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GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT- THE LATEST TREND OR STRATEGIC NECESSITY?*

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Abstract. Our dynamically developing market economy has, for some time now, been a witness to a growing interest in the concept of business management involving conscious activities oriented not only at financial profits and economic aspects but also at broadly understood social and ecological interests. Such an approach, termed sustainable development, is becoming an imperative in the contemporary world, hence the decision processes of entrepreneurs tend to be more and more often guided by the principles of environmental corporate responsibility. The author of the study reckons that the implementation of the above business model requires, most of all, the engagement of the human factor. Eco-oriented management is performed exclusively by employees with positive attitudes towards the environment, green competencies, and responsible for the environmental consequences of their actions. Therefore, human resource management oriented at supporting the implementation of the principles of ecological development and the development of environmentally-friendly attitudes of employees referred to as Green Human Resource Management plays an unprecedented role in environmental performance. Green Human Resource Management is a novel approach to the performance of the HR function within organizations – one where environmental contexts constitute the foundation of all initiatives. This involves the application of HR policies in order to promote the sustainable use of company resources, to support ecology and development of ecological sensitivity in workers. This is because ecological awareness of employees and managers is key to the operations of any company complying with the concept of sustainability. The purpose of the study is to present the relevance of Green Human Resource Management to the operations of contemporary companies and indicate practices which can be undertaken in the field to promote knowledge related to the subject matter and extend the scope of concept application as a tool for constructing sustainable companies. The theoretical part of the study, drafted on the basis of a world's literature overview, identifies several environmental practices that can be employed in the field of human resource management at each stage of the personnel process, starting with work design, employee selection, work discipline shaping, to the development of “green” competencies and “green” working conditions. The empirical part of the research demonstrates the results of a questionnaire conducted at a random population of 300 Polish enterprises. The research approach used enabled the researcher to identify

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these initiatives in the field of Green HRM that, in the opinion of the study managers, play the key role in the process of shaping enterprise sustainable development.

Keywords: sustainability; environmental corporate social responsibility; green human resources management

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Additional disciplines: ecology and environment

1. Introduction

Progressive degradation of the natural environment due to human exploitation brought about the need to introduce the concept of sustainable development. The sustainable development paradigm not only offers a new quality of management (Skowroński 2006) but also requires that novel sources of competitive advantage are sought to meet corporate economic goals and to heed broadly understood social and environmental interests (Hart, Milstein 2003; Abidin, Pasquire 2007; Joonhyun, Jinsoo 2018; Jabłoński 2018). Irrespective of the fact this concept has been explored for more than a dozen years now, whether at the macroeconomic or microeconomic level, it was not until recently that the relations between sustainable development and human resources in organizations were noted. However, it is the human factor which stimulates practices oriented at the improvement of organizations' environmental effectiveness. Eco-oriented management is performed exclusively by humans expressing a positive attitude towards the environment, competent in ecology, and bearing a sense of responsibility for environmental implications of their actions (Bombiak, Marciniuk-Kluska 2018; Smaliukienė, Monn 2019). Needless to say, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) plays a significant role in the development of environmentally-friendly practices within organizations.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is an element of Sustainable Human Resource Management (Stankevičiūtė, Savanevičienė 2018; Beck-Krala, Klimkiewicz 2017) oriented at generating value for company stakeholders through a simultaneous consideration for efficiency, social and environmental aspects in HR processes. HR processes play a significant role not only in the practical application of sustainable development policies (Renwick et al. 2008; Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson 2009) but also in the construction of a sustainable development culture (Liebowitz 2010; Harmon, Fairfield, Wirtenberg 2010). That is why, the method of human resource management is crucial to environmental goals' attainment.

Despite the gravity of the subject area, Green HRM is relatively unknown among managers, which indicates that it is in its early phase of development. Source literature provides for a relatively low number of studies on the practical implementation of the concept. The author intends to bridge the gap, at least to some extent.

The objective of the study is to present the nature of the concept and assess the impact pro-environmental human resource practices may have on the sustainable development of organizations. In the course of research, attempts were made to verify the hypothesis assuming that GHRM practices have an impact on the sustainable development of organizations, and as such they may provide strategic support to concept implementation. The study was conducted based on a source literature inquiry and a diagnostic survey method involving a questionnaire survey.

2. Environmental Responsibility as a Factor for Corporate Competitiveness: theoretical aspects

Competitiveness is a feature delineating the outstanding skills of a given enterprise to take up activities ensuring its stable and enduring development, and contributing to its market value (Walczak 2010). Within contemporary economies, it is viewed as synergy effects of numerous internal factors (such as human resources, time and cost of production, technology, price, distribution network), as well as external mechanisms and preconditions (e.g. consumer preferences) (Gorynia 2000; Krawczyk 2012). Nowadays, due to growing social awareness with respect to the importance of green competitiveness – perceived as an ability to compete and take advantage of environmental actions (Adamkiewicz-Drwiłło, Kruk, Skrzyszewska 2008).

The meaning of environmentally-friendly activities is a consequence of an increase in sustainable development concept popularity, more and more often treated as a new business opportunity and a tool for gaining a competitive edge (Holliday 2001). According to its principals, to achieve success, organizations should focus not only on economic but also on social and environmental factors (Daily, Bishop, Steiner 2007). The enterprise-society-environment symbiosis is crucial (Olejniczak 2013), hence entrepreneurs become increasingly guided by Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR). Its essence is to increase the value of an enterprise through (Chodyński, Jabłoński, Jabłoński 2008):

- the development of an effective business model based on environmental criteria;
- the creation of environmental innovations related to enduring corporate development;
- the distribution of tangible and intangible assets in the context of adopted environmental criteria;
- environmental standard reporting.

The ECSR approach signifies, above all, a concept whereby companies integrate environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.

Studies indicate a positive impact of environmental practices on a reduction in operating costs and new opportunities for development, which translates into improved financial performance (Olkiewicz 2016; Beurden, Gössling 2008; Matejun 2009; Lin et al. 2010) and competitive advantages (Wagner 2007). Environmental corporate responsibility may contribute to the creation of new business undertakings and improve interactions with stakeholders. Yet another effect of ECSR is environmental innovation, which not only brings about novel products and processes, delivering added value to both companies and customers, but also raises effectiveness of natural resource use in the economy and reduces the negative impact human activities have on the environment (Seroka-Stolka 2012; Ottman 2011; OECD 2011; Kemp, Pearson 2008). What is more, environmental corporate involvement facilitates winning local community acceptance and investor interest, thereby increasing access to funding. Needless to say, investors are keen on cooperating with companies which may take pride not only in their financial performance but also in operational transparency, honest development of corporate image and positive relations with third parties (Słupik 2014; Mishra, Suar 2010; Lai et al. 2010). Finally, the importance of other, non-financial effects, such as security increase, better working conditions, raised employee motivation to engage in environmentally-friendly activities are also highlighted.

Given the foregoing, it can be stated that at present environmental corporate responsibility is not only beneficial but also, and above all, requisite. Nonetheless, the implementation of such a business model is mainly determined by the human factor. Sustainable company development based on green practices is only possible if the staff has relevant competencies relating to the implementation of its principles into practice, provided that such competencies are continuously developed and effectively applied. Therefore, the following thesis may be formed: the role of human resource management oriented at supporting the implementation of the principles of green development and shaping environmentally-friendly attitudes in employees, referred to as Green Human Resource Management, is irreplaceable.

3. The Essence of Green Human Resource Management: literature review

Human resource management is defined as a total of actions aiming at a provision of a required number of employees, demonstrating suitable skills and competencies, and creating conditions stimulating effective behavior of the staff, at a specific time and place (Pocztowski 1993). The core basis of the concept is formed by a subjective approach to human resources seen as a component of company assets and a source of corporate competitiveness.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is an innovative approach to the performance of the HR function within an organization, in which the environmental context constitutes the basis of all undertaken initiatives (Pabian 2015). This means the application of HR policies to promote sustainable use of company resources and ecology (Mampra 2013; Zoogah 2011). GHRM is a key tool for the implementation of sustainable development (Urbaniak 2017; Gholam et al. 2016; Bangwal & Tiwari 2015; Renwick et al. 2013). A growing number of studies devoted to GHRM, as shown by the analysis of international databases (Figure 1), clearly reflects that many have become aware of that fact. However, we ought to bear in mind that the issue is relatively new, examined for less than twenty years, which indicates its early phase of development.

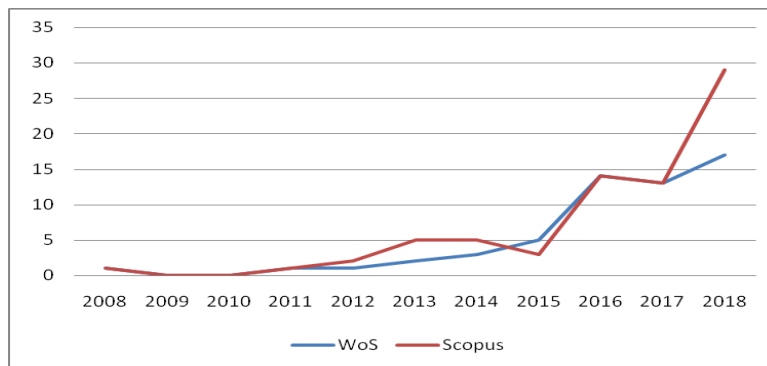


Figure 1. The number of publications containing the term “Green Human Resource Management” in selected databases
Source: own research

Green initiative undertaken as part of GHRM are a part of wider corporate social responsibility programs (Mandip 2012). Its primary objective is to develop ecological sensitivity in employees and to make them aware of how their own behaviors may affect the environment. This is about motivation and making one feel proud of participation in green initiatives. This way, Green HRM supports the creation of a green workforce, who understands, appreciates, and practices ecological initiatives (Ahmad 2015; Opatha, Arulrajah 2014). The results of research suggest that green programs have a significant positive relationship to environmental performance (AnuSingh, Shikha 2015). Green Human Resource Management has been becoming a key business strategy for the significant organizations where human resource departments play an active part in going green at the organizations (Kar, Praharaj 2017). It has extended the boundaries of conventional HRM practices towards more sustainable and environmental strategies (Peerzadah, Mufti, Nazir 2018). Authors engaged in GHRM issues draw attention to a number of environmental practices applicable to the field of human resource management at each stage of the HR process. A selection of them is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of green practices at each stage of the HR function

HRM function	Green practice example
Green job design and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusion of tasks related to environmental protection in job descriptions, - inclusion of green competencies as a part of a competency profile for each position, - creation of positions accountable for environmental corporate management.
Employee selection (recruitment, selection, adaptation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusion of environmental criteria in job announcements, - notifying candidates of employer’s commitment to environment, - exposure of environmental values in job vacancy advertising, - asking questions related to ecology during candidate selection, - giving preference to candidates with competencies and experience in environmental projects, - introducing new employees to environmental standards of organization
Developing working discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - setting a set of transparent rules and regulation concerning green conduct principles, - developing a disciplinary system to discipline employees breaching the principles of green conduct, - pursuing disciplinary actions with respect to employees breaching the rules (warning, suspension, etc.)
Green development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis and identification of employee needs with respect to environmental training, - provision of environmental training to develop green competencies, - encouraging employees to develop green competencies
Green performance evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conduct of environmental audits, - inclusion of environmental criteria in performance appraisals, - establishment of goals and responsibilities in relation to ecological initiative implementation - provision of regular feedback to employees on their progress in attaining ecological goals or improvement of their environmental effectiveness
Green employee relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - providing opportunities to engage in green projects, - encouraging employees to submit ecological initiatives, - allowing employees to feel free when it comes to the formulation and experimenting with environmental projects, - provision of green projects advisory services and support, - joint consultations regarding the solving of corporate environmental issues, - sharing knowledge about environmental initiatives or programs
Green working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reducing paper use in offices, - energy-efficient bulbs, - turning off computers, television sets, and lights when the work is done, - giving preference to reusable energy sources (e.g. solar panels), - recycling programs, - initiatives aimed at occupational stress and occupational diseases reduction

Source: compiled on the basis of: (Bangwal & Tiwari 2015; Arulrajah et al. 2015; Renwick at al. 2013; Opatha 2013; Ahmad 2015; Mathapati 2013; Opatha, Arulrajah 2014).

The analysis of environmental HR practices shown in Table 2 allows one to conclude that GHRM covers various initiatives which popularize environmental thinking amongst employees (Mishra, Sarkar, Kiranmai 2014) and encourage environmentally-friendly attitudes. It is underpinned in source literature that GHRM has long ago ceased to be a non-mandatory addition and instead became a necessity (Ackermann 2017; Müller–Camen, Zdravkovic 2012). Thus, it is vital to identify those GHRM practices, which support corporate sustainable development to the largest extent.

4. Research methodology

The objective of the study is to assess the impact pro-environmental human resource practices may have on the sustainable development of organizations. The study was conducted based on a source literature inquiry and a diagnostic survey method involving a questionnaire survey. In the course of analyses, the following research problems were addressed:

- Are Polish managers familiar with the Green Human Resource Management concept?

- Which Green Human Resource Management practices are key to sustainable development of organizations in the Polish reality?

- Which Green Human Resource Management practices are most often used in Polish organizations?

In the course of research, attempts were made to verify the hypothesis assuming that GHRM practices have an impact on the sustainable development of organizations, and as such they may provide strategic support to concept implementation.

The subject matter of the research were environment-friendly human resource practices implemented across Polish enterprises. The diagnosis was conducted with reference to 7 areas of human resource policy:

- Green job design and analysis;
- Green recruitment;
- Shaping of green discipline at work;
- Green development;
- Green performance evaluation;
- Green motivation;
- Green HRM procedures.

The research attempted to evaluate the impact individual practices have on the sustainable development of the enterprises studied. The assessment of the impact was conducted with the application of a five-level Likert scale, where 1 signified a very low impact and 5 a very high impact of a given practice. To evaluate the scope of GHRM concept implementation in the Polish reality, the popularity of individual environmental human resource practices was analyzed.

The survey was conducted in 2018 on a random representative population of 300 medium and large enterprises with their seat in Poland. The study was conducted with the application of the CATI technique. The study sample was selected on a layer basis. First, 50 entities from each of the six Polish regions were drawn: Central, South, East, North-West, South-West and North. The survey targeted individuals in charge of human resource policy development in the enterprises studied. The characteristic features of the study population are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Details of enterprises covered by the research

Criterion	Number of Enterprises	Percentage
Employment number:		
50-249 employees	125	41.7%
250-499 employees	94	31.3%
500-749 employees	33	11.0%
More than 500 employees	48	16.0%
Time on the market:		
up to 3 year	150	50.0%
3-5 years	14	4.7%
5-7 years	8	2.7%
7-9 years	2	0.6%
More than 9 years	126	42.0%
Type of ownership:		
limited liability company	179	59.7%
joint-stock company	52	17.3%
state-owned enterprise	69	23.0%
Scope of operations:		
international	130	43.3%
national	82	27.3%
regional	38	12.7%
local	50	16.7%
Main type of activity:		
services	162	54.0%
production	119	39.7%

trade	19	6.3%
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Source: own research

The most frequent type of ownership of young organizations was limited liability company (59.7%). The geographical coverage of the enterprises was highly-diversified, with the most numerous operating globally (43.3%). The prevailing type of business activity of the study entities was the provision of services (54%). The enterprises which prevailed in the population studied were medium-sized, i.e. employing between 50 and 249 employees (41.7%), operating on the market up to 3 years (50.0%). The analysis of research results in the group of young enterprises is presented in another paper (Bombiak, Marciniuk-Kluska 2018).

5. The Effect of GHRM on Corporate Sustainable Development in the Light of Empirical Research

The subject matter of the research were environmental practices implemented in the area of GHRM, further grouped into 7 areas of HR policy. The research attempted to evaluate the impact individual practices have on the sustainable development of the enterprises studied. The assessment of the impact was conducted with the application of a five-level Likert scale, where 1 signified a very low impact and 5 a very high impact of a given practice. The results of the analysis are presented in Tab. 3.

Table 3. The impact of GHRM practices on the sustainable development of organizations (scale of 1 to 5)

Area of GHRM	Activities	Mean impact assessment of an activity	Mean impact assessment of an area
Green job design and analysis	1. Inclusion of tasks related to environmental protection in job descriptions	2.9	2.7
	2. Inclusion of green competencies (such as ecological knowledge) as a part of competency requirements for each position	2.5	
	3. Creation of positions accountable for environmental corporate management	2.8	
Green recruitment	4. Communication of employer's commitment to ecology during recruitment	2.3	2.3
	5. Exposure of environmental values in job vacancy advertising	2.2	
	6. Verification of candidate's ecological knowledge and skills during recruitment process	2.2	
	7. Giving preference to candidates with competencies and experience in environmental projects	2.2	
	8. Introducing new employees to environmental standards of organization during adaptation	2.5	
The shaping of green discipline at work	9. Establishment of a clear set of rules and provisions regarding employee conduct in relation to environmental protection	2.7	2.5
	10. Development of a disciplinary system to discipline employees breaching the principles of ecological conduct	2.4	
	11. Implementation of disciplinary actions (such as warning, penalty, suspension, dismissal) against employees breaching the provisions and rules of environmental protection	2.4	
Green development	12. Analysis and identification of employee needs with regards to ecological training	2.4	2.4
	13. Provisions of ecological training for employees and managers to develop ecological skills and knowledge	2.4	
	14. Incentives for workers to develop green competencies	2.3	
Green performance evaluation	15. Inclusion of environmental criteria in performance appraisals	2.2	2.4
	16. Establishment of goals and responsibilities in relation to ecological initiative implementation	2.4	
	17. Conduct of environmental audits	2.6	
	18. Provision of regular feedback to employees on their progress in attaining ecological goals or improvement of their environmental effectiveness	2.4	
Green motivation	19. encouraging employees to submit ecological initiatives (e.g. ecological	2.4	

	project competitions)		2.6
	20. Provision of advisory services and support to solve ecological problems	2.3	
	21. Sharing knowledge about environmental initiatives or programs	2.4	
	22. Development of a rewards system for completion of ecological projects (awards, subsidies to wages)	2.3	
	23. Promoting environmentally-friendly attitudes when performing professional tasks (such as paper use reduction, waste sorting)	3.5	
Green HRM procedures	24. Inclusion of environmental goals of HRM in company strategy	2.6	2.4
	25. Measurement of effectiveness of environmental actions in HRM	2.4	
	26. Provision for HRM environmental actions-related expenditure in the budget	2.4	
	27. HRM environmental action progress monitoring	2.3	
	28. Drafting reports on environmental actions in HRM	2.3	
Average impact of GHRM practices on the sustainable development of organizations			2.5

Source: own research

The analysis of data demonstrated in Table 3 allows one to confirm the indication that pro-environmental actions undertaken in the area of human resource management have an impact, with variations, on the sustainable development of the studied organizations. The impact assessment of individual activities ranged from 2.3 to 3.5. The activity with the greatest impact, in the opinion of the respondents, was activity no. 23, i.e. promoting environmentally-friendly attitudes when performing professional tasks (such as paper use reduction, waste sorting). The respondents assessed the impact of the activity at 3.5 on the 5-level scale. Other activities the respondents found crucial were:

- inclusion of tasks related to environmental protection (duties and responsibilities) in job descriptions (activity no. 1), with an impact average of 2.9;
- creation of positions responsible for environmental management aspects across organizations (activity no. 3), with an impact average of 2.8;
- establishment of a clear set of rules and provisions regarding employee conduct in relation to environmental protection (activity 9), with an impact average of 2.7;
- consideration Inclusion of environmental goals of HRM in company strategy (activity 24), and conducting environmental audits (activity 17), with an impact average of 2.6.

On the contrary, a very small impact on the sustainable development in organizations was associated by respondents with the following:

- exposure of environmental values in job vacancy advertising (activity 5);
- verification of candidate’s ecological knowledge and skills during recruitment process (activity 6);
- giving preference to candidates with competencies and experience in environmental projects (activity 7);
- inclusion of environmental criteria in performance appraisals (activity 15).

The impact of the above activities was assessed at 2.2 on the 5-level scale used. Similar results were obtained by analyzing pro-ecological practices in the group of young enterprises (Bombiak, Marciniuk-Kluska 2018).

The analysis of the impact of individual GHRM areas demonstrates that the respondents perceive them as having a moderate impact on the sustainable development of organizations - the mean average regarded as the arithmetic mean of the assessment of individual areas was 2.5 points on the 5-level scale applied. The importance of individual areas varied in the opinion of the respondents. The area with the strongest impact was the work analysis and design stage, with the average impact calculated as the arithmetic mean of the assessment of individual practices divided by their number in a given area, was 2.7 points. In addition, a relatively high impact was ascribed to the area of encouraging employees to take up environmentally-friendly actions (2.6 points). These areas were regarded as principal from the point of view of the input of the HR function in the sustainable development of organizations. The effectiveness of Green motivation was also confirmed by the studies

conducted in Denmark, which showed that green motivation programs increased employee participation in pro-environmental initiatives (Forman, Joergensen 2001). In addition, research carried out in 376 Pakistani companies demonstrated the key role of educational practices for the purpose of attainment of environmental management goals (Bhutto, Auranzeb 2016). Needless to say, Green development practices appear underestimated in Poland, as they were listed fourth in terms of their impact on the sustainable development of organizations.

Relatively low ratings are also given to the importance of acquisition of job candidates with green competencies – the recruitment was ranked the lowest, with an impact average of merely 2.3 points. The insignificant impact of green acquisition of employees was also demonstrated by the studies conducted by Owino and Kwasira (Owino, Kwasira 2016) and Guerci et al. (Guerci et al. 2016). The latter of the studies referred to revealed that green recruitment was perceived as an activity having no impact on environmental performance of organizations.

Against this background, the scope of implementation of individual GHRM practices becomes a crucial research issue.

6. The Elements of GHRM in the Practice of the Study Enterprises

To evaluate the scope of GHRM concept implementation in the Polish reality, the popularity of individual environmental human resource practices was analyzed. The study outcomes are illustrated in Chart 2. The most popular activity appeared to be promoting environmentally-friendly attitudes when performing professional tasks (such as paper use reduction, waste sorting). This practice was implemented relatively often - in as many as 78.7% of the study entities. Nearly a half of the analyzed enterprises (45.3%) included tasks related to environmental protection in job descriptions. In more than 1/3 of the studied entities:

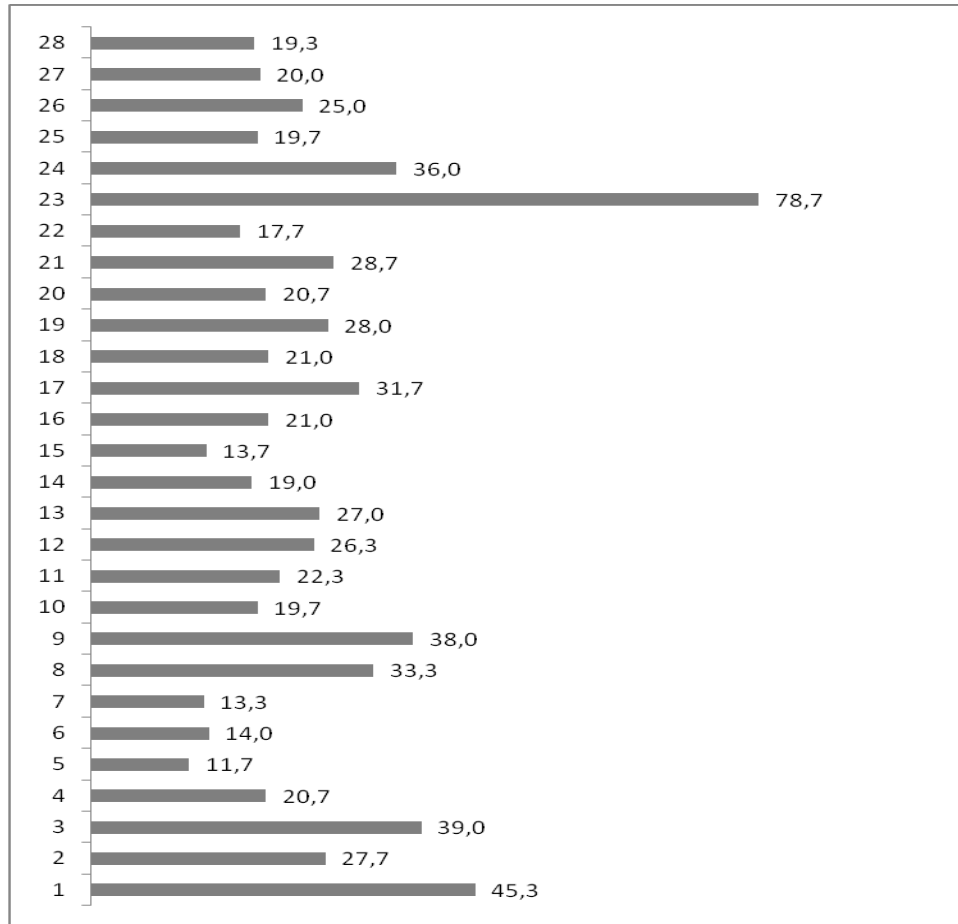
- a clear set of rules and provisions regarding employee conduct in relation to environmental protection was established;
- positions accountable for environmental corporate management were created;
- ecological HRM goals were accounted for in company strategy;
- new employees were introduced to environmental standards of organization during adaptation.

Contrary to the above, the rarest implemented practices covered:

- exposure of environmental values in job vacancy advertising, implemented in 11.7% of the studied entities;
- giving preference to candidates with competencies and experience in environmental projects, implemented in merely 13.3% of the studied enterprises;

inclusion of environmental criteria in performance appraisals, implemented in only 13.7% of the covered entities.

Similar results were obtained by analyzing pro-ecological practices in the group of young enterprises. In this case, also the most popular activity turned out to be activity promoting environment-friendly attitudes when performing professional tasks (such as paper use reduction, waste sorting). The remainder of practices were carried out by less than half of the study enterprises (Bombiak, Marciniuk-Kluska 2018).



Note: the y-axis shows the numbers of activities included in Table 3

Figure 2. The scope of implementation of GHRM practices in Polish enterprises (data shown in %)
Source: own research

The results presented in Figure 2 demonstrate that the GHRM concept is rather unpopular in Polish organizations. Polish managers appear to be lagging far behind American companies in terms of GHRM concept application, as the latter have been commonly using environmental goal-based bonuses for the management (Wehrmeyer 1997). Studies conducted in Poland showed that ecological practices are implemented mainly to improve company image or to gain financial benefits (Beck-Krala, Klimkiewicz 2017). The development of environmentally-friendly attitudes of the staff is largely seen as a secondary advantage. However, the implementation of GHRM is indeed vital, for the pro-ecological attitudes developed in companies may actually be transferred to private lives (Whitmarsh, O’Neill 2010; Muster, Schrader 2011; Urbaniak 2017).

We can observe no systemic approach in the enterprises studies, the consequence of which is selecting a few, individual environmental practices in the GHRM area. The reason behind it could be, above all, limited knowledge in the field (Bombiak, Marciniuk-Kluska 2018). Such competency gap was confirmed by the analyses performed. Insight into Green HRM was confirmed by only one in four managers (26% of the respondents). In Poland, environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR), a part of which is GHRM, remain a relatively unknown initiative in Poland. It is neither long-standing nor deep rooted in Polish enterprises. The main problem is the absence of perceiving environmental issues as elements of strategic management. Many entrepreneurs expect these to be handled by politicians and public officials. The main mechanism of environmental practices

implementation in the approach given becomes prescriptive legislation (Słupik 2014). GHRM practices, however, continue to be voluntary.

One of the difficulties related to GHRM implementation may also be a different perception of green economy (Urbaniak 2017). Whereas the management is inclined to create a more idealistic picture of a green company, the staff demonstrate a more cynical approach. These discrepancies may indicate a lack of green organizational culture (Harris, Crane 2002). It is underpinned in source literature that from the point of view of environmental performance of organizations GHRM practice formalization is required (Jabbour 2011).

7. Conclusions

Environmental protection presents a considerable challenge for contemporary enterprises facing the need to find a balance between the economic expansion and environment-friendly actions. As demonstrated by the research, GHRM offers vital support to the green strategy implementation. GHRM is a new area of research within HRM oriented at the development of environmentally-friendly organizational culture and employee attitudes. Both the review of world's literature and the empirical studies confirm the thesis that pro-environmental actions undertaken in the area of GHRM have an impact on sustainable development.

In response to the question posed in the title to the study, it may be said that GHRM is not only a new trend but also a strategic necessity in the context of an increase in both social awareness concerning the environment and environmental protection requirements. The implementation of GHRM contributes to the development of the unique resource - the "green" human capital - which features an above-average environmental sensitivity and efficiency. Therefore, we may conclude that GHRM is the basis for the development of a continued competitive advantage for organizations.

Nevertheless, the concept appears undervalued and with a narrow scope of implementation in Polish companies. This proves that the HR function in Poland is still not considered a strategic partner, actively participating in the processes generating an added value for a variety of stakeholders. A development of GHRM qualifications is an essential condition to ensure an increased role of HRM in the shaping of sustainable organizations, for it is the absence of managers' knowledge in the field which is the main obstacle to the practical implementation of the concept. To overcome it, the nature of GHRM needs to be promoted in business circles, extensive research must be carried out on the impact of environmental human resource practices on sustainable development, and good practices in the area have to be displayed in social reports. A considerable challenge is further presented by the measurement of the impact of GHRM activities and their effect on financial performance of enterprises, as said activities should not exclude the principles of economic calculation. GHRM may yield an added value only when the pro-environmental goals of HRM are integrated into the general business policy of an enterprise.

This study contributes to source literature by diagnosing a gap associated with human resource policy use as a tool for supporting corporate sustainable development under Polish conditions, which constitutes the foundation for taking up corrective actions by managers. In the opinion of the author, the results of the cited studies may stimulate interest in the implementation of the GHRM concept in Polish organizations and the widening of the scope of its use as a tool for sustainable enterprise development.

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