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A Study on Relationship Between Green HR Practices Implementation and Employee Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Organizations should be innovative and systematic in achieving sustainable development. Concern for environment has been major issue of discussion world over, to sustain and achieve economic productivity. Business houses should have an eye for details regarding processes, techniques, systems and results. Green HRM is one such innovative technique which creates environment friendly HR practices and preservation of knowledge capital

This paper is an attempt to understand the employees' satisfaction level towards Green HR practices implemented by different organizations in Bangalore.

Over 101 employees of 5 reputed organizations were asked to respond for the questionnaire related to their satisfaction level. Statistical tools like standard deviation (SD), correlation coefficient were used to achieve the stated objectives.

Key words: Green HR Practices, Employee's Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today sustainability has become a major concern globally. Environmental issues are creating panic among the nations. Organizations are taking initiatives in going green. In India, Wipro, also named as Green brand, is a great initiator in green revolution. Wipro Ltd was named a "Leader" in Sustainable Technology Services by Verdantix, a leading analyst firm providing advice to clients in

the field of energy, environment and sustainability challenges. Walmart, global retail giant, has successfully implemented green HR practices, globally by engaging its more than 2 million associates.¹

Lado and Wilson (1994), defined HRM system as "a set of distinct but interrelated activities, functions and process that are directed at attracting, developing and maintaining a firm's human resources". Green HR is the use of HRM policies to promote sustainable use of resources with the organization (Jadhav & Jadhav, 2012, Mandip, 2012). Green initiatives are increasing in the organizations due to the concern over global warming. Today, role of HR department is not only restricted to recruitment, training & payroll activation but they also have more responsibility. They implement policies and strategies relating to human capital. They also implement practices and policies that reflect corporate social responsibility.

Green HR involves two essential elements: environmentally friendly HR practices and the preservation of knowledge capital (Mandip, 2012). Green HR involves reducing carbon footprint via less printing of paper, video conferencing and interviews, etc. Companies are quick to layoff when times are tough before realizing the future implications of losing that knowledge capital. Green HR initiatives help companies find alternative ways to cut cost without losing their top talent.

Immense usage of paper should be reduced and organizations should focus more on

e-communications. Today HRIS play a major role in organizations. All the HR functions can be performed online. E-Recruitment, E-training etc. are examples. This will have a great impact of cost savings and sustainability. By going green, HR can play a crucial role in economic development of the nation. Natural resources should be preserved and sustained. Interviews and appraisals should be conducted online. Organizations should assure that all the communications are done electronically. Job offers, selection process etc. can be done electronically.

HR managers should be aware of carbon emission made by the employees. Unnecessary prints and photocopying should be avoided. Strict adherence to practices like switching off the A/C, fans and lights on a stipulated time can be implemented by HR managers. Training programs should be conducted for the employees in order to create the awareness across the employees about green HR practices and its advantages. Sustainability is the core part in this green world. Green HR management will play an important role to promote the environment related issue by adopting green HR practices and policies (Shaikh 2006).

Green HR helps employees in building image of an organization as a brand. It makes employees and society members aware of natural resource utilisation more economically and encourage eco-friendly products. Employees should be discouraged in wasting stationeries. According to Wilkinson (2007), "Employers can introduce carbon offsetting schemes into flexible benefits packages so that staff can take steps to reduce their own carbon footprint".

Reduced costs and increased marketing value are positive advantages noted by numerous online articles from respected business sites touting the financial benefits of going green. Green practices begin with an awareness of the products we use, what they're made of, how they get to us and what happens to them once we throw them away. It is imperative for the HR managers to educate the employees about these aspects.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

'The Greening of HR', survey conducted by Buck Consultants (HR consultants), found that 54% of the respondents implemented green practices in their organizations (The Central New York Business Journal, April 3, 2009). The survey analyzed responses from 93 organizations in the United States, representing a wide range of industries.

The research was conducted during the fourth quarter of 2008, and examines the types of "green" initiatives employers are using in workforce management and human-resources practices.

Some common green human-resources initiatives included were:

- Using Web- or tele-conferencing to reduce travel (78 percent)
- Promoting the reduction of paper use (76 percent)
- Implementing Wellness programs to foster employees' proper nutrition, fitness, and healthy living (68 percent),

According to Don Sanford, managing director of Buck's Communication, Many employers have realized that green programs in the work place can promote social responsibility and help retain talent. Haden et al., (2009), stated that the incorporation of environmental objectives and strategies into overall strategic development goals of a company helps in arriving at an effective environment management system.

2.1. GREEN MOVEMENT AND GREEN HR

According to M.W.Shaikh (2006), "green movement is a political movement which advocated four important principles, environmentalism, sustainability, non-violence and social justice." Supporters of green movement are called greens and they adhere to green ideology. In March 1972, the United Tasmania Group, the World's first green party was formed. Green movement gave birth to green HR. Human Resource Managers are responsible for training

and implementing green practices in their organizations.

2.2. GREEN HR PRACTICES

If a company wants to be more eco-friendly, then it should see that its current employees are working towards achieving green goals. HR can accomplish this task through proper communication and training (Debus, 2011). HR can adopt computerized Human Resource Information System (HRIS) and applicant tracking systems to streamline hiring efforts which also reduce paper usage and costs. Employees should be educated and trained on company's green initiatives.

Green HR emphasises on having every employee touch point/ interface to promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness on sustainability. It includes undertaking eco friendly HR initiatives that results in greater efficiencies, lower costs and better employee engagement. It also helps the organization to reduce employee carbon footprints, by car-sharing, job sharing, tele-conferencing, online training, energy efficient office spaces etc. (Mandip, 2012). Mandip (2012). Training programs should include environmental issues at all levels and strategic sustainability issues at executive management level. Orientation programs to the new employees should inform the employees about green practices. Implementation of green practice requires high level of technical and management skills among employees (Callenbach et al., 1993).

Environmental Management System (EMS) cannot be effectively implemented, unless companies have the right people with the right skills and competencies (Daily & Hunag, 2001).

In order to implement an effective corporate green management system it is important to promote a great deal of technical and management skills among all employees of the organization (Daily et al., 2007; Unnikrishnan and Hedge 2007).

Attainment of specific sustainable initiatives should be incorporated into the compensation system by offering employees a benefit package

that rewards employees for changing behaviors. A variable pay element can be added to the compensation system by linking pay to eco-performance (Mandip, 2012).

Candace Taylor, Wal-Mart's Director of Sustainability, explained that, Walmart has a volunteer associate sustainability program. The program asks their associates a basic question: "What one thing could you do to make a difference in terms of your health, your community or the natural environment?" By asking this question, Walmart has successfully engaged approximately half of its U.S. associates and more than half the associates in other markets such as Brazil and Canada to take some kind of action. A key best practice Taylor identified was Wal-Mart's continuous recognition of associates and their stories of achievement in order to encourage them to follow the green HR practices (<http://www.triplepundit.com/2010/04/interview-walmart-green-human-resources-best-practices>).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study green HR practices implemented by the organizations.
- To study employees' satisfaction pertaining to the green HR practices implemented in organizations
- To understand about organisational communication on significance of green HR practices to employees.

4. METHODOLOGY

Purpose of this research was to study the Employees' satisfaction towards the green HR practices implemented in their organizations. Five Organizations in Bangalore city that have already implemented green HR practices were identified, and 101 employees were randomly chosen as the sample for this study.

Primary data was collected from employees associated with these organizations, identified for the study. Questionnaire was mailed to the respondents and filled questionnaire was mailed back by the respondents promptly. Assurance for

confidentiality of the data and information was provided to the respondents by the researchers.

4.1. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE VARIABLES

Green HR practices & Implementation was chosen as the independent variable and Employees Satisfaction was dependent variable in this study. Green practices are eco-friendly practices initiated and implemented by HR managers in the organizations to promote the sustainable use of resources with the organization. Implementation aspect is concerned with the way the green practices were communicated, how the employees were trained, and how the practices had been following up.

Employees' satisfaction - The degree of satisfaction derived by the employees pertaining to the green HR practices implemented in the organization and how it was communicated to the employees by the management.

4.2. STATISTICAL TOOLS

Descriptive statistics in the study comprises of grading number and frequencies. Further, Mean and Standard Deviation of the raw data was calculated. In order to understand the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable, Pearson Correlation was applied.

FREQUENCY TABLE - INDICATING THE GENDER, YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND OVERALL YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS

TABLE 4.1 INDICATING THE GENDER OF RESPONDENTS (Footnotes)

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid Female	50	49.5	49.5	49.5
Male	51	50.5	50.5	100
Total	101	100	100	

TABLE 4.2 INDICATING YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS WITH THIS FIRM

	Frequency	%	Valid	Cumulative %
Valid 1	16	15.8	15.8	15.8
2	34	33.7	33.7	49.5
3	36	35.6	35.6	85.1
4	8	7.9	7.9	93.1
5	7	6.9	6.9	100
Total	101	100	100	

TABLE 4.3 INDICATING THE OVERALL YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid 1	15	14.9	14.9	14.9
2	22	21.8	21.8	36.6
3	11	10.9	10.9	47.5
4	18	17.8	17.8	65.3
5	20	19.8	19.8	85.1
6	11	10.9	10.9	96.0
7	4	4.0	4.0	100
Total	101	100	100	

4.3. HYPOTHESES

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Green HR practices & Implementation and Employees satisfaction.

TABLE 4.4 - CORRELATIONS

		Green practices Implementation	Employees satisfaction
Green practices Implementation	Pearson Correlation	1	.329**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	101	101
Employees Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.329**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	101	101

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation results indicated that correlation was significant at 0.01 level, null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implied that there is significant positive relationship between HR practices and employee satisfaction.

TABLE 4.5 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (GREEN PRACTICES & IMPLEMENTATION)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Practices communicated	101	3	5	4.27	.467
Employees following practices	101	3	5	4.11	.344
Prior training given	101	3	5	4.08	.337
Training to educate employees about Green practices	101	3	5	4.01	.360
Innovative practices are communicated	101	3	5	4.02	.346
Employees actively participate in training	101	2	5	3.84	.484
Personnel appointed to ensure that employees are following practices	101	3	5	3.97	.386
Personnel encourage employees	101	3	5	3.84	.441
Management encourage car pooling	100	2	5	3.77	.529
Organization fosters a culture of corporate responsibility	101	2	5	3.80	.548
Organizations resorts to tele-conferencing, e-communication etc	101	3	5	4.00	.400
Training given to employees about significance of green practices	101	3	5	3.90	.332
Organization supports environmental charities	101	3	5	3.90	.412
Managers trained to implement green practices	101	3	4	3.90	.300
Recruitment policy reflects sustainability agenda	101	3	4	3.77	.421
HR identifies employees compatible to green practices	101	3	4	3.54	.500
EHR practices implemented & following	100	3	5	4.04	.374
Green orientation programs are provided to new employees	101	3	5	3.88	.516
Green orientation programs effectively convey employees	101	3	5	3.73	.488

**TABLE 4.6 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS
(EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION PERTAINING TO GREEN PRACTICES IMPLEMENTATION)**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Incentives given for creative green products or ideas	101	2	5	3.75	.555
Incentives given for following green practices	101	2	5	3.41	.635
Management celebrate success of green practices	101	2	5	3.26	.702
Management welcomes suggestions from employees	101	2	5	4.04	.508
Employees are overall satisfied about green practices	101	3	5	4.53	.521
Employees involved in green practices	101	3	5	4.52	.521
Organization has implemented effectively	101	3	5	4.51	.522
Valid N (list wise)	101				

5. MAJOR FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Results of the study proved that employees are satisfied with the green HR practices and their implementation. Study indicated that green HR practices were communicated effectively and employees were satisfied with this aspect. This statement has the highest mean value of 4.27. Whereas, communication of green practices during orientation programs, perception of respondents was poor with a mean score 3.73. Study also indicated that success of the green practices is not celebrated in the selected organizations.

5.1. SOME GREEN PRACTICES PREVALENT IN STUDIED ORGANIZATIONS

- Discourage usage of plastics.
- Limited usage of paper, encouraging using electronic/digital media for communications to replace papers, keep a check on IPs- not more than 5 pages can be printed from 1 IP without approvals from managers.
- Usage of teleconferencing and video conferencing set up to avoid frequent travels.

- Regular free health checkups for all employees and wellness programs to ensure proper nutrition, fitness and healthy living, women employees in particular have offers on various vaccinations and medicines related to other health problems, example- cervical cancer.
- Organizing workshops and events like bird watching and plant a plant program.
- Regularly sending out communications to employees encouraging them to switch off the electronic gadgets while leaving the office premises to save electricity.
- Water treatment plant in the campus.
- A small paper recycling plant in the campus and use of recycled paper in the campus.
- Paper cups had been replaced with ceramic cups.
- Employees have to get approval from management to take color printouts.

Regarding the incentives given to followers of green practices, perception was poor with a low mean score of 3.26. It is suggested that HR managers should implement the incentive

programs to those who follow the green practices and thus encourage them. HR managers should also give emphasis to green practices in the orientation programs and convey it well to the new employees. Management should take initiatives to arrange for the celebration of success of green HR practices. Majority of the respondents agreed that green practices were implemented in their organizations effectively.

6. CONCLUSION

Being Green is becoming a big trend. Invented by need to become eco-friendly and to survive in harmony with the environment, the trend is fast spreading all across the globe. Study indicates that there is growing awareness of green practices in organizations and HR plays a crucial role in building this awareness, training the employees and implementing these practices in the organizations. ITC Ltd, Wipro Ltd, HCL Technologies, ONGC, Indus Ind Bank, Idea Cellular etc. are some leaders who have successfully implemented green practices in India. Other organizations can learn from these leaders and 'any time' is never late to implement green practices in any organization. Brands in India are now focusing more on practices and policies that would help them tap consumer's choice for green products and promotion of eco-friendly mechanism in their respective markets.

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