

Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) Practice Advocacy in Organizations: A Strategic Necessity for a New Global Climate Change Management and Environmental Sustainability

¹Wokoma, Harcourt Opubo & ²Adias Lolo Teddy

¹Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences,
Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State Nigeria.

²Business Administration and Management, Bayelsa State Polytechnic

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Abstract

With the fast-growing threat of climate change and other divergent environmental challenges which has taken its toll in the world, there is global intentional activism to mitigate the endemic threat ravaging the world leading to respective ecological awareness and advocacies for environmental sustainability. This has culminated into various strategic responses given rise to Green Human Resources Management Practice Advocacy by scholars across the globe in various fields as a strategic necessity for the new global climate change management and environmental sustainability approach. It was found out that the intentional practice by organizations to contribute to global environmental sustainability is rather skeletal. In an effort to vent this advocacy, this paper adopted green economic theory and the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory after exploring extent literatures (secondary data) to further strengthen the current global drive to combating climate change through a conscious integration of environmentally friendly activities into all organizational functions and practices.

Keywords: *Green Human Resource Management Practice (GHRMP); Climate change; Climate change management; Environmental sustainability; Green economic theory; Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory*

Corresponding Author:

Wokoma, Harcourt Opubo

Background to the Study

Organizations operate within the confines of an environment especially on the earth realm. These operations are geared towards annexing the natural resources embedded by nature for the supposed wellbeing of humanity. These activities over the years have impacted the ecosystem hence the lives of those who dwell in it. It is imperative to bring to the fore that the operational activities of organizations are predicted on the knowledge and orientation at the disposal of the human resource factor per time. And this overtime becomes the inherent regular practices that frames and shapes the behavioral dispositions of employees as they regularly interact with the environment and other organizational constituencies.

The regular interaction between human and environment by extension the organization and the environment has been adjudged parasitic in literature. Humans through the barrels of human resource practices in the organizations has continually exploited the environment leading to the unsustainable utilization of resources. The resultant outcomes is the various environmental challenges we face today and prominent among them is climate change. This has snowballed into divergent ecological predicaments. However, this dynamism has also triggered various advocacies in various fields of study to create this balance between organizational activities and environmental impact.

With the rising awareness and advocacies on the environment, organizations are formulating and designing regulations, environmentally friendly strategies, green policies etc. to transform their modus operandi in a rather environmentally friendly manner (Pr Hossari Hosna & Elfahli Kaoutar, 2022). This has risen to Green Human Resource Management as a proactive measure to managing the environmental system (Hossari & Kaoutar, 2022; Jahan & Mamin Ullah, 2016; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Ren & AI (2018) posits that GHRM captures the formulation and execution of Human Resource Management Practices, Philosophies and Policies to foster targeted organizational objectives as it relates to the environment, enhancing attitudinal disposition of employees for a behavioural change to improve environmental performance.

Irrespective of the fact that researchers on GHRM is becoming prominent (Young et al., 2019), the level of attention given to GHRMP and its effectiveness in environmental management has been infinitesimal, but until 2008 when it as given the categorization of environmental management (Tamunomiebi & Mezeh, 2022; Renwick et al., 2008; Delaney & Huselid, 2006).

After exploring literature, it was found out that the advocacy on GHRM practice to contribute in curbing climate change and environmental sustainability is rather skeletal especially in Africa which forms the primacy of this paper. It is on this premise that this paper deals with Green Human Resource Practice Advocacy in Organizations as a strategic necessity for managing global climate crisis and environmental sustainability. In this paper, some scholarly details on the lexical complexities were discussed bringing to the fore the significance green practices in organizations to make the interface between the organization and the environment a symbiotic and a balanced one.

Objective of the Study

The major objective of this paper is to place Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) Practice advocacy in organizations, a strategic necessity for a new global climate change management and environmental sustainability. This paper is set out to drive the following specific objective.

1. To understand the concept of Green Human Resource Management Practice, Environmental Sustainability and other attendant concept like climate change, climate management etc.
2. To enhance literature on the heightened advocacy of GHRM Practices to mitigate climate change and other environmental challenges.
3. To recommend the strategy to develop an effective advocacy of GHRM Practices in organizations to improve climate management and mitigate environmental challenges.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Green Economic Theory

The coinage of the terminology “Green Economy” was first brought to bear in 1989 by the British government which encompasses an integration of ecological concern, economies and the market as a social system that should imbibe environmental and social goals (Tamunomiebi & Mezeh, 2022). From literary dispositions, theory of green economy covers a wide range of areas involving the matrimony between the environment and the human factor. Economists in the sphere of greening contend that decisions bothering on the economy should be predicated in some sort on the environment as ecological services and natural capital have some monetary gains. This goes to explain the fact that the theory of green economy is geared towards reducing environmental challenges and ecological bottlenecks while chasing far reaching developmental strides that does not endanger the ecosystem. This is in line with the advocacy of GHRM practices that can mitigate environmental challenges and cubing or managing climate change.

The AMO Theory

This is otherwise known as Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory. This makes this theory to stand on a tripod. Hassari & Elfahli (2022) say that AMO is a model that advocates the enhancement of employee skills through green training and development (Ability), encourage and propel employees to embrace green behavioural tendencies through green rewards and performance appraisal (Motivation) and on the last leg of the tripod get the involvement of employees in the process of environment management which gives them the avenue to contribute and partake in green activities in the organization (Opportunity). As part of the green advocacy for climate mitigation, this theory is relevant as employees are granted the opportunity and capacity to drive the green agenda.

Statement of the Problem

Biodiversity issues and ecological imbalances are taking the center stage of today's world (Aggarwal & Sharma, 2015). Consequently, the topical issues for discussion in recent times

has been on climate change, Carbon credit, global warming, and pollutions of all sorts which is an outcome of the excessive utilization of resources from the environment by organic atoms has mounting an undue pressure on the earth endangering the survival of current and future generations. This has skyrocketed the awareness quotients of organizations more socially responsive to the society especially where they get their resources from. This has given rise to the HR department of organizations today to imbibe the integration of green practices driven by policies that contributes in the development of a culture of sustainability.

Tamunomiebi & Mezeh (2022) posits that organizations lay emphasis on the encouragement of employee eco-friendliness with respect to more usage of LED lights, keeping minimum lighting when it is not in use switching off appliances and online distribution and sharing of training /self-learning materials.

This goes to explain the fact that the issue of greening the organization for sustainability is the absolute responsibility of all. Researchers and scholars have argued that the main driver of environmental sustainability in an organization is the HR department whose function should be in tandem with policies and practices of sustainable goals. On the contrary, if it goes the flipside of the coin, the goals of environmental sustainability will not be achieved. This gives the premise for this advocacy as presented on this paper.

Conceptual Review

The section reviewed the following: Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Green Human Resource Management Practices (GHRMP), Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change, and Climate Management.

Green

According to Aggarwal & Sharma (2015), the colour “green” is a reflection of life, happiness, growth, friendliness and in recent time fashion. According to the Thesaurus (New Oxford) 2000 it stands for several meanings like eco-friendliness, verdant, unripe, unseasoned, naïve and inexperienced. With respect to organizational policy formulation and strategies, they are increasingly understanding the necessity and reason to go green. That is the reason Aggarwal and Sharma (2015) posits that organizational greening has to do with protecting the natural resources, nurturing the natural ecosystem, detracting the contamination of the atmosphere that stands to engender greenery.

Green HRM

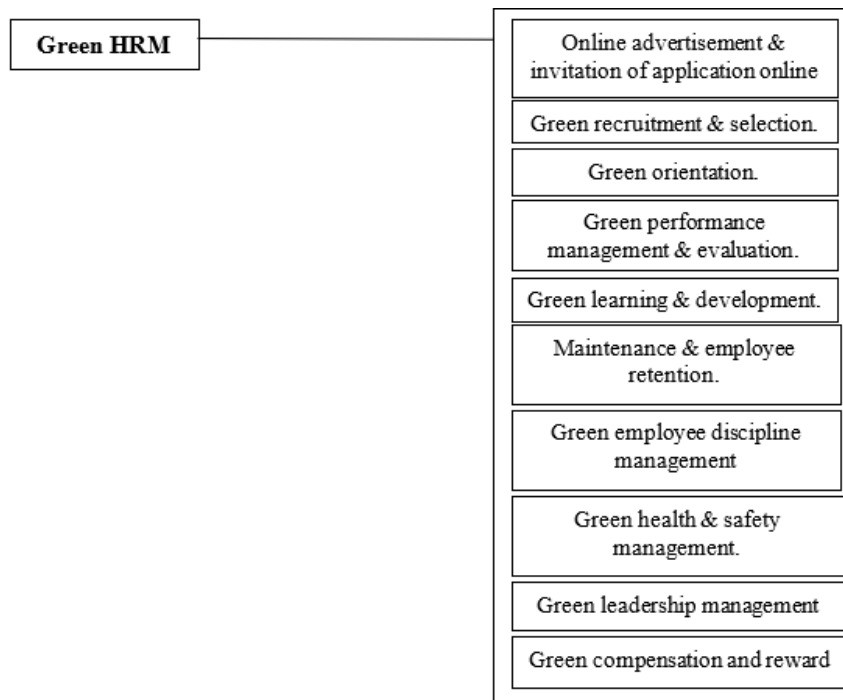
Hossari & Elfahli (2022) carried out an extensive chronicle of scholarly definition of Green HRM as shown on the adopted table below.

Aggarwal & Sharma (2015) in addressing what “Green or greening” means gave four meanings in the context of employee management in the workplace and Human Resource Management. These four meanings they stipulated are: Preservation of the natural environment, conservation of the natural environment, avoidance or minimization of environmental pollution and generation of gardens and looking like natural places. They

further elucidate that employees are expected to perform four roles so has become a green employee, these are being a preservationist, conservationist, non-polluter and maker.

Aggarwal & Sharma (2015) posits that GHRM can be seen from the spectacle of all responsibilities that are associated with the evolution, propagation and pursuit of a system that is focused at making the human resource of an organization activated towards environmental awareness in both their private and professional dispositions. They went further to elucidate that GHRM has to do with spelling out awareness strategies of green practices so as to propagate and heighten sustainable commercial activities which goes a long way to helping organizational ecofriendly disposition. Green HRM includes facets: environment conducive HR practices and nurturing of knowledge capital (Aggarwal & Sharma, 2015:64).

Shreevamshi et al. (2022) gave the following GHRM frame work as adopted from Ren et al. (2020).



Source: Shreevamshi et al., 2022 as adopted from Ren et al., 2020.

The Necessity for Green HRM

According to Arulrajah & Opatha (2016) after reviewing the need for GHRM by organizations from over fifteen scholarly works came to a conclusion that organizations engage in the practice of GHRM which makes employees green fostering the reduction or elimination of waste and a reduction of cost. Also, they tend to innovate environmentally, friendly goods or services” (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016:155). Looking at the need so reviewed they further posits that organization will enjoy increases in productivity, reputation, talent

acquisition, employee retention, customer loyalty and market expansion which they shall be consequential effects will reflect on enhancing competitiveness of organizations.

Green Human Resources Management Practices (GHRMP)

GHRMP can be defined as the utilization of HR rules to strengthen the sustainable utility resources to ascertain environmental sustainability (Sobaih, 2020). GHRMP is the process of utilizing employees in the organization so as to actualize the goals of the organization, with intentional efforts of making that process add values to the sustenance of the environment.

Mwita, (2019) and Uddi & Islam (2015), in their perspective, opine that GHRMP is HRM policies and practices that is geared towards environmental friendliness that helps organizations to actualize monetary goals through the barrel of environmental branding and on the flip side of the coin shield the environment from adverse impacts that may arise from the said policies and practices. Mowaiye et al. (2022) in their study measured GHRMP with green employee performance management, green disciplinary management and green employee relations. Hossari & Elfahli (2022) highlighted thirteen GHRMP that can be attributed to environmental friendliness after reviewing 120 articles which are: Green recruitment and selection, green induction, green training and development, green compensation and rewards, green empowerment and involvement, green performance appraisal, green job analysis, green discipline management, green culture management, green health and safety management, green HRM procedures, green human resource planning and the role of green unions.

Neeraja & Dhananjara (2018) in their study on GHRMP with respect to present day advocacy posits that GHRMP has the following scenario:

- a) Paperless office
- b) Turnoff lights, and other work equipment and appliances not in use especially on weekends
- c) Communication via mail
- d) Electronic filing
- e) Encourage the use of lap tops in place of desktops
- f) Waste management
- g) Online recruitment
- h) Video conference meeting
- i) Paperless training
- j) Green performance management
- k) Carpooling
- l) Job sharing.

Environmental Sustainability

The physical environment is greatly affected and impacted by innovative and emerging system – ecological systems, economic and societies (Tamunomiebi & Mezeh, 2022). They went ahead to elucidate the fact that there is a wide range of activities associated with environmental sustainability such as waste management, water conservation, recycling, energy conservation etc.

Adjei-Bamfo et al. (2019) posits that resource depletion, such as water, energy and other nonrenewable resource beckons for environmental attention. Environmental sustainability therefore has to do with concerted efforts by all stakeholders in the organization, the society to ensure that activities and operations does not negatively impact on the environment. This will help to have an enduring place for future generations.

Climate Change

The climate as a system is an embodiment of air, sea, land, atmosphere, cryosphere, land surface elements and ocean and all these get involve in an interaction (Alkintas, 2023). Houghton et al. (1997) argue that this interaction of the elements bring about energy exchange which provides about the formation of the climate system of the earth.

Aksay et al. (2005) in examining the concept of climate change generally defined climate change as the creation of a greenhouse effect occasioned by radiation from the sun wave impacting the earth and the greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere hitting the earth. However, in 1992 in a convention on climate change by the United nation, climate change was arguably defined from the perspective of change in climate from the activities of human beings that directly or indirectly erode or disrupt the constituents of the global atmosphere. Gidden (2013) opine those scientific studies and analysis is a rise in global temperature as the glacier layers has eroded by 3% since 1900s compared to studies conducted in 1970s.

Bosoglu (2014) additionally elucidate that environment pollution from climate change is caused by insufficiency of resources, increasing energy consumption, the rate of population growth and speedy growth strategies of countries globally. Altintas (2023) further posits that the concentration on constant growth of business activities for profitability affects climate change. This goes to say that “commercial activities have a great impact on climate change” (Kaya, 2023:65). Hence the advocacy on GHRMP.

Lean & Rind (2008) unraveled the fact that climate change is driven by two main effects – manmade and naturally induced climate change. Kadioglu (2019) attributes the change in energy level overtime, the earth orbital differentiation, the impact of continental drifts, the evolution of the plates and volcanic eruptions to natural induced climate change. On the other hand, Kabatt & White (2007) attributes increase in the use of fossil fuels with the graduating industrial revolutions as human induced emits six types of greenhouse gasses that impacts on climate change. Sen (2022) reintrate that technological innovation developed by humans indirectly affect climate change.

Altintas (2023) posits that although natural origin of climate change is not predictable that of human which has been known can be prevented. Akbulut and Kaya (2020) reinforce that the solution of climate change is within the reach of man. They went further to enforce the fact that the challenge of climate change has to be accepted as a disaster and be treated with such urgency to avoid future disaster.

Arulrajah (2014) opine that climate change occasioned by global warming has posed and raised a red flag to organizations, institutions, the public and even governments across the world. The big question is, what is the way forward and how can the environment be better managed by contribution from organization, since they also contribute to the degradation of the environment?

Climate Change Management

Stoddard et al. (2021) as cited in McPherson & Clarke (2024) on the issue of climate management made it explicit that there is an elusive disposition on the tangible impact in sphere of climate change mitigation by the general leaderships across the board.

In the past decades, the continuous lack of appreciable advancement in mitigating climate change and management has further threatened climate related predicaments putting dominant risk to lives on earth (Stoddard et al., 2021; Kinley et al., 2021; Calvin et al., 2023).

Harker et al. (2017) looks at climate management as the conscious action which comprises efforts geared towards alleviation and acclimating to the effects of anthropogenic global warming, with the focus on ameliorating disturbances occasioned by climate change. McPherson et al. (2024) in citing Calvin et al., posits that abysmal decarbonization to curb the emission greenhouse gas is aimed at preventing global warming that may exceed 1.5-2 degrees in the future. McPherson further advocates the fact that climate change management has to focus on empowering leadership so as foster the drive in policies and implementation on climate change.

Relationship between GHRMP, Climate Change Management and Environmental Sustainability

Altintas (2023) posits that organizations and businesses engaging in practices in line with green management philosophy has a significant impact on climate change. Hawken (1993) expressed the prominence of environmental awareness as the third way for sustainability. Altintas (2023) in considering the relationship between green management practices, greenhouse gasses which impact on climate change can be reduced through green management practices. These practices can only be enforced by GHR in the organization.

Conclusion

GHRMP in organizations is geared towards minimizing the negative impact on the environment in a sustainable way through her green policies and functions.

Although climate change is endangering the world partly caused by man which has accumulated greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, it can be reduced by man. It is obviously shown from the various reviews on GHRMP that, it has all it takes to manage the global climate and curb environmental challenges.

Recommendations

- i. GHRMP in all organizations should be given prominence as it will go a long way to contributing a substantial quota to fighting climate change and environmental sustainability.

- ii. A synergy between businesses and the environment should be fostered through approaches such as investment in renewable energy sources, energy serving, waste minimization, training and enlightenment on environmental issues.
- iii. While organization seek to carry out their business activities, the green management approach to the environment should be strengthen like promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, efficient use of forest and water resources, recycling practices which reduces the negative impact on climate change.
- iv. Environmental consciousness on innovative technologies on green practices should be encouraged in the organization to effectively manage climate change.
- v. Government should embrace and formulate policies that are geared toward greening the environment of businesses like compulsory planting trees and discourage cutting down trees.

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