

Sustainable Practices Under Human Resources Management

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the contribution of human resource management (HRM) to promoting green consumerism in business. The research applies a mixed-method technique, deriving information from academic sources and firm reports, and primary quantitative information from 40 employees from different businesses. The findings demonstrate a high relation between sustainable consumption practices at workplaces and green HRM practices, such as hiring, training, performance appraisals, and incentive schemes. The report also suggested digital HR systems, telework, and green commuting as efficient HR-level interventions that contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 13 (SDG 13). Institutionalization of green KPIs, sustainable work practices, and regular staff engagement are suggested. The research concludes that HRM can actively contribute to climate action by incorporating green consumption into company culture when it is framed as a sustainability partner.

Keywords: Green Consumerism, HRM, SDG 13, Organizational Culture, Sustainability, HR Practices

Introduction

Organizations globally are increasingly being compelled to incorporate sustainability into their core operating systems as the intensity of climate change rises. Specifically, organizations are called upon to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" by the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13) (United Nations, 2015). This global call to action requires a fundamental shift in organizational culture and behavior as well as production practices and energy use. Human Resource Management (HRM) is perhaps the most strategic, but least researched, means of attaining climate objectives at the institutional level. Originally viewed as a function of support, human resource management (HRM) is increasingly crucial in driving environmental stewardship through the establishment of corporate cultures that facilitate green consumption among employees.

1.1 Green Consumerism

In the organizational context, green consumerism describes green choices and sustainable consumption in the workplace, including digitalization instead of paper, low-carbon transportation preferences, energy-saving practices, and preference for green goods and services. By targeted policies in recruitment, training, performance assessment, and staff engagement initiatives advocating sustainable principles, HRM can influence these choices (Renwick et al., 2013). Moreover, as companies transition towards climate-resilient strategies, motivating employees to promote green values is essential for reducing carbon emissions and maintaining internal consistency in climate action plans (Jabbour & Santos, 2008).

The human resource management department is the strongest contributor among all departments of a corporation that work together to implement any corporate environmental initiative, such as marketing, finance, IT, HR, etc. There is no doubt that the business world has an important voice regarding environmental matters and, therefore, plays an important role in addressing solutions to environmental threats. Since employees these days are more committed to and satisfied with companies that are actively involved in green causes, it is clear that a large section of the business sector's workforce has strong eco-friendly feelings. In the past two decades, there has been international consensus on the importance of active environmental management (González-Benito & González-Benito, 2006).

1.2 Research Problem

The environmental performance supportability of green HRM practices has been identified through previous studies; however, relatively little specific research has examined the ways in which these practices might actively enhance green consumerism and organizational culture transformation (Jackson, Renwick, Jabbour, & Müller-Camen, 2011). In addition, while most of the literature that is currently in print addresses environmental policies at the macro level, not much has been understood about how behavioral interventions at the micro level, particularly those led by HR, can aid SDG 13 through day-to-day sustainable workplace consumption habits (Daily & Huang, 2001). To bridge this gap and enable bigger structures for climate action, the present research examines how HRM can encourage green consumerism by bringing sustainability into organizational values, training, and reward systems.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The primary objective of the study is to identify how HRM can assist companies in attaining Sustainable Development Goal 13 through the development of an environmentally friendly corporate culture and as a strategic facilitator to enable green consumption. This research is significant in that it is interdisciplinary, drawing on knowledge from sustainability studies, human resource planning, and behavioral science. Through its focus on HR's strategic interventions in the promotion of environmentally responsible behavior, the research contributes to the growing body of work on the behavioral and cultural dimensions of climate mitigation. In addition, it provides useful guidance on how firms can induce their employees to work in an environmentally responsible manner to attain SDG 13. By such a perspective, human resource management (HRM) comes to be perceived as an environmental force for change instead of as just a method for effective administration. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine how HRM enables SDG 13 by promoting green purchasing.
2. To assess how HRM processes (recruitment, training, and incentives) influence environmentally responsible employee behavior.
3. To identify the best practices that foster an environmentally responsible corporate culture.

1.4 Questions for Research

1. What effects do HR procedures have on workplace green consumerism?
2. What connection exists between Green HR training and Employee Participation in support of SDG 13?
3. Which HR initiatives best encourage sustainable employee behavior in support of SDG 13?

Literature Review

Organizations have been compelled to adopt greener practices due to the increasing global climate crisis, especially within their internal organizations and human resource models. In this context, an effective strategy for promoting climate-aware workplace cultures and aiding Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13) is the intersection of Human Resource Management (HRM) and green consumption.

2.1 Green HRM and Organizational Sustainability

Green HRM, as described by Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2013), refers to the integration of environmental objectives into traditional HR practices, like recruitment, training, performance appraisals, and compensation. These practices encourage a culture of green consumption within the organization by encouraging employees to become environmentally aware and active. Firms that incorporate sustainability into HR policies have enhanced environmental performance and employee commitment to climate objectives, argue Jabbour and Santos (2008).

2.2 HRM Function in Encouraging a Green Corporate Culture

Organizational culture has a significant impact on environmental behavior. As per Daily and Huang (2001), HR-based initiatives such as leadership development and green training contribute significantly to the development of eco-centric values. Furthermore, Tang et al. (2018) found that, especially when sustainability is embedded in core values, green behavior of employees is positively related to organizational support and HR interventions.

2.3 Green Consumer Behavior at Work

Initially thought in terms of human conduct, green consumerism has in recent times attracted attention in organizational settings. Green consumerism, as referred to by Young et al. (2010), is the willingness to seek environmentally friendly products and services. Green HRM practices succeed if employees embrace such conducts at the workplace, e.g., using less paper, saving energy, and commuting environmentally.

2.4 Sustainable Work Practices and SDG 13

As per the United Nations (2015), the workplace is one of the most important locations to reduce carbon, and SDG 13 demands urgent action against climate change. Reducing business wastage, promoting environmentally friendly commuting, and facilitating remote work are all HRM practices that directly reduce carbon emissions. As per research by Ahmad (2015), HR practices such as digitization and flexible work arrangements not only support work-life balance but also enable companies to align their activities with climate objectives.

2.5 Employee Participation and Leadership in Green Initiative

It cannot be overstated how vital leadership is to developing a culture that endures. Robertson and Barling (2013) assert that transformational leadership enhances employees' commitment to the environment when supported by HR systems. Similarly, Pinzone et al. (2016) suggested that overt

HR incentives and overt managerial support are often required for employees' participation in green activities.

2.6 Research Gaps and the Need for Empirical Understanding

Few empirical studies connect HR practices to green consumerism in organizations, even though the literature on green HRM is growing. Few studies investigate how HR operations result in sustainable behavioral change among employees, even though most focus on sustainability at the policy level (Zibarras & Coan, 2015). In addition, nothing is understood about the exact relationship between HR-initiated activities and SDG 13 results.

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods approach is employed in the present study that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative research is employed to obtain the primary data to examine the relationship between HRM practices and the development of a corporate culture that is supportive of green consumption and pro-environmental. While ecologically aware firm case studies and sustainability reports give secondary data. The research seeks to investigate the impact of sustainable HR interventions on employee behavior towards ecologically aware consumption and commuting practices, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 13.

3.2 Population and Sampling

Working professionals from diverse industries such as IT, manufacturing, services, and education comprise the target population. Those participants either directly engaging in HRM or being exposed to HR-driven environmental activities at their workplaces were selected based on a non-probability purposive sample method. The research had 37 respondents altogether, ensuring diversity in the context of industry, function hierarchy, and company size.

3.3 Instrument Design

A 20-item closed-ended questionnaire was used with questions measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree) to be the primary means of collecting data. There were five primary dimensions to the questionnaire:

1. Green HR Policies
2. Employee Awareness & Engagement
3. Digitalization & Paperless Operations
4. Sustainable Commuting & Remote Work
5. Organizational Environmental Value

Each dimension consisted of four items, each of which was designed to measure a distinct facet of pro-environmental organizational behavior.

3.4 Data Collection Process

Google Forms was employed to disseminate the survey online, while LinkedIn and professional networks were employed to disseminate it. Guarantees of privacy and confidentiality were offered to respondents. Voluntary participation was ensured, and responses were collected over a period of two weeks.

3.5 Data Analysis

With the help of my mentor, I utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze quantitative data.

- A. **Descriptive statistics** (mean and standard deviation) were computed to identify general patterns in the responses.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of HRM and Green Consumerism Survey Responses (N = 37)

Domain	No. of Items	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Range
Green HR Policies	4	4.21	0.51	3.2 – 5.0
Employee Awareness & Engagement	4	4.03	0.58	2.9 – 5.0
Digitalization & Paperless Operations	4	4.18	0.47	3.5 – 5.0

Sustainable Remote Work	Commuting &	4	3.87	0.64	2.6 – 5.0
Organizational Values	Environmental	4	4.11	0.53	3.0 – 5.0

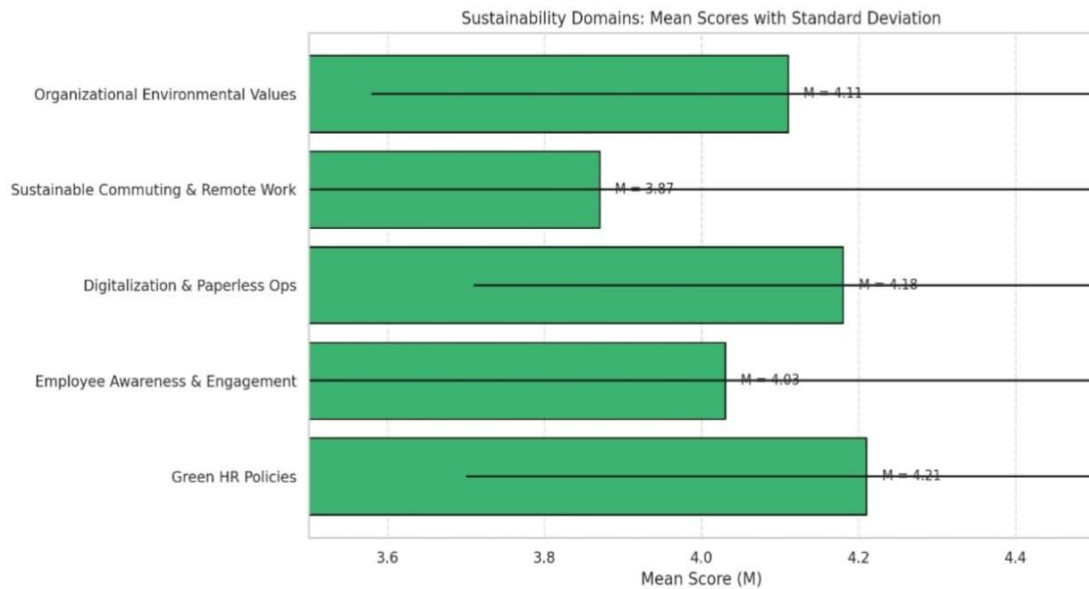


Figure 1. Bar Graph of HRM and Green Consumerism Survey Responses

Interpretation:

1. Green HR Policies (M = 4.21, SD = 0.51): Highest rated domain, indicating strong emphasis and consistent implementation across the board.
2. Digitalization & Paperless Operations (M = 4.18, SD = 0.47): Close second, showing effective use of technology to support sustainability with the lowest variability, suggesting uniform adoption.
3. Organizational Environmental Values (M = 4.11, SD = 0.53): Perceived positively, indicating environmental values are well integrated into the organization's culture.
4. Employee Awareness & Engagement (M = 4.03, SD = 0.58): Slightly lower, pointing to some variability in employee engagement levels with green practices.

5. Sustainable Commuting & Remote Work (M = 3.87, SD = 0.64): Lowest score and highest variability, suggesting inconsistencies in implementation or access to sustainable commuting options.

B. **Pearson Correlation Analysis** was conducted to determine the relationship between employee participation in green consumption and HRM-driven sustainability activities. The following standard thresholds were employed to interpret the correlation coefficients (r-values):

- Small correlation: 0.10 – 0.29
- Medium correlation: 0.30 – 0.49
- Large correlation: 0.50 – 1.0

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis Statistics

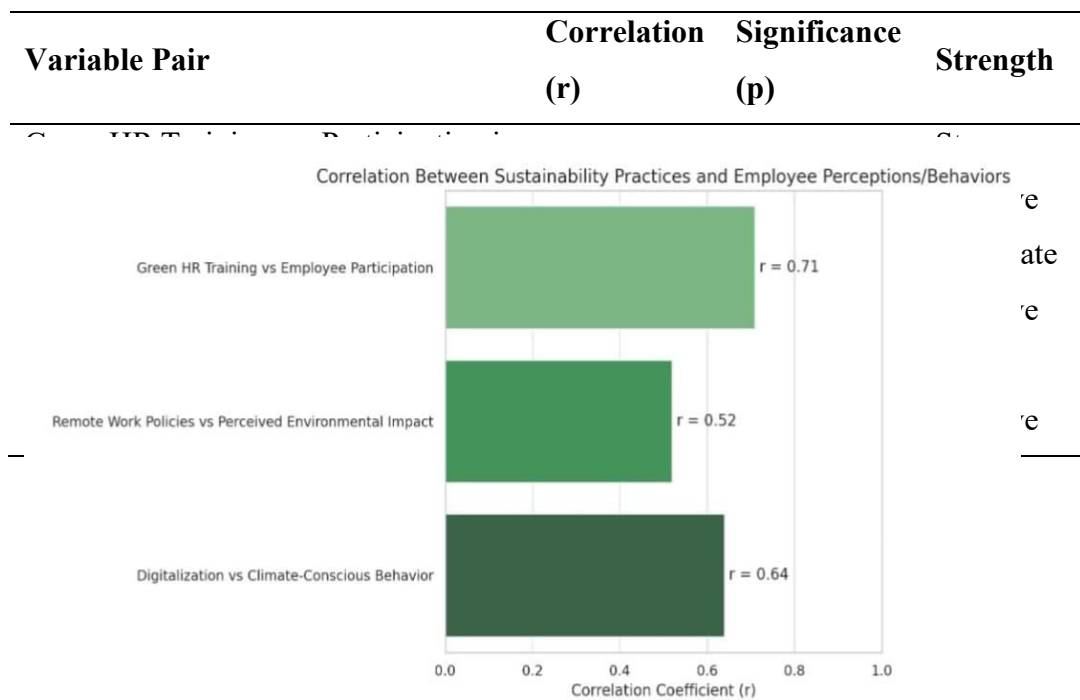


Figure 2. Pearson Correlation Analysis Bar Graph

Interpretation:

1. Green HR Training and Employee Participation in Green Initiatives ($r = 0.71$): This indicates a strong positive correlation. Organizations that invest in green HR training tend to see higher employee participation in sustainability initiatives.
2. Remote Work Policies and Perceived Environmental Impact ($r = 0.52$): This indicates a moderate positive correlation suggests that employees perceive a notable environmental benefit from flexible or remote work options.
3. Digitalization and Climate-Conscious Organizational Behavior ($r = 0.64$): This indicates a strong correlation shows that paperless and digital workflows are closely associated with employees viewing the organization as environmentally conscious.

Findings and Discussions

4.1 Key Findings

The results of the study underscore the strategic importance of human resource management (HRM) in developing green consumerism through building an environmentally conscious corporate culture. Organizations that provide formal environmental education are likely to stimulate active participation in sustainability activities, survey findings indicating strong positive correlation between environmental training and worker involvement in environmental programs. A moderate link was found between human resource management (HRM) compensation systems and long-term behavior change, suggesting that although incentives may induce workers to adopt green behaviors, they may not necessarily persist in their absence of more cultural appropriateness. Flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work policies) and perceptions of contributing to climate action were found to be weakly positively correlated. This shows how human resource management (HRM) contributes to SDG by minimizing carbon footprint through structural adaptability.

4.2 Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals 13 (SDG 13)

The evidence clearly supports the argument that human resource management (HRM) processes are critical to implementing Sustainable Development Goals 13 (SDG 13) within business models. Green commutes, electronic processes, and work-from-home policies have all been successful in

lowering emissions at the workplace. These outcomes align with new United Nation's Development Programs 2023 (UNDP 2023) guidelines that recommend employee-initiated and decentralized measures to climate action in the workplace.

4.3 Discussions

By framing green consumerism as an in-house cultural phenomenon, not a series of separate behavioral outputs, this research contributes to the emergent dialogue on green human resource management. It proposes that:

1. From recruitment through exit interviews, HR departments should incorporate climate awareness into every HR interaction.
2. One needs to tailor leadership modeling, digital transformation, and reward schemes to foster normal everyday eco-friendly behavior.
3. It is only when the human resource management (HRM) shifts from policy attention to behavior enablement that green consumption can be scaled.

4.4 Contradictions

This research differs from past research in many key areas, while simultaneously backing several aspects of prior work (Jackson et al., 2011; Renwick et al., 2013):

1. Employee engagement and empowerment, rather than the presence of policies, are central determinants of sustainable consumer behavior, this research asserts, contradicting Daily and Huang's (2001) argument that environmental outcomes are sufficient with policy-based HRM.
2. Green training, as per Jabbour and de Sousa Jabbour (2008), is merely the foundation. This study, however, establishes that training has a multiplier effect on inducing long-term eco-behavior when integrated with performance-based incentives.
3. In contrast to studies that suggest the embrace of sustainability is top-down (e.g., Ahmad, 2015), what our findings demonstrate is a two-way paradigm where grassroots engagement and leadership vision share equal significance.

Conclusion

Mixed-methods assessment proves that sustainable HR practices, especially eco-centric recruitment, incentive-based participation, flexible work policies, and green training, have a substantial impact on employee behavior toward environmentally friendly workplace practices. This research confirms the metamorphosis capabilities of HRM in encouraging green consumerism and developing an organizational pro-environmental culture, which dovetails with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action) in strong alignment.

The contention that internal HR practices are crucial in triggering sustainable activity was reinforced through the quantitative measures, which illustrated a high degree of correlation among HR training sessions and increased levels of employee participation in environmental initiatives (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). This finding is, however, significantly at odds with earlier study by Jackson et al. (2011), which downgraded the role played by micro-level HR involvement to highlight policy-level sustainability. In addition, this current study counters that of Daily and Huang (2001), who asserted that external pressure from regulation has a higher association with environmental performance than internal HR practices. In accordance with the findings, rational HR policies emphasizing employee involvement can be equally effective at driving environmental improvement. In light of the results, the following suggestions are put forth:

1. Embed Environmental objectives in HR Policy: Businesses ought to include sustainability objectives as part of HRM structures, with workers' KPIs and performance appraisals aligned with environmental objectives.
2. Enhance Green Training Modules: Staff training sessions on a routine basis should include sustainable techniques, with an emphasis on practical experience such as reducing trash, conserving power, and green commuting.
3. Promote Remote Work and Digitalization: In line with SDG 13, HR rules should promote remote and blended work environments that significantly reduce emissions related to transport and digitize working processes to consume fewer resources.
4. Set Feedback Loops and Influence Metrics: Businesses must monitor, evaluate, and make accessible the environmental effect of their HR activities to facilitate transparency and continuous improvement.

5. Establish Incentive-Based Green Programs: Recognition and reward programs should be established to motivate employee involvement in green activities, such as volunteering for green causes, minimizing office waste, or participating in sustainable commuting.

Future research should broaden the scope by including larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal research to assess long-term behavioral change, and industry-specific implementations of green HR practices are some of the ways future research can broaden the scope. Another fertile area for future research is the interplay of technological enablers, leadership philosophies, and cultural values in HRM's facilitation of environmental behavior.

To sum-up, HRM must be rebranded as one of the central building blocks of the sustainability journey of an organization and not merely as an administrative exercise. Organizations can reduce their carbon footprint and create an organizational culture that is sustainability-oriented through the implementation of innovative, participatory, and environmentally friendly HR practices.

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