



A study of employees' perception towards green HRM initiatives

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Abstract

There is a growing need for the integration of environmental management into Human Resource Management (HRM) – Green HRM – research practice. The majority of people believe that the power to reconstruct the environment is in the hand of only technical types like scientist, engineers, lawyers and legislators. But today the employees of organizations owe the strength to demonstrate the green practices which allows them to participate and involve themselves in the environment management programs and practices. The objective of this paper is to measure and analyze the employee's involvement and participation in the green HRM in the organizations. A self-developed questionnaire is used as an instrument to collect the information and response.

Keywords: human resource management, environmental management

Introduction

Conceptual Framework

The impact of our daily activities on the environment and the desire to go green has expanded from just individuals to organizations. More organizations are volunteering to operate in a more environmentally responsible way. Local municipalities are encouraging business to become greener by offering incentives. In the near future, "being green" could become the norm. In September 2007, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) conducted the SHRM 2007 Green Workplace Survey to examine environmentally responsible practices from the perspective of HR professionals and employees. This survey brief explores types of practices organizations have in place, human resource professionals' and employees' perceptions of their organizations' practices, and HR professionals' role in their organizations; environmentally friendly programs.

The greening of HR survey examines the types of environmentally friendly "green" initiatives that companies are utilizing their workforce and human resource practices. The results confirm that companies are incorporating and working toward integrating a number of green practices. While the study's question and results are broad, they hint at several areas for HR practitioners to consider in the green space. The natural environment, encompasses all living and non-living things occurring naturally on Earth or some region thereof. It is an environment that encompasses the interaction of all living species. The concept of the natural environment can be distinguished by components

- Complete ecological units that function as natural systems without massive human intervention, including all vegetation, microorganisms, soil, rocks, atmosphere and natural phenomena that occur within their boundaries.
- Universal natural resources and physical phenomena that lack clear-cut boundaries, such as air, water, and climate, as well as energy, radiation, electric charge, and

magnetism, not originating from human activity.

The natural environment is contrasted with the built environment, which comprises the areas and components that are strongly influenced by humans. A geographical area is regarded as a natural environment (with an indefinite article), if the human impact on it is kept under a certain limited level. Apart from the specific society segments with whom the firm interacts in the course of conducting its business, the manager also has responsibility towards his surroundings and the people living in the vicinity of his factory and office. Firms behave irresponsibly when they pollute their physical environment by releasing harmful smoke and gas into the atmosphere, discharging toxic effluents into nearby rivers, lakes or seas, and dumping their waste matter in surrounding lands. All these have a detrimental effect on the environment and affect the health of the people by polluting the air they breathe, the water they drink and the food they eat. The Bhopal tragedy where poisonous gas leaking from the factory of Union Carbide caused the death of thousands of innocent people is an example of the extent of damage which can be caused if proper precautions are not taken.

The government is only now realizing the irreparable harm which firms, in pursuit of their business, are causing to the environment and the ecological balance. Vast forests have been indiscriminately felled by firms in their narrow, single-minded pursuit of profit. This has created an imbalance in the ecology of the area. Floods have become a recurrent feature in areas which had never been known to be flood-prone.

Green HRM is the use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within business organizations and, more generally, promote the cause of environmentalism. Green initiatives within HRM are increasing as a result of mounting concern over global warming and the adverse effect of much business activity on the natural environment. They often form part of wider programmes of *corporate social*

responsibility. The kinds of action taken within green HRM initiatives include educating employees about climate change and other environmental issues, training in working methods that reduce the use of energy and other resources, promoting and incentivizing more sustainable means of travel to work (e.g. car sharing, cycling, public transport), and auditing employee *benefits* to eliminate those that are environmentally damaging (e.g. unnecessary provision of a high powered *company car*). Some green HRM initiatives also make use of employee *volunteering* to support environmental charities and projects and to develop green initiatives at work. Where trade unions are present, green HRM may involve *consultation* and joint working with union environmental representatives (i.e. union representatives who are trained to promote a green agenda at work) to advance sustainable business practice.

There is a growing need for the integration of environmental management into Human Resource Management (HRM) – Green HRM – research practice. A review of the literature shows that a broad process frame of reference for Green HRM has yet to emerge. A concise categorization is needed in this field to help academics, researchers and practitioners, with enough studies in existence to guide such modeling. This article takes a new and integrated view of the literature in Green HRM, using it to classify the literature on the basis of entry-to-exit processes in HRM (from recruitment to exit), revealing the role that HR processes play in translating Green HR policy into practice. The contribution of this article lies in drawing together the extant literature in this area, mapping the terrain in this field, and in proposing a new process model and research.

The Greening of HR Survey examines the types of environmentally friendly "green" initiatives that companies are utilizing involving their workforce and human resource practices. The results confirm that companies are incorporating and working toward integrating a number of green practices. While the study's questions and results are broad, they hint at several areas for HR practitioners to consider in the green space. Over half of the companies surveyed have incorporated environmental management into business operations and have a formal green program in place or plan to implement one in the next 12 months. More than half of the survey participants currently have the following green programs in place:

- Using the internet or teleconferencing to cut down on business travel (78%)
- Putting Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs) or other company information online to reduce printing (77%)
- Promoting the reduction of paper usage (76%)
- Implementing wellness programs around proper nutrition, fitness, and healthy living (68%)
- Offering opportunities for employees to "telework" or work from home (57%)
- Ride/Share programs (52%)

Greater than 60 percent of companies surveyed have made environmental responsibility a part of their organization's mission statement and view the promotion of social responsibility as the most critical objective of their green programs. In nearly 50 percent of companies, only five percent or less of their employees are actively involved in

green programs.

Findings illustrate that companies who have appointed individuals to lead organizational green efforts have a much higher prevalence of employees actively involved in their green practices than companies who have not. Findings also demonstrate that corporate Operations and HR departments are most often responsible for green programs.

Review of literature

Jabbour, Charbel Jose Chiappetta, (2011) ^[1] analyzed the level of greening of HRM practices, organizational culture, learning, and teamwork in Brazilian companies. Henricks, Mark. *Entrepreneur*, (2008) ^[3] wrote an article about how green practices implementation can cut down the greenhouse emissions to cut down global warming. Rangarajan, Nandhini; Rahm, Dianne, (2011) ^[7] studied that how have environmental initiatives and "going green" permeated the human resources realm? This article, through a nationwide survey, examines the extent to which cities have incorporated environmentally friendly human resource practices. Results reveal that income, education, environmental awareness and presence of preexisting successful environmental programs have an impact on technical and strategic human resource practices in U.S. cities. This article discusses the implications for public administration. Kato Hikari, Too Linda, (2010) shed light on the perceptions by occupiers of green workplace environments. They examined how occupiers (both management and employees) perceive and evaluate the role of green workplace environments, and subsequently assesses the effectiveness of a green workplace environment. This paper relies on a data set derived from a survey of 128 respondents who have occupied Green Building Council Australia's Green Star-rated offices and buildings for more than 12 months. The findings suggest that green workplace offers greater psychological benefits (taking pride of the workplace environment) to occupiers than physical improvements (health and productivity gains). Further, management perceived greater benefits of green workplace compared to employees. This paper summarizes the findings of the first phase of a longitudinal study. It is limited at this stage by a relatively small data sample, given that there are only a limited number of Green Star-rated buildings that have been in operation for more than 12 months at this stage of data collection. However, the survey has a 36 per cent response rate and thus provides reasonable scope for generalization of the findings. The results are useful to building owners and employers who need to be more aware of probable outcomes in terms of employee workplace satisfaction, and areas that may require particular attention in transitioning to green workplaces. The results are also useful to managers by highlighting areas of perceived deficiency in green workplaces and ensuring a more targeted effort in meeting the needs and expectations of employees. The paper provides empirical findings of the strengths and weaknesses of a relatively new concept, i.e. the green workplace. The findings from the Australian experience serves as a good benchmark for future similar studies. Agnieszka, Leszczynska, (2009) analyzed corporate environmental awareness in an international cross-section and explored whether attitudes towards environmental issues mirror the development of an economy. Thus, do more

advanced societies represent more progressive attitudes? How significant are differences in perception between countries? The empirical research was conducted in three countries. In total, 200 managers in public and private corporations nationwide were selected in Australia and Ukraine. In Poland the population of managers was 250. Business Journal (Central New York) ^[8], 2009 article presents a survey conducted by Buck Consultants, regarding the sustainable practice of the human resources (HR) in the U.S. Survey reveals that there are 54% of the companies have practiced sustainability and environmental management as well. It highlights the green human resources practices adopted by these companies including paper use reduction and web conferencing. S. Sohal Amrik, Zutshi Ambika, (2003) summarizes the findings of the qualitative part of a large study aimed at exploring the extent of involvement of organizational stakeholders (employees and suppliers) during the environmental management system (EMS) adoption process. Interviews with nine senior/middle managers from Australian manufacturing and service organisations revealed the growing awareness of the impact of their products and processes on the ecological and social environments. Moreover, implementation of an EMS or waste management system (WMS) is accepted as a learning curve by both the organization and its stakeholders, including its employees. Organizations at the same time are also contemplating the need for certifying their existing EMS against international standards such as ISO 14001 based on the cost-benefits resulting from the certification. Adamantios, Bohlen Greg, Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Bodo B., (1993) shown that environmental consciousness has consistently been shown to be much more than a passing fad. However, very little academic research has been conducted in the UK in developing ecological segmentation variables for targeting the environmentally-concerned/aware segments of the population. This paper follows established procedures from the measure development literature and attempts to develop measures encapsulating employees' (1) perceived knowledge about green issues, (2) attitudes toward the environment and (3) levels of environmentally-sensitive behaviour.

Objectives of the study

To identify the employee's perception towards environment.

To identify employees' perception about organization as green initiative taker.

To identify the implementation of employee awareness programmes and practices in the organization.

To identify the employees involvement and participation in environmental practices in the organization.

To open new vistas for further research.

Research Methodology

1. The sample design & size

Population: population was the employees of the north India.

Sample size: 100 respondents.

Sampling element: Individual employees of the organization.

Sampling Technique: Non Random Sampling

2. Tools used for data collection

Self-made questionnaire for employee's perception towards green initiatives was used for data collection. Data was collected on a Likert type scale of 1 stood for Strongly Disagree Satisfied and 5 stood for Strongly Agree

3. Statistical analysis and techniques

- Descriptive Analysis
- Exploratory factor analysis
- Test of Sampling Adequacy

Analysis and Results

Table – 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the items. Result of exploratory factor analysis showed that there are four factors extracted out of 15 questions of employee perception of green initiatives which explained 68 percent of total variations in the scores. One factor accounted for very less variation and contained single and uncorrelated question in thus was eliminated and remaining three factors explained 58 percent of variation. As shown in Table – 3, First factor contained 6 questions which were all related to employee's perception of organisations role in green initiatives, second factor contained six questions which were all related to the employee's own role in green initiatives and third factor was related to employee's sense of responsibility for green initiatives. KMO and Bartlett's Test shows that sample size was adequate for the study.

Table 1

Items	Mean	SD
i feel that my organization is a green organization	3.8375	1.2773
i like to participate in conducting conventionor meetings for creating awareness for employees regarding envir. Safety	4.075	0.86822
i like to participate the wellness programs organized in our organization.	3.9625	1.20593
i feel there is a need of environmental awareness program for employees in our organization.	4.0375	1.01188
i feel a great need of introducing / promoting training on environmental management and green practices in our organization	3.95	1.08965
i feel i am socialized with green values	3.9	1.10922
i prefer to use technology a better medium of communication than other.	4.1	0.68621
I feel myself a Environmentally responsible employee.	4.1875	0.94258
I believe that Green performance should be indicators in employee's performance management system.	3.7625	0.90349
I set my green targets, goals and responsibilities along with job responsibilities.	3.825	0.93829
I feel that the Recruitment of employees with green skills, experience and awareness should be the part	3.6	1.0385
I usually like to participate and giving green suggestions at my work place.	3.8	0.89159
I feel that there should be disciplinary system for Environmental breaches in organizations	4.075	0.88267
i would like to go the greener employers' organization	3.9625	1.01188
i feel that web or teleconferencing is an important technique to cut down on business travel	4.1	0.8359

KMO and Bartlett's Test**Table 2**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.639
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	619.380
	Df	105
	Sig.	.000

Table 3

Items	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
i feel that my organization is a green organization		0.774		
i like to participate in conducting convention or meetings for creating awareness for employees regarding enviro. Safety		0.736		
i like to participate the wellness programs organized in our organization.		0.878		
i feel there is a need of environmental awareness programme for employees in our organization.		0.728		
i feel a great need of introducing / promoting training on environmental management and green practices in our organization		0.745		
i prefer to use technology a better medium of communication than other.		0.438		
I believe that Green performance should be indicators in employee's performance management system.	0.763			
I set my green targets, goals and responsibilities along with job responsibilities.	0.821			
I feel that the Recruitment of employees with green skills, experience and awareness should be the part	0.852			
I usually like to participate and giving green suggestions at my work place.	0.743			
I feel that there should be disciplinary system for Environmental breaches in organizations	0.589			
i would like to go the greener employers organization	0.711			
i feel i am socialized with green values			0.797	
I feel myself a Environmentally responsible employee.			0.675	
i feel that web or teleconferencing is an important technique to cut down on business travel				0.827

Implication of the study

Implication for Managers: They can use the study for making policy and system of their enterprise operation towards environment policy.

Implication for society: Social studies can be done by knowing the factors of social responsibility of an organization towards environment.

Implication for academicians: They can use it for further research by taking more constraints like conservation of energy resources, water resources etc.

Limitations and Future directions

The study was conducted in the employees of Gwalior region with a sample size of 100 and non-random sampling and also due to shortage of time only exploratory factor analysis could have been applied. Future studies can focus to overcome above limitations and apply some more in depth data analysis to explore the correlation among the factors found and future studies can also explore prediction of employee's own perception of green initiatives on the basis of his/her perception of organization's green initiatives. Also the effect of demographic factors like salary, education level etc. can be explored on factors found.

Discussion and Conclusion

We set out to explore the factors of employees' overall perception of role in green initiatives. The study builds on the recent theoretical and empirical advancements in the literature of HRM green initiatives by an organisation. The findings largely support our underlying contention that employees are concerned about both equally i.e. his/her own role in the green initiatives and organisations role in implementing the green

HRM policy in the organisation. Our results show that both employees perception of own role in green HRM initiatives and organisation role form a crucial part of organisation overall culture.

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