

## EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA'S BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

<sup>1</sup>OLAYEMI, O. O., <sup>2</sup>OKONJI, P. S. & <sup>3</sup>OLUSI-SHOMOYE, A. M.

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Business Administration,

University of Lagos.

[oolayemi@unilag.edu.ng](mailto:oolayemi@unilag.edu.ng)

### *Abstract*

*This research seeks to evaluate the state of art as far as environmental sustainability is concerned among businesses in Nigeria. The objectives of this study are to ascertain the awareness, acceptability and prospect of environmental sustainability practices in Nigeria. Questionnaires were distributed to human resource personnel of various organisations using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Two hundred and two questionnaires were used for the analysis. SPSS frequencies was employed to process the data. Research hypotheses were developed in alternate form and the result supported the hypotheses. The investigation revealed that prospect of green human resource management (GHRM) could have a positive potential across all facets of organization development if fully adopted, there is little or obscure knowledge of GHRM; hence instigating need for further sensitization on the benefit of GHRM. It is recommended that organisations should adopt environmental friendly practices in order to reap the benefit of environmental protection which contributes in furtherance to the benefit of organizational stakeholders thereby ensuring sustained organizational performance.*

**Keywords:** Environment, sustainability, business ecosystem, green human resource, organizational performance.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Human activities and misuse of the natural environment has constantly led to the degradation and pollution of the natural environment. This constant degradation of the natural environment birth environmental sustainability. Sustainable development requires technology that ensures the maximization of human wellbeing for present generation but does not lead to a reduction in potential wellbeing (Okonkwo, 2019). Institutionalising sustainable development may mean removing factors that are responsible for depletion of natural resource and degradation of the environment.

Awareness has been given to the importance of green practices in ensuring environmental sustainability. Nevertheless, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) as a business approach is growing strongly in green movement in tandem with other trends such as green finance, green banking and green spaces; it has become famous because of its effect on the sustainability of businesses (Asian Institute of Finance, 2017). GHRM is a novel concept which is practiced in the field of human resource aimed at ensuring minimal use of paper based work which could constitute environmental threats (Chowdhury, 2019). GHRM is also concerned with adjusting employees to environmental friendly actions and results in ways that lead to organizational appropriateness from an environmental perspective (Shaban,

2019).

The concept of GHRM could not only bring fast moving services and good corporate reputation to organisations but it could also aid a better living world with less environmental pollution. According to Pallavi and Bhanu, (2016) Green HRM include environmentally friendly human resource implementation and efficient resources utilisation, less wastage, better work life balance as well as lower employee turnover which would allow companies to reduce carbon footprints of workers through green HRM management practices.

With shifting lifestyle, our day to day activities impact the environment and it has become important for societies and organisation to embrace green practices. Today, more than ever, companies and workplaces are able to work in an environmentally friendly manner and have recognized that they are part of the society and it is of utmost importance to embrace green practices (Goyal, 2013). Over time, people have come to acknowledge how important green practices are and how green becomes the standard, undoubtedly, the future belongs to a green economy (Pallavi & Bhanu, 2016). The green practices in return are providing measurable advantages to the business, rather than merely elevating the organisations corporate image and reputation.

Green management of human capital is a fairly recent practice in many countries. In Poland for instance, the concept has been discussed quite infrequently. The small number of publications available on the Polish market addressing the issue of green personnel management problems has made it possible to express that the term is largely unknown in Poland (Bombiak & Marciniuk-Kluska, 2018). Al Mamun (2019) stated also that there are very limited studies which has investigated the level of awareness of personnel in relation to environmental sustainability practices in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, increased alertness among 'green consumers' or 'environmentalists' contributes to the purchasing of environmentally and socially responsible goods and services. In order to ensure the longevity and uphold the success of the green efforts, businesses and organisations must be encouraged to consider and explore more opportunities and benefits in the future (Yusoff, Othman, Fernando, Amran & Ramayah, 2015).

Environmental sustainability practices is still revolutionary, unclearly defined and vague conceptualization and has some difficulties in its implementation (Shaban, 2019). Prior studies have provided a detailed theoretical framework for GHRM practices and evaluated the perspective of the GHRM concept in construction companies in with particular reference to the developed nations, little consideration has however been given to this problem in developing countries (Shaban, 2019). Environmental management practices has remained consistently poor over the years and the challenge has become a monster that is difficult to solve in spite of all endeavour from all arms of government (Okanlawon, Odunjo & Soyeb, 2015).

The nation's population has risen rapidly to about 140 million according to the latest National Census (2006) without sufficient infrastructural provisions and lack of supporting services to cope with the increasing population. Okanlawon et al. (2015) explain that this implies poor environmental sanitation which is visible in form of increased waste generation, an overstretch on limited existing facilities, inadequate availability of drinking water, poor land usage, conversion of residential housing to industrial use, uncontrollable increase in

rural-urban migration and a general decline in human quality of life. Nevertheless, asides from Nigeria's inability to achieve environmental sustainability in various spheres of life, it is obvious that our current activities could lead to subsequent declines in human wellbeing if proper measures are not put in place (Okanlawon *et al.*, 2015).

Similarly, developing countries such as Nigeria, Haiti, Ghana and South Africa have emerged top of the chart of all standard measurement of climate change and negative hardship arising from natural exploration, extraction, manufacturing and production of economic activities which is an olden path of growth (Oyebanji, Adeniyi, Khobai & Le Roux, 2017). Although investigations on GHRM have been conducted in various nations of the world in order to proffer solutions to environmental hardships, there is scarcity of research on GHRM in Africa (Mtembu, 2018). It is on the basis of the aforementioned research gaps that this study examined the awareness, acceptance and prospect of green personnel resource management in Nigeria's network of organisations.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Going green is an integrated process targeted at ensuring a smarter energy utilisation, lower costs and minimal wastage using sustainable resources or materials that could be reprocessed to obtain end results that are ecologically safe (Al Mamun, Mohamed, Bin Yacob and 2019). Green HR practices aid the transformation of worthy intention and actions of human resource personnel and employees within the organisation into an environmental friendly act and encourage the green plan of action embedded in the global human resource practices (Shaban, 2019). Yusoff, *et al.* (2015) opined that increased awareness among 'green consumers' or 'environmentalists' contributes to purchasing goods and services which are not detrimental to the safety of the environment and society.

The green employee, being a manager or a non-manager should be aware of the main four green roles. First: "environmental preservationist" for keeping the natural resources in their original form, second "environmental conservationist" for carefully using natural resources to let them last as long as possible, third "Non-polluter" i.e., minimizing environmental pollution by stopping contamination of the natural resources that are negatively affected by business activities, fourth, generator of natural green areas, parks and trees to affect positively the environment (Huselid & Becker, 2000 as cited in Farid & El Sawalhy, 2018).

Setting regulatory policies at the global level could enable corporations and business activities to implement the stated environmental conservative values. Besides, increased cognizance of the concept of green activities among 'green consumers' or 'environmentalists' could result in buying of commodities and services that are environment friendly (Yusoff *et al.*, 2015). The environmentalists keeps track of both production and society-related practices conducted by the companies, hence it becomes important that enterprises do not ignore any unsustainable management activities.

To ensure organisations uphold the continued sustenance and success of the green environment, there must be willingness on the part of the corporations and business enterprises to have full consciousness of GHRM whilst seeking for more chances and benefits attached to going green in the future.

### 3. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

#### Organisational Culture Theory

Organisational culture theory posits that principles and behaviors contributes to the distinctive social and psychological environment of a business. Schein (2004) defines culture as a pattern of common fundamental beliefs that a society learns in order to solve its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. Ravasi and Schultz (2006) characterize institutional culture to include set of shared postulates and principles guiding individual behavior of employees within the organization. Organisation wide culture theory aids the understanding of the sort of vision, beliefs, values, postulations, conduct as well as targets an institution requires to embed a culture of sustainable management practices. The culture of sustainable management practices is green human resource management and this explains why this theory is suitable in the context of this analysis. He maintains that these simple assumptions will perform well enough to be deemed valid and therefore to be instilled and inculcated to new members as the best way of perceiving, thinking and feeling in relation to certain organisational problems (Schein, 2004, pp 12).

#### EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

#### GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The association between green human resource management and organizational performance is an emerging one, although few studies have been conducted and have documented their research outcomes. The study of Al Mamun et al (2019) for instance, pinpointed the level of awareness of managers on GHRM in numerous business sectors in Bangladesh and suggested that business entities should adopt requisite Green HRM practices to achieve efficient organizational growth. Results from South Africa showed that the majority of HR experts believes that greening practices should not be included in the responsibilities of the HR department because HR professionals are not trained on solving greening issues and that there was absence environmental friendly HR policies in the institutions surveyed (Mtembu, 2018). Similarly, the findings of the study by Renwick, Redman and Maguire (2013) suggested that the understanding of how GHRM practices influence employee motivation to become involved in environmental activities. Farid and El-Sawalhy (2018) conducted a research on the awareness and execution of environmentally safe human resource management in the hotel industry and findings revealed that although hotels human resource managers are conscious of green HRM, measures are not deployed to facilitate the adoption of the greening system in their organisation. The research recommends involving green practices into personnel management policies with the aim of transforming hotels employees to adopting GHRM. Having empirically examined the association between green management and organizational success, there seems to be scanty empirical documentation of the evaluation of greening practices in Nigeria's business enterprise system. Thus, this study hypothesized that;

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is no green human resource awareness in Nigeria*

*H<sub>2</sub>: The prospect of greening practice in Nigeria is not known*

#### 4. METHODS

The research design utilized in this study is cross sectional in nature as it is perceived as the most suitable for the study because the research design utilized in this study is cross-sectional in nature because the researcher intend to have a onetime observation of the study variables. (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Questionnaire items were given to human resource personnel of various fast moving consumer goods companies in Lagos Nigeria, the choice of the fast moving consumer goods companies is due to the increased awareness on sustainable environmental practices and likelihood for demand of sustainable practices by consumers. The choice of Lagos is as a result of its emergence as a major business hub and headquarters for companies and businesses with a population of over twenty million citizens residing in Lagos (NBS, 2022). Items used in measurement of the studied variables were adopted from the work of Masri (2016) which have been reported to be adequately reliable and valid. 364 questionnaires were distributed and 202 questionnaires were returned and employed for statistical analysis.

#### 5. RESULTS

**Table 1**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Years of work with the organisation</b>		
<2	43	12
2-5	187	53
6-10	86	24
11-15	22	6
>15	18	5

As it is seen on Table 1, it is seen that most of the respondents have been working between 2 to 5 years. Very few of the respondents have been working for more than 11 years.

Does your company integrate environmental protection in its business operation?

**Table 2**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>company incorporate environmental protection</b>		
Currently Exists	21	6
No plans to deploy	156	44
Plans to deploy within 12months	54	15
Plans to deploy in more than 12months	87	24
Unsure	38	11

On Table 2, most of the respondents agree that their organisations currently have no plans to implement environmental management.

**Table 3**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Practices of Human Resource</b>		
Community pressure on businesses to take better care of the environment	23	6
Ecological Considerations	59	17
Legal Pressure	111	31
Competitive Advantage	87	24
Contribution to society	76	21

It is seen on Table 3 that organisations mostly use environmental management because of legal pressure to do so and majorly to enjoy competitive advantage.

**Table 4**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
<b>Barriers of green HRM</b>		
The lack of green policy awareness	297	83
Absence of support by management	59	17

On Table 4, it is seen that the major barrier to green HRM is the lack of what the policy really means.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

This paper seeks to study the acceptance and prospectability of green human resource practices in Nigeria's business environment. It was discovered that community and pressure group influence on companies is creating awareness of ecological human resource management issues. However, there is lack of understanding of greening policies and there exist minimal support from government in recent years but there is a rigid conviction that green human resource practice could yield a constructive potential across all facet of organisation development. It was concluded that there is a need for further sensitization of the benefit that organisations seeks to achieve from its adoption.

The study was restricted to fast moving consumer goods companies. Originally, green HRM landscape should have been examined across various sectors in Nigeria. However, the presence of numerous constraints made the national investigation unobtainable by the researcher. Consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalised to all fields.

## **7. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

Broad consideration should be given to a wide variety of factors that are unique to each sector. Succeeding research could also investigate green HRM among all sectors in Nigeria, with a view to undertaking a comparator studies among sectors. A longitudinal study could be conducted to document the trend in green HRM over a period of time, also future research work can be required to provide empirical evidence while the greening human resource practices deliver the positive results.

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