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EFFECT OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to find out the effect of green Human Resources Management and employee performance on work-life balance, in small and medium enterprises operating in transition economies, specifically in Kosovo. Additionally, this paper presents a comprehensive conceptual framework for green human resources management and work-life balance.

In order to find out this relation, a questionnaire was delivered to employees of small and medium enterprises in Kosovo. The data collected was analyzed using STATA 14. To test the hypothesis, a linear model was constituted, and a regression analysis was conducted using the OLS technique. The model results indicate positive linear correlation between green human

resource management, work-life balance, and employee performance, which means that green HRM and employee performance have significant impact on work-life balance of employees in small and medium enterprises in transition countries.

This study contributes to practical level, as it provides important information to companies in Kosovo, who should take into consideration the importance of incorporating new green strategies in their human resource practices to facilitate work-life balance for employees, consequently leading to enhance company performance.

Key words: Green Human Resources Management, work-life balance, employee performance, environment.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings reveal a paradoxical relationship with sustainability, expressing a profound need and desire for it, yet simultaneously contributing to environmental destruction. “Environmentally conscious”, “eco-friendly”, “eco-consciousness” and “going green” are the main buzz words used nowadays as a consequence of a widely spread campaign of environment protection. The world has scarce resources and if we continue to consume with no thought for sustainability, we will destroy the planet soon. Iddagoda et.al (2021) in their paper emphasized that although guidelines and laws aimed at reducing and minimizing the impact on the environment are in effect, proper adherence to these provisions is not properly practiced.

Millions of organizations are nowadays operating worldwide, they are constantly contributing to environmental pollution and waste producing. According to Ashraf and Anam (2015) organizations should be willing to adopt green practices to pursue sustainability; green practices include environmental protection, risk management, employee retention, reduction of carbon footprints, demands from stakeholders etc.

Daily & Govindarajulu (2009) indicated in their study that businesses are under pressure to take proactive steps toward improvement of environmental initiatives, however organizations are yet to introduce rewards for employees for their environmental efforts, but Ahmed (2015) in his paper has concluded that green human resources management is a very appropriate way towards creating green workforce that appreciates green organizations. Even though corporate world is full of other buzz words on this concept, such as green leadership, green human resource management, green employee engagement and green work-life balance,

still a lot of work needs to be done, in order to properly add these processes into function, this was emphasized in the paper from Iddagoda et al. (2021).

The most valuable asset of the organization is human resources, which is why Human Resource Management (HRM) is an important part of the process of managing the organizations. Sustainability starts from the behaviors of employees and actions of HRM department, which is why Green HRM is a hot topic. Ahmed (2015) indicates that Green HRM stands for economic and social well-being of organization and employees, along with awareness towards environment protection and sustainability; at the same time, ecological consciousness is very important in our personal and professional life; as we are living and working, we are affecting the environment and our future; that is why we need to change our living habits. No doubt, businesses are the major stakeholder in environmental issues and therefore they should be an important factor driving solution.

On the other hand, the new economic era which is referred to as “Information Age” has given us enormous opportunities to reinvent what we do and how we do it. We feel blessed that we are living in a new era that enables us to make the most of the new technologies, but at the same time we are affecting our work-life balance; because as we become more accessible, we are derailing our social life. Vasa & Sowdamini (2017) emphasize that improving work-life balance of employees using Green HRM practices appears to have positive effect on employees and employers; it also reduces operational costs. These practices help mitigate problems and create motivated employees, which will, in turn, improve productivity.

Therefore, this paper is going to investigate whether small and medium companies operating in transition countries have improved HRM, whether they have adopted green practices, do they invest in work-life balance of employees and what is the effect of Green HRM and work-life balance on employee performance. Specifically, the study examines data collected in the Republic of Kosovo, a country that went through substantial economic development, especially in private sector.

The main purpose of this research is to introduce novel concepts essential for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in transition economies. The study aims to determine the impact that Green Human Resources Management and work-life balance exert on employee performance, focusing specifically on SMEs in transition economies, specifically in Kosovo

Objectives:

The study intends to expand knowledge about the importance of Green Human Resource Management in SME's.

- To put focus on Green HRM policies and strategies and importance of work-life balance.
- The study intends to comprehend the GHRM and work-life balance conceptual frameworks.
- The study intends to find the effect GHRM and employee performance have on work-life balance.
- The study intends to determine the effect of GHRM and work-life balance on employee performance.
- The relation between employee performance and work-life balance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green is referred to activities that affect environmental protection. Vasa & Sowdamini (2017) in their study indicate that activities that affect the green process are: creating and storing renewable energy, recycling, energy efficiency manufacturing, supply chain management, environment awareness and education, sustainable business practices etc. Meaning to change the way we live and work in order not to cause damage to the environment and help sustainability of the world. “Green” is a buzz word in the scientific, political and corporate world.

Business excellence is the most important goal of every organization, and it cannot be achieved without achieving business sustainability, Ahmed et al. (2020) has emphasized in their study. On the other side business sustainability is impacted by innovation in the company and positive relationship is indicated between employee training, employee empowerment and decentralization, government policies and corporate sustainability (Kajtazi, Rexhepi, Sharif, & Ozturk, 2023).

Businesses are under constant pressure to improve their activities in all their departments in order to shift towards green practices, as they are the most important actors in these processes. The best way to improve these practices is through human resources management. The area of business sustainability gains immense attention among the researchers and practitioners because of the negative ramifications being caused to society and ecology by the manufacturing organizations (Yusliza et al., 2020). In their study Vasa & Sowdamini (2017) have given an approach for green practices that should be used in the organization: **green recruitment** (green job descriptions, green job candidates, recruitment of employees who are ‘Green aware’ becomes part of the interview schedule, green employer

branding (green employer of choice), **green performance management** (communication of Green schemes to all levels of staff through wide dialogue on green matters, managers set green targets, green outcomes included in appraisals, green criteria in appraisals, penalties for non-compliance with targets in environmental management etc.), **green training and development** (integrating training on instruction and generation of Eco values, socialization in Green values/management, train staff to produce green analysis of workspace, training in EM aspects of safety, energy efficiency, waste management, and recycling, establish development of Green personal skills etc.), **green compensation** (tailor packages to reward green skills acquisition, use of monetary-based EM rewards, use of non-monetary, link participation in Green initiatives to promotion/career gains (managers advance through supporting staff in EM) etc.), **green employee relations** (staff independence to form & experiment with green ideas, unions negotiating Green workplace agreements, green elements into the health and safety process, encouraging employees to use green forms of transport, introduce green whistle-blowing help-lines etc.).

Green activities in the organization not only affect financial benefits but also social and ecological outcomes, which were emphasized in the study by Zhang et al. (2019). Green policies affect the creation of green culture in the organization, consequently the employees feel better and more supported conclude Mirahsani et al. (2023) in their study. Organizations should invest in the development of their human resources to have sustainable business outcomes and to gain competitive advantage indicates Suki et al. (2022) in their study.

On the other side Iddagoda et al. (2021) indicate that Green HRM refers to an interdisciplinary approach to manage employees and implement practices that support the achievement of environmental objectives. In their study they developed a work-life balance measurement tool; employer's expectations (CEO, immediate boss, co-workers, subordinates, customers) and family's expectations (spouse, children, parents, close relatives), based on the model proposed in this study, 3rd and 4th part of the questionnaire used in this paper have been prepared. These elements should be taken care of by employer to achieve the work-life balance of the employees, which consequently improves the performance of the company.

Another study supporting the development of green HRM practices was conducted by Nezir, Mufti & Peerzadah (2018) emphasizing that green HRM practices are the best tools to transform the organizations' operations, as green HRM creates awareness among employees, encourages employees to help the organization reduce the causes of environmental damage through green programs. The study emphasizes that Green HRM can inspire and increase the

willingness and commitment of employees to put extra efforts into green activities. The authors conclude that the results of Green HRM are increased efficiencies, sustainable use of resources, less wastage, improved Job-Related Attitude, improved work-life balance, improved employee performance and lower costs; these are the reasons why the companies should prioritize green HRM practices. On the other side, Opatha (2019) did not narrow the HRM only on green, but in their study, it was emphasized that there are three subdivisions in sustainable HRM: green HRM, social HRM and economic HRM. Green HRM is the strategy used primarily to reduce the footprint of each employee in the Organization.

Organizations are increasingly focusing on green strategies, as it has become a globally growing trend, HRM with green effects is becoming the power, GHRM has become the key business methodology in stepping up the ladders toward environmentally friendly workplace indicates Anuradha & Srivastave (2019) in their study. “Green HRM began with the expect to build up the eco-accommodating nature inside them and the preview of the authoritative setup, by creating HR arrangements and the systems, with a specific end goal to accomplish the authoritative objective” (Anuradha & Srivastave, 2019). Green Human Resources Management helps achieve green goals but also to encourage green behaviors, which effects achievement of sustainable development goals (Ribeiro et al. 2022). Implementation of Green HRM initiative helps promote sustainability, however more serious approach needs to be done in order to implement, communicate and encourage employees and stakeholders to implement green initiatives and reward them emphasis Das & Singh (2016) in their study. Additionally, they imply that the future of GHRM is bright as employees, management and stakeholders are becoming part of these activities. HR is becoming part of green initiatives by doing activities and involving employees in organizational activities related to sustainability.

Green Human Resources Management practices make organizations stronger, builds a sense of team and increases organization culture; all these activities effect the level of employee satisfaction which effects the performance of the organization, green HRM practices boost employee satisfaction indicates Ashraf et al. (2015), the authors also suggest that organizations should foster green attitudes among employees in order to achieve environmental sustainability; organizations should integrate “go green” concept in their HRM agenda. Additionally, green HRM practices have positive impact on work-life balance also shows the study done by Mishra (2022). As indicated by Bedarkar & Pandita (2015) organization’s performance is directly affected by performance of employee; therefore, companies should

give special emphasis to the creation of a good work environment, engage with the employees and give them liberty. Employees are the key assets of an organization and if they are not treated right and allowed time to strike a balance of work and fun, they are likely to disengage, which translates into lower performance of employees and organizations.

There are three components that make work-life balance to have a satisfied level based on the study conducted by Kalliath & Brough (2015); Time balance: an equal amount of time devoted to work and family roles; Involvement balance: an equal level of psychological involvement in work and family roles; Satisfaction balance: an equal level of satisfaction with work and family roles. These elements make people have higher satisfaction and perform better. Also work-life balance is associated with quality of life based on the study done by Greenhaus et al. (2003). Based on the study by Bangwal et al. (2017), in order to generate green culture in the company and green workplace companies should organize green trainings, more environmentally friendly activities etc.; these would stimulate an increased will of employees to perform green activities. Another study conducted by Likhitkar & Varna (2017) implies that greater efficiencies, lower cost, satisfied employees and sustainable organizations are achieved when employees use electronic filing, ride sharing, flexi workplace, teleconferencing, virtual interviews, recycling, energy efficiency in offices and other green initiatives.

Based on literature review above, which implies that green human resources management, employee performance and work-life balance are related to each other, regression analysis will be performed, as a model will be build, also the hypothesis will be tasted:

H1: Work-life balance improves as GHRM practices are enhanced.

H2: Work-life balance improves as employee performance is enhanced.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To test the hypothesis empirical research was conducted, through a questionnaire which was delivered to a sample of employees employed in small and medium enterprises in Kosovo. A structured electronic questionnaire was developed, consisting of four parts. The initial section gathered demographic data, while the second section focused on providing information regarding green human resources management in SMEs in Kosovo. The third part addresses perceptions of work-life balance, and the fourth part provides information on how respondents perceived employee performance. Both third and fourth part of the questions were based on

the questions used by Iddagoda et.al (2021) in their study. The questions were answered with a 5-point Likert Scale.

Questionnaires were delivered to approximately 280 employees of SMEs in Kosovo during January 2023, the questionnaire was translated in Albanian before it was delivered. Of the questionnaires delivered, 123 questionnaires were returned. After checking and reviewing data for incomplete materials and missing values, 116 respondents were taken into consideration, which is an acceptable sample.

To analyses the data collected from the questionnaire STATA 14 was applied. In order to test the hypothesis, a linear model was constituted, and a regression analysis was conducted using OLS technique.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Out of 123 respondents, 61% or 75 were male and 39% or 48 of respondents were female; most of respondents were married 69.1%, 28.5% were single and 2.4% declined to answer this question. Concerning age, 53.7% were 29-38 years old, 21.1% were 18-28 years old, 16.3% were 49-58 years old, 7.3% 39-48 years old and only 1.6% were over 58 years old. In terms of education, 48% of respondents hold a master's degree, 41.5% a bachelor's degree, 6.5% high school diploma and 4.1% of respondents hold a PhD degree.

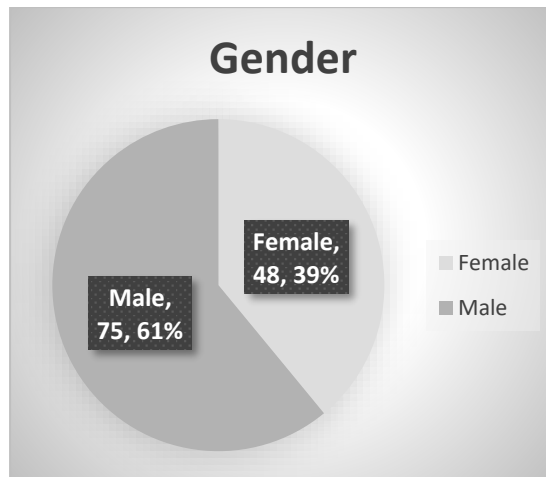


Figure 1 Gender of respondents

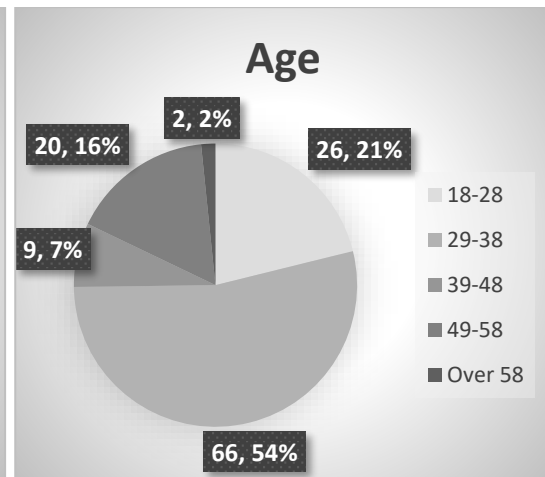


Figure 2 Age of respondents

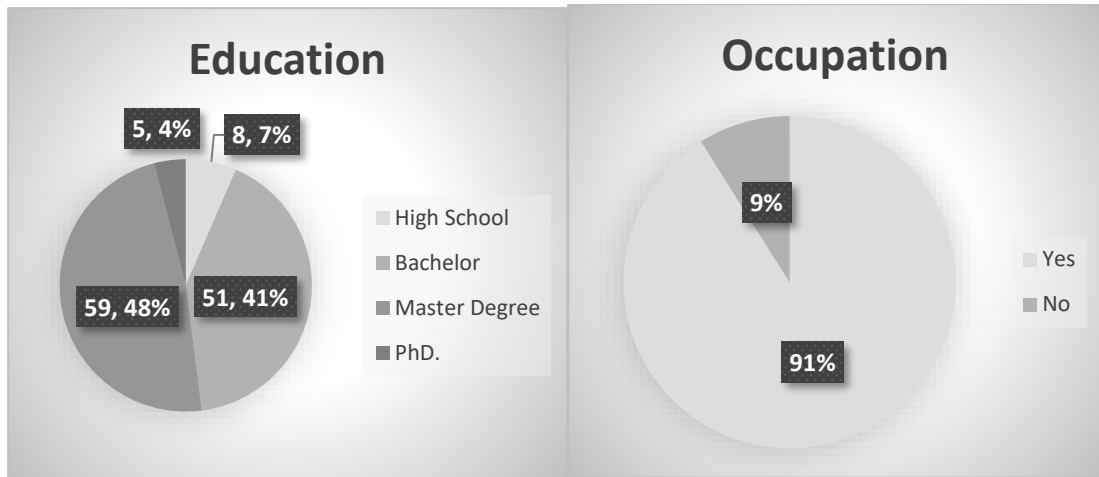


Figure 3 Education level of respondents

Figure 4 Occupation of respondents

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

In the proposed model it was hypothesized that there is a positive linear relationship between employee performance, GHRM and work-life balance. In order to test the hypothesis, a linear model was constituted, and a regression analysis was conducted using OLS technique. In the constructed model, Work-Life Balance (WorkLB) is classified as dependent variable (Y_{workLB}) while employee performance (WorkP) and Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) are determined as independent variables.

$$Y_{\text{work-life balance}} = \beta_0 + \beta_{ghrm} + \beta_{workP}$$

Nr. of obs.	116					
F (2,113)	65.27					
Prob > F	0					
R-Squared	0.536					
Adj R-Squared	0.5278					
Root MSE	5.1928					
Source	SS	df	MS			
Model	3519.95195	2	1759.976			
Residual	3047.01357	113	26.964722			
TOTAL	6566.96552	115	57.104048			
WORKLB	Coef.	Std. Error	T	P > t 	[95% Conf. Interval]	
WORKP	0.8781368	0.104877	8.37	0	0.670356	1.085917
GHRM	0.3831045	0.080617	4.75	0	0.223387	0.542822
_cons	6.680098	2.741736	2.44	0.016	1.248225	12.11197

Table 1 Regression analysis conducted with STATA 15.0

First, we examine the significance of the model by looking at F value from regression model in Table 1, which intends to explain the overall significance of the model. In the majority of models, the significance level of the model for acceptance should be equal to or less than 5% (0.05). As shown in Table 1, the model is significant, at a significance level of 5%; we can interpret that F-statistics at 0.000 indicates that independent variables have significant effect on dependent variable.

Additionally, we will interpret R-squared as a statistical measure of the fit of a regression model, in this regression its value is 0.5360 as shown in Table 1, which means that 53% of the variance in the dependent variable (work life balance) can be explained by independent variables (green human resources management and work performance) in the model. The remaining 47% is explained by other factors not included in the model. The error of the model is explained by Root MSE.

The coefficients of 0.878 for Work Performance variable and 0.383 for Green Human Resources Management are the estimated coefficients from regression model. A change in the response variable for a unit changes predictor variable, while holding all other predictors constant. From the model we can interpret that an increase per one unit of work-life balance would increase 0.878 units in work performance and an increase per one unit of work-life balance would increase green human resources management by 0.383 units.

Number of OBS	116	R-Squared	0.7278
Root MSE	4.915	Adj. R-Squared	0.5768

Source	Partial SS	D F	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	4779.2	41	116.5	4.8	0.000
WORK	1600.6	17	94.15	3.9	0.000
GHRM	1361.7	24	56.74	2.3	0.002
Residual	1787.7	74	24.16		
TOTAL	6566.9	115	57.10		

Table 2. ANOVA test for the model

The F-test in ANOVA (analysis of variance) is used to test the null hypothesis. From Table 2 above we can infer that at a significance of 5%, the model is significant.

The result of this paper allows to accomplish all research objectives. First, literature review provides an overview on Green HRM, policies and practices, conceptual framework for GHRM and work-life balance while the model in the study finds the effect of GHRM and employee performance on work-life balance of employees.

Paper shows that most of respondents, who were employees of SMEs in Kosovo, answered that they find green HRM very important and work-life balance is important for them; this judgment remained similar across different respondents with different age, gender and level of education.

The most important outcome of the research is that GHRM policies and work performance of employees have a positive impact on work-life balance of employees. The finding from this research, based on questionnaire carried out with employees of SMEs in Kosovo, are in line with a vast number of studies like Ashrat et.al (2015), Mishra (2022), Vasa & Sowdamini (2017). Small and Medium Enterprises in transition countries should adapt to new practices in Human Resources Management and should focus on the well-being of their employees, as employees are the most important asset of organizations.

Important contribution of the study for the sector is that company owners, board members or managers of SME will have the opportunity to implement activities presented in this paper; through which activities employee engagement will be increased, their commitment toward sustainable world will be increased and they will contribute in the image of the company, consequently companies will gain competitive advantage in the market. Nazir et al. (2018) in their paper emphasized that green activities encourage employees to help the organization reduce the causes of environmental damage through green program. Based on the studies researched and the results of the regression, SMEs should adopt new green strategies in their HRM departments, in order to increase retention of employees, their satisfaction and their work-life balance; this will give positive results in overall performance of the companies.

Another important finding highlighted in this paper is that new practices of Green HRM are already showing their positive effect; companies are realizing that these new practices are giving higher employee satisfaction, improved work-life balance and higher employee engagement, this was implied by Shah & Moerman (2018).

Iddogoda et.al (2021) have given a very good explanation of the work-life balance conceptual framework which is in line with our study and also gives information for a very important objective of this study related to understanding work-life balance concepts. In our

study, we have listed employer's expectations and family expectations based on the study mentioned above, which are used as a measurement tool for work-life balance. This tool can be used by companies to design activities that would achieve employer's expectations and family's expectations by the employees of the company. The study concludes that a balance in time, involvement and satisfaction through green HRM practices and through employee performance employees can achieve work-life balance, which is also in line with the study conducted by Kalliath & Brough (2015).

Finally, theoretical, and practical findings of the study show relevant results for those interested in the green HRM policies and practices and work-life balance. In line with results of this previous research, study shows that adopting green HRM practices and employee performance increases work-life balance, which increases the overall performance of the company and satisfaction of employees. Taken together, results support the hypothesis that practicing activities of Green HRM and increasing employee performance will have enhanced work-life balance of our employees.

CONCLUSION

Findings indicate that the hypothesis presented in this study that Green HRM and Employee performance have positive effect on work-life balance of employees is confirmed. As companies implement more green strategies in their Human Resources Department and increase the performance of employees we will see better work-life balance, which leads to higher general performance of the company, better reputation and reduced environmental footprint.

One important finding in this paper is that Green HRM policies and strategies indicate that organizations promote environmental sustainability and take action to reduce the negative impact of business on the environment. The processes of green HRM are green recruitment, green performance management, green training and development, green compensation and green employee relations; in order to achieve Green HRM, businesses are introducing different activities with employees such as using bicycle to commute to work, encourage digitalization, reduce the energy usage, reduce waste and decrease consumption of resources. In conclusion, Green HRM brings enhanced efficiencies, suitable use of resources, improves attitudes of employees, achieves higher satisfaction of employees, higher employee performance, while lowering costs and improves work-life balance; implementation of green HRM practices helps these companies gain competitive advantage in the market, enhances their competitiveness and reduces their negative effect on sustainability of environment.

Another finding of the paper is that work-life balance is the need of people to have a balance in their work and personal life. This refers to allocating time for personal, activities with family and friends that bring satisfaction to people around you and maintain high performance at work. Work-life balance is very important as it improves the overall well-being of people, increases productivity in companies and employees who achieve a satisfactory work-life balance tend to experience higher job satisfaction.

Literature review indicated that green HRM and work-life balance have positive effect on job satisfaction and well-being of the employees which also effects positively the employee performance; however, other factors such as organizational culture, the level of education, social factors and individual demands of people should not be ignored.

LIMITATIONS

The study conducted has some limitations; first, the data set is limited to Kosovo only and to determine the effect of green HRM practices and employee performance on work-life balance of people working in SMEs in transition countries, we should expand the data set in order to gauge whether results are similar to different environments. Second, data collection was done through convenience sampling, as our questionnaire was delivered to employees that were available, reliable, and accessible. Thus, for future research, data set should be expanded to include different countries, in order to obtain more accurate results and compare the data to different countries within transition context.

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