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# GREEN MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND GREEN BEHAVIOR OF EMPLOYEES IN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS

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**Abstract:** Organizations that operate in the modern environment are becoming more and more aware of the changes that are taking place, especially those that concern the environment. Global warming, increased air and water pollution and depletion of natural resources contribute to increasing climate change. Organizations therefore direct their business strategies and practices towards environmental protection. One of the most important factors to influence is employees. This is where the function of green human resource management comes into play, which directs all human resource management activities towards environmental protection and influences employees to develop green behavior. This paper will explain the concept and importance of green management of human resources, green behavior of employees, as well as the impact of green management of human resources on the green behavior of employees in modern organizations.

**Keywords:** green management of human resources, green behavior of employees, sustainability

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Climate change has become a major concern for countries around the world, as it is linked to global warming, which further affects food production and human life. Human behavior has the greatest influence on this situation, as well as on air, water, and soil pollution. Organizations additionally contribute to this with their operations, because they create large amounts of waste and irrationally consume non-renewable energy sources [1]. For this reason, in addition to achieving business success and competitiveness, one of the main goals is sustainability and environmental protection. In order to achieve this, organizations adapt their business strategies to environmental protection, and as one of the results of this business practice, green management appeared [2]. Green management represents practices that produce environmentally friendly products and minimize the impact on the environment, through green production, green research and development, green marketing [3]. One of the important functions for competitive business is the green management of human resources.

The human resource management function has a key role in the creation and implementation of sustainable business strategies throughout the organization [4]. As organizations are now changing their business strategies and practices, focusing on environmental protection, the Human resource management (HRM) function is also transforming into green HRM. Green management of human resources implies the greening of all strategies and practices in the field of human resources management, with the aim of greening the organization itself and protecting the environment [5]. It was created as a result of the great need of organizations to integrate environmental sustainability into their business models and is applied to implement green strategies and achieve the organization's green goals [6]. Green human resource management implies the adoption of the following functions of human resource management, with a special focus on environmental protection: recruitment and selection of employees, training and performance management, rewarding, involving employees in improving the environmental performance of the organization [2].

One of the strategies that organizations follow to improve their environmental performance and achieve sustainability goals is green employee behavior. It can be defined as employee behavior that has a beneficial impact on the environment [7,8]. Green behavior can be: voluntary green behavior (personal initiative) and green behavior according to the task (according to the job description) [9]. As concrete examples of green behavior in the workplace, we can mention: eliminating/minimizing the use of paper, sharing employees' transportation, turning off the computer when not in use, working in natural light as much as possible, using the stairs instead of the elevator, etc.

Green management of human resources should have an impact on the green behavior of employees. The adoption of green human resource management strategies and practices will signal the organization's commitment to environmental conservation, which is likely to make employees work toward achieving the organization's green goals [10]. Of course, for green human resource management to be more effective in eliciting green behavior from employees in the workplace, it should ensure that the organization has recruitment strategies that aim to attract employees who have similar environmental values as the

organization; development, performance and reward practices that take into account individual environmental performance and effective training programs that develop environmental awareness, attitudes, skills and knowledge [11].

## 2. GREEN MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The human resources function has a key role in the creation and implementation of sustainable business strategies throughout the organization. Therefore, human resource managers should see themselves as strategic drivers of environmental and sustainability initiatives [12, 13]. Green human resource management means programs, processes and techniques that are implemented in organizations in order to reduce the negative impact on the environment or improve the positive impact on the environment. The ultimate goal of green human resource management practices is to improve the sustainable environmental performance of the organization [14]. To ensure that organizations get the right environmental performance of employees, it is necessary to adopt or modify human resource management functions to be green (Figure 1) [15-17].



Figure 1. Greening of human resource management functions

Green human resource management refers to all activities involved in the development, implementation and ongoing maintenance of the system, which aims to make the employees of the organization green.

Therefore, it is the side of human resource management that deals with the transformation of normal employees into green employees, in order to achieve the organization's environmental goals and make a significant contribution to environmental sustainability [14]. Green human resource management becomes necessary to ensure environmentally friendly products and operations, to successfully manage corporate environmental programs, and to overcome the challenges of implementing corporate environmental programs. Prominent policies in recruitment, performance appraisal, training and development, employee relations and reward systems are considered powerful tools for aligning employees with the environmental strategy. Precisely because of this, the green management of human resources can contribute to the successful management of environmental protection [15, 18].

### 3. GREEN BEHAVIOR OF EMPLOYEES

One of the key strategies that organizations follow to improve their performance and achieve sustainability goals is green employee behavior [7]. It is a specific form of employee behavior towards the environment. It can be defined as a form of employee behavior that has a beneficial impact on the environment, that is, the intentional behavior of employees who try to reduce their negative impact on the environment [8, 19]. The green behavior of employees can be divided into two types [9-11]:

- voluntary green behavior of employees - includes personal initiative of the employee and exceeds organizational expectations;
- green behavior of employees according to the task - it is performed within the organizational limits and within the required work duties. It includes activities that are formally described and identified as part of the job description. This specifically refers to employees from who e.g. require them to ensure that toxic waste is not poured into local water systems or that hazardous material is disposed of in accordance with laws and regulations.

Green employee behavior implies three dimensions of employee behavior. The first dimension refers to green organizational citizenship behavior, which is defined as the degree to which an employee engages in positive actions aimed at helping the organization achieve its environmental development. These actions are not part of formal job requirements, but represent voluntary green actions of employees [15]. Some examples of such actions are: double-sided printing of documents (or switch to electronic form of documentation); use public transport, bicycle or walk to work; when not in use, turn off the computer; work with the minimum number of switched-on light bulbs and make maximum use of daylight; use recyclable material etc. Another dimension of green behavior is green interpersonal citizenship behavior, which refers to the degree to which an employee engages in actions aimed at helping coworkers make their jobs "greener." This is not part of the formal conditions for the job, but represents voluntary help that the employee provides to his colleagues [15, 20]. Examples of such behavior are: teaching others to be "green"; stimulating and providing support in carrying out such actions; answering questions about greening. The third dimension of green behavior is green official behavior and is defined as the degree to which an employee engages in the official duties assigned to him by his superior in relation to environmental protection. This engagement is not voluntary, but represents an official obligation that the employee must fulfill. Such duties may include specific procedures that the employee must follow in order to reduce loss and eliminate waste [15, 3].

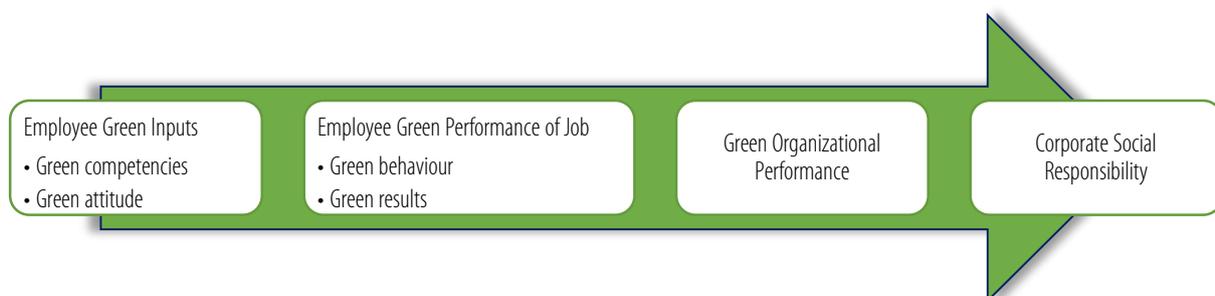


Figure 2. Employee green inputs and employee green performances of job

In order to achieve the organization's green goals, identify and determine the requirements for green human resources. There are four categories of these requirements and they are: green competencies, green attitude, green behavior and green results. Green competences (knowledge and skills that employees possess about environmental protection) and green attitude (constructed positive attitude about environmental protection) are seen as green inputs of employees, and green behavior and green

results represent green performance of employees, which contributes to green organizational performance and meets the requirements of socially responsible business (Figure 2) [15, 21].

#### 4. THE INFLUENCE OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON THE GREEN BEHAVIOR OF EMPLOYEES

Green human resource management practices refer to human resource management activities that have a positive impact on the environment. These practices can be categorized into three primary activities: developing green employee capabilities, motivating green employees, and providing green opportunities [12]. Developing employees' green capabilities involves the integration of positive environmental thinking in the organization using human resource management activities (recruitment, selection, training) [22]. Once engaged and trained, employees are motivated through performance measurement and building systems to improve their environmental performance in the organization. Therefore, it could be said that human resource management practices influence the improvement of green behavior of employees [23]. Therefore, the reasons why it can be expected that the green management of human resources will influence the green behavior of employees are as follows [10]:

- communicating the organization's preferences for environmental protection during employment and considering the environmental values of individuals in the employee selection process, which is likely to increase employees' awareness of environmental performance;
- involving employees in the implementation of green initiatives and providing green training will improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of employees and make them more available to engage in green behavior;
- the adoption of green human resource management policies and practices will show the organization's interest in contributing to the preservation of the environment, which will likely make employees work to achieve the organization's green goals.

Green human resource management practices will directly influence the green behavior of employees if it is officially valued and rewarded, thus becoming a common behavior in the workplace. However, voluntary green behavior of employees is not necessarily influenced by green human resource management. Voluntary green behavior will be most influenced by knowledge of the organization's green culture, as well as the willingness of the employee to implement such behaviors and habits in his/her daily life [11]. Therefore, integrating the green behavior of employees into the reward and incentive systems of the organization (green profit sharing, green employee of the month and a lump sum based on green performance, additional days off, etc.) improves employees' perception of the attractiveness and fairness of such systems. For this reason, they will build positive attitudes and show a high level of engagement when performing tasks [24].

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The primary goal of every modern organization is to achieve business success. Over the past few decades, managers have realized that doing business in a highly competitive global economy requires efficiency and effectiveness, but also environmental responsibility. For this reason, the process of greening the business began. One of the functions that is given great importance to, is the green management of human resources. Green management of human resources plays a significant role in achieving sustainable development in the organization, through its functions of recruitment and selection of employees, training, and performance management, involving employees in improving environmental performance, shaping organizational culture, structure, strategy and policy. Also, organizations in order to improve environmental performance stimulate green behavior of employees. It implies employee behavior that increases the positive and decreases the negative impact on the environment. Green employee behavior includes activities such as: rational using of resources, energy saving, recycling, waste reduction, etc. Through its functions, green human resource management influences the green behavior of employees. This especially applies to the recruitment and selection of employees, who already have green preferences. Also, rewarding employees plays a big role in encouraging green behavior, whether it is material or non-material rewards. Therefore, by greening the management of human resources and encouraging green behavior of employees, in addition to achieving their business goals, they also influence organizations to gain a better reputation on the market.

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