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# CONCEPTUAL VIEWPOINT ON THE NEEDS FOR CREATING GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AWARENESS OF HOTEL INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA; ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

*Green practices have in recent years created much attention from academia and practitioners in every part of the world. However, an extensive analysis of green or environmental HRM has not been made so far. To close this gap, the present study provides a thorough literature review that was neglected by researchers in management in the hotel sector in Nigeria and therefore less researched. The purpose of this narrative review paper is to create awareness on the effect of Green practices and Green Human Resource Management strategies with respect to Nigeria Hotels. In addition, the government should adopt policies to encourage the above activities because improving organizational quality will be a positive long-term reflection of the economy. All of these can be achieved through the productive organizational and national human resource development program.*

**Keywords:** Green Practices, Green Human Resource Management, Hotel industry

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The growing danger of unsustainable use of natural properties is among the leading environmental factor such as deforestation, loss of biodiversity, degradation of ozone layers, global warming and climate change. Sadly, the tourism and hospitality industry hotel sub-sector are complicit in that respect, and according to past researches, hotels are notable among others for their high-water consumption and indoor recycling of large volumes of waste and air quality issues (Bohdanowicz, Kasim, 2006 & Mbasera, 2017, Zientara & Novotna, 2011).

In another researches, it is noted that the hotel and tourism are one of the vital sectors that is obligated to protecting and maintaining the aesthetic quality of the environment because the richer the quality of the environment, the higher the proportion of tourists that can likely visit such location. Thus, there is mutual benefit between the hotel and the natural environment (Han, Yoon, 2015; Heish, 2012; Kasim, 2006 Wan, Chan, & Huang, 2017). In recognition of this, hotels need to strive harder to ensure that its activities do not leave negative environmental footprint on resources like land, air, water, energy (Bohdanowicz-Godfrey & Zientara, 2014; Bohdanowicz, Zientara, & Novotna, 2011; Rahman, Reynolds & Svaren, 2016).

Manaktola & Jauhari (2007) defined a green hotel as a lodging facility committed to ecological and committed to making it an environment-friendly practices. From the empirical study by Hossan (2012), he confirmed that via green practice, it is possible to minimize the negative impacts of human behavior on environment, reduce the cost of management and through green practices hotels can contribute a lot to a great extent to green tourism all over the world. The focus of today's Green Practices, therefore, requires not only knowledge of environmental issues but also reflects the social and economic well-being of both the company and employees from a broader perspective.

Previous studies on environmentally friendly hotel practice seem to focus more on advanced countries like the US and the UK. Some emerging countries on the Asian continent, such as China, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Macao, have also recently taken the lead. But in Africa, such research is scanty. Studies have shown that very few studies are carried out in less advanced countries such as Nigeria, even with a high level of worldwide awareness of sustainable practices and literature on its adoption in business (Muazu, 2017). Recently, one of the major hospitality providers in Nigeria named Eko Hotels and suites recently launched “Eco-friendly initiatives” by creating the necessary awareness to all hotels in Nigeria to adopt the green operation through a green initiative's programs (Nwosu, 2019).

The concern of the hotel for its immediate environment and the global community enhanced her in taking the necessary green initiatives by enforcing several pieces of training on the hotel employee and re-orientation programs to be environmentally responsible and equally be conscious of how it affects its environment (Nwosu, 2019). This study became necessary because is relatively new in the context of the Nigerian tourism and hospitality industry. This study will surely serve as a means of green awareness and effect on green practices in hotels and because few of the related studies have been carried out in developing countries, Nigeria is considered in this study. Very few studies show the efficacy of Green practices outside developed countries.

### **1.1. Reviews of literatures for Green Hotel and GHRM**

Hossan (2012) refers "Green Hotels" as an environmentally friendly properties whose management is passionate about programming that saves water, resources and also decreases solid waste to help protect the earth. Hotels that follow environmentally friendly designs and operations by implementing environmental practices such as reducing pollutant emissions, sourcing of renewable products and water and energy conservation are called green hotels (Han, Hsu, Lee & Shue, 2011 & Maglovska, 2016), for example use and fittings of premium energy star light bulbs, which definitely use at least two-thirds less energy than regular light bulbs (Ahmad, 2015). In this sense, being green has a double meaning - it is good for the environment and good for the pocket of the hoteliers.

The word 'green' in HRM activities also refers to the interests of people management policies and practices with respect to the wider corporate environmental schedule (Ullah, 2017). Thus, going green does not mean an environment has to be painted green, but it means the measures where organizations operating in a business area are been conscious of their environment (Jabbour 2011; Mandip, 2012; and Kapil, 2015). It applied to industry, finance, building construction, education, maintenance of offices, agriculture, trade, etc. But in the real sense, it is meant to conserve nature as far as possible in its original state. It is felt more than ever in the 21st century that we need to recycle the limited resources we have, minimize our aggressive behavior towards nature, and thereby save the environment from pollution (Hossan,2012).

This topic brought greater gravity and inspired business organizations to develop and implement green management through the implementation of environmentally friendly practices and procedures (Prasad,2013). A lot of organizations are trying to create and implement a structured environmental management structure to achieve this growth. Since the 1990s, this initiative was identified as one of the most important keys to sustainability (Chan,2011). Many divisions, such as service, finance, marketing, and others, have included environmental management (Mittal & Sangwan,2014; Rehman & Shrivastava,2011).

#### ***1.1.2. Needs for "Green HRM" practices implementation in the Hotel Industry***

Green Human resource management (GHRM) roles may be implemented to inspire responsible people to be environmentally friendly (Cherian & Jacob,2012). It is the responsibility of human resources (HR) professionals to get the workers' support to conserve the environment (Sathyapriya et al.,2014). Academics agree that GHRM is an effective tool for building sustainable HR that can produce sustainable energy production and a green competitive edge. Cherian & Jacob (2012) found out that companies that pay awareness to GHRM can be more efficient and therefore produce positive results. In addition, several companies are pressing successfully to stimulate the actions of their workers towards conserving the environment (Masri & Jaaron,2017).

The department for human resources shall be aimed to improve the organizational culture through the promotion of green workplaces and green practices. This is because Green HRM is a very important strategic method for achieving the sustainability objectives of business companies to go green, and this can be done through the recruitment, selection, training and retention of skilled young people with special skills and knowledge of green human resources (Sudin, 2011). Nevertheless, unethical practices in companies may still trigger industrial pollution (Ones & Dilchert,2012).

Cherian & Jacob (2012) stated that the implementation of environmental practices shall be a core goal of an organization, and it is necessary to interact with the aid of human resources management practices. However, according to Ladipo, Awoniyi & Arebi (2017) most firms failed in a competitive environment because they took business environments for levity. At the

same time, some earlier researchers also found that organizations are likely to be profitable than usual if they engage in GHRM to balance its industrial growth and preservation (Daily & Huang, 2001; cited in Murari & Bhandari, 2011). However, in his study, Saraswa (2015) found that workers are unaware of GHRM, but understand eco-friendly vehicles, like energy & hybrid cars.

## **2. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR PRACTICING GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (GHRM)**

Implementing green management processes leads to reduce resource consumption and enhanced environmental quality, however, at the same time, it can be obstacles that hotels are experiencing when introducing green initiatives to reduce the environmental impacts of their activities (Font & Kornilaki et al., 2008). For example, some past researches have stated that the introduction of environmental programs led to employee's resistance due to reluctance to change from their daily operations (Brown, 1996 & Chan, 2014), which according to them happened due to human psychology because most people want to stick with their current circumstance or condition and natural behavior (Chan, 2013 & Honetal, 2013; Oreg, 2003). Chan & Hawkins (2010) indicated that some workers are reluctant to adopt green practices because they doubt the actual purpose of their management behind the green initiatives.

Companies that do not involve their employees in greening can lose the effectiveness of their ecological results (Renwick et al., 2013). Pizam (2009) & Mbasera et al., (2017) in their studies suggested that most hospitality companies do not want to protect the environment for environmental or ethical reasons but engage in ecological practices purely for financial, profitable motives.

A study by Mbasera (2014) indicated that there are few obstacles in introducing environmentally friendly sustainable programs in hotels in Nigeria. For example, an empirical research by Iweama in 2014 revealed that just 30 percent organization are environmental practice responsible in Nigeria while Karatu & Mat (2013) said only 5 percent of Nigeria society are aware of green practices and green products. There appears to be a lack of environmental awareness among its people, such as lack of green awareness, lack of confidence in claims for green goods, high green product prices, weak waste management, and worsening pollution scenario noticeable in an evolving nation like Nigeria as much is not know about "green" (Karatu & Mat, 2013).

The Nigerian society specifically is yet to be conversant with the issues of green (karatu & Mat, 2015; Quick pulse, 2011; Olamiyu, 2012), and this suggest that there is a low level of green awareness among Nigerians. Thus, no wonder Idoko & Kasim (2019) reported that Nigerian hotels especially intercontinental hotels are extremely yearning for this type of research because they received little or no attention in the academic research on environmental responsibility which has been massively appreciated from a practitioner and academic worldwide which necessitate this current study.

Additionally, Mbasera (2017) revealed that it is not easy for people working in the hospitality sector to support programs in environmental management. This is because of the reluctance of people in the hospitality industry who saw this GHRM as only recently been implemented and a new phenomenon. It is also suggested that there are still gaps in the creation and implementation of ecologically friendly practices. This incoherence is due to administrators failing to comprehend or appreciate the idea of green initiative Mbasera (2017). Other than that, it also emerged that the availability of green management systems as one of the major issues, for example, a few years ago the hotel was built when the architects were not mainly concerned with green buildings. The environmental building includes the development of resource-

efficient buildings with advanced energy-and water-reduction technologies and improved the management of waste (Chan et al.,2009).

Furthermore, Graci (2008) states that where government regulations are not in effect for the tourism industry, focusing on voluntary measures resulted in little regulatory pressure. Therefore, Idoko & Kasim(2019) suggested that in the absence of environmentally responsible policies in some of the hotels in Nigeria, the government only can encourage the hotel management to design in-house green policies to conserve resources, prevent environmental degradation and sustain the environment for the future generations. Meanwhile, several hotels are still at the crossroads when it has to do with enforcing environmental management requirements due to lack of support from the government and similarly the lack of effective environmental organization value(Masoud&Kamleh,2010).

## **2.1. Significance of Adopting GHRM practices**

Greening is a comprehensive approach aimed at better use of carbon, low waste uses renewable resources or recyclable materials for sustainable goods, targets, etc.(Mohammad,2019). Environmentally friendly activities improve the morale of visitors and patrons and help strengthen the company in the competitive aspect and an environmentally friendly hotel also has the opportunity to gain a competitive advantage strategy (Park, Kim & McCleary, 2014). Through reforming hotel environmental practices, the sector will be able to minimize its operating costs (Bryman et al., 2007; Chen & Chen, 2012 and Gössling, 2015).

Moreover, Brebbia & Pineda (2004) notice that financial savings are among the most significant factors that affect environmental policies, especially in highly competitive markets where the energy, water, and waste management costs are high. As Jafri (2012) pointed that greening is economically useful, has a direct impact on business profits and actually increases returns on investment. Green practices also able to improve trust in tourists and employers and support the business against competition and an eco-friendly hotel, therefore, has the opportunity to achieve a strong strategic position (Park, Kim&McCleary,2014). By inference, the eco-friendly accredited hotel retains consistency through adopting the protocols and it receives international recognition, and workers recognize what they should do in environmental matters.

By default, when customers are embedded in a hotel certified by an accredited certification body, the hotel is driving up in business, thereby giving the company a competitive advantage over its uncertified counterpart. Natural environmental problems would be reflected in environmentally friendly business strategies and the fair use of resources will be the responsibility of hotels (Jonker & DE-Witte,2006). Mehta & Mehta (2017) claimed that increased organizational efficiency will result in reduced carbon footprints for workers through GHRM activities such as flexible scheduled work electronic filing, car sharing, job sharing, teleconferencing, video interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, energy-efficient office space.

## **3. THE ECO-FRIENDLY GHRM PRACTICES IN ACHIEVING GREEN HOTEL OPERATION**

Tourism depends on environmental quality for its sustainability; therefore, it is necessary to play a vital role in the protection of the environment (Tzischentke, Kirk & Lynch; Mbasera et al., 2017). The topic of sustainability moves rapidly on the list of corporate world leaders ' priorities as an experience of integration "climate" into the corporate strategy is gaining ground in the industry, but many HR professionals are still not familiar with that issue(Wirtenberg, Harmon, Russell & Fairfield, 2007). Environmental organization success regards to taking actions in such a society that will have a positive impact on the environment. But businesses

are strongly encouraged to pursue appropriate environmental management practices in order to enjoy the protection of the environment (Jackson & Seo, 2010; Rawashdeh, 2018).

Milliman & Clair (1996) were among the first to suggest exploring the role of HRM in environmental management. This system has been known since the 1990s as one of the most significant keys to sustainable development (Chan, 2011). Renwick et al., (2013) recommended the following practices as the best method to achieve the organizational goals; green recruitment, green training, green Performance appraisal, and green reward.

- i. Green recruitment: this practice is one of the HRM activities to hire prospective job candidates. Green recruiting means a paperless recruitment process with minimal impact on the environment (Deepika & Karpagam, 2016). Razab et al., (2015). Suggested that a leading portion of the interview requirements would represent environmental issues when interviewing prospective applicants. When dealing with HRM practices especially in Nigeria, the recruitment process needs to include environmentally sustainable development issues (Mandip, 2012) and green recruitment is yet to be explored in any academic research in Nigeria.
- ii. Green reward system: Numerous studies have resolved that businesses can attain positive ecological results by offering various forms of incentives such as letters of appreciation, advancement, job changes, gifts, money, etc. (Prasad, 2013; Ahmad, 2015 & Arulrajah et al., 2015; Renwick et al., 2013; Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014). The idea of a green reward is very vital to enhance employees to appreciate ecological and be friendly environmentally although this practice is scanty and yet to be discussed in academic research in the Nigerian hotel sector. Recognition-based awards will highlight green employee contributions through wide-ranging advertising and public recognition and appreciation by top managers of green initiatives (Ullah, 2017).
- iii. Green training stands out among the significant GHRM activities required for the achievement of green management in companies. Ecological preparation is also considered to be one of the most important instruments for human resources growth (Jabbour, 2011 & Rawashdeh, 2018). This aims at increasing the interest and awareness of people towards environmental concerns, creating a positive mindset, taking a proactive approach to green initiatives and develop waste reduction and energy saving skills (Zoogah, 2011 & Renwick et al., 2013).
- iv. All training programs should be structured on the basis of training needs so that the maximum environmental benefits from training can be obtained (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Green training involves employee working practices that reduce waste, efficient use of resources, energy conservation and reduce the causes of environmental degradation (Ullah, 2017).
- v. Measuring employee green performance: Green Performance Assessment System is a framework for determining the performance behaviors of workers in the environmental management process (Jabbour et al., 2008 & Saeed et al., 2018). Jabbour (2011) established that this practice ensure the inclusion of green issues in the daily routines of individuals. A structured method of implementing environmental performance management must be defined by organization as this will enhance and stimulate more employees to be environmentally responsible.

### 3.1. Theoretical implication

Some of this study's findings contribute importantly to the literature. First, for developing countries including Nigeria, there is limited research using sustainable practices, which adds to the current knowledge base for HRM. Management of the hotels in Nigeria may perceive employing GHRM practices as a meaningful organizational move expressing real

environmental concerns, and inspiring many hotels to take the initiative. The current study is expected to extend the theoretical study of green practices (GP) in the sense of Nigerian hotels, which is relatively scarce, thereby strengthening the theoretical body. And for prospective researchers willing to undertake a similar analysis, the research knowledge can be useful.

### **3.2. Practical implication**

Many hospitality scholars and practitioners have started to understand that environmental management, including the protection of the environment, turns into one of the main responsibilities of hospitality organizations (Hsiao et al.,2014 & Rahman et al.,2012; Yen et al.,2013). To be in agreement with this concern, the hotel industry in Nigeria should deliver GHRM ahead of other valuable environmental management efforts. From the study, the output of appropriate GHRM is crucial for hotel organizations as it assists the role of the organizations in the protection of the environment, this not only strengthens the commitment of employees to their organizations or promotes ecological behavior, but also helps the organization achieve its expected goals.

More importantly, hotel organizations, whether the property has green certificates or not, GHRM will become a top priority. The study aims at providing information and guidance to the employer on the effect of Green practices and effectiveness for the employers since the hotel owners in Nigeria are craving for this type of research as it was stated by Idoko&Kasim(2019) revealed that hotels in Nigeria, mostly the Multinational hotels are extremely yearning for this type of research because of the little attention in the academic research of environmental responsible.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

This article discusses in detail the idea of significant effects of the activities of Green Human Resource Management in the hotel industry. It also discussed extensively the impacts of Sustainable practices, challenges, and problems associated with sustainable practices in the hotel industry to achieve the organizational goal. Green human resource management practices have been seen as a means of resolving multiple internal and external problems that are vulnerable to adversely impacting organizations and their environment. It is advisable for hotels especially in a developing country to imbibe and adopt green initiatives via GHRM practices for better performance and to serve as a helping hand for environmental management. For practitioners, academics and even policymakers in a country, this initiative is crucial and very successful. Nigeria's hotel industry is a challenging environment that will develop into a prosperous and sustainable destination if properly managed.

## **5. RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY ON GREEN HRM**

Green practices and recycling have become a central theme for future studies of management. There are some limitations in the present study, but the limitations can aid as a means for future research. Future studies should consider the empirical research of the same study. Also, future research to be more informative and broader on the effects of GHRM in other sectors and Lastly, future research should collect data from hotel employers and workers to know the level of GRHM awareness.

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Conceptual viewpoint on the Needs for creating green human resource management practices awareness of Hotel industry in Nigeria; Issues and Challenges

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