

Green work life balance & green HRM: A new replica for organisational triumph

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Abstract

In this speed- possessed era, each one of us shoves excessively has various things in every minute to run through life. Each one of us has sensed it, the complete enervation as we rush through the day, finalizing domestic chores at home front, meeting deadlines in office and multitasking. This sense can be attributing to our hectic work schedule which leaves us with or no personal time. Green Human Resource refers to using every employee interface to promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issues of sustainability. Through Green HR activities for work life balance help employees to gain personal pleasure and helps them to focus in their workplace better, moreover they imbibe a feeling of belonging for the organization and they tend to be more productive that aims at reducing the carbon footprint, carbon emission from employees and organization additionally, they imbibe a feeling of belonging for the organization and they tend to be more productive since happy employees are more productive employees. The aim of this paper is to provide the general idea through the conceptual knowledge and possible measures using a “green work-life balance model” for a creating a better environment friendly behavior in both life domains.

Keywords: green HR, work-life balance

Introduction

There has been a shift of work from the “Industrial Age” to the “Information Age”. Each one of us feels blessed to have the profit of novel ways of working. No longer are we shackled to centralized operational locations. Irrespective of the type of industry we work in, somewhere between two thirds and three quarters of all trade and industry activity is information based and therefore electrically transportable. The new-fangled work place is one where employees are more connected to their jobs beyond the traditional workday and workplace. This economic fact represents an enormous opportunity to reinvent not only what we do, but also how we do it. Our Information Age is the era where we make the most of new technologies, but at the same time the wonders of modern technologies are upsetting our work life balance.

People have become more accessible on one hand and on the other end these facilities have disrupted their lives outside office, mostly enabling him/her to carry the workload home. Thus, we see that the frontiers of traditional workday and workplace have thinned. The more the borderline is blurred, the higher work-to-life conflict. This leads to several health disorders such as work related mental stress, anxiety disorders, depression, and ageing to name a few. A stressful job could make us old and sick before time. The Human Resources departments in organizations play a large part in how their employees deal with work-life balance.

The Study Aims on the Following Aspects

- To understand the conceptual framework of green human resource management and green work life balance.
- To suggest a model to know how both green work life balance and green human resource management has a relation with the employee performance to improve the best environment at work place.

Literature

The millennium brought with it tremendous challenges with it. Organizations had to face tremendous competition and sustainability has become the buzz word and key integral aspect of doing business in any sector / Industry - the sustainability on optimizing and balancing the social, financial and environmental concerns. To achieve this, sustainability should be part of the business – the way things are done in the workplace rather than as a separate add-on. Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in this shift towards a sustainable business. It makes or breaks an organization's green policies and programs. It represents the organization's values, beliefs, and processes that echo’s what the leadership team and the employees perceive about issues on environmental sustainability. One of the critical roles of Human Resources Management is to drive the organization towards achieving a sustainability strategy by creating and developing skills in people, motivate them, generate a value system and create an environment of trust so as to achieve a bottom line that is threefold. This, in turn, will bring about healthy and sustainable organizational practices benefitting both the internal and external stakeholders of the organization. This only emphasizes the increasing need of integrating human resource management and environmental sustainability.

Human Resources function is in charge of employee benefits, Organization and employee manuals or policies, SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) and Organizational or workplace policies. They also work with the Management to develop sustainability programs like work-life balance and employee retention. Green HR aims to reduce the carbon footprint of each employee in the organization including talent retention. Today’s generation employees are more aware and concerned about global warming, environment

degradation, and climate change. The HR function in the Organizations is looking at Green HRM as a tool to retain the top talent in their organization. Employees are considered as the biggest assets for any organization and the creamy layer of employees – the so-called top performers are the engine and drivers of innovation for the organization. Hence organizations continue to find innovative strategies to retain their top talent.

“Green” – The buzz word in the scientific, political and the corporate world

We, humans, are the only living being / creature that is responsible for the destruction of the environment. Why do I say so? Because it is only us that exploits the natural resources this great planet has to offer beyond the permissible limits of safety. The effects of this are reflecting directly in climate change and global warming. Countries like UK and France are not experiencing snowfall in the winters and similarly experiencing higher temperatures in the summer. This phenomenon is not restricted to only these two countries but affecting all nations across the globe. Deforestation and increase in pollution from Industries is the primary reason. This rapid change is only being seen in the last 50 years with the advancement in technology and subsequent human dependence towards it. Our increasing energy needs have led to increased oil exploration and digging the earth's crust for more than half a century. The irony is that most of the extraction is done in the pretext of storage for future needs. But newer renewable sources of energy like hydrogen and nitrogen will make all this oil stored to waste. Coal is being used for power generation. Digging for coal leads to cavities in the earth's crust. These cavities can cause earthquakes during flooding. The quest for technology and better standards of living is making us destroy the environment and changing the ecological balance of nature. Governments, Scientists, and Companies are realizing this and are trying to take a collaborative approach to reducing carbon footprint thereby reducing emissions and global warming.

Green, in other words, refers to being clean or renewable. It is any process or activity that attempts to do the following:

- Create and store energy that can be renewed
- Recycle products and materials
- Energy efficient manufacturing, supply chain management, equipment, and maintenance
- Environment compliance, awareness, and education
- Sustainable and natural business practices

Go Green

Go green refers to the conservation of the planet's natural resources at the same preserving one's personal resources i.e. lifestyle, family, communities and the surrounding. It involves making lifestyle changes that would help the individual live and sustain without causing damage to the environment. This requires one to have an awareness of the environment and make necessary changes so as to ensure minimum damage to the environment. These small changes would enable one to lead a green work-life that translates to a green environment for the present and future generations.

Paille (2013) says that in order to motivate the employees in order to achieve the objectives of environment sustainability,

organization use suitable and effective HRM practices. To achieve sustainability, organizations need to associate and partner with every employee so as to create awareness and commitment thereby promote sustainable practices that meet the objectives. Sathyapriya (2013) simply put it that in order to promote environmental sustainability, implementing policies suitable according to business purview, Green HRM is essential. It has its own unique characteristics that differ from traditional Human resources management subsystems.

Mandip (2012) explains the importance of Green HRM by the help of illustrating the case of Bank of America provides tax benefits to its workforce that purchases hybrid cars, employees of Google are paid cash by the company on purchase of cars that consume less fuel per gallon and Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) in the UK allowed their employees to bring their daily garbage from homes to the workplace and recycle them so as to decrease the amount of carbon footprint.

Green Work Life Balance & Green Human Resources Management

Green Work life balance refers to Green HR initiatives that are aimed at creating sound occupational health and organizational health. It encompasses two key elements 'sustainability' and 'operational efficiency'. These holistic approaches are designed to create a comfortable workplace for employees so that they can be more efficient and productive in their ways of working and in turn improve the organizational health at large. Green work life balance practices are highly commendable in the present context to sustain the intellectual capital in the organization and it can be instrumental in creating a win-win situation for both the employee and the employer at large. We in India are heading towards a green economy where the concept of going green is no longer a fad or a mere public relations tool in organizations. It has become a way of life in most organizations because it contributes the feel good factor at work. Jyorden T Mishra, Managing Director Spearhead Inter Search aptly opines, "ecoconsciousness " or the color 'green' is rapidly emerging in every dimension of our lives and workplaces are increasingly displaying an organized response to this challenge by bringing in ' professional consciousness' at an institutional level as well as individual employee level."

Green HR practices for work life balance help employees to gain personal gratification, and helps them to concentrate in their workplace better, Moreover, they imbibe a feeling of belonging for the organization and they tend to be more productive since happy employees are more productive employees. For instance, work from home revolution that aims at reducing the carbon footprint helps employees and organizations in more ways than one. It not only reduces operational costs of the organization via reduced absenteeism and lowered transportation costs, but has become a value added retention tool. Employees get rid of nerve-wracking commutes and are able to balance work and life.

Green Human Resources Management or in short Green HRM is a strategy used primarily to reduce the carbon footprint of each employee in the Organization. It is approach adopted by Organizations that can be combined with traditional CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) concept with the objective of attaining a long-term renewable or

sustainable approach to business practices. Green HRM involves incorporating environment-friendly HR policies and initiatives that could result in greater efficiencies and better employee engagement at the same time help organizations to reduce employee carbon footprints in the processes, job and day-to-day functioning of the enterprise. Some of the techniques introduced or adopted by companies are electronic filing (instead of a physical file), car-sharing (reduce emissions / save fuel / save time by lesser traffic and thereby faster commute), sharing of jobs, teleconferencing, virtual interviews, recycling where ever possible, telecommuting, online training.

Some of the techniques adopted by organizations are:

- Discourage the use of paper or if required use recycled paper for filing of records and other pertinent information through the use of technology like electronic / digital filing instead of physical documents and file
- Carpooling / Bike pooling or sometimes provide transportation to employees for their daily commute to the workplace so as to save fuel, lessen traffic thereby ensuring faster commute and reduction in carbon emissions. Sometimes, even encourage employees to cycle to work, wherever possible
- Minimum usage or nil usage of lights and allowing sunlight during the day wherever possible. Using energy efficient LED (Light Emitting Diode) bulbs in the night so as to save electricity. Using recycled and refurbished products and ensure products are disposed of for recycling, construct buildings, and workspaces that support a green architecture by allowing natural lighting, heating, and cooling and get it certified
- Implementing a smoking free office
- Rewarding employees for coming up with sustainable green ideas and strategies
- Plant trees and conduct green awareness for employees
- Awareness and training electronic waste, bio-medical waste for employees

Green HRM leads to Green Jobs

Green HRM leads to green jobs. A green job refers to an occupation where the job contributes to reducing the carbon footprint on the environment by innovative methods, materials and enforcing policies, technologies that reduce environmental damage. It also requires special skills, knowledge, abilities, experience, attitudes and experience in this area. The 3 top most Green HRM practices suggested or reported by human resource management professionals were motivating and encouraging staffs to work consciously that doesn't affect the environment, using recycled products and offering programs that encourage recycling and discounting / donating used office furniture supplies. John R. Rathgeber (2007) believes that Green Business policies are embraced not only to achieve corporate sustainability but also to enhance business operations and improve competitiveness.

Green HRM Practices

Recruitment

- Green job descriptions for employees (and green goals included into managerial job descriptions)
- Graduate perceptions of Green practises (applicants use green criteria)

- Green job candidates
- Recruitment of employees who are 'Green aware' becomes part of the interview schedule
- Green employer branding (green employer of choice)
- Green aspects introduced to the induction process (familiarisation)
- Becoming a green employer may produce other HR benefits, like increased staff motivation and/or engagement, reductions in labour turnover, and increasing workforce health

Performance management

Green performance indicators into performance management system, and appraisals (PMA)

- Communication of Green schemes to all levels of staff through PMA scheme, establishing firm
- wide dialogue on green matters
- Managers are set green targets, goals and responsibilities
- Roles of managers in achieving Green outcomes included in appraisals
- Writing & integrating green criteria in appraisals
- Appraisals assess number of green incidents, use of environment responsibly, & successful communication of environmental policy
- Penalties for non-compliance on targets in environmental management

Training and development

Introduce training on EM, & processes/material use

- EM training needs analysis
- Integrating training on instruction and generation of eco-values
- Development of employee skills, and competence building in EM
- Socialisation in Green values/management
- Use of Green teams in EM
- Train staff to produce green analysis of workspace
- Job rotation to train green managers of the future
- Integrating training to increase staff knowledge
- Training in EM aspects of safety, energy efficiency, waste management, and recycling
- Safety representatives to give data on green courses
- Establish development of Green personal skills
- Re-training of staff losing jobs in relevant polluter industries

Compensation

Green pay/reward system

- Tailor packages to reward green skills acquisition
- Use of monetary-based EM rewards (bonuses, cash, premiums)
- Use of non-monetary based EM rewards (sabbaticals, leave, gifts)
- Use of recognition-based EM rewards (awards, dinners, publicity, external roles, daily praise)
- Develop negative reinforcements in EM (criticism, warnings, suspensions for lapses)
- Develop positive rewards in EM (feedback)
- Establish PRP for all to gain green stewardship /citizenship (esp. seniors)
- Link suggestion scheme to rewards system

- Link participation in Green initiatives to promotion/career gains (managers advance through supporting staff in EM)
- Use green tax breaks
- Line have rewards to motivate employees in EM

Employee relations

Employee involvement & participation (EI&P) in Green suggestion schemes, & problem-solving circles

- Staff independence to form & experiment with green ideas
- Integrate staff EI&P into maintenance (cleaning)
- Employee help-line for guidance in green matters
- Tailor Green EI scheme to industry/company standards
- Increase line/supervisory support behaviors in EM
- Unions negotiating Green work place agreements
- Training of union representatives in EM
- Green elements into the health and safety process
- Encouraging employees to use green forms of transport
- Set-up low carbon chiefs (including CEO and Board) to increase action in EM
- Introduce green whistle-blowing help-lines
- Discipline and/or dismissal for EM breaches

Greening is the Way to a Sustainable Future

The impact of Green Human Resource Management is multifold and requires continuous checking and monitoring so as to understand their potential impact on Human Resource Management issues. Yusliza, Ramayah, and Othman says that Green Human Resource Management involves specific HR's policies and practices that are catered to the three sustainability pillars — environment, social, and economic balance (2015, p.1). The Human Resources Managers of today's generation carries the burden of creating awareness among the youth and employees working in the organizations about Green HRM. Mathapati says that Green movement, utilization of natural resources and helping the organization to maintain proper environment practices thereby retaining and preserving the natural resource of the planet for the future generations is a sustainable development model (2013, p. 2).

Green Work Life Balance: A Novel Model

Basing on the novel model developed reciprocal interactions between working life and private life occur, a

“green work-life balance concept” is suggested to facilitate environmentally friendly behavior in both life domains. The concept offers chances not only for the environment, but also for the company and its employees by increasing, for example, work motivation and job retention. However, challenges like employees' reactance to allow corporate influence on private life need to be addressed.

The importance of work-life balance in today's society it is common for employees to have many competing responsibilities in their life. Examples of responsibilities away from work might include:

- Care commitments involving children or elderly relatives
- Education commitments that limit availability at times of the week/month/year
- Duties and/or interests outside of work
- Needing to be available for religious observances
- People wanting a greater sense of wellbeing and reduced stress levels

A poor balance between an employee's work commitments and their other responsibilities can lead to stress, high absence and low productivity. Employees who have a better work-life balance often have a greater sense of responsibility, ownership and control of their working life. If an employer helps an employee to balance their work and home life this can be rewarded by increased loyalty and commitment. They may also feel more able to focus on their work and to develop their career. Overtime is normally hours that are worked over the usual full time hours; it can be compulsory or voluntary. A recognized system of paid overtime is more common with hourly paid staff than salaried staff. There is no legal right to be paid a higher rate for any overtime worked. However, certain sectors, to encourage their employees to work overtime, do offer an improved overtime rate. For example, additional hours worked on some days of the week would carry payment at the normal rate, but hours on days that are less popular might carry a higher rate, such as time plus a quarter, time plus a half or even double time. What the employee would receive should be made clear in advance of any overtime being worked.

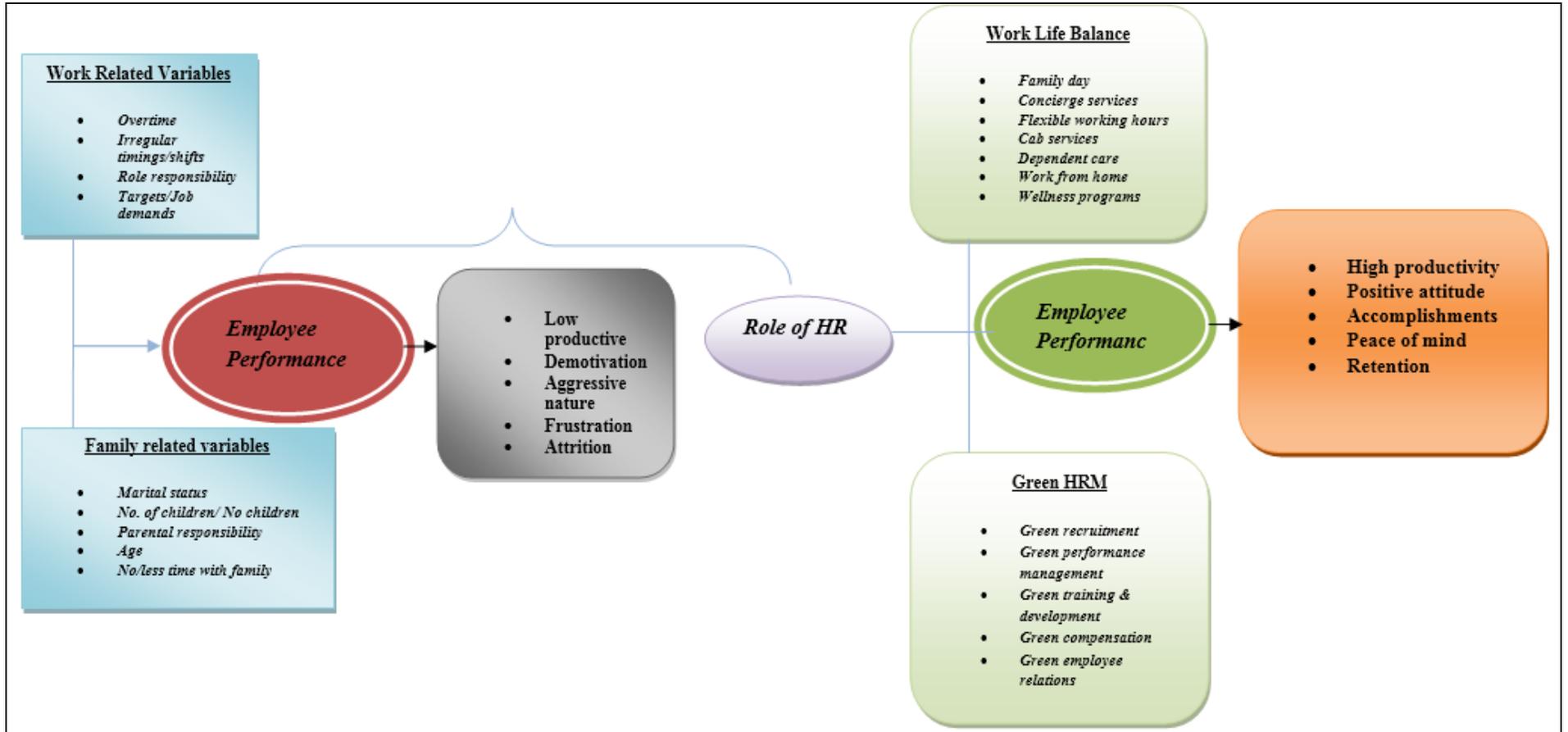


Fig 1

Irregular working hours were consistently associated with decreased work life balance for the employees. In addition, non-standards hours were associated with different kinds of adverse outcomes in form of poorer cognitive stimulation in the home environment and emotional or behavioral difficulties for the children, lower marital quality and divorce. With regard to psychological well-being for the employee the results were mixed. An employer should base its policies on the needs of the organization, its customers and its employees. In advance of creating a policy an employer should give serious consideration to what the main motivation behind its creation is, such as:

- Improved production levels
- Better work-life balance for employees
- Better customer care
- More committed employees

Any existing consultation and/or negotiating arrangements should be followed so that employees or their representatives can contribute to their views on any proposals. This is advantageous to an employer because employees will often be aware of the practical and potential problems of introducing new forms of flexible working.

A policy should include, for example:

- A statement that actively encourages employees to consider flexible working arrangements, provided that both the organization's and the employees objectives are met
- Be clear that the organization is committed to ensuring that individuals who request flexible working arrangements are not treated less favorably than their colleagues
- Details of the various flexible working options available
- How employees can request a flexible working arrangement
- Where to find further information

So Green HRM can meet its full potential only by considering employees in their twofold role as producers and consumers. Employees learn different kinds of behavior not exclusively at the workplace, but also in private life.

Conclusion

In this inclusive warming most of us find 24 hours services operations in the present age, has left us with miniature personal space. At the end of the day we comprehend that we have matched up the lick of moment, but lost a lot in the haggle, whether it is peace mind, messy, strained and shabby out our wellbeing. The emphasis on improving work life balance for employees using Green HR practices appears promising for both the employees and employers at no extravagant costs, rather it reduces operational costs. Organizations can actually work towards chalking out a concrete and feasible plan of action for work life balance so that employees don't get frazzled at work. This would not only reduce attrition rates, it will help mitigate problems of absenteeism and

help create motivated employees who can essentially improve productivity.

“Everyone deserves a great work force”

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