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**GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:
ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

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***Abstract:** Sustainable development, seen as long-term, responsible growth and development, is balancing between social, environmental and economic goals. Organizations nowadays are trying to reach sustainability in business by performing different activities regarding all three mentioned goals. Beside financial performances, which are economic goals, many environmental and social responsible practices can help them to make their business sustainable. One of practices that become more and more interesting for modern organizations is green human resource management (GHRM). The aim of this paper is to explore the concept of GHRM, main GHRM activities and relationship between HRM and environmental performances of organizations. The subject of research represents the main activities of green human resource management. The authors proposed GHRM as a management concept that could be seen as organizational readiness for reaching sustainability.*

***Keywords:** human resource management, sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, environmental management.*

1. Introduction

Contemporary business environment is faced with many challenges, such as financial crisis and economic instability, globalization and competition, political crisis and raising level of terrorism, forced migrations of people, other demographic changes (age and gender issues), cultural issues, etc. Beside, one more important issue today comes from the nature, as the request for the preservation of the environment. All those challenges influence higher complexity for organizations that are competing on the market and that are

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trying to achieve sustainable success. Organizations which did not respond to these issues properly vanished from the market.

Sustainable development as a concept which deals with social, environmental, and economic goals of the firm (Ubius, Alas 2012) gains special attention in this research. According to WCED (1987) sustainable development is “a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. There are many practices that organizations use in order to increase environmental protection and to establish sustainable business. Those are well know TQM system (Daily, Huang 2001; Contrafatto, Burns 2013), environmental accounting (Brown, Fraser 2006; Ribeiro et al. 2016), environmental management system EMS (Daily, Huang 2001; Comoglio, Botta 2012), global reporting initiative (Toppinen, Korhonen-Kurki 2013; Milne, Gray 2013; Vigneau et al. 2015), green supply chain management (Green et al. 2012; Dües, Tan, Lim 2013), etc. All mentioned concepts are created with the aim to improve organizations’ intentions to preserve environment and make businesses more sustainable regarding all three SD goals – social, economic and environmental.

Here it is important to emphasize that all those approaches are implemented trough people who are employed in organizations. Since human capital is one of the most valuable resources of organizations, it is important to explore the role of HRM in environmental issues. One HR approach that becomes more and more interesting for modern organizations is green human resource management (GHRM). Based on the above mentioned, the aim of this paper is to explore the concept of GHRM, main GHRM activities and relationship between HRM and environmental performances of organizations. The subject of research is the relationship between the HRM, sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. The methodology included analysis of available literature on this topic, but also the analysis of the examples of good practice in GHRM.

2. Theoretical review

Changes in today's business environment have influenced the emergence of many benefits, but also new challenges for organizations that now have to create completely new, and so far unused strategies to be able to respond to all requests. Among the most important concepts that represent imperatives for business policies and strategies in organizations there are environmental protection and social sensitivity (Berber et al. 2014). Regarding mentioned, an integrated approach for solving these and similar problems is the concept of sustainable development, which provides a balance between economic performance, social and environmental objectives (Ubius, Alas 2012).

Before we present some of the most important parts of our research, we decided to determine three main concepts which will be used in the paper. Those are environmental management and sustainable development, human resource management, and corporate social responsibility.

According to Bruntland’s report from 1987 sustainable development is using the available resources to meet current human needs without compromising the natural systems and the environment, which enables the fulfillment of human needs and in the future. The concept of sustainability emphasizes “eco-efficiency in the use of resources; and eco-socio justice in their distribution between current generations (i.e. intra-generational) and

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between present and future generations (i.e. inter-generational)” (Contrafatto, Burns 2013, 350). Sustainability entails “the preservation, regeneration, and development of the ecological, economic, and social resources of a system, and that a firm controls its impact on various economic, social and ecological environments” (Ehnert et al. 2016, 89). The analysis of the definition of sustainable development points that there is a three interrelated elements, the environment (natural resources), needs (economic context), and humans (social context). In this regard, the environmental management system is defined as measures, conditions, and instruments for "sustainable management, conservation of natural balance, integrity, diversity and quality of natural resources and conditions for the survival of all living beings, as well as for the prevention, control, reduction and rehabilitation of all forms of pollution in environment" (the Law on Environmental protection, Official Gazette of RS, no. 135/2004, 36/2009, 36/2009, 72/2009, and 43/2011 – decision US, Article 2).

Human resource management is the concept of managing organization’s people thought different and very sophisticated activities such as planning, staffing, training, career development, performance management, rewards, industrial relation, etc. An adequate HRM approach leads to significant improvements in business performances (Berber et al. 2014; Huselid, 1995) and competitive advantage of organizations (Albrecht et al. 2015; Progoulaki, Theotokas 2010; Lado, Wilson 1994; Schuler, MacMillan 1984). Human resource management is seen as a key driving force in the development of sustainability of modern organizations. Human resources should incorporate organizational culture within the framework of sustainable business strategies, but also need to shape organizational system in a way to enable the impact on employees, society and other stakeholders in accordance with the vision of a sustainable society (Garg, 2014).

Carroll (1991, 40) defined CSR as the concept that includes four kinds of responsibilities: the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. According to Carroll (1991) CSR firm should “strive to make a profit, obey the law, be ethical, and be a good corporate citizen”. CSR activities incorporate “social characteristics or features into products and manufacturing processes (e.g. aerosol products with no fluorocarbons or using environmentally-friendly technologies), adopting progressive human resource management practices (e.g. promoting employee empowerment), achieving higher levels of environmental performance through recycling and pollution abatement (e.g. adopting an aggressive stance towards reducing emissions), and advancing the goals of community organizations (e.g. working closely with groups such as United Way)” (McWilliams et al. 2006, 1-2).

From the definitions stated in this part we can conclude that CSR and sustainable development contains both environmental and human resource concerns. Since the aim of the paper is the exploration of the specific human resource management approach which is directed toward environmental protection in the continuation of the research we will point our attention on green human resource management as new management concept.

2.1. Green Human Resource Management

In the context of human resource management, the most important changes related to the understanding and implementation of the concept of sustainable development are

linked to the recruitment and selection processes, in the sense that those activities should be carried out in relation with the abilities that workers should possess and which are consistent with sustainable development idea. These skills can be developed and learned through the application of special development programs for learning in organizations. Ahmad (2015) points out that the Green Human Resource Management becomes one of the key strategies for success and that HR departments play an important role in the "greening" of the workplace in modern organizations. Jackson et al. (2011) pointed out the importance of the "greening" of all functions of human resources management, from recruitment and selection, through performance management and compensation and benefits, to career development, training and the like.

GHRM is determined as a concept where "HRM is engaged in managing the environment within an organization" (Ahmad, 2015, 2). Green HRM is "the use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within business organizations and more generally, promotes the cause of environmental sustainability, it involves human resource initiatives to endorse sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issues of sustainability" (Sharma, Gupta 2015). GHRM is concerned with the "systemic, planned alignment of typical human resource management practices with the organizations environmental goals" (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016, 192). Also, GHRM is defined as "the use of HRM policies, philosophies, and practices to promote sustainable use of resources and prevent harm arising from environmental concerns within business organizations. It depends on the unique and identifiable patterns of green decisions and behaviors of HR managers (green signatures)" (Zoogah, 2011, 118).

According to Jabbour and De Sousa Jabbour (2016, 1826-1827) GHRM involves "traditional human resource practices (recruitment, selection, performance evaluation, training, and rewards) aligned with environmental goals and strategic dimensions for HRM, new forms of work organization such as organizational culture, teamwork, and employee empowerment". In his earlier paper, Jabbour (2011, 98-99) stated that workers will take control of the environmental management in organizations only if "the HR practices motivate their engagement. Only if job positions, recruitment, selection, training, performance assessment, culture, learning, and teamwork incorporate environmental issues, can organizations reach the proactive stage of environmental management". Paille et al. (2014) suggested that the HRM should be focused on the selection, training and rewarding employees for their positive attitude towards the protection of the environment in order to generate a culture of environmental protection which would be in a function of environmental performance.

When determining GHRM it is important to emphasize that the environmental management is influenced by *green signatures*. According to Zoogah (2011, 118-120) GHRM depends on the patterns of green decisions and behaviors of HR managers. HR managers' green signatures are either promotive or preventive. "Promotive green signatures refer to the pattern of behaviors and use of HR practices to promote EM while preventive green signatures refer to the pattern of behaviors and decisions that prevent negative environmental outcomes" (2011, 118-119). Also, "while green decisions refer to the formation of intentions and volitions of HR managers to use policies and practices to promote or prevent harm to EM, green behaviors refer to the EM-related role behaviors of HR managers" (Zoogah, 2011, 120).

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Although there are various options that could be integrated into a system of green human resource management, there are also certain limitations in regard to the implementation of these achievements. According to Renwick et al. (2013) organizations did not give sufficient support to the implementation of GHRM and this fact can be a limiting factor in improving effectiveness and efficiency in terms of achieving environmental performances. For example, in the UK HRM practices are not used to a great extent to encourage employees to become more pro-environmental. The most prevalent practices used within organizations incorporated elements of management involvement supporting the idea that managers are the gatekeepers to environmental performance, but only a very small percentage of organizations actually conducted any form of evaluation (Zibarras, Coan, 2015).

After determination of the GHRM, the next important part of the research is the explanation of the GHRM practices used to enhance environmental performances in organizations.

3. The practices of Green Human Resource Management

3.1. Green HR staffing

According to Jackson et al. (2011) recruitment practices can support environmental management practices by ensuring that new employees understand environmental culture of organizations and share their environmental values. Many firms use their reputation of *a green employer* as an effective way to attract new talents with environmental values (Jackson et al. 2011, 104-105; Renwick et al. 2013). Firms such as The Rover Group carmaker, Siemens, BASF, Bayer and Mannesmann use environmental activities and a green image to attract high-quality staff (Ahmad, 2015, 5). Some of green staffing practices include the usage of commercial of organizational web sites, and social media for recruitment and selection activities (Yusoff et al. 2015; Renwick et al. 2013). On line job vacancies can be more useful because organizations can present more information about roles, duties, responsibilities, and environmental values of candidates needed for certain positions. Jabbour et al. (2010) surveyed Brazilian organizations and found that selection process was based on environmental knowledge and motivation. HR managers should develop staffing process in the line with environmental aims, i.e. to attract and employ people who possess environmental knowledge, ideas and values and who are ready to implement them in daily work.

According to the review of GHRM practices of Arulrajah et al. (2015), who made interesting theoretical analysis of the GHRM practices, there are several activities that will enhance green staffing:

- “Indicating or making transparent about organization’s environmental performance (past and current) when communicating recruitment messages.
- Becoming a green employer or green employer of choice.
- Communicating the employer’s concern about greening through recruitment efforts.
- Reflecting environmental policy and strategies of the organization in its recruitment policy.

- Expressing certain environmental values (e.g. be a part of the green team of ABC.. or we are a socially and environmentally responsible employer) in the job advertisements of the company.
- Expressing the preference of the organization to recruit candidates who have competency and attitudes to participate in corporate environmental management initiatives too in the recruitment message
- When interviewing candidates or evaluating them for selection, to ask environment-related questions” (Arulrajah et al. 2015, 5-6).

3.2. Green HR Training and Development

Well-trained and environmentally aware frontline employees are ideally placed to identify and reduce waste, as they are closest to it (Renwick et al., 2013). Environmental training should focus on educating employees about regulatory requirements and technical standards, developing new technical skills to comply with such requirements and meet such standards, improve employee awareness of the organization’s environmental goals and business strategy (Jackson et al., 2011). Also, this training should emphasize the value of EM, the usage of working methods which conserve energy, reduce waste, and provide opportunity to engage employees in environmental problem solving (Zoogah 2011, 133). This HR practice will empower employees to understand the need for pro-environmental action and to become equipped with the key knowledge and skills needed to carry out environmental behaviors and environmental initiatives (Zibarras, Coan 2015). Environmental training is one of the most important HRM factors for achievement of the environmental performances (Ramus 2002; Renwick et al. 2013; Haddock-Millar et al. 2016).

Some of the most important green training activities are given below (Arulrajah et al., 2015):

- “Providing environmental training to the organizational members (employees and managers) to develop required skills and knowledge.
- Providing training to learn or adapt environmental friendly best practices (e.g. reducing long-distance business travel and recycling).
- Providing environmental awareness training to create „environmental awareness“ among the workforce.
- Providing training to the staff to produce green analysis of workspace.
- Applying of job rotation to train green managers of the future.
- Imparting right knowledge and skills about greening (to each employee through a training program exclusively designed for greening).
- Conducting training needs analyses to identify green training needs of employees.
- Providing opportunities to everybody to be trained on environmental management aspects” (Arulrajah et al. 2015, 9).

3.3. Green Performance Management

Green performance management should be evaluated based on environment-related criteria. The key benefit of including environmental performance indicators within

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performance management systems is that employees become accountable for environmental management (Zibarras, Coan 2015, 2124). HR managers can enhance environmental performance of employees when they integrate environmental performance indicators into performance management systems by setting environmental objectives, monitoring such behaviors, and evaluating achievement of these objectives (Sharma, Gupta 2015). Some organizations have established environmental management information systems, environmental audits, installed corporate-wide environmental performance standards, and green information systems/audits to follow data on environmental performance (Alfred, Adam 2009; Renwick et al. 2013; Arulrajah et al. 2015). Some of well-known systems that increase awareness of environmental performances are EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme), ISO standards 14000, GRI (global reporting initiative), etc.

According to Arulrajah et al. (2015) effective green performance management system should be based on:

- “Establishing environmental management information system (EMIS) and environmental audits.
- Incorporating corporate environmental management objectives and targets with the performance evaluation system of the organization.
- Installing corporate-wide environmental performance standards.
- Integrating green criteria in appraisals or evaluating employee’s job performance according to green-related criteria.
- Including a separate component for progress on greening in the performance feedback interview.
- Setting green targets, goals and responsibilities.
- Providing regular feedback to the employees or teams to achieve environmental goals or improve their environmental performance.
- Introducing or formally evaluating all employees’ green job performance (as far as possible)” (p. 8).

3.4. Green Compensation and Benefits

Rewards, i.e. compensation and benefits are used to increase employees’ productivity and loyalty. They also increase employees’ satisfaction and motivation for work. In regard to GHRM, green reward systems should be designed to reflect management’s commitment to environmental performance while reinforcing and motivating employees’ pro-environmental behaviors (Zibarras, Coan 2015, 2124). Monetary green rewards can include different bonuses and incentives, profit-sharing programs, and increase in pay for reaching environmental goals (Daily, Huang, 2001), while non monetary rewards can include promotion and recognitions. Recognition-based rewards for employees can be for individual, team and divisional contributions to reducing waste, companywide team excellence awards, giving employees opportunities to attend green events, paid vacations, time off and gift certificates (Govindarajulu, Daily 2004; Renwick et al. 2013, 6). One more important issue in green compensation and benefits is that these programs should be related to the acquisition of designated skills and competencies (not just for performances), as they are seen to be important factors in performance over the long-term, i.e. reward systems should be develop to produce desirable

behaviors in environmental management (Renwick et al. 2008). Effective green reward system should be based on:

- Rewarding employee for achieving environmental performances and environmental knowledge and values.
- Design specific monetary and non monetary rewards for employees who achieve environmental goals.
- Design specific organizational, team and individual-level rewards for employees.
- Design rewards for innovative environmental initiatives of employees.
- Introduce new and innovative benefits for eco-friendly practices of employees.

4. Conclusions

Human resource management as the process of attracting, motivating, developing and retaining employees in organizations is not insensitive to the changes and requirements that come from the environment. Globalization in each of its segments, affect changes in the functioning of organizations around the world. In addition to the positive impacts, i.e. expansion of capital, knowledge, technology; globalization caused the occurrence of several negative impacts. Among the most significant are pollution and environmental degradation, inadequate workforce relations, unfair behavior towards business partners and competitors, and the like. Because of the lack of sustainability of such a system, which in short-term brought certain benefits only to the one part of the stakeholders, in recent years the concepts of management which include the three most important objectives - society as a whole, the quality and quantity of environment and economic efficiency and effectiveness are getting more and more importance.

One of the approaches that is aligned with the idea of sustainability is green human resource management. It is seen as the implementation of HR activities in the way that people in organizations are managed on the basis of green principles. GHRM means greening of all the activities of HR, but also the introduction of some new and innovative practices which will lead to the increase of environmental-friendly attitudes, values, competencies and behaviors of new and current employees. Main GHRM activities are green staffing, green training, green performance management and green rewards. All these should be implemented in a way to emphasize the environmental and social responsibility of the organizations and their employees. There are also green engagement, green empowerment and the like, but for this paper the authors decided to explore only those above mentioned. Based on the theoretical research of available literature the authors concluded that GHRM is relatively new concept and that the most of the researches are based on the theoretical contributions and less on empirical analysis of the GHRM practice. Several papers from India, Brazil and USA deals with this issue in organizations, but there is still a lack of greater empirical researches. Also, GHRM leads to the greater environment preservation and social responsible business, so the authors conclude that GHRM is an approach which can be seen as organizational readiness for reaching sustainability.

The implications of this paper are modest in the sense that the authors did not offer any empirical evidence of GHRM in Serbia. This is also one great limitation of the paper. On the other hand, theoretical implications exist because this paper could be used as a good basis for the development of theoretical background for future empirical research on GHRM. Also, practical implication of this research is in the offered GHRM activities,

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which are explained so that HR managers can adjust and implement them in their organizations. Future researches in this area will be oriented toward development of a questionnaire and the methodology for gathering the data on the GHRM practices in organizations and exploring the relations between those practices and organizational environmental and overall performances.

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ZELENI MENADŽMENT LJUDSKIH RESURSA: SPREMNOST ORGANIZACIJA ZA ODRŽIVOST

Apstrakt: Održivi razvoj, kao dugoročno odgovoran rast i razvoj, ima za cilj balans između društvenih, ekoloških i ekonomskih ciljeva. Organizacije danas pokušavaju da postignu održivost poslovanja na različite načine u odnosu na sva tri navedena cilja. Pored finansijskih performansi, koje su ekonomski ciljevi, različite ekološke i društveno odgovorne aktivnosti mogu pomoći organizacijama da učine svoje poslovanje održivim. Jedan od pristupa koji postaje sve zanimljiviji za moderne organizacije jeste zeleni menadžment ljudskih resursa (Green human resource management, GHRM). Cilj ovog rada je istraživanje koncepta GHRM, glavnih GHRM aktivnosti i odnosa između HRM i ekoloških performansi organizacija. Predmet istraživanja jesu glavne aktivnosti zelenog menadžmenta ljudskih resura.

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Autori su predložili GHRM kao pristup upravljanju koji se može posmatrati kao organizaciona spremnosti za postizanje održivosti.

Ključne reči: menadžment ljudskih resursa, održivi razvoj, korporativna društvena odgovornost, ekološki menadžment.