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# Identifying the obstacles of green human resource management in order to increase the sustainability of the organization

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**Abstract**

The aim of the current research is to identify the obstacles of green human resource management in order to increase the sustainability of the organization. The research method is applicable according to its purpose, and qualitative in terms of its implementation. The statistical population of the research is the Kermanshah West Cement Industry Company, and to investigate the effect of obstacles on the implementation of green human resources management in the statistical population, 14 university experts in the field of management were interviewed. To analyze the data in the first phase, by searching in domestic and foreign reliable scientific databases and related studies, ten effective obstacles to the implementation of green human resources management were identified; and then, by conducting interviews with industry and academic experts in the field of management and using the Dimtel decision-making and evaluation test method, analysis of obstacles to the implementation of green human resources management were carried out. The findings showed that the absence of necessary green structures, processes, and tools plays the biggest role in not increasing the sustainability of the organization. Also, factors such as lack of leadership support, challenges in attracting green talented employees and lack of green competencies are other influential factors. The presented interactions using the matrix of relationships between obstacles in the implementation of green human resource management help human resource professionals to visualize the influence of factors on the whole system and focus on important obstacles. It is expected that this study can be enlightening for human resource managers in the optimal use of company resources.

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## Extended abstract

### Introduction

Today, the survival and growth of the competitive environment emphasizes the adoption of sustainability by organizations. Sustainable business development depends on adopting environmentally friendly practices and policies so that it becomes successful without jeopardizing existing resources for future generations (Mehta & Chugan, 2015). Sustainability includes strategic and operational commitments at all levels (Khan & Muktar, 2020). Organizations face many challenges in understanding and adopting sustainable practices due to lack of knowledge and lack of will (Polman & Bhattacharya, 2016). Transforming a company into a more sustainable business requires a deep understanding of green human resource management practices and policies. In the executive part, the adoption of green human resource management faces many challenges and obstacles that must be understood from both the industry and organizational perspectives. Recognition and acceptance of green HRM can only be achieved through employee participation (Moin et al, 2021; Renwick et al, 2016). Employees are key stakeholders in the development and implementation of practices that are environmentally sustainable. Lack of focus is also caused by top management that may not have a strategic view of sustainability (Luu, 2020; Priya, 2020). Therefore, the main question of this research is: What are the obstacles of green human resource management in order to increase the sustainability of the organization?

### Theoretical framework

#### Lack of leadership support and commitment

The lack of commitment and focus of senior management can lead to the non-acceptance of green human resource management plans (Ahmad Ullah & Khan, 2021). As stated by Bombiak & Marciniuk-Kluska (2018), the core values and vision of the organization are transmitted through the leaders of the company, and by focusing on the ideas of the leaders, organizations seek to develop and adopt the best practices of green human resource management (Ren et al., 2020; Yusliza et al., 2019).

#### Absence of green behavior

The absence of green activities at the personal level also leads to a poor response while doing work in the organization (Davis et al, 2020).

#### Lack of green culture

The lack of green culture does not allow the sensitivity towards green practices to be created as a cultural support for all employees and include all of them (Islam et al, 2019). Sustainability, if adopted as a shared cultural parameter, leads to the creation of a culture that holds together core values (Maini & Kaur, 2019).

#### Problems of measuring the effectiveness of green human resource management

Another key obstacle in the implementation of green human resource management practices and procedures is the challenges related to measuring its effectiveness. According to Al Mamun (2019), green human resource management is about hiring and training employees who have sustainability awareness, so the organization also seeks to cultivate this sustainability. For this purpose, organizations may also adopt many practices and policies to create green awareness, but when it comes to results, the effectiveness cannot be clearly examined (Chamola, 2017).

### **Failure to create the necessary green structures, processes and tools by HR professionals**

According to Yuriev (2018), for any new strategy adopted by the organization, a clear integration between strategy, organizational structure and processes should be achieved. Green human resource management is a long-term approach in the organization where it is necessary to achieve employee cooperation with the right resources and orientation while developing green behavior tools.

### **Challenges in attracting green talented employees**

Another very important and critical issue that organizations face is the recruitment and selection of employees who have the capabilities to perform green tasks. In order to create a green company or implement green human resource management practices, the first step is to hire and select green talented employees, either in the form of educational qualification or work experience (Kim, 2015).

### **Lack of empowerment of green employees/lack of employee participation and accountability**

Given that there are no human resource policies that motivate or empower employees to learn and implement sustainability; implementation of green human resource management is problematic (Tariq et al, 2016). In order for employees to be able to make certain decisions, creating a high level of participation along with the green strategy is required (Sing et al, 2020).

### **Lack of recognition and rewards related to sustainability**

When employees must be oriented or motivated towards specific result-based activities, the importance of rewards and recognition increases many times. Employees are motivated towards a certain behavior based on their internal motivation or external motivation provided by the organization (Mehta & Chugan, 2015).

### **Lack of green attitude among employees**

As part of culture development, perception and positive attitude in green thinking is a big challenge in today's companies (Pham et al, 2019). Attitude is a combination of emotional and cognitive components based on knowledge and emotional inclination (Likhitkar & Verma, 2015).

### **Lack of green competences**

People are hired and retained because of their competencies and capabilities, and they perform certain tasks that others cannot. Sustainability should be learned theoretically or practically, and become a competency for employees (Dumont et al, 2017; Fawehinmi et al, 2020).

Alirezai et al, (2022) investigated the impact of green transformational leadership on environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness in small and medium businesses in Sirjan Special Economic Zone. The findings of the research indicate that, in general, green transformational leadership has a significant effect on environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management and environmental awareness.

Ezadi kah keshi et al, (2022) investigated the modeling of structural equations of the effect of senior management's green commitment on environmental performance with the mediating role of green human resource management (a case study of Shahrekord manufacturing companies). The results show that the green commitment of senior management has a



significant positive effect on the company's environmental performance. Also, the senior management's green commitment has a significant positive effect on the company's green human resources management. But green human resource management does not have a positive effect on environmental performance.

### Research methodology

The research method is applicable according to its purpose, and qualitative in terms of its implementation. The statistical population of the research is Kermanshah West Cement Industries. In order to investigate the effect of obstacles on the implementation of green human resources management in the statistical population, 14 university experts in the field of management were interviewed.

### Research findings

To analyze the data in the first phase, by searching in domestic and foreign reliable scientific databases and related studies, ten effective obstacles to the implementation of green human resources management were identified, and then by conducting interviews with industry and academic experts in the field of management and using the Dimtel decision-making and evaluation test method, analysis of obstacles to the implementation of green human resources management were carried out. The findings showed that the absence of necessary green structures, processes, and tools plays the biggest role in not increasing the sustainability of the organization. Also, factors such as lack of leadership support, challenges in attracting green talented employees and lack of green competencies are other influential factors. The presented interactions using the matrix of relationships between obstacles in the implementation of green human resource management help human resource professionals to visualize the influence of factors on the whole system and focus on important obstacles. It is expected that this study can be enlightening for human resource managers in the optimal use of company resources.

### Conclusion

The current research was conducted with the aim of identifying the obstacles of green human resource management in order to increase the sustainability of the organization. The results of the present research is aligned with the results of Ghaemi & Asgari (2023), Alirezai et al, (2022), Ezadi kah keshi et al, (2022), Shabet & Azizi (2020), Rezaei et al, (2020), Lee et al, (2019), Tavakoli et al, (2018), Sriram & Suba (2017), and Fayyaz (2016). Sriram & Suba (2017) showed that green human resource management will lead to increasing employee commitment and changing their attitudes. Also, the results of their research showed that green human resource management measures will lead to improving the effectiveness and financial performance of organizations.

According to the results of the research, the following proposal was presented:

Identifying the existing obstacles for green human resources management in this article will help managers to make important decisions about human resources in the organization, and at the same time move in the direction of making the company more sustainable.