

Green HRM Practices at a Historically Disadvantaged Higher Education Institution in South Africa: Implementation and Challenges

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Abstract – Historically disadvantaged higher education institutions (HDHEIs) struggle to respond to the ecological demands of influencing green behaviours at the workplace. HR departments are required to take a leading role through the adoption of green HRM (GHRM) practices. This study explored HR professionals' experiences with the implementation of GHRM practices and the related challenges at a South African HDHEI. A qualitative approach was adopted. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 HR professionals. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse data. The findings revealed five themes linked to the GHRM practices: online advertisement and invitation of application, green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management and green compensation and reward, with financial constraints, lack of awareness, complexity and lack of green capital as related challenges. The study concluded that an institutional green vision, mission statements and values should be developed and aligned with GHRM to promote environmental sustainability at HDHEIs.

Keywords – Behaviour, Environment, Green, Higher Education Institution, Human Resources Management

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1 Introduction

The degradation state of the environment has become a major concern for everyone, making it imperative for mechanisms to be put in place aimed at sustaining or greening the environment (Abanina et al., 2021). Hence, Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG-11) and Climate Action (SDG-13) are among the most crucial 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN) targets include, which focus on encouraging eco-friendly practices and promoting environmental sustainability (Annan-Aggrey et al., 2021; Mahesh et al., 2024). The words “green” and “environmental friendly” will be used interchangeably as they are both concerned with environmental sustainability (Rajab & Yusliza, 2023). In the work context, Human Resource (HR) department is regarded as being in the better position to initiate and promote green organisational culture by influencing employees to engage in green behaviours. The modification of the behaviour of employees towards green engagement is considered crucial in addressing the degradation of environmental (Abbas et al., 2022).

As the custodians of human capital as well as guardians of employment related policies, practices and procedures within the organisations (de Beer & du Toit, 2015), the HR departments are expected to assume a leading role through the adoption of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices that promote green behaviour among employees at the workplace. Research shows that GHRM contributes towards constructive green behaviours of employees such as in-role and extra-role green behaviours as well as green innovative workplace behaviour (Aboramadan, 2022). Senthilkumar et al. (2023, p. 5322) define GHRM as “the use of human resource management techniques to promote efficient resource usage”. GHRM is defined as an approach that incorporates environmental sustainability into HRM practices in order to promote “environmentally friendly and sustainable practices within the organisation” (Mahesh et al., 2024, p. 267).

GHRM relies heavily on the use of technology, which contributes to the reduction of paper use at the workplace (Hosain & Rahman, 2016; Lakshmi & Battu, 2018). The use of green technology that lower the carbon footprints at the workplace is crucial in order for GHRM policies, practices and procedures to be translated into green practices and activities (Elayan, 2022). However, in higher education context, the investment in green technology depends on the strength of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) in terms of resources, funding, international alliances, capacity building and workforce composition (Cox & Trotter, 2017). Thus, there is a power difference between the Historically Disadvantaged Higher Education Institutions (HDHEIs) and the Historically Advantaged Higher Education Institutions (HAHEIs) in South Africa (Sebola, 2023).

Research shows that a majority of HEIs in South Africa have a challenge of operating with limited resources (Ramdass & Nemavhola, 2018; Sebola, 2023). This implies that the situation is worse for the HDHEIs. The HDHEIs with limited muscles tend to struggle to access the most appropriate green technology to effectively incorporate environmental sustainability into HRM

practices. Research shows that GHRM practices in higher education sector predict the sustainability within HEIs (Abbas et al., 2022). The purpose of this study was to explore the HR professionals' experiences of the implementation of GHRM practices at a selected HDHEI as well as the related challenges. Although the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic forced organisations, including the HEIs to adopt the fourth industrial revolution technology to continue with their daily operations, GHRM practices requires more than a simply reliance on technology to perform HRM functions. It also requires the integration of green element or environmental sustainability on each HRM function (Varma & Balachandran, 2021).

Although there seems to be limited studies on green practices relating to HEIs, research has been conducted globally on GHRM practices in HEIs (Rawat & Singh, 2021; Abbas et al., 2022; Cherian, 2023; Rajab & Yusliza, 2023). However, there is a dearth of research focusing on HR professionals' experiences of GHRM, especially in the South African context (Mtembu, 2017). Al-Alawneh et al. (2023) assets that studies on GHRM are needed in order to gain more insight on its impact on organisations and employees. Varma and Balachandran (2021) emphasize that the need for further studies to focus on the extent to which HRM is greened in HEIs. This study sought to address the gap by exploring HR professionals' experiences with regards to the implementation of GHRM in a HDHEI. GHRM practices play a crucial role in promoting employee green behaviour and organisational culture that consider environmental sustainability a priority (Altassan, 2023). Moreover, the implementation of GHRM practices improves organisational performance and provides an opportunity for HR department to align the organisation's strategic objectives with green goals (Alegbesogie, 2023). The remainder of this paper presents the literature review on GHRM, research design, results, discussion and conclusion.

2 The Storey Model of Human Resource Management

The Storey Model of HRM developed by John Storey in 1989 is the underpinning theory used in this study. The model identified four key elements in the implementation of HRM practice, namely, beliefs and assumptions, strategic concepts, line management, and key levers (Storey, 1992; 2002). Although the model focuses on differentiating HRM from personnel and industrial relations practices, its four key elements are relevant in the implementation of GHRM.

Beliefs and assumptions include the special role of HRM in assisting the organisation to gain competitive advantage, enhancing employee commitment as well as selecting and developing programmes to build on human capital (Storey, 1992; 2002). Thus, GHRM assists organisations to gain the competitive edge through corporate social responsibility and reputable green corporate image through incorporation of organisation and HRM policies with green policies, which assist to attract green motivated and competent employees (Mohammad et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020). GHRM helps organisations

to survive and maintain the long-term sustainability by ensuring that the organisation has updated, innovative and knowledgeable human capital with values that correspond with the organisation's green goals (Sharma & Gupta, 2015; Yadav, 2017).

Strategic concepts encompass the active role of HRM in strategic planning in order to align HR decisions and policies with the organisations' strategic goals and policies (Storey, 1992; 2002). Thus, the implementation of GHRM should be aligned with the vision and mission statements of the organisation (Aggarwal & Agarwala, 2021). Organisations that value the HR managers as strategic business partners are regarded as the most successful because HR departments play a crucial role in ensuring sustainability and profitability of a business (Pandey & Risal, 2022). Therefore, GHRM's involvement in strategic planning assists with strategic responses to environmental management through green change programmes that would ensure adaptation towards greening the organisation (Balakrishnan et al., 2018).

Line management emphasises that efficiency and effectiveness of HRM cannot rely solely on HR departments/professionals, but require line management's involvement in delivering and driving the HR policies. This implies that HRM has a role to also manage other managers within the organisation (Storey, 1992; 2002). It is therefore essential to ensure that managers possess technical and management skills that would influence employees' motivation and commitment to engage in various forms of green behaviours for GHRM to be successful (Trivedi, 2015). Ahmad (2015) asserts that all managers from a strategic level should be the first to receive green training before their subordinates in order to ensure effective implementation of green management systems in all departments within the organisation.

Key levers highlight the importance of managing organisational culture effectively, ensuring integration between HRM practices as well as restructuring and designing jobs to enable employees to have more responsibility and some degree of authority (Storey, 1992; 2002). Organisational culture shapes the behaviour of employees to be aligned with organisational objectives in order to ensure organisation success and sustainability (Chang & Lin, 2015; Dakhan et al., 2020). Thus, on the forefront of promoting green organisational culture, the HR department has a responsibility to shape employee values, beliefs and behaviour through GHRM practices such as green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management and green compensation management (Amini et al., 2018; Aggarwal & Agarwala, 2021).

3 Implementation of GHRM

GHRM assist organisations, including HEIs to fulfil their obligation towards environmental sustainability irrespective of the difficulties that inhibit full implementation of GHRM policies (Mukherjee et al., 2020). The discussion of the implementation of GHRM in organisations focuses on ten HRM practices in which GHRM can be implemented as suggested by Hosain and Rahman (2016). These practice are: online advertisement and invitation of application,

green recruitment and selection, green orientation, green performance management, green training and development, green compensation and reward; green employee relations, green leadership, green health and safety management, and green employee discipline management.

3.1 Online Advertisement and Invitation of Application

The technological advancement has simplified the manner in which organisations advertise their jobs as they simply post their job advertisement online on organisations' websites (Hosain & Rahman, 2016). Although this process is quick, efficient, easy and cheap, for online job advertisement as one of HRM practices, to be integrated to GHRM, it is important to ensure that job advertisement also reflects the organisation's green values (Mukherjee et al., 2022). Thus, the main job duties associated to the advertised job should also include relevant green-related duties of the job (Mukherjee et al., 2022).

3.2 Green Recruitment and Selection

Green recruitment and selection involves the use of technology to conduct recruitment and selection activities to reduce paperwork (Varma & Balachandran, 2021). It is regarded as the first step of ensuring that prospective employees who are attracted and selected to join the organisation are green conscious and possess knowledge and skills concerning environmental protection (Al-Alawneh, et al., 2023; Rawashdeh, 2018). It involves the use of technology to recruit and conduct interview, through telephone or video conferencing (Mukherjee et al., 2022). Artificial intelligence technology assists to screen out the most appropriate candidates for the job and also assists with decision-making when interviewing prospective employees (Na, 2024). Hosain and Rahman (2016) assert that for GHRM to be successful, prospective employees with environment awareness and motivation to foster green behaviours should take preference. Thus, there must be selection criteria in which candidate's environmental awareness and commitment to green practices are assessed during the interview process (Al-Alawneh et al., 2023).

3.3 Green Orientation

Green orientation or induction requires that orientation programmes be designed with green consciousness, such as inclusion of organisational green issues and the use of softcopy handouts (Lakshmi & Battu, 2018). Green orientation involves introducing employees, both new and old at all levels in the organisation, to the organisation's green goals, policies and procedures (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014; Shyam, 2019). Hosain and Rahman (2016) highlight that for HRM practices in relation to the orientation of new employees to be fully integrated into GHRM, orientation programmes should include all green issues and organisation's green initiatives in order to enhance new employees' green consciousness. Renusha (2022) found that green orientation has a direct influence on employees' green attitudes and stressed that green

orientation instill green values to new employees at the beginning of their journey with their organisation.

3.4 Green Performance Management

Green performance management involves the processes of setting of green goals and green targets for the employees and thereafter measure employees' green performance in line with the set goals and targets (Mukherjee et al., 2022). Hosain and Rahman (2016) emphasize that for green performance management function to be successful, comprehensive performance management system should be developed to encompass green targets in key performance areas and key performance index at all levels. This implies that jobs should be redesigned for job descriptions to reflect green responsibilities (Mukherjee et al., 2022). This should be followed by designing criteria to be used to evaluate employees' green performance (Dakhan et al., 2020).

3.5 Green Training and Development

Green training and development as an HRM practice involves the use of online tools and softcopy as training material instead of printed material (Lakshmi & Battu, 2018). It also include educating employees about the values of environmental management, green working methods, waste management, energy conservation practices, recycling and reduced the paper use (Tang et al., 2018). Employees are provided with knowledge and skills for environmental management, which also enhances employees' commitment to make green initiatives (Ali et al., 2023). Hosain and Rahman (2016) found that green training and development programmes equip employees with relevant knowledge and skills in green management. Trained employees engage more in responsible green behaviours that do not only focus on protecting organisational resources, but also conform to environmental rules within and outside the organisation (Abbas et al., 2022). Furthermore, green training and development assist to develop green culture by motivating and shaping the behaviour of employee behaviour towards green behaviour (Dakhan et al., 2020).

3.6 Green Compensation and Reward

Green compensation and reward involve the use of both monetary and non-monetary rewards as well as benefits to motivate employees to engage in green behaviours and assist the organisation to attain its green goals (Cherian, 2023; Hosain & Rahman, 2016). Likhitkar and Verma (2017) emphasize the importance of compensating employees for any newly acquired green skills in influencing employees' green behaviour. Monetary rewards include provision of special bonuses to reward employees' extraordinary green behaviours while non-monetary rewards include using recognition based awards, leave gifts and vouchers to reward employees' outstanding green behaviours (Razab et al., 2015). It is however important for organisations to align its green compensation and reward system with its green values in order to

ensure that it accomplishes its green goals (Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016; Rawashdeh, 2018).

3.7 Green Employee Relations

Green employee relations involves the HR department's responsibility to build and maintain good relationships between the employer and the employees as well as among employees as co-workers in order to create an environment that allows for employee participation in making green-related decisions (Cherian, 2023; Hosain & Rahman, 2016). This may include involving everyone on planned green activities such as campus cleaning, planting trees and maintain gardens (Varma & Balachandran, 2021). Employee participation in green related decision making is known as green employee involvement, which afford employees with the opportunity to voice out their ideas on green-related issues as well as to assist in solving green-related problems (Saifudin et al., 2020). Bangwal and Tiwari (2015) discovered that when employees participate in making green related decisions, they are more likely to engage in green behaviours linked to the green decisions taken. Thus, employee green participation improves their morale and commitment towards attaining green goals, which result into better green management.

3.8 Green Leadership

Green leadership has an impact on employees' green behaviour, which determines the success or failure in the implementation GHRM (Khan, 2023). Zhang et al. (2023) discovered that leader pro-management attitude influence employees' green behaviours. Leader pro-management attitude involves leaders' positive feeling about green issues and the ability to influence followers towards green behaviours. Similarly, Rehman and Yaqub (2021) found that green transformational leadership has a positive influence on green performance. Green transformational leadership refers to the ability to clarify the green related vision of the organisation, encourage employees to attain organisational green goals and provide employees with the necessary support (Rehman & Yaqub, 2021) while green performance involves employees' engagement in green behaviours during a particular period of time (Arulrajah, et al., 2016).

3.9 Green Health and Safety Management

Green health and safety management involves incorporating traditional health and safety management function of HRM with aspects of environmental management (Hosain & Rahman, 2016). Thus, green health and safety management does not only focus on occupational health and safety but health and safety of the environment within which the organisation operates, which also includes taking into consideration its inhabitants. Chalaris (2022) asserts that organisations do not only have an obligation to ensure that their employees

are not exposed to health and safety risks, but also to ensure that their activities do not pollute the environment or discard hazardous material that may pose health risks to people. Organisations can support the community's green initiatives in relation to health awareness while also taking preventative steps to address possible environmental hazards that the organisation may cause (Arulrajah et al., 2016).

3.10 Green Employee Discipline Management

Green employee discipline management includes preparing and implementing a discipline framework that serves to guide on the procedures to be followed when employees fail to comply with the organisation's green policies and procedures (Hosain & Rahman, 2016). Arulrajah et al. (2016) discovered that organisations that adopt green employee discipline management have clear set of green rules and regulations. Green employees discipline management serves as a requirement to promote green behaviour at the workplace, whereby employees who violate the organisation's green rules and regulations face normal disciplinary actions. Thus, it serves as employees' self-regulating device that directs employees' green behaviour (Lakshmi & Battu, 2018).

4 Challenges of GHRM

Organisations may benefit from the implementation of GHRM practices, however, research shows that there are challenges associated, which include amongst others financial constraints, lack of green capital, complexity, resistance to change and lack of awareness.

4.1 Financial Constraints

The implementation of GHRM practices requires investment in technologies and infrastructure that integrate traditional HRM practices into GHRM, which cause financial constraints for organisations with limited financial resources, such as HDHEIs (Mahesh et al., 2024). Hosain and Rahman (2016) found that upfront investment is required at the beginning of the implementation phase, resulting in high investment but low return. This may also have impact on the provision of green training and green rewards that covers all deserving employees (Al-Alawneh, 2023).

4.2 Lack of Green Human Capital

Lack of green capital can be a challenge because the successful implementation of GHRM practices requires employees with green knowledge and skills (Adekoya et al., 2023). Abbas et al. (2021) found that it is very difficult to attract, retain and develop employed with green skills while Hosain and Rahman (2016) discovered selecting and developing future green leaders to drive the

organisation's green initiatives and positively influence employees green behaviour as a major challenge.

4.3 Complexity

The process of integrating traditional HRM practices into GHRM practices is complex as it requires time to carefully plan, coordinate and monitor progress while considering external factors which may be beyond the organisation's control (Mahesh et al., 2024). This involves aligning the organisation's green goals with the strategic objectives of the organisation (Alegbesogie, 2023), making it challenging to ensure a balance between green practices and other essential business priorities such as cost efficiency and productivity (Mahesh et al., 2024). Furthermore, altering deep rooted organisational culture into green organisational culture is complex and lengthy (Aggarwal & Agarwala, 2021; Adekoya et al., 2023).

4.4 Resistance to Change

The implementation of GHRM may fail as a result of managers and/or employees resisting green-oriented change by clinging on to the status quo and refuse to green initiatives (Aggarwal & Agarwala, 2021). Managers may resist green-oriented change as a result of perceived operational disruptions to be possible while employees may be demotivated to adopt GHRM practices (Mahesh et al., 2024). Hosain and Rahman (2016) attest about the difficulty in changing employee attitude from traditional HRM to GHRM instantly.

4.5 Lack of Awareness

Mahesh et al. (2024) found that lack of green awareness have negative influence on the successful implementation of GHRM practices. Adekoya et al. (2023) attest that lack of understanding of the organisation's green initiatives may result in employees' failure to embrace the organisation's green initiatives. This is caused by the organisation's failure to promote its green objectives to its employees. Kaur and Aggarwal (2019) emphasize that it is the role of HR department to ensure that employees are on the board with organisation's green goals.

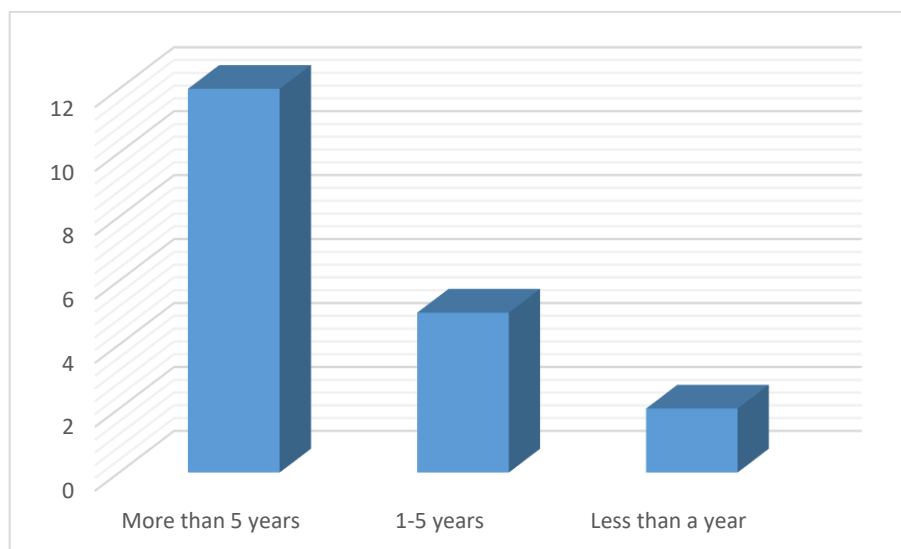
5 Methodology

A qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews was adopted in this study. This approach is used to understand the participants' subjective and socially constructed meanings of the phenomenon under study (Saunders et al., 2023). The qualitative nature of this study enabled collection of rich data on the participants' (HR professionals') experiences of the implementation of GHRM at their workplace, including the challenges involved. Upon obtaining ethical approval and gate keeper permission from the selected

HDHEI, a convenient sample of 19 HR professionals who were willing to participate in this study were interviewed.

A rapport was established with the participants and their consent was obtained to record the interviews. The participants confirmed their demographic background first and then responded to the interview questions. A total of 11 participants were male while 8 were female and 17 of them were Black, 1 was White and another one 1 a Colored. The age of 8 participants was between 41-50 years, followed by 7 who were between 31-40 years, and 4 who were between 21-30 years. Majority of the participants (N=12) have been working at the institution for more than five years, 5 for a period of 1-5 years, and 2 for less than a year. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the participants' working experience.

Figure 1: Participants' Working Experience



The interviews recordings were transcribed and thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2023) and the themes that reflect the participants' experiences of the implementation of GHRM and the related challenges were identified.

6 Findings and Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the HR professionals' experiences of the implementation of GHRM practices at a selected HDHEI as well as the related challenges. The discussion is structured and contextualized according to suggestions made by Hosain and Rahman (2016) that the implementation of GHRM in organisations is based on ten HRM practices. From the thematic analysis conducted, only five themes emerged and these themes are linked

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to only five of the ten HRM practices, namely: online advertisement and invitation of application, green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management as well as green compensation and reward. These themes are discussed below:

6.1 Topic 1: Online Advertisement and Invitation of Application

Most of the HR professionals (N=16) from the selected HDHEI who participated in this study reported that available vacancies are posted on the institution's website to invite prospective candidate to apply. They also indicated that in some instances, the traditional way of advertising jobs is also considered when there is poor attraction of suitable candidates. Participant 5 said: *"We advertise jobs on the University's website in order to reach a wide pool of suitable candidates but sometimes, those who are most suitable are not reachable because they are either not looking for job openings or do not have time to check job advertisement online. In such cases, traditional methods such as head hunting or newspaper advertisement become a solution. We sometimes ask candidates to send their applications via emails"*.

However, the use of technology to post job advertisements online is not enough for online advertisement and invitation of application to be fully integrated to GHRM. The job advertisements should also include the green institution's values and the green requirements of the job (Mukherjee et al., 2022), which seems lacking in the HDHEI's implementation of GHRM. Participant 3 attested: *"The challenge is that we can't go fully green because we do not have appropriate leadership that values GHRM and currently, the University does not have green policies."* This implies that the lack of green awareness or management's resistance to demands for green-oriented change due to fear of possible operational disruptions may serve as challenges in the implementation of this function as suggested (Mahesh et al., 2024).

Although research shows that the use of technology to post job advertisement online on organisations' websites is quick, cheap and easy (Hosain & Rahman, 2016), the findings of this study show that challenges linked to online advertisement and invitation of application include its failure to reach the most suitable or qualified candidates for the advertised positions. This is in line with the findings from previous research, which show that posting of job openings and inviting possible applicants online may result in high quantity but low quality of candidates (Okolie & Irabor, 2017).

6.2 Topic 2: Green Recruitment and Selection

All participants (N=19) reported that the selected HDHEI conducts its recruitment and selection processes online since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the screening of candidates is not done online, which require the HR professionals to scrutinize the candidates' resume. This implies that the green recruitment and selection practices at the HDHEI are sufficient to be green recruitment and selection. Participant 9 said: *"Online recruitment and selection is conducted, requiring applicants to apply for a job"*

online but we still need to go through each and every CV and documents sent by the candidates. The short listed candidates are then invited for either telephonic or video conference interviews”.

The adoption of artificial intelligence technology assists with the process of screening out the most appropriate candidates for the job (Na, 2024) instead of going through a huge pile of applications manually. Research shows that for green recruitment and selection to be fully integrated into GHRM, this function should also assess candidates' green awareness (Hosain & Rahman, 2016). The findings of this study shows that the lack of green awareness among the HR professionals and the limited number of potential applicants with green awareness pose a huge challenge. Participant 13 said: *“There is a lack of knowledge about linking environmental issues with GHRM, which result in omission of green aspects on the job description”* while Participant 7 states: *“It will be challenging for us to recruit candidates with environmental awareness even if we include it on the selection criteria because they are difficult to find.”*

Research shows that the lack of green capital can be a challenge in the implementation of GHRM practices (Adekoya et al., 2023). AI assists in hunting for passive candidates with talents, however, with cost implications (Trziszka, 2023). Thus, the challenge of financial constraints faced by HDHEI may influence the implementation of GHRM (Ramdass & Nemavhola, 2018; Sebola, 2023). Participant 10 says: *“To fully implement GHRM requires high investment and there might be a lack of financial support from the university.”*

6.3 Topic 3: Green Training and Development

Most of the participants (N=16) reported that the selected HDHEI provides training and development programmes online. However, the function has not been fully incorporated with GHRM because it focuses solely on general online training and development programmes rather than training and development programmes that also equip employees with green knowledge and skills. Participant 6 said: *“Since the COVID-19, workshops are conducted using various online platforms, which reduces a burden of printing out training material”.*

Research shows that for green training and development to be fully integrated to GHRM as a function, there must be training programmes specifically designed to assist employees to acquire green knowledge and skills that would enable them to engage in green behaviours (Abbas et al., 2022). Thus, the use of online platforms to conduct training and development programmes is not sufficient. Dakhan et al. (2020) assert that it is through green training and development programmes emphasizing on green issues that can enable the organisation to develop a green culture. It is therefore not surprising that the minimal implementation of green training and development function in the institution resulted in Participant 8 citing the lack of green organisational culture as a challenge in the adoption of GHRM. The participant said: *“It is difficult to embrace GHRM because the nature of our organisational culture is not green conscious”.*

6.4 Topic 4: Green Performance Management

There were few participants (N=3) who reported the minimal implementation of green performance management at the selected HDHEI. The participants reported that there is a performance management system (PMS) in the selected HDHEI, which uses technology to determine employees' annual bonuses based on their performance. Participant 6 said: *"We use the PMS to reward high performing employees in a form of annual bonus in order to encourage employees' commitment and innovativeness". This also takes into considerations my division's efficiency in using the allocated resources."*

However, the existence of PMS that does not include green targets in key performance areas and key performance index implies that it does not measure green performance. The only green aspect which not clearly stated is the sustainable use of resources For green performance management to fully integrate into GHRM, green goals and targets should be set, and employees' green performance be measured according to green performance criteria in order to determine the extent to which the targets are met (Dakhan et al., 2020; Mukherjee et al., 2022). This supports the suggestions by Dakhan et al. (2020) that job should be redesigned for job descriptions to include green duties, which will serve as a basis for measuring performance. Similarly, Lakshmi and Battu (2018) suggest that each job description should at least include one green duty/ or responsibility.

6.5 Topic 5: Green Compensation and Reward

Although the implementation of green compensation and reward system is very minimal at the institution, there are participants (N=8) who reported few aspects of compensation and reward that can be linked to green compensation and reward. Participant 4 said: *"We use the ITS system for payroll capturing, staff data and payments and pay slips are electronically sent to each employee, which promotes paperless workplace"*.

The use of technology to perform compensation and reward function does not necessarily warrant the existence of green compensation and reward. This is based on the fact that the function should also include how employees' green behaviours, knowledge and skills are rewarded within the organisation (Likhitar & Verma, 2017; Varma. & Balachandran, 2021). However, the absence of green key performance areas and index makes it impossible for this function to be carried out.

7 Summary and Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore HR professionals' experiences of the implementation of GHRM and the related challenges. The findings reveal that there is partial implementation of GHRM on five functions, namely online advertisement and invitation of application, green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management as well as green compensation and reward. Such implementation relies more on the use

of technology to ensure sustainable use of resources without organisational green vision, mission and values to serve as a guide. The institutions have no green-related activity in place in relation to the following five HRM functions: green orientation, green employee relations, green leadership, green health and safety management, and green employee discipline management. The challenges cited in relation to the implementation of GHRM include financial constraints, lack of awareness, lack of green human capital and the complex nature of incorporating HRM practices into GHRM

It is GHRM's active involvement in strategic planning that can assist in driving the organisation to respond strategically to environmental management demands (Balakrishnan et al., 2018; Pandey & Risal, 2022). The interdependent nature of the HRM functions influence the HDHEI's green performance in other functions (Lindström & Janhonen, 2021). For example, the lack of organisational green vision, mission and values indicates flaws in HRM's strategic role as business partner in relation to GHRM at a strategic level, which has a direct impact on green orientation function, green leadership as well as green and health safety management. Thus, GHRM at a strategic level should focus on the alignment of the institution's vision and mission statements with its environmental duty in order to build a green corporate image and green organisational culture (Aggarwal & Agarwala, 2021). The online job advertisements do not include the green institution's green values and the green requirements of the job, which makes it difficult to have a green selection criterion as well as to fully implement green performance management and green compensation and rewards. Green job design and analysis function has direct influence on these functions as it assists to provide job descriptions that incorporate and specify green duties and responsibilities related to each job within the institution (Lakshmi & Battu, 2018).

The theoretical implications of this study are:

- The study assists to fill the gap in relation to the limited studies focusing on the implementation of GHRM.
- It provides a useful insight on the implementation of GHRM in the HDHEI context as well as the challenges associated with the implementation of GHRM.
- The study highlights the possible specific areas that should be considered to successfully integrate traditional HRM practices into GHRM practices.
- The strategic role of HRM in assisting the organisation to fulfil its responsibility towards sustaining or greening the environment has been accentuated.

Although there is a consensus that GHRM plays a significant role in promoting environmentally friendly behaviours and sustainable practices within organisations (Mahesh et al., 2024), there is a dearth of studies on the implementation of GHRM, especially in HEIs (Al-Alawneh et al., 2023). Therefore, future research should focus on comparative studies instead of a single HDHEI to gain a broader view of the implementation of GHRM in South African HDHEIs.

GHRM in HEIs may assist institutions to fulfil their obligation towards environmental sustainability irrespective of the difficulties that inhibit full implementation of GHRM policies (Mukherjee et al., 2020). Therefore, the following are practical recommendations for the HDHEIs:

- HDHEIs should introduce an integration of HRM into GHRM at a lower-scale and gradually add other functions.
- The HRM should play an active role as business partners and initiate transition towards environmental goals and instill a green organisational culture from the strategic level at the HDHEIs.
- Green training programmes should be provided to those in leadership to ensure that they are able to influence employee green behaviour in various levels.
- Green leaders should be identified and tasked with a responsibility of monitoring progress towards attaining organisation's green goals.

8 Authors

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