

Green Human Resource Management: The Path to Corporate Environmental Performance

Prasad Siba Borah*, Benard Korankye

School of management, Jiangsu University, China

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ABSTRACT

As an emerging phenomenon, green human resource management (Green HRM or GHRM) means human resource management practices that enhance favorable environmental outcomes. Green HRM has become a widely accepted concept in today's business world. The growing concern for the environment worldwide and the determination of international standards and protocols for the management of the environment have established the need for companies to adopt environmental policies and programs. The organizational setting is shifting its sight from a traditional structure to a modern capacity-based system that is expected to explore green facets of business as the corporate world is going global. With this emerging concept, it has been observed that the extant literature has to be extended further from the HRM functions perspective. The objective of this review is to explore the association between GHRM and corporate environmental performance, highlight some GHRM practices, and the relevance of GHRM to organizations. The research followed the archival approach of the literature review. The contribution of this research lies in drawing together the extant literature in this regard; highlighting the different GHRM practices; suggesting some GHRM practices and in the end attempting to highlight some importance to organizations.

1. Introduction

The extent to which practices, systems, and policies surrounding human resource management (HRM) have been aligned with the management of our environment has become a growing area of study for researchers and practice by organizations (Guerci & Carollo, 2016; Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016). The drive of going green has become predominant among organizations in many jurisdictions since they also contribute to the destruction or preservation of the environment (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016a). Hitherto to that, green human resource management (GHRM) has been determined as a globally acceptable approach where organizations integrate their plans, activities resources with environmental goals all in the name of contributing to the efficient utilization of the scanty resources, protecting the ecology, and making their employees environmentally responsible (Chaudhary, 2020; Tang et al., 2018).

* Corresponding author E-mail address: siba@ujs.edu.cn

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According to Renwick et al., (2013), Green HRM centers on a systematic, planned alignment of typical human resource management practices with the company's environmental goals. This approach results in situating human resources and other functional areas of the business entity to operate on the path of contributing to the environmental performance of the organization (Singh et al., 2020a).

Furthering the argument on promoting corporate environmental performance through GHRM, several units in the organization such as human resources, marketing, information technology, operations, and finance among others are said to join forces but the most important of the antecedent functions is the human resource management section (Roscoe et al., 2019a; Tweneboa Kodua et al., 2022). This unit is regarded as very important because it serves as the unit through which employees are recruited and posted to other functional areas within the organization (Paillé et al., 2020). Additionally, the corporate world is regarded as an important player in the assessment of environmental issues and hence adjusts to being a central part of the solution to minimizing carbon emissions, reducing other environmental hazards, and raising eco-friendly employees (al Kerdawy, 2019). There is also information in the business arena that nowadays many workers feel strongly about the state of the environment, show commitment, and participate in the activities of the organizations that aim at preserving the environment and signing up for going green (Dumont et al., 2017).

With green human resource management gaining roots among practitioners, the assessment of corporate environmental performance has also become key (Arulrajah et al., 2016; Chaudhary, 2020). Even though a substantial degree of existing information speaks to the focus on Green HRM, there is still ambiguity connected with the efficient administration of green HR management activities in many entities worldwide to practically achieve a better corporate environmental performance (Singh et al., 2020a).

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This study appreciates how organizations are introducing policies to promote environmental management by initiating practices that develop human resources and determine processes involved in green HRM. Due to extant literature on this angle, the study would review the literature on Green HRM which would aid in discovering the practices introduced by organizations in going green. Fundamentally, this article aims at:

- (1) Exploring the association between green human resource management and corporate environmental performance.
- (2) Highlighting some green human resource management practices undertaken by organizations.
- (3) Highlighting the relevance of green human resource management to organizations.

1.2. Methodology

This research primarily is founded on secondary data. Information on the phenomenon under consideration was gathered from publications, websites, different databases, and other sources deemed fit were gathered. A systematic review of the gathered information is presented below and in detail.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

The traditional concept that has been practiced over the years was regarded as Human Resource Management (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016b). The element of Green HRM is a modern management concept aimed at encouraging employees to demonstrate green behavior. The emergence of this concept has gained attention and interest among researchers under the auspices of management for its important contribution to enhancing corporate environmental performance and its retrospective impact on the behavior of employees at the workplace (Mampra, 2013; Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013; Singh et al., 2020b). Green HRM has proven to be worthy and serves as an appropriate management approach to resolving issues of corporate environmental sustainability (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016b). With the current trend of GHRM in the business circa, it does not only represent creating awareness for preserving the environment but also represents the social and economic well-being of both employees and organizations from a broader angle (Arulrajah et al., 2016; Renwick et al., 2013).

According to Marhatta & Adhikari, (2013), Green HRM indicates the adoption of HRM policies to advance the sustainable use of resources within companies and more specifically promote the preservation of the environment. GHRM posits creating a green workforce that aims to comprehend, appreciate, and practices green ideas and sustain green goals throughout the HRM process of staffing (hiring, recruitment & selection), training & development, compensating and enhancing an organization's intellectual capital (Roscoe et al., 2019b; Singh et al., 2020b). Generally, GHRM represents policies, practices, and systems that ensure workers of an entity are green for the benefit of the society, persons, businesses, and the natural environment (Mampra, 2013; Roscoe et al., 2019b).

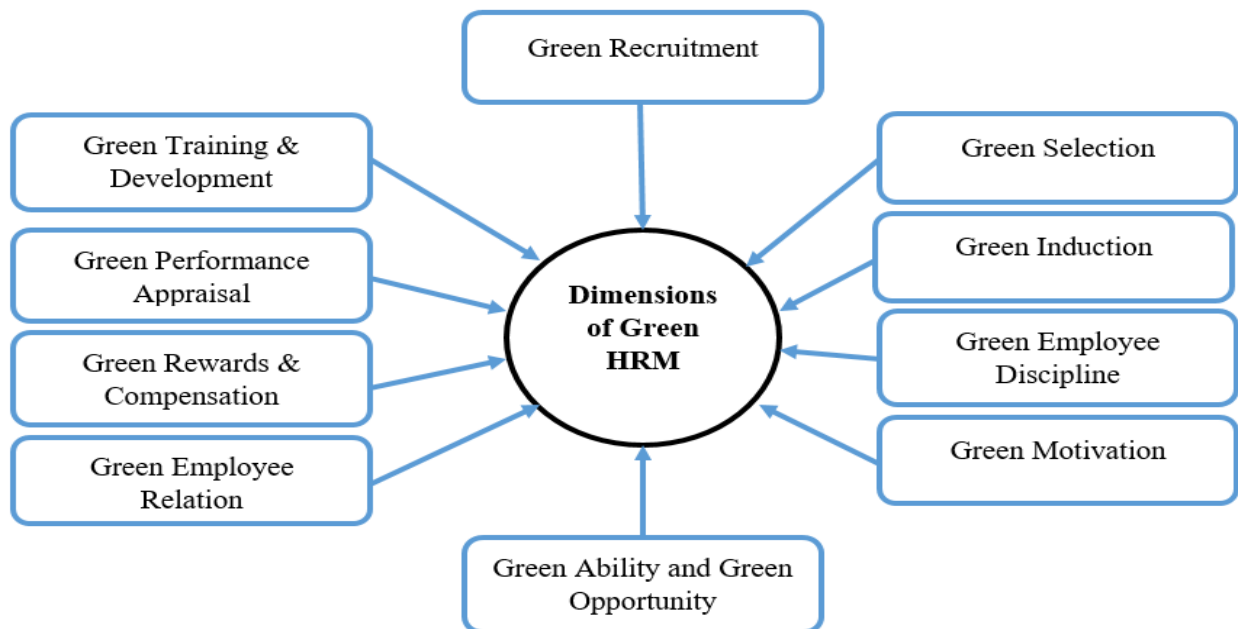


Figure 1. Dimensions of Green HRM deduced from the literature
Source: author 2022

Additionally, several human resource activities such as interviews, pre-screening tests, aptitude tests, and appointments among others communicate the principle of going green. Workers these days demonstrate green behavior aimed at minimizing paper usage, time, and traveling which invariably translates into minimizing carbon footprints for employees and the entire

organization. In the write-ups of Arulrajah et al., (2016); Opatha, (2009); Opatha & Arulrajah, (2014), green human resource management consist of HRM functions emerging from Green Recruitment, Green Selection, Green Induction, Green Training & Development, Green Performance Appraisal, Green Rewards & Compensation, Green Employee Relation, Green Employee Discipline. In the words of Ahmad, (2015); Roscoe et al., (2019b), Green HRM activities include Green Recruitment, Green Performance Appraisal, Green Training & Development, Green compensation, Green Motivation, Green Ability, and Green Opportunity. Following these revelations, a model depicting the practices or dimensions is formulated by the author.

2.2. Corporate Environmental Performance (CEP)

Corporate environmental performance defines the commitment and strategies implemented by companies aimed at being eco-friendly, protecting natural resources, minimizing carbon emissions & waste, and ensuring they obtain a competitive advantage (Rodríguez-Antón et al., 2012; Shafaei et al., 2020). Surprisingly, some organizational stakeholders perceive that being environmentally focused is pricey (Chaklader & Gulati, 2015). Eventually, some also think going green attracts more customers and the capital market to companies thereby enhancing corporate environmental performance which ultimately maximizes overall business performance (DiPietro et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2011). Moreover, the introduction of many laws regarding the environment by countries the market, and some internationally recognized bodies have awoken business entities and managements to pursue environmental performance (Chaklader & Gulati, 2015). Reflecting on what has been stated, it is believed that the availability of corporate environmental performance provides an avenue to elevate the competitiveness of entities and establishes a win-win situation (Guo & Lu, 2020). This is because the pursuit of greening which centers on corporate environmental performance has become a competitive strategy for organizations (Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013).

Furthermore, the actualization of corporate environmental performance aid several organizations to minimize their emissions, minimizing their greenhouse gasses, minimizing hazardous waste, and minimizing solid waste (Yang et al., 2011). The quest to ensure effective environmental performance initiatives improves organizational practices, minimizes operational cost, enhances the corporate image, enhances competitiveness, and complies with rules and regulations relative to the protection of the environment (Chaklader & Gulati, 2015; DiPietro et al., 2013; Rodríguez-Antón et al., 2012). The pursuit of environmental performance is now regarded as the fulfillment of an organization's corporate social responsibility that ensures they thrive (Guo & Lu, 2020). Several practitioners and researchers evaluate companies' reactions to issues in the environment and this quest to integrate environmental performance activities into their strategic documents (Jabbour et al., 2010). Invariably many organizations have determined several measures that ensure the pursuit of corporate environmental performance (Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013).

2.3. Green HRM and Corporate Environmental Performance

According to Arda et al., (2019); Daily et al., (2012), there have been several studies constituted to discover how eco-friendly HRM activities and policies enhance the environmental performance of firms. On the path of evaluating corporate environmental performance, elements such as persistent improvement, continuous recycling, waste minimization, persistent environmental audits, cost savings, and stakeholders' commitment to preserving the environment were prevalent (Yusoff et al., 2020). Human resource officers or practitioners play a critical role in ensuring organizations attain environmental goals through HR practices such

as job advertisement, recruitment & selection, appraisals, motivation of environmentally conscious workers, training & development, and incentive packages among others (Daily et al., 2012; Harvey et al., 2013; Renwick et al., 2013; Yusoff et al., 2020).

It is believed that organizations through their human resource activities testify about their environmental credentials to attract possible candidates whose ideology on the environment is consistent with that of the organization (Chaklader & Gulati, 2015). In this process, organizations could easily instill environmental beliefs in employees (Shafaei et al., 2020). According to Renwick et al., (2013), institutions have now embedded environmental issues in the job description and interview questions to advance future workers who will go the extra mile to attain the goals of an entity relative to the environment.

Moreover, organizations are expected to consistently institute programs that posit to train, equip workers with environmental knowledge, and develop their beliefs, values, and psyche in preserving the environment (Ahmad, 2015b). Training and developing workers to be eco-friendly and explaining the impact of the company's activities on the environment arouses staff's concern towards such phenomenon (Simpson & Samson, 2008). The rationale behind educating workers is to develop their green abilities, motivate them, and allow them to contribute to minimizing waste generated and other harmful substances (Chaklader & Gulati, 2015). More so, it is a means of activating their emotions to engage in a lot of creative means aimed at improving a firm's environmental performance (Guo & Lu, 2020; Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013).

The attainment of organizational environmental objectives calls for the need to evaluate the contributions of employees to such milestones (Singh et al., 2020b). Human resource managers mostly design and implement environmental indicators or predictors and evaluation systems for the entire organization (Roscoe et al., 2019b). Human resource managers discuss with the workforce whether they are on the path of achieving or achieving environmental goals, develop means of minimizing waste and indicate means of improving their performance if needed (Ahmad, 2015b).

Even though employees are inspired to do less harm to the environment, their attitude and commitment could be further deepened through compensation packages or remuneration systems (Guo & Lu, 2020; Shafaei et al., 2020). According to Shen et al., (2019), the presence of juicy compensation has a direct bearing on corporate environmental performance. Studying 207 companies, Cordeiro & Sarkis, (2008) indicated that organizations with higher levels of compensation obtain higher levels of environmental performance and vice versa. It was revealed that companies that have functional managers working with compensations and rewards tied to their delivery of environmental goals have higher environmental performance as compared with organizations with fixed salaries (Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013; Renwick et al., 2013).

Conclusively, many studies have shown that the required Green HRM practices would produce a better environmental performance for firms (Ahakwa et al., 2021; Amjad et al., 2021). As the studies of Jabbour & Jabbour, (2016); Teixeira et al., (2012) indicated that companies holding the ISO 14001 certification mostly are in a pool position to produce a better environmental performance since they deliberately make budgetary allocations to this course. Moreover, their employees are inspired by a proper and documented motivational plan to demonstrate their commitment and involvement in all the operating stages of the firm (Shafaei et al., 2020).

Research by Raineri & Paillé, (2016) showed that administering HRM activities at the strategic level is critical to environmental performance with the condition that the entire workforce (from top management to frontline workers) are involved in these environmental programs. More so,

the research by (Chan et al., 2014) in the hotel industry revealed that elements like choosing candidates who are environmentally conscious, knowledgeable, and have a positive attitude towards the environment, and consistent environmental training are potential ways to enhance a hotel's environmental performance. Relying on the evidence produced above on the relationship between Green HRM and corporate environmental performance, the researcher puts out a diagrammatic representation.

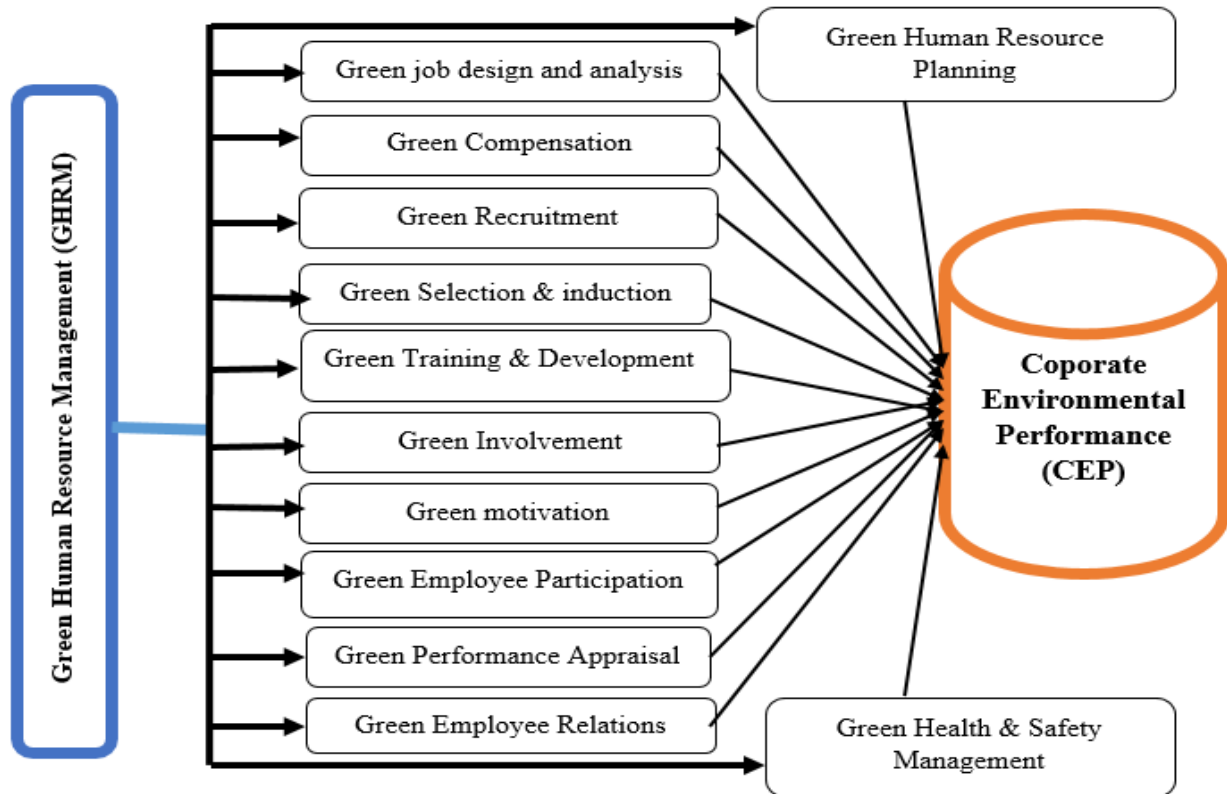


Figure 2. Diagrammatic presentation of GHRM practices that affect corporate environmental performance

Source: author 2022

2.4. GHRM Initiatives Practiced and Implemented By Organizations

Globally, there are renowned companies that have administered Green HRM throughout their activities. Companies such as Google goes the path of green recruitment with the approach that would inform and attract creative and talented employees (Mitra & Hembrom, 2020). Moreover, the “Six Sigma” introduced by General Electric goes a long way to enhance operations to advance environmental results maximizing performance. Hewlett Packard and Infosys have employed Take-Back”, “Green packing”, “Design Integration”, and “eye twitching E-recruitment” respectively to aid in the appropriate environmental management and sustainability via these Green HRM activities (Mitra & Hembrom, 2020).

The changes happening among organizations in this age and time is rapid and therefore organizations must constitute measures that correspond to the changing trends and demands towards preserving the environment (Mitra & Hembrom, 2020). With this idea, companies employ Green HRM ways that aid them to realize organizational goals and invariably be eco-friendly towards the environment. Aligning green practices and policies with that HR functions is the ideal force to ensure environmental performance (Harvey et al., 2013). It is prudent to note that some entities have resorted to Environmental Management System (EMS) as a

comprehensive approach to having a competitive advantage and alternately managing a company's impact on the environment (Arda et al., 2019).

In the quest for greening, some organizations around the world are adopting what is referred to as **green building** as their workplace and officers other than the usual traditional offices. Green building ensures that rare natural resources are not exploited for building construction (Ahmad, 2015b). Moreover, green buildings come with features that associate with green activities such as renewable energy, stormwater management, and energy efficiency. The green building approach is a medium to increase savings for companies as the cost of construction and engineering are drastically reduced.

Furthermore, the **paperless office** has presented itself as a practice aimed at preserving the environment. Mostly, papers are used in many organizational settings. But with the current revelation of IT, the use of papers has been reduced (Borzykowski, 2013). The E-business pattern has altered the way and procedures used within the offices and reduced the thirst to print or write on paper. A paperless office represents an organization with functional offices but has either eliminated or restricted the use of papers by converting most of their relevant documents into an electronic manner. This approach cuts down paper usage, and the cost of paper-related activities which includes printing, copying, sorting, and saving time for other important issues (Ahmad, 2015b).

Additionally, **reducing, reusing, recycling** and appropriate waste disposal enforce organizations' commitment to the environment (Yusoff et al., 2020). With this approach, employees are encouraged to be efficient in the utilization of available resources or reuse a resource if the need be. Ultimately, materials such as waste or metals that could not be reused are processed into new and essential products (Shafaei et al., 2020). Recycling minimizes the use of raw materials that would have been used to generate new products. The recycling activities save energy and minimize the amount of waste that is thrown on the surface of the earth. By so doing, the environment is made cleaner, better, and freshened air (Ahmad, 2015b).

Mitra & Hembrom, (2020) also listed some practices that companies line up to practice Green HRM. They are:

- (1) Undertaking relevant environmental audit
- (2) Undertaking Go-Green or environmental surveys
- (3) Paperless activities like the use of applications, software, and electronic HR
- (4) Reuse and Recycling
- (5) Teleconferencing to minimize traveling
- (6) Vying for alternate sources of energy example solar
- (7) Efficient Power Saving
- (8) Adequate utilization of water

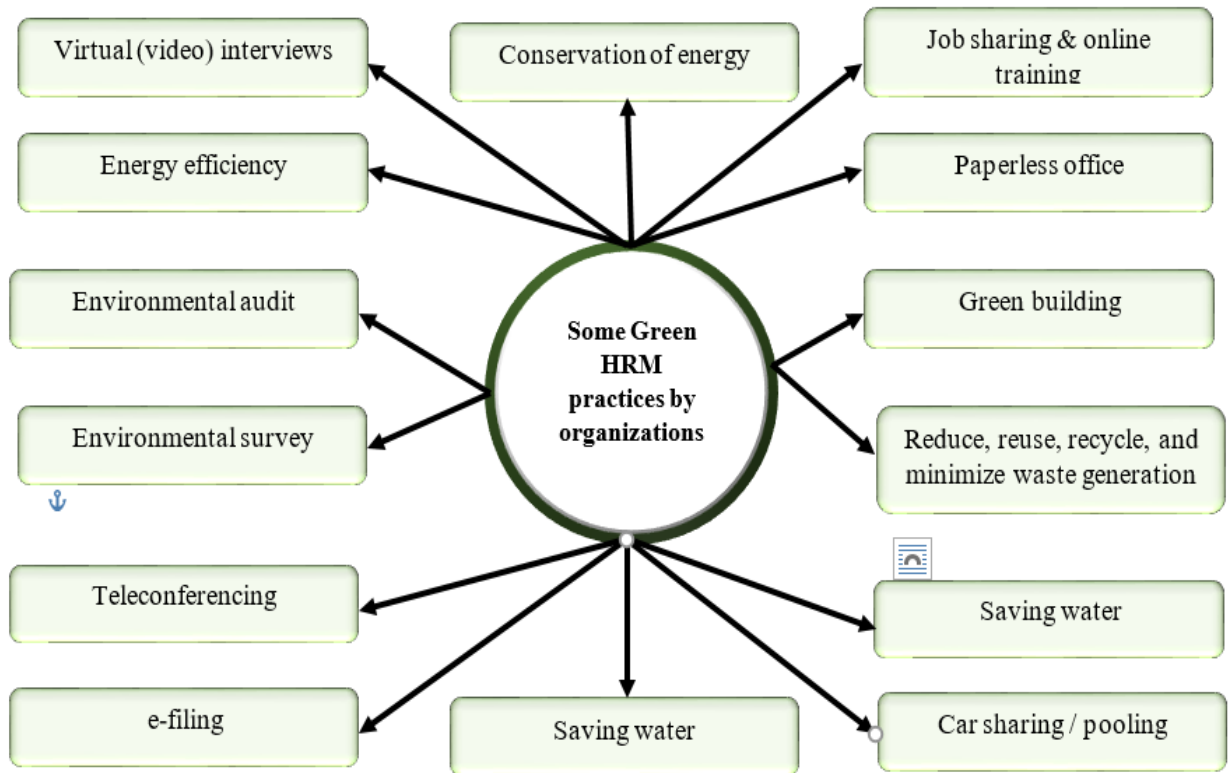


Figure 3. some practices organizations undertake toward environmental performance
Source: author, 2022.

2.5. Relevance of Practicing GHRM

GHRM is regarded as the manifesto that assists to create green employees who appreciate the need to go green within an organization (Yusoff et al., 2020). The green initiatives permeating through HRM functions such as recruiting, hiring, training, developing, compensating, and relations among others mean that the organization could achieve its green objectives (Mitra & Hembrom, 2020; Roscoe et al., 2019b). Even though some practitioners and researchers have revealed that the cost of going green is expensive, it must be stated that there are numerous advantages for organizations that go greening (Shafaei et al., 2020).

Table 1.

Importance of GHRM to organizations

No	Authors/source	Importance of GHRM to organizations
1	Jabbour & Jabbour, (2016) (Arulrajah et al., 2016; Shen et al., 2019)	Creates a green workforce that invariably enhances the organization's brand and image. Attract potential workers who are well oriented towards the environment and creative
2	(Haddock-Millar et al., 2016b, 2016a)	Support organizations to minimize expenses (electricity, water, and manufactured goods) without losing talent.
3	(Shafaei et al., 2020)	It helps to achieve greater employee job satisfaction and dedication, which leads to increased productivity.
4	(Ahakwa et al., 2021; Amjad et al., 2021)	Create good public relations and add green initiatives to the organization
5	(Roscoe et al., 2019b; Singh et al., 2020b)	Develop a culture of concern for the holistic well-being of fellow employees.
6	(Chaklader & Gulati, 2015)	Conserve energy, reduce waste, diffuse environmental awareness within the organization, and provide an opportunity to engage employees in environmental problem-solving

Source: author 2022.

3. Conclusion

The review above highlights the shreds of information put together to depict the link between Green HRM and corporate environmental performance (CEP). Upon a critical look at the literature reviewed, it was established that GHRM activities such as green recruitment, selection, training, development, and compensation, among others indicated (see figure 2) influence corporate environmental performance. This outcome shown is in tandem with the outcome emanating from (Ahmad, 2015b; Guo & Lu, 2020; Roscoe et al., 2019b; Singh et al., 2020b). The more employees become conscious of the green practices and policies initiated by their organization, the more they are likely to be committed to partaking in green activities to promote corporate environmental performance (Roscoe et al., 2019b; Singh et al., 2020b).

The researcher upon perusing the literature, the researcher identified some practices undertaken and practically implemented by organizations. These include but are not limited to green building, carpooling, reuse, recycling, and paperless office, among others (see figure 3). Haddock-Millar et al., (2016b) revealed that practices such as job sharing, online training, and e-filing are practices organizations engage in. Energy conservation, recycling, and proper waste disposal are also practices organizations undertake with the sole aim of preserving the environment (Roscoe et al., 2019b).

Lastly, it was prudent to highlight the essence of Green HRM to organizations. Organizations should not only focus on negative consequences such as the cost of going green comes with (Guerçi & Carollo, 2016). Arulrajah et al., (2016) indicate that the pursuit of GHRM is of advantage to the organization. Table 1 presents some benefits accrued to organizations when they go green as stipulated by these researchers.

4. Managerial Implication

The future of the Green HRM module seems promising to all players involved in human resource activities. These players include employees, employers, academicians, and practitioners. As indicated in this study, there are some functional green activities undertaken by organizations. Organizations should make effort to cultivate the perceptions of their employees toward greening. Employers should take advantage of activities such as green recruitment & selection, green training & development, green compensation, and green motivation among other green policies shown through the review to promote corporate environmental performance, which would invariably minimize carbon emissions. Workers should be conscientious about the environmental and social well-being that they are required to be achieved via Green HRM. To ensure the selfless pursuit of environmental goals, employers should connect the compensation package where the appropriate salary is directly linked to the environmental performance of workers. This would inspire workers to contribute to environmental performance.

HR systems should endeavor to introduce and implement practices such as video interviews, green buildings, paperless offices, environmental audits, teleconferencing, online training, and conservation energy to aid employers and employees to contribute to minimizing carbon emissions and waste generation. The installation of e-HR would aid management to monitor their carbon emissions. More so, critical environmental components need to be integrated into the pattern through which employees are appraised to establish a culture of environmental management. Workers could also express their thoughts and knowledge to Green HRM, which would be deliberated upon and included in the goals and policies of the organization towards the environment.

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