



Green Human Resource Management: Evolving Practices, Cross-Sectoral Insights, Challenges, and Future Directions

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Abstract

Environmental sustainability has become a major concern in global practices in recent times. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) which incorporates environmental principles into traditional HRM activities has become one of the popular sustainability approaches. This comprehensive review methodically examines the evolving concept of GHRM, focusing on its core components—green recruitment, training, performance appraisal and incentive programs—and explores its practical applications in various industries.

To illustrate how GHRM practices promote sustainability, employee engagement and organisational image, this study draws upon lessons from international and Indian context to showcase sector specific examples from IT, manufacturing, hospitality and healthcare industries. Despite its many advantages organizations face many challenges such as low awareness, resistance to change, high cost of implementation and measurement issues. The review provides useful tips and proposes measurement frameworks to overcome these challenges. The study also highlights the research gaps and suggests cross cultural comparative study, longitudinal study and research into the employee motivation factors that underlie effective GHRM practices. Finally the study stresses the importance of incorporating environmental issues into HR activities and provides a clear road map for scholars and practitioners to achieve sustainability outcomes through Green HRM.

Keywords: Green HRM, Sustainability, Environmental Management, Employee Engagement, Green Recruitment, Sectoral Analysis, India

1. Introduction

Resource depletion, environmental degradation and climate change are global concerns that companies are facing today. Sustainability is seen as a strategic agenda for businesses that attempt towards the goals of resource conservation, environmental sustainability and green economic growth. HR is getting highly competent in the field of sustainability in terms of implementing different aspects of the business operations. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is an integral element of environmental sustainability and HRM which means mixing green practices with the regular HR processes and practices. This article looks at the similarities among GHRM practices and concepts, industrial implications, the challenges encountered and the future trends in GHRM with an emphasis on the globe and Indian case and sector.

The use of human capital for ecological sustainability is at the heart of GHRM. Organizations can reduce their environmental footprint and increase operational efficiency at the same time by engaged and eco-conscious employees. Green hiring and selection (attracting eco-conscious talent), green training and development (improving employees' ecological skills), performance evaluation (evaluating employees based on eco-friendly behavior) and green compensation and reward systems (incentivizing sustainable practices) are the main HR practices linked to GHRM.

GHRM is being widely adopted by companies from different sectors worldwide in order to stay ahead of the curve, align with the core aspects of CSR and be responsible giants and proactively take care of GHRM issues.

The worldwide movement in the manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality as well as IT sectors has launched a system to automate the GHRM process to stimulate employee morale, thus increasing their capacity to remain micro-organisms and make only environmental-unfriendly stakeholders of all of them.

Departments in companies sector like manufacturing, healthcare, and hospitality and IT firms are also integrating GHRM by designing programs that enhance employee morale, and not Increased legal framework, rising stakeholder expectations and growing environmental awareness among customers and employees have all contributed to the growing interest in GHRM practices in Indian context in recent years. However, due to cultural differences, limited resources and lack of awareness about GHRM, Indian companies face unique challenges. Based on recent empirical research studies and sector specific examples, this study focuses on Indian companies in particular, examining both successful implementations and challenges faced. So this review paper has three objectives. By synthesizing various definitions, models and theoretical perspectives it will clarify and consolidate the concept of GHRM. Second it will examine the impact of GHRM practices on organizational sustainability and employee outcomes across various industries by reviewing the empirical data available from international and Indian studies.

Thirdly, it will outline the difficulties that companies face in integrating GHRM and suggest feasible tips for overcoming them as well as directing research to promising new directions. The organized manner in which this review paper is presented is supposed to keep the coherency.

Literature Review

Sustainable management of human resources and the whole concept of Green HRM (GHRM) is in the spotlight, and that is a clear sign of the significance of this discussion in a field of sustainable development. The concept of GHRM is a way of integrating environmental sustainability and HRM processes like employee engagement, performance management, training, and hiring (Renwick et al., 2013). Scholars also focus on the strategic positioning of HR to better support the sustainability agenda through the engagement of the workforce with the environmental targets (Renwick et al., 2013). GHRM is supported by AMO theory, indicating that environmental management is effective when workers receive the necessary training, are motivated by rewards and recognition and have the opportunity to do the same. The organization also needs to adopt Resource-Based View (RBV) to transform it into green HRM, and understanding Stakeholder Theory is vital in this aspect to gain the satisfaction of stakeholders and competitive advantage as well.

According to the case studies published around the globe, it is apparent that GHRM as a priority in environmental improvement relates to an enhancement in entity performance.

The most common outcomes of the implementation of green HR are as follows:

(a) Reducing operating expenses, (b) Raising employee spirit, (c) Enhancing creativity, and (d) Stricter compliance with environmental protection regulations. Renwick et al. (2013) and Yong et al. (2019) have found a number of green HRM initiatives that were high on sustainability potential. Employers who use green hiring practices attract applicants who share their values and green training initiatives significantly improves workers' ecological awareness and behavior. Green awards are crucial in reaching environmental goals because studies show that incorporating environmental criteria into performance evaluation systems encourage employees to be sustainable (Masood, 2018).

Research on GHRM is happening in India; new studies show that industries like IT, manufacturing, hospitality and healthcare are adopting it gradually but quite well. According to Vijaya Lakshmi and Battu (2018) Indian companies have slowly started adopting green hiring techniques like digitally controlled selection process which has reduced paper usage drastically. Companies like Tata Group and Infosys are good examples of GHRM practices and are showing positive impact on ecological performance and employee motivation. Resource constraints and lack of awareness among small businesses are still hindering the widespread adoption in India despite good examples (George et al., 2022).

In other words, the study shows how GHRM can strengthen the bond between the employees, stimulate innovation, and increase the efficiency of nature in the company. The existence of GHRM benefits is indisputable and is backed up with the help of various statistical general knowledge, but as indicated by research in India, it's systematically use is still getting established, which means that more in depth study together with the "broader acceptance" are wanted.

Methodology

Employing a literature research-based system, this study suggests a way of solving this problem. In the first phase, researchers performed searches in reputable academic databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were queried by the sentences, "Green HRM," "environmental management," "employee involvement," and "sustainability." The study concentrated primarily on academic papers, conference proceedings, and reports released between 2010 and 2025. The review also focused on articles with a certain level of empirical rigor, relevant sectoral case studies, precise definitions of Green HRM, and usefulness in organizational sustainability. In order to maintain a minimum academic standard, arising GHRM theories without supportive evidence were qualified out of the undertaken research.

To maintain the academic standards, studies lacking empirical evidence or not making any important contribution towards the development of GHRM were omitted.

The key themes that emerged were the Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices' strategic frameworks, their applications, and the associated benefits, challenges, and recommended strategies. Clearly delineate Indian and global lessons and findings employed a comparative analytical approach. This review employed the snowballing technique, which allows authors to capture additional relevant literature through the references of the primary significant articles.

Sector-Specific Deep Analysis:

Due to every sector having individual operational difficulties and sustainability goals, the adoption of green HRM techniques varies considerably from sector to sector.

Resource conservation and digitization are the primary objectives of the information technology industry. Companies have implemented virtual on boarding and have transitioned to a paperless recruitment process. To enhance environmental consciousness among employees, Indian companies such as Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services have established comprehensive green training programs. Their focus on sustainability is largely implemented through the digitization of work processes, which leads to a significant reduction in emissions and resource consumption.

In the manufacturing industry, waste minimization and operational effectiveness are favorite. An Indian company, Mahindra, and Mahindra and Tata Motors integrate green practices into job descriptions and performance targets. Employees are trained on energy conservation and waste minimization techniques. Such reviews, which are aimed at green performance, encourage ingenuity, align business objectives with environmental objectives, and resource depletion, as well as productivity increase.

Sustainability actions within the hospitality and tourism industries significantly influence consumer perceptions. All the hotels, including those of ITC and Taj Hotels, who are practicing green HR, are educating their employees to reduce waste, conserve water and to operate in an environmentally friendly way, At the time of employee's performance reviews, they also define sustainability goals, this way, the function of employees is improved together with the branding website is also recognized.

In the healthcare industry, high-quality patient care is provided without harming the environment by green methods. In this context, the medical staff is trained extensively on the usage of energy-saving methods and the correct handling of medical waste. For example, by using the green procurement process, Apollo Hospitals is able to save on operating expenses and hazardous wastes. Building staff awareness is the key successful factor to have accomplished programs which somehow place less stress on the environment as well as taking better care of the employees.

Common problems are shared across the sectors which are resistance to change and high initial investment costs. However, companies that have mastered green HRM usually note the long-term benefits, like the increased satisfaction of employees, better compliance, and operating efficiencies through different sectors.

Discussion and Comparative Analysis

The advice drawn from the literature highlights the available data on GHRM practices, which have great benefits around the planet and India, although their implementation differs because of economic, cultural, and organizational grounds. Globally, GHRM programs continually catch hold of rising employee engagement, reduced expenses, increased operational efficiency, and improved regulatory compliance. These outcomes are further confirmed by Indian investigations with studies pointing to the fact that the implementation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to be a little slower than the usually desired pace due to the lack of awareness and resource constraints. Additionally, in the evolving time the area of increasing technological

integration, such as the AI-powered HR analytics for tracking sustainability measures, and the rise of employee engagement as the most significant mediator in the adoption of GHRM have been observed as the main trends of today. When one looks at the practices followed by these different corporate cultures and the regulatory systems that they work with cross-cultural differences get illuminated. Asian enterprises and particularly Indian

businesses allocate more resources towards cost-saving through resource efficiency and community-driven sustainability

programs than do Western firms, which are mostly concerned with public image and regulatory compliance.

Challenges and Barriers

While the advantages it presents are visible, the process of GHRM adoption is not without its difficulties. Awareness is the main problem; lots of employees and HR professionals don't really understand the importance of GHRM. From cultural pressure to cynicism toward 'anything new' full-scale adoption is made impossible that is why competency and cultural transformation programs are designed for such cases. Economic factors emerge as the main obstacles for SMEs and firms starting in the emerging markets in which a firm has high initial investment costs. Infrastructure and new technologies may be a turn-off for small and medium enterprises if the adoption costs are too high. The major obstacle is the reluctance to give up old fashioned jobs.

This measurement problem hinders the long-term commitment to GHRM programs and limits corporate responsibility.

Future Directions and Recommendations

The study is in the direction of giving its strong support for the companies promising to address the development of Global Human Resource Management through time. They should adopt a comparative cross-sectoral and cross-cultural approach to research to develop best practices suitable to a wide range of operational contexts and cultural surroundings. To that effect, a better understanding of the individual psychological processes that lead an employee to carry out green activities is an important issue.

For instance, companies are recommended to bring about a high degree of awareness and training via intelligent use of technology in HR systems to ensure sustainability. Imposing mandatory laws and providing rewards are effective tools that governments can use to encourage the green revolution. Moreover, the identification of the common criteria for the measurement of effectiveness in the evaluation of GHRM results is the prerequisite for the creation of structures of transparent accountability and the verification of the observable benefits of GHRM programs.

The current study pays great attention to the phenomenon of Green HRM which blends the principles of 'sustainability and environmental care' into the human resources business strategy. The understanding of the pressing linkage of Indian and global knowledge is that Green HRM leads to higher ecological performance, employee productivity, and business efficiency. The existing challenges that include low awareness of the issue, high expenses, as well as measurement issues, can be overcome by activist tactics and pro-environmental regulations. The future investigations as well as the empirical application of the principles of Green human resource management will add to the successful spread of GHRM among organizations and thus secure the sustainability of all businesses.

Conclusion

Green HRM, a combination of environment-friendly organizational human resource practices, is a highly significant strategic approach emphasized and analyzed in our research work. The positive association between the transfer of local and global knowledge and companies with Good GHRM is manifested in their ecological

performance, workplace engagement, and operational efficiency. Such obstacles as low awareness, expenses, and measurement issues can be solved with proactive tactics and new legislation. Research on the subject and the real usage of above-mentioned practices can greatly improve GHRM's efficacy and thus, usher in a sustainable future for the companies of the world.

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