

GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Human resource management suggests that organizations that want to attract and in the future retain quality human resources for business with the goal of sustainable development must change the prevailing situation, especially now that human resources are consumed rather than developed. At the same time, green management of human resources was recently introduced as a response to changes at the social, economic and especially environmental level of the labor market and employment relations. Green human resources management is understood as an extension of strategic human resources management and represents a new approach to people management with a focus on long-term development, regeneration and renewal of human resources in the context of sustainable business development. However, the attributes of green HRM compared to mainstream HRM are not yet completely clear and precise. The contribution aims to fill this gap by proposing and revealing the characteristics of green human resource management and their impact and influence on business sustainability, as well as the possibilities of integrating green human resource management practices into businesses.

Key words:

green human resource management, sustainable development, business

JEL Classification M12, M14, Q56

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INTRODUCTION

Today's time is characterized by an increased interest in environmental problems. One of the reasons is the growing scientific knowledge of how human activities affect the environment. Worldwide interest in environmentalism resulted from specific treaties on combating climate change, e.g. Kyoto 1997, Bali 2007, Copenhagen 2009 (Victor, 2011) Thanks to the media and social networks, today's public is sufficiently informed about climate change, environmental pollution and other environmental problems that pose serious threats to humanity. This increased interest in environmental problems is manifested in all areas of economic and social life. Many governments have taken measures to reduce the impact of human activities on the environment (changing policies, changing legislation, etc.). The increasing interest in environmental problems is a sign that humanity is beginning to realize the seriousness of these problems and is willing to act for their solution. The number of people involved in environmental activism is increasing. People, as well as business entities, realize that the environment is important for their

own health and economic well-being. Therefore, business entities today are forced to solve environmental problems in addition to economic problems. To achieve success and sustainable development in business, organizations must focus sufficiently not only on economic and financial factors, but also on social and especially environmental ones (Daily et al., 2007). These initiatives are proof that the world is starting to move towards a more sustainable future. The concept of sustainable development in the use of natural resources and obtaining benefits from these resources is basically maintaining a balance between strengthening economic, social and environmental factors in space and time. The purpose of this balance is to protect our natural resources for us and for our future generations. Sustainability is something that improves the quality of human life while allowing natural systems to maintain their functions for the future. It is the ability of something to continue to exist over a long period of time. Sustainability is important because it ensures that we will have the ability to use natural resources well into the future. For a business, this means that it should conduct its

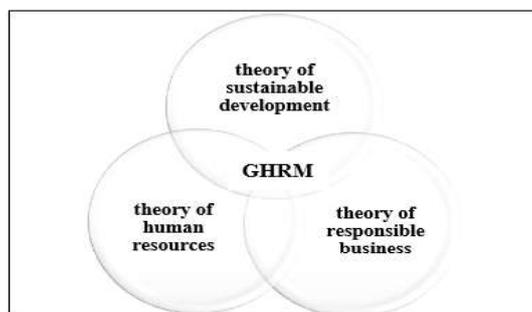
business in such a way as to minimize its impact on the environment, promote social justice and contribute to economic development. However, in order for the company to be able to maintain and develop environmental sustainability, it must develop pro-environmental skills and behavior of its employees. In every company, employees play an important role in achieving the company's goals, not only in the economic but also in the ecological field. Businesses around the world are increasingly implementing various pro-environmental initiatives. However, the success of these initiatives implemented at the company level largely depends on the pro-environmental behavior of the company's employees. As such, employee behavior is considered an important factor contributing to corporate environmental performance (Blok et al., 2015) and it also has an impact on the natural environment, financial performance of the business, employee job satisfaction, and also contributes to sustainable business development.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Green human resource management is a new and rapidly developing trend in human resource

management that focuses on the integration of environmental concepts into all human resource management processes (Mishra, 2017). In the beginning, some scholars linked human resource management with environmental management and called it "ecological human resource management" or "environmental human resource management" (Reynwick, et al., 2013). However, the term "green human resource management (GHRM)" is already in use today. The goal of GHRM is to achieve the sustainability of the organization through its employees. Green management of human resources is based on three theoretical foundations, namely the theory of sustainable development, which claims that the development of society should be based on a balance between economic, social and environmental aspects, and the theory of responsible business, which claims that companies should they had to account for their impacts on society and the environment and also from the human resource theory which states that people are the most important resource of any organization. (picture no. 1), are the basis of every successful business.

Fig. 1: Three basic theoretical foundations of GHRM



Source: own processing

So what can be imagined under the green management of human resources management? How to understand this new concept of working with human resources in the company? Green human resource management can be defined as a set of activities and policies that aim to reduce the environmental impact of the organization through its employees, support the sustainable development of the organization and its employees, and also increase employee

engagement and satisfaction. Thus, GHRM is the use of human resource management policies to promote the sustainable use of resources in businesses and to promote environmental stewardship, which further increases employee morale and satisfaction (Mampra, 2013). According to other authors, GHRM is about the use of such policies, philosophies and practices of human resource management in a company, which aim to promote the sustainable use of

company resources while at the same time trying to thwart any unwanted damage resulting from environmental problems in companies (Ren et al., 2018). Green human resource management is a systematic and planned alignment of typical human resource management practices with the environmental goals of the organization (Jabbour, 2013). Thus, the question arises as to how to use GHRM tools to achieve sustainability in the company. GHRM includes five dimensions: green recruitment and selection, green training, green performance management and development, green compensation and motivation, green engagement.

GOAL AND METHODOLOGY

The growing interest in this topic is evident in foreign professional publications, compared to domestic sources. It is valuable to examine the scientific interest in the field of GHRM in the context of sustainable development. Logically speaking, it is an examination of possible research gaps. It is important to know what has been researched on this topic, so that subsequent logical reasoning reveals opportunities for future research, and at the same time, so that specific research results can also be applied in practice. The aim of our contribution is, based on the previous analysis of data from the literature, to explain the benefits from how individual dimensions of GHRM can be integrated in companies in the context of their efforts for sustainable business development. This work is theoretical. In the first phase of the survey, relevant data from the literature were collected. Using selected keywords, articles from the Web of Science, Scopus, or Google Scholar databases were collected through an online search. The keywords for the search were chosen as follows: sustainability, sustainable development, GHRM, green human resource management practices. After reading the abstracts of the selected articles, irrelevant articles were removed. In the remaining articles, we have explored the "how" and "what" has already been explored in relation to the objective of our paper. Thus, we have examined the research methodology, research results, gaps and research limitations in detail in the articles. On the basis of these facts, we were subsequently able to point out the possible positive benefits or intricacies of the integration

of green human resources management procedures for business entities in the context of sustainable development.

FINDINGS

When organizations set their economic and environmental goals in the context of sustainable development, they must make sure that there is consistency between the company's strategy and the company's human resource development strategy (Ren et al., 2018). It is necessary to understand the nature of environmental behavior at the individual level. The consequence of this was the formation of GHRM, which links environmental management systems and human resource management systems in the company. (Renwick et al., 2013). Given these facts, we decided to examine the integration of the GHRM literature with sustainable business development. We were looking for the benefits of applying green human resources management tools in the company. We found that studies report that GHRM includes five elementary dimensions within which different kinds of green HR tools are applied depending on the specific strategies and goals of businesses. Of course, the integration of these green human resource management practices brings benefits to the business:

- more efficient use of human resources,
- the possibility of standardization of human resource management processes,
- contributes to increased flexibility and adaptability in human resources management,
- can positively improve communication and cooperation
- can contribute to cost reduction,
- better management of talents as key resources for the company,
- reducing risks, improving competition, etc.

Green recruitment and selection of employees

The primary task of this area of GHRM is to attract quality employees to the company. We can state that at present, with the existing current situation on the labor market in Slovakia, it is a key challenge for the field of human resources in the "war for talents". Research shows that some employers, especially large multinational companies (Ehnert, 2009), adopt GHRM practices as a form of "employer branding" in

order to increase their attractiveness on the labor market and thereby attract high-quality, qualified, talented applicants. The environmental reputation and image of the organization are often an important criterion for job applicants. Of course, this is also reflected in the company's recruitment activities, where recruiters try to provide much more information and details about their environmental activities. The recruitment websites of major European employers provide considerable detail about the environmental activities of the organization (Ehnert, 2009). Many studies and surveys conducted in the USA, the UK, Japan and other countries agree that if a company has a good environmental reputation, it is able to attract quality employees (Behrend, et al., 2009, Backhaus et al., 2002, Ehnert, 2009). So, within the framework of GHRM, the traditional functions of recruitment and selection in the organization, which are primarily focused only on selecting a suitable candidate who meets the requirements of the job, are complemented by other aspects of recruitment and selection that focus on the environmental skills and knowledge of the candidates (Ahmad, 2015, Andjarwati et al., 2019, Nisar et al., 2021, Renwick et al., 2013). Among the main attributes of ecological recruitment and selection within the framework of GHRM, we can include, for example:

- hiring candidates with environmental knowledge and awareness (Jabbour, 2011; Ahmad, 2015; Masri and Jaaron, 2017; Tang et al., 2018),
- building a green brand to attract ecological employees (Ren et al., 2018); prioritizing candidates who choose green criteria to shortlist organizations (Ren et al., 2018),
- familiarizing candidates with the environmental goals of organizations during the recruitment process (Mandip, 2012; Renwick et al., 2013); the use of online tools such as video conferencing in recruitment (Nasruddin, 2015; Masri and Jaaron, 2017).

Green employee training

Training, education of employees is generally perceived in the literature as a key competence of GHRM. Why? Because training is a means to

help employees acquire the necessary skills that help improve their knowledge and help them be innovative. However, with growing concerns about the environment, organizations are more inclined to provide environmental training to their employees. Green trainings are mainly aimed at increasing employees' awareness of the impact of their organization's activities on the environment. Green training leads to employees being equipped with key skills and data that allow increasing the level of "eco-literacy" and environmental expertise in the company (Roy, Therin, 2008). Green training encourages employees to acquire certain skills to address the environmental problems of organizations and focus on environmental improvements, thereby meeting the goals of the organization (Jabbour, 2011; Tang et al., 2018). Green training is the most significant method through which GHRM can achieve the environmental goals of organizations and help the organization move towards more sustainable development (Teixeira et al., 2016; Jabbour, 2013). Well-trained and environmentally conscious front-line employees are ideally placed to identify and reduce waste, as they are closest to it, and this is naturally associated with lower costs. The main attributes of green education and employee development are, for example:

- providing all training materials online to reduce paper costs (Masri and Jaaron, 2017),
- special training for waste management - waste management and recycling (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2013),
- involvement of employees in solving environmental problems,
- job rotation within ecological tasks (Arulrajah et al., 2016).

Green performance management and employee development

Green performance management and company employee development means integrating environmental sustainability and social responsibility into performance management processes. This approach reflects the fact that businesses have a responsibility to operate in an environmentally conscious and socially responsible manner. Here are some ways to incorporate green performance management into evaluating and improving employee performance:

- determine key performance indicators that measure employees' contribution to sustainability, e.g. energy savings, waste reduction, waste reduction or participation in volunteer activities,
- include environmental or sustainability-related goals in employee performance goals, e.g. reducing the consumption of resources, minimizing waste or implementing sustainable practices in the performance of their work,
- integrate environmental metrics into the employee performance evaluation process, e.g. evaluate the impact of employee actions on the company's carbon footprint, energy consumption or other relevant environmental factors,
- encourage employees to come up with eco-innovative ideas to improve the company's environmental behavior.

Green remuneration and motivation of employees

The green reward and reward system is a means of motivating employees to work towards the organization's environmental goals through financial and non-financial rewards. It is also an attempt to prevent talented employees from leaving the organization and also to attract new employees who know green practices (Jabbour et al., 2008, Mandip, 2012). Modern organizations adopt the practice of strategically rewarding employees who work to achieve the organization's environmental goals (Ahmad, 2015). Constantly rewarding employees for their eco-initiatives keeps them motivated and oriented towards environmental practices (Daily and Huang, 2001, Renwick et al., 2013). Research also suggests that green performance appraisal and compensation play a vital role in motivating employees to commit to green behavior in the workplace (Alabdullah et al., 2019, Roscoe et al., 2019, Rasool et al., 2019), which also it also helps to improve the economic performance of the organization and contributes to sustainable development. In any case, researchers agree that the right combination of monetary and non-monetary rewards is highly effective in motivating employees. While it would be more appropriate to motivate with non-financial rewards through green remuneration such as praise, recognition or other non-financial

rewards such as sustainable travel - green travel benefits for employees (Ramus, 2001, Renwick et al., 2013, Jabbar and Abid, 2014, Ren et al. , 2018), ecological tax incentives (Ramus, 2001, Jabbour et al., 2008, Arulrajah et al., 2016, Tang et al., 2018), support of volunteer activities and projects, use of less polluting vehicle fleet (Ahmad, S. 2015) and so on. And ultimately, the integration of green behavior into corporate reward and incentive systems, e.g. green profit sharing, green employee of the month/year and a lump sum based on ecological performance will also improve employees' perception of the fairness of these systems. (Ababneh, 2021).

Green involvement of employees

Involvement of employees in the development of environmental initiatives and decision-making on environmental goals will support their involvement in environmental initiatives. Establishing two-way communication that emphasizes the need to advance the organization's environmental performance will increase employees' awareness of how important their contribution is (Jabbour et al., 2013; Renwick et al., 2013). Furthermore, creating opportunities for employees to participate and collaborate in setting environmental activities and goals will promote their psychological and emotional attachment to and identification with these goals (Pinzone et al., 2016; Roscoe et al., 2019). Also, the establishment of formal and informal communication channels that clarify the green values and intentions of the organization and support the involvement of employees in decision-making on environmental issues will stimulate employees to participate more actively in environmental initiatives and encourage them to exchange knowledge with colleagues, adopt eco-initiatives and adopted innovative methods in solving various environmental problems. Company employees strive to achieve environmental goals when they positively assess and perceive the meaningfulness between the performance of their task and these well-defined goals (Grobelna, 2019). Active participation of employees in decision-making on environmental issues will, among other things, strengthen their emotional attachment to organizational values and principles. Thus, employees exert a high level of enthusiasm and energy in dealing with

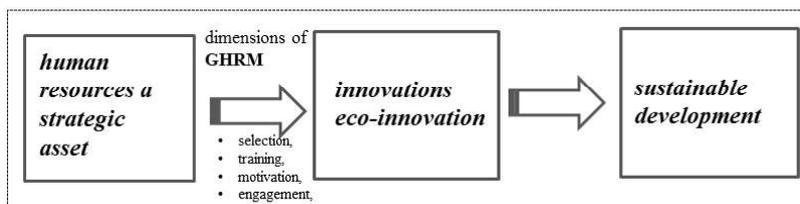
sustainability-related matters (Pinzone et al., 2016).

DISCUSSION

Business sustainability is defined as a business strategy that drives long-term growth and profitability of a company by mandating the inclusion of environmental and social issues in the business model (Niță and Ștefea, 2014). Business sustainability based on achieving a balance between economic, environmental and social business activities is the goal of the overall strategy of socially responsible business. Green human resource management is characterized by trying to align typical human resource management practices with the environmental goals of organizations. (Jabbour, 2013). So here we have an intersection where GHRM meets sustainability in organizations as green HRM practices that deal with

environmental aspects seep into CSR strategies through HRM. However, many questions arise as to how big this penetration should be and to what extent the individual dimensions of GHRM can support the sustainable development of business, etc. Then, of course, there is a need to examine the impact of green human resource management practices on the performance dimensions of sustainability within CSR strategies. According to the literature, green human resource management is key to achieving sustainability programs and helps gain competitive advantage. However, activities with a green focus in practice are challenging because they require implementing systemic changes, which of course requires time and money. The implementation of these systemic measures helps organizations in adopting green human resource management practices, which become a unique, irreplaceable and valuable resource.

Fig. 2: Interrelationship between human resources, innovation and sustainable development.



Source: own processing

So what are the benefits of GHRM for organizations that decide to implement green human resource management practices in relation to sustainable development? The benefit is quality (qualified, talented, motivated...) employees with added value in the form of pro-environmental behavior. Qualified employees are the bearers of new innovative ideas, which are an added value for the company, and this is of course reflected in economic results. And what is the prerequisite for sustainable development in a company in the context of socially responsible business? They are innovations, more precisely eco-innovations. Why? Because the application of innovation within the entire organization can achieve sustainability, social responsibility, competitive advantage and that only under the assumption of

continuous learning and development (Haden et al., 2009). And we are dealing with the human resources of the company, because the basis of innovation is an idea, an idea, and its bearer is an employee. And hence the task for GHRM to acquire employees who have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to the creation and implementation of ideas and innovations. Many studies have found that GHRM positively affects individual environmental behavior, however, it remains difficult to assess which specific GHRM practices have the ability to influence employees' environmental behavior, which may be the subject of further investigation. For example, employees engage in environmental initiatives when they receive well-designed training programs that support the organization's culture

and sustainability goals and that improve employees' ability to solve environmental issues (Roscoe et al., 2019). This means for the company that it is therefore necessary to design and compile quality training programs that address a wide range of environmental issues (e.g. emission reduction, energy and water consumption, waste management, green purchasing procedures and options...). When creating training programs, GHRMs also need to keep in mind that individual employees may suffer from being hindered by emotional and cognitive job demands due to a lack of knowledge and awareness. Therefore, organizing well-designed GHRM trainings will contribute to enhancing the capabilities and environmental skills of employees and creating a good work environment that supports performance. And as it was already mentioned above, people are the bearers and creators of innovations as a source of future development (sustainable development), so the dimension of recruitment and selection of employees is one of the key tasks of GHRM in organizations. Many studies have confirmed that ultimately, hiring employees who have knowledge, experience, and environmental values and attitudes that are consistent with the organization's environmental policy, systems, values, and goals are most likely to engage in the organization's environmental initiatives and create eco-innovations. (Dumont et al., 2017). But the tasks of GHRM do not end at the moment of selecting a suitable employee and training him. It is necessary to continue working with employees in the company. And here a new space opens for GHRM, where it is necessary to use all previous knowledge and results of studies on how to motivate employees and how to reward them fairly. Because for employees, in many cases, the issue of remuneration and motivation is a key element that decides whether to stay at work or not. Thus, a properly designed and implemented green reward system that employees perceive as fair can motivate employees to improve their performance and job satisfaction, and also motivate them to engage in sustainable and environmentally friendly behavior in and out of the work environment. It is important that organizations have a balanced approach to compensation, and that green

compensation programs take into account the individual needs and preferences of employees. Some companies implement green human resource management practices that are aimed at supporting sustainable behavior and environmental initiatives in the corporate environment as part of their corporate social responsibility and thereby promote environmentally sustainable values. So, based on the studied materials, we can say that all dimensions of GHRM contribute to the development of the organization in the context of the principles of sustainability and social responsibility of business, even if there are still many unanswered questions that will need to be answered in the future through further studies.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the paper was to point out that GHRM is a solid part of the organization that contributes to increasing performance in the area of sustainability and how the individual dimensions of GHRM are able to contribute to the sustainable development of the company in the case of their integration in the company. Businesses should be able to involve the workforce in forming connections between pro-environmental practices and pro-environmental impacts. Thus, the role of the green HRM process can be concluded that, as part of socially responsible business management, it is a resource that tends to assist organizations in adopting green HRM practices that act as an organization's ability to contribute to the growth of sustainable development. And in conclusion, we can also state that the integration of green human resource management practices can have a significant impact on the economic performance of the company, the growth of the company's competitiveness in a globalized environment.

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