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CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

In the last few years, global concerns have increased regarding environmental issues. These concerns generated more pressure and necessitated business and industries to develop and use green management by adopting environmentally-friendly practices and products. Today, more than ever before, people are willing to operate in an environmentally responsible way and they understand that they are part of society and should therefore adopt green practices in organisations. Green Human Resources Management (Green HRM) is recently attracting the attention of academic researchers and practitioners. Regardless the importance of green human resource management in various aspects, the literature shows that a broad process frame of reference for Green HRM has yet to emerge. The term Green Human Resource Management is by all accounts an unfamiliar term to most of the people, including experts and academics in HRM. In order to bridge this gap, this paper contributes towards a better understanding of green human resource management and related concepts. Green HRM is simply integrating Human Resource Management with Environmental related issues. Five Green HRM practices are reviewed in this paper. They include green recruitment and selection, green job analysis and design, green training and development, green performance management, and green reward management.

Keywords: Green Human Resource Management, Environmental Management, Green Management, and Environmental sustainability.

Paper type: Research paper

Type of Review: Peer Review

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of HRM is said to have started in England in the early 1800s during the craftsmen and apprenticeship era and further developed with the arrival of the industrial revolution in the late 1800s (Haslinda, 2009). Throughout its evolution various developments have been emerging to make HRM meeting different demands in the business world. One of the most important catalysts for the emergence of HRM developments came from thinking strategically about how businesses will need to adapt to change and survive in different time periods (Cania, 2014). In the last few years, global concerns have increased regarding environmental issues, especially after consolidation of the industrial revolution which increased environmental degradation. These concerns generated more pressure and necessitated business and industries to develop and use green management by adopting environmentally-friendly practices and products (Masri, 2016). Today, more than ever before, people are willing to operate in an environmentally responsible way and they understand that they are part of society and should therefore adopt green practices in organisations (Goyal, 2013).

In the present era, many organisations are being used to run their business with a green manner, and also the practice of green HRM is remarkable in different organisations. Green HRM has been the emerging field of research in the organisational study (Stojanoska, 2016). Renwick, Redman and Maguire (2008) opine that after a wealth of research into green marketing (Peattie, 1992), accounting (Owen, 1992), and management (McDonagh

and Prothero, 1997), gaps still exist in the Human Resource Management (HRM) literature on the HR aspects of environmental management - Green HRM. Such gaps include an informative guide on the emergent literature, its scope and coverage, and a process model and research agenda in this field.

Regardless the importance of green human resource management in various aspects literature shows that a broad process frame of reference for Green HRM has yet to emerge (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2018). It should be noted that organisations commenced practising green HRM practices even before 1980s but most of scholarly works were initiated after 1990s in HRM (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016). Since Green HRM is considered a new and emerging discipline in management and specifically Human Resource Management literature there is a need for more scholarly works to create more understanding and awareness on the field through bridging this literature gap.

This paper aimed at achieving the following two objectives: to review and detail the concept of green human resource management from the existing literature; and to explore green human resource management practices and their applicability in organisations. This review is expected to help researchers in the field of human resource management specifically green human resource management by providing a detailed meaning of green HRM and other related concepts that the literature shows to be insufficiently available. Further, the paper aims at showing the significance of green HRM in contemporary organisations.

1.2 AMO Theory

This study is guided by AMO theory. AMO stands for Ability, Motivation and Opportunity. According to the theory, performance is a function of employees' ability, motivation and availability of opportunities to perform. This implies that, a firm is more likely to perform better when employees have right knowledge and skills, are well motivated and are offered with opportunities to use their knowledge and skills. Since its emergence in 2000, the ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO) framework (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2000; Boxall & Purcell, 2003) has been largely accepted for explaining the linkage between human resources management and performance (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016). The choice of the theory has been done based on its relevance to green HRM. Practicing green HRM may be influenced when employees have the right green knowledge and skills (ability), are offered financial and non-financial incentives to adapt and use green HRM (motivation) and are given chances to use their green knowledge and skills in organisations (Opportunity). Further, numerous studies such as Pham, Tučková, and Phan (2019); Alnajdawi, Emeagwali and Elrehail (2017); and Renwick, Redman and Maguire (2012) have used this theory in their studies relating to green HRM.

2. METHODS

The study adopted the use of archival method to achieve the above stated objectives. The method involved reviewing articles on green human resource management published to detail the meaning of Green HRM terms, applicability of five selected GHRM practices and significance of GHRM to contemporary organisations. The method was adopted to enable exploration of available existing literature so as to come up with a better understanding of green human resource management and green human resource management practices. The method has been used by Pham, Tučková, and Phan (2019); Peerzdah, Mufti and Nazir (2018); and Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2008) in similar studies and enabled an extensive exploration of green HRM studies. Published works included in this study are those which were published between 2005 and 2019. The study included recent published works in order to capture the recent understanding and trends in the field of Green HRM.

3. GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

3.1 Conceptual Meaning of Green Human Resource Management

The term Green Human Resource Management is by all accounts an unfamiliar term to most of the people, including experts and academics in HRM (Stojanoska, 2016). This is why there are few scholars who have defined the concept of green HRM in the existing literature (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016). The term has been defined differently by different people but there is a great level of consensus on one thing which is integrating Human Resource Management with issues relating to Environmental management and reinforcing environmentally

sustainable practices among employees. Uddin and Islam (2015) defined that Green HRM involves environmentally-friendly human resource policies and practices that, on the one hand, will help organisations achieve its monetary goal through environmental branding and on the other hand protect environment from any negative impacts that might be caused by the policies and actions of the organisations. Hosain (2016) explains that the concept of green HRM typically includes using less possible paperwork at all HR functions like recruitment and selection, training, performance review etc. to create a sustainable, environmentally-friendly and competitive advantage through employee engagement. Although this definition reminds us of one of very important aspects of GHRM, yet it has a limited focus by relating the concept only with the use of less of paper work in working places. Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) refers to using Human Resources Management (HRM) practices to reinforce environmentally sustainable practices and increase employee's commitment on the issues of environmental sustainability. It embraces considering concerns and values of Environmental Management (EM) in applying Human Resources (HR) initiatives generating greater efficiencies and better Environmental Performance (EP) necessary for reducing employees' carbon footprints (Masri & Jaaron, 2017). This paper defines green HRM as a process of making use of human resources at workplaces in order to achieve organisational goals with deliberate efforts to make sure the process contributes towards environmental sustainability. It intends to use HR functions, policies, strategies and practices as mechanisms for environmental management at work places.

3.2 Green Human Resource Management Practices

There are numerous green HRM practices. In this paper five green HRM practices are reviewed. This include: green recruitment and selection, green job analysis and design, green training and development, green performance management and green reward management. The five (5) green human resources management practices are herein discussed in item 3.2.1 to 3.2.5.

3.2.1 Green recruitment and selection

Recruitment is considered as an entry point to the organisation. It gives an organisation an opportunity to attract a pool of candidates so that the right ones can be selected to join. Kiruthigaa and Viswanathan (2014) defined Green recruitment as a paper-free recruitment process with a minimal environmental impact. Applications are invited through online mediums like e-mail, online application forms or the Global Talent Pool. If possible, telephone or video-based interviews are conducted to minimise any travel related environmental impact. From this perspective organisations are trying whatever they can to ensure that right candidates are attracted but the process remains to be as environmentally friendly as possible. Diana (2016) insists that e-recruiting reduces energy use and pollution associated with manufacturing, transporting, and recycling paper products. Process automation also saves energy in mailing, storage, handling, filing, and reporting tasks. Direct cost savings come from reducing paperwork related to resumes, advertising, and on boarding.

After attracting job candidates in green way organisations are supposed to ensure that right green candidates are selected in a green way as well. In Green selection, the selection tests can also be as much paperless as possible like behavioural observation, interview, presentation in which less paper is needed. Moreover, preferences could be given to the candidates who are more environmentally aware and friendly or who have strong motivation to keep the office and environment green or natural as it is (Hosain, 2016). This entails that whatever test is used to assess job candidates, the test should be designed in such a way that among other criteria, candidates with knowledge on environmental conservation and willingness to conserve environment are more likely to be selected.

Generally, green recruitment and selection is the process of using eco-friendly methods, tools and technologies in attracting and selecting suitable job candidates who are willing and able to fill available vacancies in a particular firm. Although various criteria are always considered in selecting job candidates, willingness and ability of the candidates to conserve the environment are tested. Since recruitment and selection plays a vital role in hiring employees green initiatives should be well integrated at this stage. This will help to ensure that candidates who are willing and able to take green initiatives are hired. This will also make easier for organisations to instil green behaviour and green culture to the newly hired employees. This view is supported by AMO theory since the theory insists that ability is among three determents of employee performance and therefore companies should

consider hiring people who are able not only to perform their primary duties and responsibilities but also are able to conserve and protect the environment in a sustainable manner.

3.2.2 Green job analysis and design

Job analysis involves collection of information on knowledge, skills and ability that a person should possess to discharge a particular job effectively (Aswathapa, 2012). In job designing decisions are made in advance on how jobs will be composed with respect to duties, responsibilities, resources needed, human resource requirements and working relationships within an organisation (Mwita & Buberwa, 2016). One of the outputs of job analysis and design are job descriptions. Job descriptions are an official framework defining a position; they can include specific tasks, responsibilities, specifications, broad goals, competencies, and knowledge desired by the company (Barbouletos, 2011). From this perspective employers may use a process of job analysis and design to ensure that employees are formally or officially mandated to perform their jobs in an environmentally friendly way but also ensuring that they have knowledge on environmental issues as one of their requirements to perform a particular job efficiently and effectively. As it was noticed by Arulrajah, Opatha and Nawaratne (2015) in some companies, each job description includes at least one duty related to environmental protection and also specifically includes environmental responsibilities whenever and wherever applicable. With this regard it is easier for companies to officiate green practices but also making employees accountable for green practices. AMO theory insists that for employees to perform well they have to be offered opportunities to do so and therefore a supportive environment is needed. In support of this view Marin-Garcia and Tomas (2016) argue that opportunity takes into consideration not only individual characteristics but also the work environment. Work environment includes how jobs are analysed and designed to support achievement of organisational goals including green goals.

This paper defines green job analysis and design as a process of collecting information for a particular job with an intention to prepare a job description and job specification which will eventually lead to selection of employees who are able to perform their duties and responsibilities in an eco friendly way. Green job analysis and design seek to ensure that an organisation identifies duties and responsibilities, skills, knowledge, and competences for a particular job in order to make a job holder environmental friendly and accountable in the course of performing his or job. In referring to AMO theory, Njoroge and Kwasira (2015) stresses that job design and job analysis primarily determine ability requirements and opportunity and therefore the theory sufficiently reflects the need of job analysis and design in enhancing green behaviour among human resources in organisations.

3.2.3 Green training and Development

Training and development is very important for an organisation to compete in this challenging and changing world. Training and development is basically directly related to employee performance but its ultimate effect goes to an organisation as well (Khan, Khan, & Khan, 2011).

Green training and development educates employees about the value of Environmental Management, train them in working methods that conserve energy, reduce waste, diffuse environmental awareness within the organisation, and provide opportunity to engage employees in environmental problem-solving (Zoogah, 2011). Green training and development does not end with imparting employees and management knowledge and skills on environmental sustainability related issues but it also requires a process itself to be environmental friendly. As suggested by Hosain (2016) training supervisors should use more on online course materials and case studies rather than printed handouts, books and brochures to reduce the use of paper. This gives an opportunity for e-learning platforms to take chance in training and development programmes. The use of digital platform may help to reduce consumption of papers and ultimately save trees for the current and future generations.

Environmental training serves two main purposes. First, to properly educate the employees with the company's environmental policies, secondly, altering the activities of employees through training to build a more deliberate and stable relationship of employees towards environment (Sammalisto & Brorson, 2008 in Jabbar & Abid, 2014). Green Training and development activities make employees aware of different aspects and value of environmental

management. It helps them to embrace different methods of conservation including waste management within an organisation. Further, it sharpens the skills of an employee to deal with different environmental issues (Ahmad, 2015). Green training is considered one of the most important tools in developing human resources and facilitating a transition to a more sustainable society (Teixeira, *et al.*, 2012 cited in Masri, 2016).

Therefore, green training and development implies impacting employees with knowledge and skills on how to minimize or avoid environmental pollution and conserve the environment at workplaces. It also involves the use of eco-friendly methods and technologies in training and development programmes. This observation is consistent with AMO theory postulation that an employee who possesses right skills and knowledge is more likely to perform better than an employee who does have them.

3.2.4 Green performance management

Performance management is a systematic process for improving organisational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams (Armstrong, 2006). Performance management usually involves evaluation of an employee and teams basing on certain agreed criteria and goals. Every organisation gets obligatory responsibility to perform corporate environmental management and therefore there are environmental goals to be achieved by the organisation or environmental requirements to be met by the organisation (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014). Green performance management involves linking performance evaluation to green goals and tasks specified in the job description (Mehta & Chugan, 2015).

Organisations have an opportunity to practice green performance management through setting green goals for individual employees and teams and ensuring that these goals are effectively achieved. Periodic appraisal can be made to see how employees and teams are progressing towards achieving them. Green job analysis and design can help making green performance management easier by ensuring that employees have green job descriptions. From there, green duties and responsibilities may be used to assess performance of each employee on his particular job. Deshwal (2015) insists that Performance management systems should be developed to include 'green' targets in the key performance areas (KPA). This can be translated into Green performance standards and Green behaviour indicators which should serve as yardsticks in performance appraisal of employees at all levels.

Therefore, green performance management implies to be a systematic process through which a firm assign green goals to be achieved by individual employees and teams and periodically assess how these goals are achieved and use various management strategies to help employees and teams achieve them effectively and efficiently. Primarily, performance management as a human resource management practice intends to facilitate employee and organisational performance and therefore green performance management is a tool for enhancing individual, group and organisational performance towards green goals. According to AMO theory the use of HR practices that are aimed at strengthening employee performance can be viewed as a composition of three dimensions - skill-, motivation- and opportunity-enhancing HR practices (Lepak, Liao, Chung & Harden, 2006). This means, green performance management is among important dimensions of AMO theory.

3.2.5 Green reward management

Conventional wisdom suggests that a well-designed reward system can help motivate employees to achieve satisfactory performance levels, including environmental performance. The reward system provides a good indication of the seriousness of an organisation's commitment to environmental sustainability management (Bratton & Bratton, 2015). Attainment of specific environmental initiatives should be integrated into the compensation system by offering employees a benefit package that rewards employees for green performance (Milliman & Clair, 1996 cited in Uddin & Islam, 2015). To motivate managers and non-managerial employees on corporate environmental management initiatives, green reward management has significant contributions. In some companies employees are financially (e.g. incentives, bonuses, cash) rewarded for their good environmental performance. In some other companies, employees are non-financially rewarded (awards/special recognitions/honours/prizes) for their good environmental performance (Arulrajah, Opatha & Nawaratne, 2015). Therefore, green reward management refers to a systematic process of designing and implementing strategies and policies of rewarding employees and teams that are successfully contributing towards achievement of

environmental management initiatives in workplaces. Reward management is one of the important aspects of motivation that AMO theory supports. The theory entails that motivated employees are more likely to perform better and therefore organisations have an obligation of motivating employees for higher performance. With this view point, green rewards management is crucial in instilling green culture among employees hence employees demonstrating green behaviour are supposed to be offered with both financial and non-financial rewards for effective achievement of green organisational goals.

3.3 Significance of Green HRM Practices in Contemporary Organisations

Green organisations are the most desired employers and any potential hire would like to be associated with such an employer so as to learn and add value to their profile (Pandey, Viswanathan & Kamboj, 2016). This implies that organisations practising Green HRM have a competitive advantage over the rest in acquiring competent employees. A larger pool of job candidates increases a chance of employers getting more desirable employees. Many green companies these days boast low turnover rates compared to their non-sustainable counterparts (Sharma, 2016). From this view employee retention can be achieved through green HRM practices. Since organisations experience financial loss from employee turnover practicing green HRM can be considered one of remedies towards the problem. Tiwal & Bangwal (2015) reminds that organisations that are not aware about green concept, green practices and policies may lose their talented or innovative employees to companies that have implemented Green Practices or make their image as an eco-friendly company and offer socially responsible incentives.

Green HRM practices results in developing sustainability because it focuses on reservation and preservation of natural resources, and minimisation of wastage. So, a very strong correlation exists among Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and environmental sustainability (Chowdhury, Sanju, & Asaduzzaman, 2017). Through Green HRM organisations may not only be aiming at providing finished goods and services but also contributing towards serving the planet from environmental degradation which is also part and parcel of corporate social responsibility. Sharma (2013) opines that corporations that place an emphasis on corporate social responsibility typically have an easier experience when dealing with politicians and government regulators. In contrast, businesses that present a reckless disregard for social responsibility tend to find themselves fending off various inquiries and probes, often brought on at the insistence of public service organisations. In a general perspective various stakeholders find more appropriate working or associating with organisations which are socially responsible.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

Green HRM is a process of making use of human resources at workplaces in order to achieve organisational goals with deliberate efforts to make sure the process contributes towards environmental sustainability. Green HRM is still a new and an emerging field that needs more attention from researchers and HR practitioners. Admittedly, there is a big literature gap on the field which calls for more literature works. Green HRM offers multiple advantages to organisations; from those relating to corporate social responsibility, business performance as well as well facilitating environmental sustainability. Organisations that are willing and able to practice Green HRM are likely to attract more customers, shareholders and comply with legal and ethical standards.

Based on the study findings, the following are recommended: Firstly, more training programmes have to be organised and provided to managerial and non-managerial members of various organisations to raise awareness and understanding of Green HRM. Secondly, education institutions have to include Green HRM in their curricula to ensure that more green graduates are produced in these institutions. Also, more researches have to be done in the area of Green HRM to provide more evidence based findings that will explain the essence of Green HRM in contemporary organisations.

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