

Determinants and Challenges of Green Human Resource Management Practices in Small and Medium Scale Industries

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the determinants and challenges associated with green human resource management (GHRM) practices. A snowball sampling approach was used to collect the data from 20 small and medium scale industries in Nepal. 300 workers from the four industrial estates, who work in a range of industries, make up the sample. These workers' viewpoints served as the foundation for this study's analysis. Three stages were involved in gathering these workers' viewpoints. Many factors determine the effective implementation of GHRM practices. The notable determinants include societal contribution, environmental concerns, competitive financial advantage, economic considerations, government pressure, government incentives, community pressure, top management support, market share growth, media relations strategies, public relations strategies, and sustainable policies. However, many potential factors create barriers to the implementation of GHRM practices in their industries. These include the cost of implementing green practices, the complexity and difficulty of adapting green technology, lack of awareness about environmental management, lack of organizational support, lack of managerial interest, employee resistance, and poor level of knowledge. Some other factors such as lack of understanding of green policies, lack of financial gains, lack of support from staff, and high employee turnover also hinder effective practices of GHRM in Nepalese industries. Industries, nowadays, must implement environmentally friendly HR initiatives and practices to ensure the sustainable use of resources, which will increase efficiency, decrease waste, and improve job-related behaviors. To facilitate the effective application of GHRM practices, they must establish a supportive environment.

Keywords: Challenges, Determinants, Green human resource management, Small and medium scale industries, Industrial areas

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Introduction

Over the past few years, organizational management techniques have seen a significant transition. A green human resource management (also referred to as "*GHRM*") practice is one that adheres to the sustainable use of resources in the global industrial sectors (Basu, 2019). The term "*GHRM*" refers to the use of human resource management (*HRM*) principles to advance the sustainable use of resources inside commercial enterprises and, more broadly, to advance the cause of environmental sustainability (Mandip, 2012). As part of the HRM process of recruiting, hiring, training, compensating, developing, and promoting the firm's human capital, GHRM is responsible for establishing a green workforce that knows, appreciates, and adheres to green initiatives (Mathapati, 2013). For the benefit of the individual, society, the environment, and the business, it refers to the policies, procedures, and processes that make employees of the corporation environmentally friendly (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014).

GHRM emphasizes the importance of HRM in preventing pollution through business operating procedures. It highlights the HRM components of environmental management (Renwick et al., 2012; Basu, 2019). Utilizing goods and practices that may not pollute the environment or deplete natural resources is what is meant by "becoming green" (Robinson, 2008). Therefore, GHRM entails eco-friendly human resource policies and practices that will assist organizations in reaching their financial goals through environmental branding and, on the other hand, protect the environment from any potential negative effects that the policies and actions of the organizations may cause (Uddin & Islam, 2016).

It is important in the current context to include HR activities that promote sustainable practices and

raise employee awareness and commitment to the sustainability issue. GHRM entails HRM approaches with the goal of promoting resource sustainability, which will support environmental sustainability causes more broadly (Sharma & Gupta, 2015). It transforms an organization's workforce into eco-awareness. It applies rules, procedures, and systems, as well as methods and procedures that take into account the creation, introduction, and ongoing upkeep of a system. It is the area of human resource management that is concerned with converting conventional employees into environmentally friendly workers in order to meet organizational environmental goals and ultimately make a substantial contribution to environmental sustainability (Arulrajha et al., 2015). GHRM can help organizations develop and implement sustainable strategies and assist them in achieving business sustainability (Bahuguna et al., 2022).

GHRM involves making economic adjustments, increasing ecological and economic efficiency, and keeping the price of exploitation of natural resources within reasonable bounds in HRM activities. In order to enable the implementation of environmental programs, GHRM seeks to develop human resources into workers who can take environmental responsibility into their work, form positive working relationships with other employees, and present new ideas and recommendations. The primary goal is to increase employee motivation, make them environmentally sensitive, and enhance organizational environmental performance (Zehra Masood, 2018).

In order to reach the organization's environmental sustainability goals, it is crucial to implement the company's strategy by coordinating human resources with the environmental management system (Ren et al., 2018). GHRM supports the adoption of green HR policy in areas including

planning, recruiting, choosing, managing, and employee relations as well as the decrease of paper usage. The value of the employees and the organization is increased by all of the GHRM's actions (Zehra Masood, 2018). GHRM makes the workplace environment green. In this regard, GHRM has emerged as a viable option for organizational management in the Nepalese context. Therefore, this research aims to explore the perspectives on GHRM in terms of its determinants and challenges.

Literature Review

Conceptualization of Green Human Resource Management

The 21st century brings with it a need for sustainability for both the world and business. Green HRM combines elements of corporate environmental management with HRM. It is the HRM techniques that support employees' adoption of green values in support of the organization's environmental goals and promote environmentally sustainable development (Renwick et al., 2008). It is the application of HR strategies, paradigms, and techniques that enable the adoption of environmentally and ethical business practices while achieving financial performance (Yadav & Mathew, 2021).

GHRM alludes to the use of HRM policies to support the sustainable use of resources inside commercial organizations and advance environmental causes, both of which increase employee morale and satisfaction (Mampra, 2013). It, according to Zoogah (2011), is the use of HRM policies, philosophies, and practices to encourage the efficient use of company resources and prevent any unintended consequences brought on by environmental concerns in businesses. As part of the HRM process of recruiting, hiring, training, compensating, developing, and advancing the

company's human capital (Parajuli, & Shrestha, 2021; Pradhan & Shrestha, 2022), GHRM is directly accountable for generating a green workforce that comprehends, values, and adheres to green initiative (Mathapati, 2013; Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013; Ahmad, 2015).

Best GHRM Practices

Green HRM combines elements of corporate environmental management with HRM. To achieve an organization's environmental goals and promote environmentally sustainable growth, all green HRM practices encourage employees to uphold green values (Renwick, 2008). Many green practices are currently being embraced by various organizations (Raj & Verma, 2019). Green management of organizational culture, green performance management and appraisal, green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green employee empowerment and participation, and reward and compensation (Masri, 2016; Khammadee, & Ninaroon, 2022; Kuo et al., 2022) are some common best practices used by HRM departments in business organizations.

Determinants of GHRM Practices

Interest in green HRM has increased recently among both corporate and public enterprises. This has helped create and promote a sustainable green environment within the organizations (Sakwa, 2018). Many researchers (e.g. Jafri, 2012; Sudin, 2011; Yusoff et al., 2015a, 2015b; Masri, 2016) have reported some of the key determinants of GHRM practices in several industries.

Masri (2016) reported that the main influences/determinants of GHRM in organizations include societal contribution, competitive financial advantage, environmental concerns, economic considerations, and health and

safety considerations. Also taken into consideration as GHRM practice determinants /drivers include employee activism, market share growth, public relations strategies, media relations strategies, consumer pressure, government rules, internal activism, government incentives, and recent business scandals. Contribution to society and health and safety factors were listed by Jafri (2012) as additional significant determinants of GHRM, followed by environmental considerations, economic considerations, public relations strategy, competitive advantage, and market share growth. Sustainable policies, government pressure, top management support, benchmarking, leadership, and employee awareness, engagement, and receptivity were all listed by Yusoff et al. (2015a) as highly essential factors that support organizations in implementing GHRM successfully.

Challenges of GHRM Practices

Many studies have noticed several challenges of GHRM practices. The lack of financial gains from GHRM practices in the organizations, according to Guerci and Carollo (2016), may have a negative effect on other organizational activities. A barrier to implementing GHRM principles in organizations is noted as managers' lack of awareness about environmental management (Islam et al., 2019). Another obstacle to implementing green practices in organizations is the dearth of green courses offered by colleges worldwide (Brockett, 2007). Some other major challenges/obstacles to GHRM practices include the challenge of quickly altering employee behavior, variations in employee desire to support the adoption of GHRM practices across the organization, and creating a new corporate-wide culture around GHRM (Aggarwal & Sharma, 2014). Other significant obstacles to implementing GHRM practices in organizations include the expense of maintaining green practices or

programs and a lack of support from staff and upper management (Fayyazi et al., 2015; Jafri, 2012; Ren et al., 2018).

According to Masri (2016), the main obstacles to GHRM practices are the cost of implementation of green programs, the complexity and difficulty of adapting green technology, a lack of understanding of green policies, a lack of management support, and employee resistance. Yusoff et al. (2015b) highlighted the following as the main obstacles that prevent organizations from successfully implementing GHRM: technical difficulties, demographic barriers and receptivity, persuasion skills, attitudes or receptivity toward change, funds, difficulty to measure and feel, difficulty with mental change, perceived low attachment to sustainability, and difficulty ensuring that employees practice sustainability in their private lives. Islam et al. (2019) also identified poor level of knowledge, lack of managerial interest and organizational support, a lack of practice norms, high practice costs, and high employee turnover as the primary obstacles to implementing GHRM practices in industries.

Research Gap

The implementation of GHRM practices in sectors all around the world has long been considered the best practice. The majority of this field's research focuses on industrialized nations. In undeveloped countries like Nepal, there is hardly any literature on this issue. In Nepal, this idea is still relatively new. This study investigates the key determinants and challenges of GHRM in the context of Nepalese small and medium scale industries.

Research Objectives

The GHRM has developed as a result of businesses adopting strategies for environmental preservation and preserving ecological stability. In such a context, this research is guided by the following

objectives:

- To explore key determinants of GHRM in Nepalese small and medium scale industries.
- To explore the key challenges associated with GHRM in Nepalese small and medium scale industries.

Research Methodology

An exploratory research design has been used in this study to identify and assess important determinants and challenges of GHRM. The study

population consists of small and medium scale industries in four industrial areas (namely, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Patan, and Pokhara) of Nepal. 300 workers from the four industrial estates, who work in a range of industries, make up the sample (including 20 industries and 15 employees in each). A snowball sampling approach was used to collect the data from these industries. Only 209 workers (69.67%) responded to the survey. For the objectives of the analysis, these workers' perspectives were taken into account. Table 1 displays the industries that were surveyed for this study.

Table 1: Nature of industries surveyed

S.N.	Industries	Participants	Responses Rate (%)
1	Food and Beverage	49	23.44
2	Colour and Chemicals	41	19.62
3	Printing and Packaging	31	14.83
4	Agro-based	37	17.70
5	Construction materials	51	24.40

Out of 209 participants, 49 (23.44%) worked in the food and beverage industries, 41 (19.92%) in the colour and chemical industries, 31 (14.83%) in the printing and packing industries, 37 (17.70%) in the agro-based industries, and 51 (24.40%) in the construction materials industries. These workers' viewpoints served as the foundation for this study's analysis. Three stages were involved in gathering these workers' viewpoints.

Stage 1: The first stage of discussions involved a total of 71 employees, including 5 managers. Five industries in the Pokhara Industrial Area in the Gandaki Province participated in the discussions from May 2 to May 5, 2022.

Stage 2: In this stage, 63 workers participated in discussions. Ten industries were visited during a six-day field visit (3–8 July 2022) in the Bagmati Province's Kathmandu Industrial Area and Patan

Industrial Area.

Stage 3: A total of 75 employees took part in the discussion during stage 3. The discussion happened during a five-day visit (16–21 October 2022) to five industries in the Bhaktapur Industrial Area, Bagmati Province.

Analysis and Research Findings

Results and findings from the study are presented in this section. This section has two parts. The main determinants of GHRM are discussed in the first part and the second part outlines GHRM's primary challenges.

Key determinants of GHRM

Workers were asked to rank various potential criteria as necessary for implementing GHRM

practices in Nepalese small and medium scale industries. The average ratings of potential

influences on GHRM practices are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Determinants of GHRM

S.N.	Determinants	Yes (%)	Rank
1	Community pressure	76.58	7
2	Competitive financial advantage	80.29	3
3	Environmental concerns	81.25	2
4	Economic considerations	79.15	4
5	Market share growth	68.21	9
6	Public relations strategies	67.12	11
7	Media relations strategies	67.52	10
8	Societal contribution	82.52	1
9	Government incentives	77.27	6
10	Sustainable policies	65.59	12
11	Government pressure	78.41	5
12	Top management support	72.58	8

Based on the opinions of workers, the societal contribution is ranked first as the most important factor for implementing GHRM practices. Followed closely in order by environmental concerns, competitive financial advantage, economic considerations, and government pressure as the important determinants of GHRM practices.

Following the same tune, the workers responded that government incentives and community pressure also matters a lot for the effective implementation of GHRM practices in industries. The workers also agreed that top management support is also an important determinant for GHRM practices. Likewise, market share growth

also supports implementing such practices. To some extent media relations, public relations strategies, as well as sustainable policies of industries, also determine the effective implementation of GHRM practices in their industries.

Key challenges associated with GHRM

Workers were asked to give their opinions on potential factors that create barriers to the implementation of GHRM practices in their industries. Table 3 presents the average ratings of potential challenges associated with GHRM practices.

Table 3: Challenges associated with GHRM

S.N.	Challenges	Yes (%)	Rank
1	Lack of financial gains from GHRM practices	76.71	10
2	Lack of awareness about environmental management	79.52	3
3	Employee resistance	77.37	6
4	Cost of implementing green practices	81.15	1
5	Lack of support from staff	76.35	11
6	Complexity and difficulty of adapting green technology	80.27	2
7	High employee turnover	74.28	12
8	Poor level of knowledge	77.09	8
9	Lack of managerial interest	77.92	5
10	Lack of organizational support	78.21	4
11	Lack of practice norms	77.18	7
12	Lack of understanding of green policies	76.86	9

According to the opinions of workers, the key factor that creates a barrier to implementing GHRM practices is the cost of implementing green practices in their industries. Other key challenges are the complexity and difficulty of adapting green technology, lack of awareness about environmental management, lack of organizational support, and lack of managerial interest.

The workers also agreed that their resistance, non-availability of practice norms and poor level of knowledge regarding GHRM also contributed to preventing GHRM practices. Some other factors such as lack of understanding of green policies, lack of financial gains lack of support from staff, and high employee turnover also hinder effective practices of GHRM in Nepalese industries.

Discussion

GHRM practices can be seen as a way for businesses to engage in corporate social responsibility. Such practices are crucial if environmental management techniques and green initiatives are to be successfully implemented and favorably impact an organization's sustainable

environment (Mahyudin et al., 2021). In the eyes of the workers, societal contribution (Masri, 2016) is the most important determinant for implementing GHRM practices. Following closely behind the key determinants of GHRM practices are environmental concerns, competitive financial advantage, economic considerations, and government pressure (Sudin, 2011). For the effective adoption of GHRM practices in industries, government incentives and community pressure are also very important (Sakwa, 2018). The employees also concur that top management support (Jafri, 2012) is a key factor in GHRM practices. While increasing market share (Jafri, 2012; Masri, 2016) also helps in putting such practices into place. The successful application of GHRM practices in respective sectors is, in part, determined by media relations, public relations strategies, and sustainable business practices (Yusoff et al., 2015a).

Turning to the key challenges, the cost of implementing green practices (Masri, 2016) in industries is regarded as the main barrier to implementing GHRM practices. The complexity and difficulty of implementing green technology

(Yusoff et al., 2015b; Jackson & Seo, 2010), a lack of knowledge about environmental management (Islam et al., 2019), a lack of organizational support, and a lack of managerial interest are additional significant challenges associated with GHRM practices. The employees concurred that their reluctance (Aggarwal & Sharma, 2014), the absence of practice norms, and their limited understanding of GHRM all contributed to the failure to implement GHRM practices in Nepalese industries. Ineffective GHRM practices are also hampered in Nepalese industries by a number of other reasons, including a lack of understanding of green policies, a lack of financial rewards (Guerci & Carollo, 2016), a lack of staff assistance (Fayyazi et al., 2015; Jafri, 2012; Ren et al., 2018), and a high employee turnover rate (Islam et al., 2019). As Nepal has adopted the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Adhikari & Shrestha, 2022), it is important to take into account the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (NPC, 2017), particularly Goal 3 which guarantees healthy lives and promotes wellbeing, Goal 6 which accomplishes gender equality and empowers all women and girls, Goal 8 which encourages sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work, and Goal 9 which develops resilient infrastructure, encourages inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fosters innovation; and Goal 12 that mandates sustainable consumption and production patterns, should be taken into account in order to reduce the challenges associated with GHRM in Nepalese industries. Furthermore, the concept of decent work (Shrestha, 2021) should be taken into consideration in workplaces. This can contribute to the successful implementation of GHRM in our industries.

Conclusion

Both workers and industries can take advantage of

improving the workplace environment and addressing the 21st-century employment requirements as well as the demands of environmental sustainability. In order to offer fresh perspectives on the topic in the context of Nepalese industries, this research investigates the determinants and challenges of GHRM practices.

Small and medium scale industries can have massive benefits from the adoption of GHRM practices. Adopting GHRM practices is probably going to improve staff morale and financial performance (Firdaus & Udin) (2014). Employing environmentally friendly business strategies has many advantages, including improved employee engagement, cost savings, and increased efficiencies (Margaretha & Saragih) (2013). Environmentally friendly practices assist companies in attracting and retaining the talent they require (Patel, 2014). Effective GHRM practices improve workplace employee well-being and organizational performance (Renwick et al., 2012). Such practices encourage greater environmental stewardship, better environmental performance, the development of competitive advantages, the improvement of corporate brand perception, the promotion of employee loyalty and retention, and higher organizational profitability (Aggarwal & Sharma, 2014; Masri, 2016). GHRM can also improve environmental performance through employee work-life (Bangwal et al., 2017). Therefore, Nepalese industries must put a greater emphasis on the effective implementation of GHRM practices in order to reap these benefits. Additionally, they must concentrate on the important factors that will improve GHRM practices. Small and medium scale industries in Nepal must also deal with the obstacles and hindrances that impede them from effectively implementing GHRM practices in the workplace.

Recommendations

The importance of going green has been brought to

the attention of organizations in recent years. This study outlined the major driving forces for and challenges in implementing GHRM in Nepalese industries. Business organizations can improve their environmental performance by using the findings of this research. In order to strengthen organizational functioning and have a major impact on the strength of human resources, they can implement green practices. Industries, nowadays, must implement environmentally friendly HR initiatives and practices to ensure the sustainable use of resources, which will increase efficiency, decrease waste, and improve job-related behaviors. To facilitate the effective application of GHRM practices, they must establish a supportive environment.

Scope for Future Research

Future research in the area of GHRM still has a lot of potential and possibility. These are some of the scopes:

- Future studies may take into account how employees behave in a sustainable manner with regard to environmental performance.
- Future studies should also assess how GHRM practices affect organizations' costs and bottom lines.
- Utilization of GHRM methods for accomplishing sustainable development goals (SDGs) can be presented in future studies, taking into account the viewpoints of key industry stakeholders.

Limitations

This research has the following noteworthy limitations:

- This research is limited to selected small and medium scale industries of four industrial areas of Nepal. The results of this research

hence may not be applicable to all large scale industries and business units.

- The results may vary if the information was gathered from a sizable population using various sampling procedures.
- HR professionals may have not fully embraced GHRM practices because it is a relatively new concept in the context of Nepal.

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