Advancing Organizational Performance through Green Human Resource Management in Nigerian Manufacturing Firms

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Abstract

Sustainability has become increasingly important, leading companies to adopt Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices, especially in environmentally impactful sectors such as manufacturing. This study examines how green recruitment, selection, and training affect the performance of manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria. The research focused on a population of 216,060 employees across various manufacturing firms in the region, from which a sample size of 383 respondents was determined using Gordon's formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to HR managers and employees, yielding 344 valid responses. Employing a descriptive survey design and Pearson's correlation analysis, the study found that green recruitment significantly enhances organizational efficiency by attracting environmentally conscious talent. Similarly, green training and development positively affect employee productivity by equipping staff with essential sustainability skills. These findings highlight the strategic role of GHRM in promoting both environmental responsibility and organizational performance. The study recommends that manufacturing firms integrate sustainability principles into recruitment and training processes to remain competitive and environmentally compliant.

Keywords: Green Human Resource Management, Green Recruitment, Green Training, Organizational Efficiency, Employee Productivity

Introduction

In recent years, global concern about the environmental impact of industrial activities has prompted organizations to adopt sustainable business practices, including Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), which integrates environmental objectives into HR policies such as recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and workplace policies (Ahmad, 2015; Al-Swidi et al., 2021). While GHRM has advanced in developed economies due to regulations and consumer expectations, its adoption in developing countries like Nigeria remains limited (Tamunomiebi & Mezeh, 2022; Mousa & Othman, 2020). In South-East Nigeria's manufacturing sector, green recruitment helps attract environmentally conscious employees, thereby improving operational efficiency and reducing waste (Albloush et al., 2022; Amrutha & Geetha, 2023).

Similarly, green training equips staff with eco-friendly skills for energy conservation, resource optimization, and waste management, which enhances productivity and organizational sustainability (Chen et al., 2021; Garavan et al., 2023; Freire & Pieta, 2022). However, many firms lack structured frameworks to implement GHRM effectively, resulting in limited environmental awareness and reduced workforce readiness for green initiatives (Zhang et al., 2019; Baykal et al., 2023). Weak regulatory enforcement and limited organizational commitment further hinder progress. This study investigates how green recruitment and training influence organizational efficiency and employee productivity in South-East Nigeria's manufacturing sector.

Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the effect of green human resource management on the performance of Nigerian manufacturing firms in the Southeast. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Evaluate the relationship between green recruitment and selection and organizational efficiency in manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

2. Examine the effect of green training and development on employee productivity of manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) integrates sustainability principles into HR functions to promote environmentally responsible behavior among employees. Managers embed environmental objectives into hiring, training, performance evaluation, and employee engagement to build a workforce aligned with sustainable development goals (Ren et al., 2018). In resource-intensive sectors like manufacturing, GHRM helps organizations reduce operational costs, comply with regulations, and enhance public reputation (Munawar et al., 2022). By aligning HRM with environmental policies, companies achieve both sustainability and competitive advantage in green markets.

A core component of GHRM is green recruitment and selection, which focuses on attracting environmentally conscious candidates through green job descriptions, employer branding, and sustainability-centered interviews (Das & Dash, 2023; Akpobolokami, 2023). Recruiting individuals with prior green experience enhances resource use, innovation, and environmental contributions, fostering sustainable corporate structures and reducing waste (Fapohunda et al., 2022; Gitongu et al., 2023).

Equally important is green training and development, which equips employees with competencies in energy conservation, waste reduction, and resource optimization (Fapohunda et al., 2021; Al-Juboory & Eydan, 2019). These programs increase employee commitment, creativity, and job satisfaction while reinforcing organizational sustainability values. Enhanced environmental knowledge enables employees to generate green innovations and maintain workplace standards (Manzoor et al., 2019; Pham et al., 2020; Pinzone et al., 2019). Ultimately, integrating green training supports workforce well-being, boosts productivity, and strengthens organizational resilience in evolving environmental markets.

Theoretical Review

The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory explains how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) influences employee behavior and enhances organizational performance. According to AMO, employees perform optimally when they possess the necessary abilities, are motivated, and are given opportunities to contribute (Ren et al., 2018). GHRM supports these dimensions by recruiting individuals with environmental responsibilities, providing green training, and creating opportunities for employees to engage in sustainability initiatives (Fapohunda et al., 2021; Munawar et al., 2022). In manufacturing, where resource consumption is high, these practices foster both productivity and environmental stewardship.

Complementing this, the Resource-Based View (RBV) posits that organizations gain sustained competitive advantage through unique, valuable, and inimitable resources (Martins et al., 2021). GHRM creates such resources by developing environmentally conscious, skilled workforces that are difficult for competitors to replicate (Das & Dash, 2023; Akpobolokami, 2023). Embedding GHRM practices enhances innovation, regulatory compliance, and stakeholder trust, ultimately strengthening organizational performance (Amanawa et al., 2022; Coelho et al., 2024).

Together, AMO and RBV provide a comprehensive framework for understanding GHRM's role in organizational success. AMO emphasizes building employee capabilities and motivation, while RBV underscores the strategic value of cultivating green competencies as sustainable organizational assets. For manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria, integrating both perspectives is critical for achieving long-term profitability and environmental sustainability.

Empirical Review

Akpobolokami (2023) explored "Green recruitment and selection and organizational agility of multinational oil and gas companies in Nigeria." The study aimed to investigate the influence of green hiring practices on the adaptability and competitiveness of multinational oil firms. A survey method was employed, targeting HR professionals and employees from multinational oil and gas firms in Nigeria. The study used statistical analysis, including regression modeling, to assess the relationship between green recruitment and organizational agility. The findings indicated that firms practicing green recruitment experience higher adaptability and improved efficiency in responding to market and environmental challenges. The study concluded that green recruitment enhances an organization's ability to adjust to environmental policies and market demands. It recommended that oil firms integrate green hiring practices to strengthen sustainability and agility.

Gitongu et al. (2023) conducted a study on "Influence of green recruitment process on organizational performance in five-star rated hotels in Kenya." The research aimed to evaluate the impact of green recruitment on the performance of five-star hotels in Kenya. A quantitative research approach was used, involving surveys administered to HR managers and employees in the hospitality industry. The findings showed that green recruitment positively affects employee commitment and operational efficiency, thereby improving overall hotel performance. The study concluded that integrating environmental considerations into recruitment enhances hotel sustainability. The authors recommended that hotel managers adopt green hiring policies to attract environmentally responsible professionals.

Olaiya and Olaosebikan (2022) examined "Green training and development: Mediating role of employee pro-environmental behaviour in achieving environmental sustainability in a selected manufacturing company in Nigeria." The study aimed to assess how green training programs influence employees' pro-environmental behaviors and their contribution to organizational sustainability. The researchers employed a quantitative research design, collecting data from employees in a Nigerian manufacturing firm through structured questionnaires. Data analysis was conducted using regression analysis. The findings revealed that green training significantly enhances employee pro-environmental behaviors, which mediate the relationship between training and overall sustainability goals. The study concluded that organizations must continuously train employees on environmental best practices. It recommended integrating green training initiatives into HR development strategies to enhance corporate sustainability.

Fapohunda et al. (2021) carried out a study on *"Green training and development practices on environmental sustainability: Evidence from WAMCO PLC"*. The research aimed to investigate the impact of green training and development on environmental sustainability in WAMCO PLC. The study focused on employees of WAMCO PLC, assessing their engagement in green initiatives. A mixed-methods research design was used, incorporating surveys and interviews. The major findings indicated that green training enhances employees' environmental awareness and encourages sustainable workplace practices. The study concluded that integrating environmental education into corporate training programs improves overall organizational sustainability. The authors recommended that firms implement structured green training programs and incentivize employees to participate in eco-friendly workplace behaviors.

Yafi et al. (2021) conducted a study on *"Impact of green training on environmental performance through mediating role of competencies and motivation"*. The study aimed to examine how green training influences environmental performance through employee competencies and motivation. The research was conducted across different organizations implementing GHRM practices. A survey-based quantitative research method was employed, collecting data from employees participating in green training programs. The major findings indicated that green training enhances employee competencies, which in turn improves environmental performance. The study concluded that green training is essential for fostering pro-environmental behavior among employees. The

authors recommended that organizations invest in continuous environmental training programs to strengthen workforce sustainability awareness and competencies.

Pham et al. (2020) conducted a study on "Managing environmental challenges: Training as a solution to improve employee green performance." The research aimed to investigate the role of environmental training in enhancing employee green performance. The study was conducted in various industries implementing green HRM practices. A survey-based quantitative approach was used, collecting data from employees participating in sustainability training programs. The findings indicated that green training significantly improves employees' environmental awareness and proactive sustainability behaviors. The study concluded that continuous green training enhances corporate environmental responsibility. The authors recommended that organizations integrate green training modules into HR policies to foster long-term sustainability.

Gaps in the Reviewed Literature

Despite the considerable attention given to GHRM in various sectors, certain gaps remain. First, there is limited research contextualized within manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria, where environmental degradation and industrial pollution are significant concerns. Second, while studies have explored green recruitment and green training separately, few have simultaneously analyzed their joint and distinct effects on organizational efficiency and employee productivity. Third, many existing studies do not disaggregate green training into specific domains such as environmental awareness, energy efficiency, and waste management—an approach necessary for tailored interventions. Lastly, empirical evidence linking GHRM practices with quantifiable performance metrics remains sparse, warranting further investigation. This study addresses these gaps by evaluating the distinct and combined effects of green recruitment and green training on organizational performance indicators within a regional manufacturing context.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the impact of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices on the performance of manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria. This design was appropriate as it allowed for a systematic collection of quantitative data to analyze relationships among variables and make generalizations across a broad population (Saunders et al., 2023). The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires to HR managers, supervisors, and general employees, while secondary data were obtained from published academic journals, company files, sustainability reports, and relevant government documents (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The study population consisted of employees drawn from twenty manufacturing firms operating across Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. These firms represented diverse industries including brewing (Golden Guinea Breweries Plc, Nigerian Breweries Plc Ama Plant), pharmaceuticals (Juhel Nigeria Limited, Starline Nigeria Limited, A & J Pharma Ltd), automotive manufacturing (Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing), agro-processing (Ebonyi Agro Industries, Feed De-Nation Tech Company Ltd, Adapalm Nigeria Ltd), aluminium manufacturing (Sunlight Enterprises, Aluminium Extrusion Industries PLC), packaging and chemicals (Krisoral Group), consumer goods and food processing (J. Udeagbala Holdings, Pokobros Group, Chisreal Industries Ltd, Emerald Foods), renewable energy (Greenage Technologies Power Systems Ltd), building materials (Emenite Limited), and beverages (Aqua Rapha Investment Ltd). These companies were purposively selected to reflect the diversity of the manufacturing sector in the region. The combined workforce across these companies was estimated at 216,060 employees, forming the study's target population.

A sample size of 383 respondents was determined using Gordon's formula, applying a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error to ensure representativeness. A random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of HR managers, supervisors, and general employees, thereby reducing selection bias

(Bell et al., 2022). The research instrument was a structured questionnaire divided into five sections covering demographic information, green recruitment, green training, performance appraisal, and eco-friendly workplace policies. Each item was measured on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument's validity was confirmed through expert review and factor analysis using SPSS, while reliability was tested and confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient ≥ 0.7, ensuring internal consistency (Greetham, 2019). For data analysis, descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation analysis were conducted using SPSS to examine relationships between GHRM practices and organizational outcomes (Stroud, Green, & Cronje, 2020). Statistical significance was established at p-values less than 0.05, while reliability thresholds adhered to the Cronbach's alpha minimum of 0.7 (Saunders et al., 2023).

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents the data collected through the administration of structured questionnaire to employees and HR managers of selected manufacturing firms in South East Nigeria using tables and simple percentages. Only information related to the stated objectives of the study were analyzed.

Table 1: Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire

Questionnaire Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	383	100
Retrieved and Used	344	89.8
Not Retrieved/Discarded	39	10.2

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

A total of 383 questionnaires were distributed for data collection. Out of these, 344 were properly completed and used for analysis, representing a response rate of 89.8%. The remaining 39 questionnaires, accounting for 10.2%, were either not returned or discarded due to incomplete responses.

Analysis of Research Variables

Table 3: Green Recruitment and Selection

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
Environmental awareness considered in hiring	108	132	20	46	38	344
Sustainability in job descriptions	114	128	18	48	36	344
Green values in selection process	102	130	22	50	40	344
Recruitment ads promote sustainability	116	126	24	44	34	344
Company attracts eco-conscious talent	110	134	16	42	42	344
Total	**550**	**650**	**100**	**230**	**190**	**1720**
Average	**110**	**130**	**20**	**46**	**38**	
Percentage	**32%**	**38%**	**6%**	**13%**	**11%**	

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

Most people agree with the value of green recruitment and Table 3 confirms that 70% of them support it. Most of the respondents found that sustainability was mentioned in both job listings and ads. The analysis indicates that environmental awareness is becoming important in hiring for many South East Nigerian companies.

Table 4: Organizational Efficiency

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
Green recruitment boosts job performance	104	136	22	46	36	344
Eco-aware staff improve efficiency	112	134	18	48	32	344
Sustainability hires reduce waste	118	122	20	50	34	344
Green hires adapt to eco-friendly practices	106	140	16	44	38	344
Green recruitment increases long-term productivity	108	138	14	42	42	344
Total	**548**	**670**	**90**	**230**	**182**	**1720**
Average	**110**	**134**	**18**	**46**	**36**	
Percentage	**32%**	**39%**	**5%**	**13%**	**11%**	

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

Table 4 indicates that people have a positive view of green recruitment when it comes to efficiency. Seventy percent of those responding feel that it contributes to good performance, saves resources and boosts productivity. Results indicate that businesses benefit from employing environmentally aware workers and can reach their long-term sustainability goals.

Table 5: Green Training and Development

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
Training on environmental awareness	116	130	16	52	30	344
Energy efficiency skills taught	124	122	20	50	28	344
Waste management included in training	118	136	14	48	28	344
Training emphasizes sustainability	122	124	18	46	34	344
Continuous green skills development	120	133	12	49	30	344
Total	**550**	**645**	**80**	**245**	**150**	**1720**
Average	**120**	**129**	**16**	**49**	**30**	
Percentage	**35%**	**38%**	**5%**	**14%**	**9%**	

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

Table 5 with suggests that the majority of respondents believe green training covers issues related to the environment, waste management and energy skills. Average values show 38% agreement and 32% strong agreement, reflecting a workforce that values skill acquisition in sustainability. Disagreement levels remained low, while undecided responses were minimal (UN = 5%). It appears that organizations use learning programs to make employees more eco-minded which is one reason many organizations improve their green performance.

Table 6: Employee Productivity

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
Green training boosts output	133	126	14	44	27	344
Sustainability-trained staff work efficiently	120	134	20	48	22	344
Eco skills improve quality	122	130	16	50	26	344
Training reduces errors	123	132	18	46	25	344
Green-skilled employees are more productive	132	128	22	42	20	344
Total	**630**	**650**	**90**	**230**	**120**	**1720**
Average	**126**	**130**	**18**	**46**	**24**	
Percentage	**37**	**38%**	**5%**	**13%**	**7%**	**100**

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

Table 6 presents responses on employee productivity, showing strong agreement that green training enhances performance. The majority chose "Strongly Agree" (126) and "Agree" (130), indicating positive impacts on output, efficiency, and reduced errors. Minimal disagreement exists, with "Disagree" (46) and "Strongly Disagree" (24) responses relatively low, reinforcing the belief that green skills boost employee productivity in manufacturing firms.

Test of Hypothesis One

H_0: There is no significant relationship between green recruitment and selection and organizational efficiency in manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

H_1: There is significant relationship between green recruitment and selection and organizational efficiency in manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

This hypothesis was tested with information in Tables 3 and 4. The SPSS outputs are presented in Tables 7 and 8 below:

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Hypothesis One

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Green Recruitment and Selection	3.6628	1.34108	344
Organizational Efficiency	3.6860	1.32490	344

Table 8: Correlations on Hypothesis One

		Green Recruitment and Selection	Organizational Efficiency
Green Recruitment and Selection	Pearson Correlation	1	.994**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	344	344
Organizational Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.994**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	344	344

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics, showing a mean score of 3.6628 (SD = 1.34108) for green recruitment and 3.6860 (SD = 1.32490) for organizational efficiency. These means indicate that respondents generally agreed with the positive influence of green recruitment on efficiency. Table 8 reveals a very strong positive correlation between green recruitment and organizational efficiency with a Pearson correlation coefficient of **0.994**, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (p = .000). This near-perfect correlation suggests that improvements in green recruitment and selection practices are strongly associated with enhanced organizational efficiency. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative (H_1), concluding that a significant relationship exists between green recruitment and organizational efficiency in the studied firms.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H_0: Green training and development has no significant effect on employee productivity of manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

H_1: Green training and development has significant effect on employee productivity of manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

This hypothesis was tested with information in Tables 5 and 6. The SPSS outputs are presented in Tables 9 and 10 below:

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics on Hypothesis Two

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Green Training and Development	3.7558	1.30204	344
Employee Productivity	3.8372	1.24877	344

Correlations on Hypothesis Two

		Green Training and Development	Employee Productivity
Green Training and Development	Pearson Correlation	1	.978**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	344	344
Employee Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.978**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	344	344

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation of Hypothesis Two

According to Table 9, the mean score for green training and development is 3.7558 (SD = 1.30204), while that for employee productivity is 3.8372 (SD = 1.24877). These results indicate that participants generally agreed that green training positively influences productivity. Table 10 reveals a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient of **0.978**, which is also statistically significant at the 0.01 level (p = .000). This suggests a high degree of association between the two variables, meaning that as green training and development efforts increase, employee productivity tends to improve accordingly. Given that the significance level is well below the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative (H_1) is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that green training and development has a significant effect on employee productivity in manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that green recruitment and selection have a significant positive relationship with organizational efficiency in manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria. This aligns with the studies of Akpobolokami (2023) and Gitongu et al. (2023), who similarly found that green hiring practices enhance organizational adaptability, operational efficiency, and employee commitment. Consistent with these prior findings, the present study demonstrates that recruiting employees with environmental consciousness contributes to improved efficiency by reducing operational waste and fostering long-term sustainability.

Additionally, the results indicated that green training and development significantly improve employee productivity. This finding is in agreement with the conclusions of Olaiya and Olaosebikan (2022), Yafi et al. (2021), and Pham et al. (2020), who found that green training enhances employees' environmental competencies, motivation, and pro-environmental behaviors, ultimately leading to better job performance and organizational sustainability. Similarly, Fapohunda et al. (2021) emphasized that structured green training initiatives foster greater environmental awareness and sustainable workplace practices, which the current study confirms in the manufacturing sector of Southeast Nigeria.

Overall, the present study supports and extends the existing literature by providing empirical evidence that the adoption of green recruitment and green training practices contributes positively to organizational efficiency and employee productivity within the manufacturing context of a developing economy.

Summary of Findings

The following major findings were made in this study:

1. Green training and development has significant effect on employee productivity of manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.
2. There is significant relationship between green recruitment and selection and organizational efficiency in manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria.

Conclusion

Researchers studied how green recruitment and selection and green training and development practices, affect the outcomes of manufacturing organizations in Southeast Nigeria. The findings point out that green recruitment leads to more efficient and well-performing companies that achieve greater sustainability. Furthermore, researchers discovered that green training and development makes employees more productive which proves that environmental training boosts workers' qualifications, spirit and effort toward sustainable actions. It is clear that including green HRM practices in policies encourages both caring for the environment and effective performance within the business.

Recommendations

1. Striving for sustainability should be included in companies' job postings, advertising and the way they choose new employees. Doing this will result in more green-minded staff who boost the efficiency of the organization.
2. Organizations ought to build and use organized training that teaches workers about the environment, using less energy and managing waste. This will increase the productivity of employees and encourage everyone in the organization to be more sustainable.

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