


Chapter 6

Navigating the Complexities of Green Human Resource Management Practices: Operational and Legal Hurdles

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ABSTRACT

This chapter critically examines the alignment of green human resource management (Green HRM) practices—specifically in recruitment, training and development, and performance management—with legal standards, focusing on privacy protection, personal data security, and anti-discrimination laws. It also explores the potential to integrate sustainability features into established workplace systems and practices, such as near miss management systems, to enhance environmental responsibility within organizations. This method is advantageous as it utilizes existing tools and procedures familiar to employees, ensuring smoother implementation while leveraging prior legal evaluations.

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INTRODUCTION

Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) plays a pivotal role in steering organizations towards sustainable development and a green economy. Green HRM integrates environmental management into HR practices, aiming to encourage employees to adopt sustainable and eco-friendly practices both within and outside the workplace (Wielewska et al., 2023; Paillé et al., 2020). By embedding environmental concerns into HR policies and practices, organizations can nurture a workforce that is not only aware of environmental issues but also motivated to act in ways that reduce environmental footprints. This includes promoting energy-efficient practices, reducing waste, and encouraging the use of sustainable materials. Employees extrapolate these practices from the professional milieu to their daily existence, irrespective of whether it pertains to their personal conduct within society, their anticipations from governing bodies, or the upbringing of their progeny (Bombiak, 2019). Thus, the principles of sustainability are perpetuated beyond the confines of the workplace, engendering transformative effects at the societal level. Conversely, Green HRM enhances a company's societal reputation by elevating its employer brand (Wang et al., 2023; Guillot-Soulez et al., 2022). Or, a strong employment brand is crucial for attracting and retaining top talent in today's competitive job market, boosting the company's performance (Merlin & Chen, 2022; Wallace et al., 2014; Franca, 2012).

This chapter delves into the complexities of integrating Green HRM practices within companies, focusing particularly on the legal and operational challenges encountered. These objectives are important as most studies (Amrutha & Geetha, 2020, AlKetbi & Rice, 2024; Ren et al., 2018) have tended to focus on the management perspective of the subject and have not analysed the legal challenges of implementing green HRM practices. We contend that it is important to extend the research in this field with an approach that identifies and explains the potential legal risks arising from human resource practices aimed at integrating a green component. We argue this point because integrating green values into corporate goals necessitates that employees align with these values. This means that significant aspects of the employment relationship - such as recruitment, professional development, and performance evaluation - must incorporate green criteria in their assessment processes. As we will illustrate in this article, identifying and evaluating employees' green values and actions require careful consideration of elements protected by privacy and anti-discrimination laws. Therefore, HR professionals must be aware that broadening the criteria for employee evaluations should be done in a way that maintains a balance between the employer's desire to implement green policies and the employees' rights, including their basic human rights. This approach ensures that the integration of green objectives does not inadvertently lead to violations of employees' privacy or result in discriminatory practices. It is crucial to develop HR

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