THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ADVANCING THE TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY

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Annotation. *The thesis examines the role of human resource management (HRM) in advancing the transition to a green economy. The concept of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) and its core functions – recruitment and selection, training, performance management, reward and employee involvement – are analysed through the lens of the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework. Particular attention is paid to the development of green competencies, the principles of a just transition and the tasks arising from the Strategy for the Transition of the Republic of Uzbekistan to a Green Economy for 2019–2030. Recommendations are proposed for integrating environmental objectives into organisational personnel policy and into the system of training and retraining of personnel.*

Keywords: *green economy, human resource management, Green HRM, green competencies, just transition, sustainable development, pro-environmental employee behaviour.*

The transition to a green economy has become one of the defining development priorities of the twenty-first century. The United Nations Environment Programme defines a green economy as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities [1]. The commitments undertaken by states under the Paris Agreement [2] have turned this concept from a declarative goal into a practical agenda that affects energy, industry, agriculture, construction, transport and services. In public discussion, the green transition is most often associated with technologies and investments – renewable energy capacity, energy-efficient equipment, modern waste and water management systems. However, any technology is designed, installed, operated and improved by people. Consequently, the speed and quality of the green transition depend to a decisive extent on how organisations attract, develop, motivate and retain their human resources.

For the Republic of Uzbekistan, this issue is of particular relevance. The Strategy for the Transition of the Republic of Uzbekistan to a “Green” Economy for 2019–2030, approved by Resolution of the President No. PP-4477 [3], set the course for improving energy efficiency, expanding the use of renewable energy sources, rational use of water and land resources and reducing the carbon intensity of the economy. These priorities were further developed in the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 [4] and in Resolution of the

President No. PP-436 on measures to increase the effectiveness of reforms aimed at the transition to a green economy until 2030 [5]. The implementation of these documents generates a growing demand for specialists in renewable energy, energy auditing, water-saving technologies, waste recycling, sustainable agriculture and environmental management, as well as for managers able to embed environmental objectives into everyday business decisions.

1. The green transition as a labour market and skills challenge

International studies show that the green transition reshapes the labour market not only by creating new jobs, but primarily by transforming the content of existing occupations. According to the International Labour Organization, the measures needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement could create around 24 million new jobs worldwide by 2030, while approximately 6 million jobs may be lost, mainly in carbon-intensive industries [6]. A key conclusion of the ILO country studies is that skills shortages are among the main obstacles to the implementation of green policies: most occupations do not disappear, but require additional knowledge of energy and resource efficiency, environmental regulation and new technologies [7]. Thus, the green transition is, to a large extent, a large-scale process of reskilling and upskilling, and it is precisely the human resource management system that is responsible for managing this process at the level of the organisation.

2. The concept of Green Human Resource Management

In the scientific literature, the integration of environmental objectives into personnel management is described by the concept of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM). D. Renwick, T. Redman and S. Maguire consider Green HRM through the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework: an organisation achieves environmental results when employees have the necessary abilities, are motivated to act in an environmentally responsible way and are given real opportunities to participate in environmental initiatives [8]. The AMO logic itself goes back to studies of high-performance work systems [9]. S. Ren, G. Tang and S. Jackson emphasise that Green HRM should be regarded not as a set of isolated practices, but as a coherent system that aligns the HR strategy with the environmental strategy of the organisation [10]. G. Tang and co-authors identified five core dimensions of Green HRM: green recruitment and selection, green training, green performance management, green pay and reward, and green employee involvement [11]. Let us consider the role of each of them in advancing the green transition.

Green recruitment and selection. At the recruitment stage, the organisation lays the foundation of its future environmental culture. This involves including environmental responsibilities and green competencies in job descriptions and competency profiles, assessing candidates’ environmental values and awareness during interviews, and positioning the company as an environmentally responsible employer. Research shows that a strong environmental reputation increases an organisation’s attractiveness, especially for young professionals, and thus becomes a competitive advantage in the labour market.

Green training and development. Training is the central instrument for building the “ability” component of the AMO framework. It should operate on at least three levels: general environmental awareness for all employees (resource saving, waste sorting, the environmental impact of everyday operations); specialised technical training for engineering, production and service staff (operation of energy-efficient equipment, renewable energy installations, environmental monitoring); and managerial training aimed at developing “green leadership” – the ability of managers to set environmental goals, evaluate projects in terms of their environmental effect and lead change. Under conditions of a rapidly changing technological environment, short-term, practice-oriented retraining programmes become especially important. In this regard, along with state higher education institutions, non-governmental educational institutions can play a significant role, as they are able to respond flexibly to employers’ requests and promptly launch programmes on topical green skills.

Green performance management and reward. Environmental objectives become a real priority only when they are reflected in the system of performance evaluation and remuneration. This presupposes the inclusion of environmental indicators – for example, reduction of energy, water and raw material consumption per unit of output, the volume of recycled waste, the number of implemented eco-initiatives – in the key performance indicators of units and managers. Reward for environmental results may be both financial (bonuses, allowances) and non-financial (public recognition, career advancement, additional training opportunities). At the same time, it is important to ensure the transparency and measurability of such indicators in order to avoid formalism and “greenwashing”.

Green employee involvement. The “opportunity” component of the AMO framework is realised through mechanisms that allow employees to participate directly in improving the environmental performance of the organisation: green teams, suggestion systems for resource saving, volunteer environmental actions, and involvement of staff in the development of environmental policy. J. Dumont, J. Shen and X. Deng showed that Green HRM practices shape a psychological green climate in the organisation, which in turn stimulates employees’ voluntary pro-environmental behaviour in the workplace [12]. Furthermore, Green HRM is closely linked with green supply chain management, since environmentally competent and motivated personnel are a prerequisite for introducing environmental requirements into relations with suppliers and partners [13].

3. Human resource management and the principles of a just transition

The green transition inevitably involves structural changes that may adversely affect certain categories of workers, primarily those employed in energy-intensive and resource-intensive sectors. The ILO Guidelines for a just transition stress that environmental sustainability must be achieved together with decent work, social inclusion and poverty eradication [14]. At the organisational level, the human resource management service is the main executor of these principles: it is responsible for the timely forecasting of changes in staffing needs, the organisation of social dialogue with employees, internal redeployment, retraining of workers whose jobs are being transformed, and support for employees in

mastering new professions. Thus, HRM ensures that the green transition is perceived by employees not as a threat, but as an opportunity for professional growth.

4. Barriers and directions for improvement

The analysis allows us to identify a number of barriers that hinder the full use of the potential of HRM in the green transition: insufficient awareness of managers and employees of the goals and benefits of the green economy; the predominance of administrative rather than strategic functions in the work of many HR departments; the lack of methodological tools for measuring the environmental results of personnel; a shortage of qualified trainers and training programmes on green skills; and a weak link between educational institutions and employers in determining the content of training. Overcoming these barriers requires coordinated efforts by the state, business and the education system.

Based on the above, the following recommendations are proposed: (1) to integrate environmental objectives into the HR strategy of organisations and to approve corporate Green HRM policies; (2) to develop and introduce professional standards and competency models containing green competencies for key occupations in energy, construction, industry, agriculture and services; (3) to include environmental indicators in KPI systems and to establish transparent mechanisms of financial and non-financial reward for environmental results; (4) to expand short-term retraining and upskilling programmes on green skills, actively involving both state and non-governmental educational institutions; (5) to create internal platforms for employee involvement – green teams, eco-initiative competitions and suggestion systems; (6) to build the competencies of HR specialists themselves in the field of sustainable development and green transformation.

Conclusion

The transition to a green economy cannot be successful if it is limited only to technological and financial measures. Human resources are the link that converts strategic environmental goals into concrete actions at each workplace. Through green recruitment, training, performance management, reward and employee involvement, human resource management forms the abilities, motivation and opportunities of employees to act in an environmentally responsible way, and through the implementation of the principles of a just transition it ensures the social acceptability of change. For the Republic of Uzbekistan, the systematic integration of Green HRM into the practice of organisations and into the system of training and retraining of personnel is an important condition for achieving the goals of the national green economy strategy.

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