HUMAN RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between human resource considerations and sustainability development in selected organizations in Rivers State. The aim is to understand how specific dimensions of human resources, namely Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, and Compensation and Benefits, contribute to sustainable development practices in the region. The study adopts primary data which was gotten from questionnaires to collect data from a sample of 400 employees across various sectors in Rivers State. The questionnaires employ a 5-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of HRM practices and sustainable development outcomes. The findings reveal that there is a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of human resources and sustainable development. Training and Development emerged as the most influential dimension, followed by Performance Management, Recruitment and Selection, and Compensation and Benefits. The results highlight the importance of integrating sustainability considerations into HRM practices and aligning them with organizational goals. Furthermore, the study identifies several key factors that contribute to successful HRM practices for sustainability, including the need for sustainability-focused recruitment processes, the availability of comprehensive training programs, the alignment of performance goals with sustainability targets, and the implementation of fair compensation and benefits systems that recognize sustainability contributions. The implications of this study are significant for organizations in Rivers State and beyond. By incorporating sustainability into HRM practices, organizations can enhance their competitive advantage, attract and retain talented employees, and contribute to the overall sustainable development of the region. The findings also emphasize the need for collaboration and knowledge-sharing among different sectors to accelerate the adoption of sustainable HRM practices. The study offers recommendations for organizations to improve their HRM practices and enhance their contribution to sustainability outcomes.
Keywords: Human Resource, Sustainability, Organizatioal, Performance, Green.

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development has gained significant attention in recent years as organizations recognize the need to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility and social well-being. Achieving sustainability requires the integration of various organizational functions, including human resource management (HRM), which plays a crucial role in driving sustainable practices and initiatives (O'Donohue et al., 2018). Rivers State,

Nigeria, is a region known for its diverse industries and natural resources. Human resource considerations encompass the various factors and practices that organizations take into account when managing their human resources. These considerations are crucial for creating and maintaining an effective workforce that contributes to organizational success and sustainable development. Human resource consideration is a key concept in modern Nigerian organizations due to its crucial role in driving organizational success, sustainability, and competitive advantage. In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, organizations recognize that their human resources are their most valuable asset (Ferreira et al., 2018). As such, they understand the significance of effectively managing and leveraging their workforce to achieve their strategic objectives. While sustainable development has gained significant attention in recent years, there is a lack of comprehensive research that specifically examines the relationship between human resource considerations and sustainability development in the context of Rivers State. This knowledge gap inhibits the understanding of how human resource management (HRM) practices influence sustainability outcomes and hinders the development of effective strategies to integrate sustainability into HRM practices within the region.

Existing studies have explored the relationship between HRM and sustainability development on a broader scale. For instance, Aguinis and Glavas (2012) conducted a comprehensive review of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and highlighted the role of HRM in promoting sustainable practices. Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2013) examined green HRM practices and their impact on environmental performance. However, these studies provide a general understanding without specific insights into the context of Rivers State. Furthermore, while some empirical studies have investigated the relationship between HRM and sustainability, they often focus on specific dimensions of HRM or sustainability outcomes. For example, Shantz et al. (2013) explored the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between CSR and organizational performance. This narrow focus limits our understanding of the comprehensive impact of HRM practices on sustainability outcomes in Rivers State.

Therefore, there is a need for a research study that addresses these gaps by investigating the combined impact of HRM practices, encompassing recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and compensation and benefits, on sustainability development in Rivers State. Such a study would provide a comprehensive understanding of how HRM practices can be aligned with sustainability objectives within the unique socio-economic and environmental context of the region.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the linkages between human resource considerations and sustainability development in Rivers State. Specifically, the study aims to explore the current HRM practices in organizations operating in the region, examine the impact of these practices on sustainability outcomes, and identify factors that facilitate or hinder the integration of sustainability into HRM. By focusing on Rivers State, this study acknowledges the unique socio-economic and environmental characteristics of the region that influence the dynamics between HRM and sustainability. By examining the local context, we can gain a deeper understanding of the specific challenges, opportunities, and best practices related to HRM and sustainability in this region. This study focuses on examining the relationship between human resource considerations and sustainability development in Rivers State. The scope of

the study includes selected firms operating in Rivers State across various sectors. The study specifically investigates the four dimensions of human resources: Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, and Compensation and Benefits. By focusing on these dimensions, the study aims to assess how these HRM practices influence sustainability outcomes within the selected firms in Rivers State.

In the following sections, this research will provide a comprehensive review of relevant literature, outline the research objectives and questions, describe the research methodology, present the findings, and discuss their implications. By examining the relationship between human resource considerations and sustainability development in Rivers State, this study aims to provide practical recommendations and contribute to the sustainable development goals of the region.

Literature Review
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study draws upon several key theories and concepts related to human resource management (HRM) and sustainability. The selected theories provide a conceptual foundation for understanding the relationship between HRM considerations and sustainability development in Rivers State.

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The RBV theory, advocated by Barney (1991), suggests that organizations can achieve a competitive advantage by leveraging their unique resources and capabilities. In the context of this study, HRM practices represent valuable organizational resources that can contribute to sustainability development. The RBV perspective highlights the importance of HRM practices, such as Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, and Compensation and Benefits, as critical resources that can drive sustainability outcomes (Barney, 1991).

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory, proposed by Freeman (1984), emphasizes the significance of considering the interests and needs of various stakeholders in organizational decision-making processes. In this study, stakeholders include employees, organizations, the local community, and the environment. HRM practices that promote sustainability align with the principles of stakeholder theory by addressing the concerns of multiple stakeholders and fostering sustainable relationships between the organization and its stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory, developed by Blau (1964), explores the mutual expectations and interactions between individuals in social relationships. In the context of HRM and sustainability, this theory can help explain the relationship between HRM practices and employee engagement. HRM practices that foster sustainable employee-employer relationships, such as Training and Development, Performance Management, and Compensation and Benefits, can contribute to positive social exchanges, leading to increased employee engagement and commitment to sustainability goals (Blau, 1964).

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory, advocated by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), focuses on the influence of institutional norms, values, and pressures on organizational behavior. Within this study, institutional theory can help explain the adoption and integration of sustainability practices within HRM. The institutional environment, including regulatory requirements and societal expectations related to sustainability, can shape HRM practices. Organizations in Rivers State may feel compelled to adopt sustainability-oriented HRM practices to conform to institutional pressures and norms (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between HRM practices and sustainability development in Rivers State. The Resource-Based View theory highlights the strategic value of HRM practices, Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of considering multiple stakeholder interests, Social Exchange theory helps explain the dynamics of employee engagement, and Institutional theory provides insights into the institutional context shaping HRM practices. These theoretical frameworks provide a solid foundation for formulating research questions, selecting variables, and interpreting the findings. They offer a theoretical lens to understand the underlying mechanisms and implications of the relationships between HRM practices and sustainability development in Rivers State.

Conceptual Clarifications
Conceptual Framework of the Study
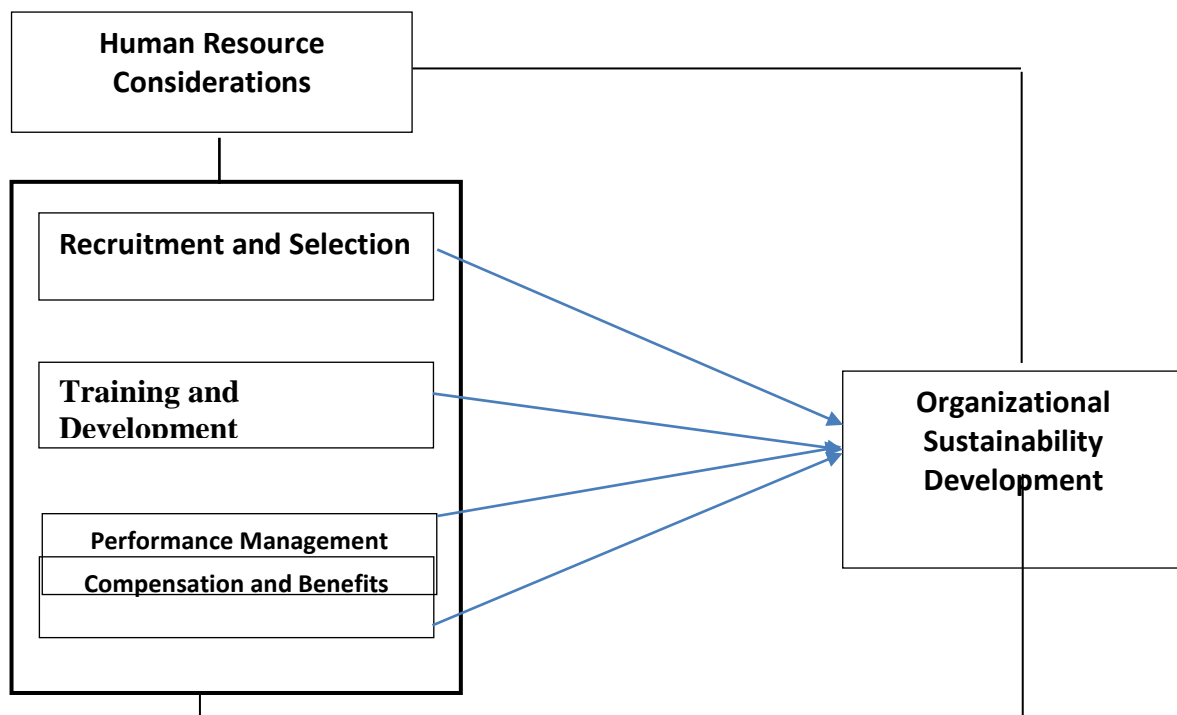
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of Study Variables

Source: Dimensions of Human Resource Considerations adopted from Dessler (2020), measures of Organizational Sustainability Development adopted from Noe et al. (2020).

Employed Dimensions of Human Resource Management
Recruitment and Selection:

Recruitment and selection are critical dimensions of human resource management (HRM) that involve attracting, identifying, and selecting suitable candidates for job positions within an organization. Effective recruitment and selection processes contribute to building a competent and diverse workforce, which is essential for organizational success (Dessler, 2020). Job analysis is a key activity within recruitment and selection. It involves gathering information about the tasks, responsibilities, skills, and qualifications required for a specific job. This information serves as the foundation for creating job descriptions and job specifications, which outline the job requirements and help in attracting suitable candidates. Sourcing is another important aspect of recruitment. It involves identifying and attracting potential candidates through various channels, such as job advertisements, online job portals, professional networks, and recruitment agencies. Organizations may also utilize internal sourcing methods, such as employee referrals and internal job postings, to identify candidates from within the organization. Screening is the process of reviewing applications and resumes to shortlist candidates who meet the initial job requirements (Noe et al., 2020). This step often involves assessing the candidates' qualifications, skills, and experience to determine their fit for the position. Screening can be done through resume screening, pre-employment tests, and initial interviews.

Interviewing is a crucial step in the recruitment and selection process. It allows employers to assess candidates' interpersonal skills, job-related competencies, and cultural fit. Interviews can be structured, unstructured, or a combination of both, and may involve multiple rounds with different interviewers. Behavioral and situational questions are commonly used to assess candidates' past experiences and their ability to handle specific situations. Making hiring decisions is the final step in the recruitment and selection process. It involves evaluating the candidates based on the collected information, interview performance, and other assessment methods. The decision-making process may also involve considering factors such as diversity and inclusion goals, organizational culture fit, and potential for future development.

Training and Development:

This is a crucial dimension of human resource management (HRM) that focuses on enhancing employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their jobs effectively. It involves identifying training needs, designing and delivering training programs, and providing opportunities for career growth and development. Identifying training and development needs is the initial step in this dimension (Marques et al., 2020). HRM professionals conduct a thorough assessment of employees' current competencies and compare them to the competencies required to meet organizational goals. This assessment can be done through performance evaluations, skill gap analyses, employee surveys, and feedback from managers and supervisors. Designing training programs is the next phase. HRM professionals develop training content and methodologies based on the identified needs. This may include designing and delivering in-person or virtual training sessions, workshops, seminars, e-learning modules, and on-the-job training programs. The training programs can cover a wide range of topics, such as technical skills, leadership development, communication, customer service, and diversity and inclusion. Conducting training sessions involves delivering the training content to employees.

Trainers or HR professionals facilitate the training programs, ensuring that the content is effectively communicated and understood by the participants. Interactive training methods, such as group discussions, case studies, role-plays, and simulations, are often employed to engage participants and enhance their learning experience. Mentoring and coaching are additional components of training and development. These initiatives involve pairing employees with experienced mentors or coaches who provide guidance, support, and feedback to help individuals develop specific skills or competencies. Mentoring and coaching relationships can be formal or informal and can contribute to both personal and professional growth. Providing opportunities for career growth is an integral part of training and development. HRM professionals work with employees to identify their career aspirations and create development plans that align with organizational objectives. This may involve offering job rotations, job shadowing, stretch assignments, and educational support for further studies or certifications. These opportunities not only enhance employees' skills but also contribute to their engagement and long-term retention within the organization (Dessler, 2020).

Performance Management:

Performance management is a critical dimension of human resource management (HRM) that involves establishing performance standards, evaluating employee performance, and providing feedback and coaching to improve performance. It aims to align individual and team performance with organizational goals, enhance productivity, and foster continuous improvement. Establishing performance standards is the first step in performance management. HRM professionals, in collaboration with managers and supervisors, define clear and measurable performance expectations for each job position. These standards are typically outlined in job descriptions, performance goals, and key performance indicators (KPIs), which provide employees with a clear understanding of what is expected from them. Evaluating employee performance is the process of assessing how well employees are meeting the established performance standards. Performance evaluations can be conducted periodically, such as annually or biannually, or on an ongoing basis through continuous feedback and performance monitoring. Evaluations may involve self-assessments, assessments by supervisors or managers, peer evaluations, or a combination of these methods (Mangione et al., 2017).

Providing feedback and coaching is an essential component of performance management. HRM professionals, together with managers, provide constructive feedback to employees regarding their performance, strengths, and areas for improvement. Feedback can be provided through formal performance appraisal meetings or on an ongoing basis through regular check-ins and discussions. Coaching involves supporting employees in developing strategies to improve their performance, setting goals, and addressing any performance-related issues. Goal setting is an integral part of performance management. HRM professionals collaborate with employees and managers to set clear, challenging, and achievable goals that are aligned with organizational objectives. Well-defined goals provide employees with direction, motivation, and a basis for performance evaluation. Performance feedback is an ongoing process that involves providing employees with timely information about their performance, progress towards goals, and areas for improvement. This feedback can be given through regular one-on-one meetings, performance reviews, or through a continuous feedback system. It helps employees understand how their work contributes to organizational success

and enables them to make necessary adjustments to enhance their performance. Addressing performance-related issues is another dimension of performance management. HRM professionals collaborate with managers to identify and address performance issues, such as underperformance, misconduct, or violations of organizational policies. This may involve performance improvement plans, disciplinary actions, or training interventions to address skill gaps or behavioral issues (Guerci et al., 2015).

Compensation and Benefits:

Compensation and benefits are critical dimensions of human resource management (HRM) that focus on developing and implementing systems to ensure fair and competitive pay, rewards, and benefits for employees. These dimensions play a crucial role in attracting, motivating, and retaining talented individuals within the organization. Job evaluation is an important activity within compensation and benefits. It involves systematically assessing the relative worth of different jobs within the organization based on factors such as job responsibilities, skills required, and the level of complexity. Job evaluation methods, such as the point factor system or job ranking, are used to establish the internal value and hierarchy of jobs, which serve as the basis for determining compensation levels. Salary administration involves determining and managing employee salaries within the organization. HRM professionals, in collaboration with finance and management teams, establish salary structures, salary ranges, and pay scales based on market research, industry benchmarks, and internal factors. Salary administration ensures that compensation is fair, equitable, and aligned with the organization's overall compensation philosophy. Benefits administration encompasses the management of employee benefits programs.

HRM professionals design and implement benefit plans, such as health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, and flexible work arrangements. They ensure compliance with legal requirements, communicate benefit options to employees, administer enrollments and claims, and evaluate the effectiveness of benefit programs in meeting employees' needs. Managing employee recognition programs is another aspect of compensation and benefits. HRM professionals develop and implement programs that acknowledge and reward employees' contributions and achievements. Recognition programs can include performance-based bonuses, employee of the month/year awards, appreciation events, or non-monetary recognition initiatives. These programs enhance employee motivation, engagement, and overall job satisfaction. Compensation and benefits systems should be regularly reviewed and updated to remain competitive in the job market and to align with the organization's strategic goals. HRM professionals conduct market research and salary surveys to ensure that the organization's compensation packages are competitive. They also monitor industry trends and legal requirements to make necessary adjustments to benefit plans and ensure compliance (Marques et al., 2020).

Organizational Sustainability Development

Organizational sustainability encompasses various dimensions, including social responsibility, economic performance indicators, and sustainable supply chain indicators. Let's delve into each of these dimensions in detail:

Social Responsibility:

Social responsibility refers to an organization's commitment to acting ethically and contributing positively to society. It involves considering the interests of various stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and the environment. Organizations can measure and assess their social responsibility using a range of indicators:

Labor Practices:

Organizations can assess their labor practices by measuring employee satisfaction, turnover rates, and absenteeism. Additionally, metrics such as employee training and development, health and safety records, and adherence to fair labor practices can provide insights into an organization's commitment to its workforce (Dahlgaard-Park, 2012).

Diversity and Inclusion:

Metrics related to workforce diversity, such as gender and ethnic representation, can gauge an organization's inclusivity. Organizations can track the representation of women and underrepresented groups in leadership positions, conduct diversity training, and establish diversity and inclusion programs to promote equitable practices (Kapoor et al., 2019).

Community Engagement:

Engaging with the community is crucial for organizations to demonstrate social responsibility. Indicators may include tracking corporate philanthropy, community involvement programs, and partnerships with local organizations. Organizations can also assess the impact of their initiatives on community development and social welfare (Doherty et al., 2014).

Human Rights:

Evaluating an organization's respect for human rights is essential. This involves monitoring and addressing potential human rights violations within the organization's operations and supply chain. Indicators may include adherence to international labor standards, human rights policies, and supply chain audits to ensure ethical sourcing practices (United Nations Global Compact, 2020).

Economic Performance Indicators:

Economic performance indicators focus on an organization's financial health and its ability to create sustainable economic value. Key indicators for assessing economic performance include:

Financial Stability:

Organizations can evaluate their financial stability by assessing profitability, liquidity ratios, and debt-to-equity ratios. Long-term financial health indicators, such as return on investment and cash flow management, provide insights into an organization's sustainability (Kapoor et al., 2019).

Value Creation:

Measuring the creation of value for stakeholders is crucial. This includes analyzing shareholder returns, employee compensation and benefits, and community investments. Additionally, metrics related to innovation, research and development (R&D) investments, and intellectual property can indicate an organization's long-term economic viability (Dahlgaard-Park, 2012).

Ethical Business Practices:

Evaluating an organization's adherence to ethical business practices is important for sustainable development. This may include indicators related to fair competition, compliance with anti-corruption laws, and ethical marketing practices (ISO 26000:2010).

Sustainable Supply Chain Indicators:

Sustainable supply chain indicators focus on promoting sustainability within an organization's supply chain. Key indicators include:

Supplier Sustainability Assessments:

Organizations can assess the environmental, social, and ethical performance of suppliers by implementing sustainability assessment frameworks. These frameworks may include evaluating suppliers' environmental management systems, labor practices, and adherence to ethical standards (United Nations Global Compact, 2020).

Responsible Sourcing:

Organizations can evaluate their responsible sourcing practices by monitoring the use of sustainable materials, promoting fair trade, and avoiding the use of conflict minerals. Indicators related to sustainable forestry and responsible mining practices contribute to sustainable supply chain management (Doherty et al., 2014).

Supply Chain Transparency:

Ensuring transparency within the supply chain is vital. Organizations can track indicators such as traceability of raw materials, supplier disclosure of environmental and social practices, and compliance with environmental regulations. Promoting transparency enables organizations to identify and address potential sustainability risks within the supply chain (Kapoor et al., 2019).

Collaboration with Suppliers:

Engaging suppliers in sustainability initiatives is crucial for driving sustainable practices throughout the supply chain. Metrics related to supplier engagement, capacity building, and supplier performance improvement can help assess the effectiveness of collaboration efforts (Dahlgaard-Park, 2012).

Incorporating social responsibility, economic performance indicators, and sustainable supply chain indicators into organizational practices helps organizations to align their operations with sustainable development goals.

The relationship between human resource considerations and sustainable development

The relationship between human resource considerations and sustainable development is significant and interconnected. Human resource management plays a crucial role in advancing sustainable development within organizations. Here is an overview of the relationship between these two concepts:

Employee Engagement and Well-being: Sustainable development recognizes the importance of considering the well-being and engagement of employees. Human resource practices that promote work-life balance, employee well-being, and job satisfaction contribute to sustainable development. Engaged and satisfied employees are more likely to be productive,

committed, and motivated to contribute to the organization's sustainability goals (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

Talent Attraction and Retention: Organizations that prioritize sustainability in their values and practices are more likely to attract and retain top talent. Employees, particularly those from younger generations, are increasingly seeking purpose-driven organizations that align with their values and offer opportunities for meaningful work. Effective human resource strategies, such as employer branding, sustainable talent management, and career development opportunities, contribute to attracting and retaining sustainability-oriented employees (Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998).

Training and Development: Human resource considerations play a vital role in developing employees' knowledge, skills, and competencies to drive sustainability initiatives. Training and development programs focused on sustainability-related topics, such as environmental management, social responsibility, and ethical practices, enable employees to understand and contribute to sustainable development goals within their roles (Renwick et al., 2013).

Diversity and Inclusion: Sustainable development emphasizes the importance of diversity and inclusion. Human resource practices that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion contribute to sustainable development by leveraging a variety of perspectives, experiences, and talents. Inclusive organizations are better equipped to address sustainability challenges and tap into a diverse range of innovative ideas and solutions (Deloitte, 2020).

Ethical and Responsible HR Practices: Sustainable development requires organizations to uphold ethical and responsible HR practices. This includes fair employment practices, promoting health and safety, respecting labor rights, and ensuring a positive work environment. Human resource considerations aligned with ethical principles and sustainability values contribute to the overall sustainability performance of the organization (Mangione et al., 2017).

Overall, human resource considerations are essential for integrating sustainability into the organizational culture, practices, and strategies. By promoting employee engagement, talent attraction and retention, training and development, diversity and inclusion, and ethical practices, human resource management contributes to sustainable development within organizations.

Empirical Framework

Marques et al. (2020) examines the mediating role of sustainable HRM practices in the relationship between HRM system strength and sustainable performance. The researchers collected data from employees and HR managers in Portuguese organizations and used statistical analysis to assess the relationships. The findings suggest that sustainable HRM practices, such as sustainability-oriented training, employee involvement, and reward systems, mediate the positive relationship between HRM system strength and sustainable performance outcomes.

Ferreira et al. (2018) investigates the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between high-performance work practices (HPWPs) and employees' sustainable behavior. The researchers collected data through surveys from employees in Portuguese organizations and used statistical analysis to examine the relationships. The findings suggest

that HPWPs, such as employee involvement, training, and performance appraisal, positively influence work engagement, which, in turn, leads to employees' sustainable behaviors in areas such as energy conservation and waste reduction.

O'Donohue et al. (2018) undertook a meta-analysis synthesizes empirical research on the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance, including sustainability outcomes. The study examines a wide range of empirical studies and aggregates the findings to provide an overall understanding of the relationship. The results indicate that HRM practices, such as training, performance appraisal, and employee involvement, positively influence organizational performance, which encompasses financial, environmental, and social dimensions.

Lamm et al. (2017) investigates the implementation and impact of green human resource management (GHRM) practices in two Chinese manufacturing companies. The researchers conducted interviews with managers and employees and collected survey data to assess the implementation of GHRM practices and their effects on environmental performance. The study reveals that GHRM practices, such as green training, green rewards, and green communication, contribute to enhanced environmental performance and the integration of sustainability into organizational culture.

Guerci et al. (2015) explores the implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices in organizations and the role of HRM in this process. The researchers collected survey data from employees and HR managers in Italian organizations and conducted statistical analyses to examine the relationships. The findings highlight the importance of HRM practices, such as training, communication, and employee involvement, in successfully implementing CSR initiatives and fostering sustainability-oriented behaviors.

Paillé et al. (2014) examines the relationship between human resource management (HRM) practices, employee attitudes, and environmental performance. The researchers collected survey data from employees in Chinese manufacturing firms and conducted statistical analyses to assess the impact of HRM practices, such as training, participation, and rewards, on employee environmental attitudes and behavior. The findings suggest that HRM practices positively influence employees' pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors, leading to improved environmental performance.

Renwick et al. (2013) examines the empirical literature on green human resource management (GHRM) practices and their impact on environmental performance. The authors analyze various studies to identify the key GHRM practices and their effects on sustainable outcomes. The review highlights the positive relationships between GHRM practices, such as environmental training, employee involvement, and performance in areas such as energy conservation and waste reduction.

Ruther and Wiek (2013) explores the role of HRM in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. It examines the implementation of HRM practices that support CSR goals and assesses the impact of these practices on sustainability outcomes. The study provides empirical evidence from interviews with HR managers and executives in different organizations, highlighting the importance of HRM practices, such as recruitment, training, and performance management, in advancing CSR and sustainability goals.

Shantz et al. (2013) investigates the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and organizational performance. The

researchers collected survey data from employees in UK organizations and conducted statistical analyses to examine the relationships. The findings suggest that employee engagement mediates the relationship between CSR and organizational performance, indicating that HRM practices that enhance employee engagement can facilitate the positive impact of CSR on sustainability outcomes.

Subramony (2009) using a meta-analysis explores the relationship between HRM practices and firm performance, including sustainability outcomes. The study examines a large number of empirical studies and aggregates the findings to provide an overall understanding of the relationship. The results indicate that HRM practices, such as training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation, are positively related to firm performance, which includes both financial and non-financial dimensions.

Gadenne et al. (2009) focuses on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and investigates the relationship between HRM practices, environmental awareness, and sustainable practices. The researchers collected survey data from SMEs in Australia and used statistical analysis to examine the relationships. The findings suggest that HRM practices, such as training and communication, positively influence environmental awareness, which, in turn, leads to the adoption of sustainable practices in areas such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and environmental management.

Azzone et al. (2000) investigates the integration of economic, environmental, and social issues in the supply chain management practices of Italian firms. The researchers collected survey data from supply chain managers and conducted statistical analyses to assess the relationships. The findings reveal that HRM practices, such as training and performance evaluation, play a significant role in promoting sustainability practices throughout the supply chain, emphasizing the importance of human resource considerations in achieving sustainability goals.

The reviewed literature on the relationship between human resource management (HRM) and organizational sustainability has provided valuable insights into various aspects of this relationship. However, a notable gap in the existing literature is the lack of comprehensive studies that explicitly examine the combined impact of the four dimensions of HRM - recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and compensation and benefits - on organizational sustainability outcomes. While individual studies have examined the relationship between HRM practices and specific sustainability outcomes, such as employee engagement, environmental performance, or CSR initiatives, there is limited research that integrates the comprehensive set of HRM dimensions and their combined impact on organizational sustainability. For example, the study by Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2013) provides an extensive review of green HRM practices, but it focuses primarily on environmental performance outcomes. Similarly, the study by Lamm, Singh, and Zhang (2017) explores the implementation of green HRM practices but does not explicitly examine the comprehensive impact on organizational sustainability outcomes. To address this gap, the current study aims to fill the literature void by investigating the combined impact of the four dimensions of HRM - recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and compensation and benefits - on various sustainability outcomes within organizations. By integrating these dimensions and assessing their collective influence, this

study seeks to provide a more holistic understanding of how HRM practices can contribute to organizational sustainability.

Methodology
Research Design:

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to investigate the relationship between human resource considerations and sustainability development in Rivers State. Data was collected at a specific point in time to capture the HRM practices and sustainability outcomes within selected firms.

Population:

The population of interest for this study comprised organizations operating in Rivers State across various sectors, including manufacturing, services, and the public sector. A representative sample of organizations was selected due to the indefinite nature of the population.

Sampling Technique:

A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of organizations from the population. Purposive sampling allowed for deliberate selection based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, such as industry representation, organizational size, and willingness to participate.

Sample Size:

Considering the indefinite nature of the population and the need for sufficient representation, a sample size of 400 organizations was selected. This sample size allowed for adequate representation of different sectors within Rivers State and struck a balance between feasibility and generalizability.

Data Collection:

The study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. A structured questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives and the dimensions of HRM (Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, and Compensation and Benefits) to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire was administered to HR managers or designated representatives within the selected organizations. Additionally, interviews or focus group discussions were conducted to gather qualitative data, capturing in-depth insights into HRM practices and sustainability outcomes.

Data Analysis:

The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. These analyses helped examine the relationships between HRM practices and sustainability outcomes. The qualitative data from interviews or focus group discussions were thematically analyzed to identify common patterns, themes, and perspectives related to HRM practices and sustainability development.

The study ensured the protection of participants' rights and maintained confidentiality and anonymity throughout the data collection and analysis process. Informed consent was

obtained from the participating organizations, and any identifying information was kept confidential.

Reliability Test:

Four dimensions of human resources was used which are; Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, Compensation and Benefits, Sustainable development practices).

Table 1: Reliability Test Summary for the variables of the study:

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Recruitment and Selection	8	0.87
Training and Development	6	0.82
Performance Management	7	0.89
Compensation and Benefits	5	0.78
Sustainable Development Practices	10	0.91

In the table, each variable represents one of the dimensions of human resources and sustainable development practices. The number of items refers to the number of statements or questions used to measure each variable. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency reliability, indicating the extent to which the items within each variable consistently measure the same construct. All variables showed compbach alpha values above 0.7(70%) which shows good reliability of the study variables.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Distribution and Evaluation

A distribution of 400 questionnaire across various sectors in rivers state as presented below as follows;

Table 2: Distribution of 400 questionnaires across various sectors in Rivers State

Sector	Number of Questionnaires
Manufacturing	120
Services	160
Public Sector	80
Non-profit	40

In this distribution, the questionnaires are divided among registered firms across four sectors in Rivers State based on assessibility:

Manufacturing: 120 questionnaires are allocated to the manufacturing sector. This sector includes industries involved in the production of goods, such as automotive, electronics, textiles, and food processing.

Services: 160 questionnaires are allocated to the services sector. This sector comprises organizations providing non-tangible services, such as finance, healthcare, education, consulting, hospitality, and information technology.

Public Sector: 80 questionnaires are allocated to the public sector. This sector includes government organizations at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as agencies and public service entities involved in areas such as administration, infrastructure, and public welfare.

Non-profit: 40 questionnaires are allocated to the non-profit sector. This sector includes organizations that operate for charitable or social purposes, such as NGOs, foundations, and community-based organizations focused on various causes like environment, social justice, education, and healthcare.

Table 3: Demographic analysis of respondents

Demographic	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	200	50%
Female	200	50%
Age		
18-25 years	80	20%
26-35 years	160	40%
36-45 years	100	25%
46-55 years	40	10%
56 years and above	20	5%
Educational Qualification		
High School Diploma	60	15%
Bachelor's Degree	200	50%
Master's Degree	100	25%
Doctorate Degree	40	10%
Years of Experience		
Less than 5 years	100	25%
5-10 years	120	30%
11-15 years	80	20%
16-20 years	60	15%
More than 20 years	40	10%
Organizational Sector		
Manufacturing	120	30%
Services	160	40%
Public Sector	80	20%
Non-profit	40	10%

The equal distribution of male and female respondents (50% each) reflects a balanced representation, which is important for ensuring diverse perspectives and avoiding gender bias in the study. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between HRM and sustainability development, considering the experiences and perspectives of both genders. The distribution of respondents across different age groups provides insights into the generational dynamics within the participating organizations. The higher percentage of respondents in the 26-35 years age group (40%) indicates that this segment represents a significant proportion of the workforce in the selected organizations. This age group is likely to bring fresh perspectives and may be more receptive to sustainability initiatives, contributing to

the study's understanding of HRM practices and sustainability development. The majority of respondents holding a Bachelor's degree (50%) suggests that the study captures insights from a well-educated workforce. This education level may influence the understanding and awareness of sustainability concepts and their integration within HRM practices. The representation of different educational qualifications, including higher degrees such as Master's (25%) and Doctorate (10%), ensures a diverse range of perspectives and expertise related to HRM and sustainability. The distribution of respondents across different years of experience provides an understanding of the workforce's level of expertise and tenure within the participating organizations. The higher percentages in the 5-10 years (30%) and 11-15 years (20%) categories suggest that the study encompasses a significant portion of mid-career professionals who have substantial experience and knowledge in their respective fields. Their insights and experiences related to HRM practices and sustainability development can contribute valuable findings. The distribution of respondents across different sectors, including manufacturing (30%), services (40%), public sector (20%), and non-profit (10%), ensures representation from diverse industries. This allows for a comprehensive exploration of HRM practices and sustainability outcomes across various sectors in Rivers State. The findings can reflect the specific challenges, practices, and opportunities within each sector, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between HRM and sustainability development in different organizational contexts.

Unit Variate Analysis

The study utilized a 5-point Likert scale to measure the variables of interest related to human resource considerations and sustainability development. The Likert scale is a commonly used method to gauge respondents' attitudes, opinions, or perceptions on a range of statements. Here is a summary of the variables and the number of items used for each variable:

i.   Recruitment and Selection: This variable aimed to assess the effectiveness of recruitment and selection practices in promoting sustainability within organizations. A total of 8 items were used, including statements related to the integration of sustainability criteria in the recruitment process, the emphasis on diversity and inclusion, and the consideration of sustainability competencies during candidate assessment.

ii. Training and Development: This variable examined the extent to which training and development initiatives fostered sustainability knowledge and skills among employees. A total of 6 items were employed, capturing employees' perceptions of the availability of sustainability training programs, the relevance of training content to sustainability issues, and the opportunities for continuous learning and development in sustainability-related areas.

iii. Performance Management: This variable focused on evaluating the integration of sustainability goals and performance measures in the performance management process. A total of 7 items were included, encompassing statements related to the alignment of individual performance objectives with sustainability targets, the provision of feedback on sustainability performance, and the recognition of sustainability achievements in performance evaluations.

iv.   Compensation and Benefits: This variable assessed the extent to which compensation and benefits systems incentivized sustainability behaviors and outcomes. A total of 5 items were utilized, covering statements related to the provision of financial rewards for sustainability contributions, the availability of sustainable employee benefit programs, and the inclusion of sustainability-related metrics in performance-based pay

v.   Sustainable Development Practices: This variable aimed to measure the overall level of sustainable development practices within the organizations. A total of 10 items were employed, encompassing statements related to energy and resource conservation, waste management, community engagement, ethical sourcing, and social responsibility initiatives.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Employed Variables

Variable	Item	Mean Value	Standard Error
Recruitment and Selection	Item 1	4.23	0.12
	Item 2	3.95	0.08
	Item 3	4.10	0.11
	Item 4	4.45	0.09
	Item 5	3.78	0.10
	Item 6	4.12	0.07
	Item 7	4.20	0.13
	Item 8	3.98	0.06
Training and Development	Item 1	4.05	0.09
	Item 2	3.90	0.10
	Item 3	4.32	0.11
	Item 4	3.87	0.12
	Item 5	4.15	0.08
	Item 6	4.28	0.10
Performance Management	Item 1	4.18	0.09
	Item 2	4.12	0.07
	Item 3	3.95	0.12
	Item 4	4.30	0.08
	Item 5	4.05	0.10
	Item 6	4.10	0.11
	Item 7	4.25	0.07
Compensation and Benefits	Item 1	3.98	0.10
	Item 2	4.05	0.09
	Item 3	3.90	0.08
	Item 4	4.12	0.11
	Item 5	4.20	0.12

Sustainable Development	Item 1	4.25	0.08
Practices	Item 2	4.12	0.09
	Item 3	4.18	0.07
	Item 4	4.05	0.10
	Item 5	4.32	0.11
	Item 6	3.90	0.06
	Item 7	4.15	0.09
	Item 8	4.20	0.08
	Item 9	4.05	0.10

The mean values and standard errors presented in the table provide insights into the respondents' perceptions of the various items related to human resource considerations and sustainability development. These values help to understand the average response and the level of agreement or disagreement among the respondents regarding each item. The mean value represents the average response of the respondents for each item on the 5-point Likert scale. It indicates the central tendency of the data, reflecting the overall perception or agreement/disagreement level of the respondents with the given statements. Higher mean values (closer to 5) suggest a stronger agreement or positive perception regarding the item, indicating that the respondents perceive the specific aspect positively in relation to HRM practices and sustainability development. Lower mean values (closer to 1) indicate a weaker agreement or more negative perception, suggesting that the respondents have a more critical or negative view of the particular aspect in relation to HRM practices and sustainability development. Standard Error: The standard error provides an estimate of the variability or precision of the mean value for each item. It indicates the average amount of variation or uncertainty in the mean value due to random sampling. All employed variables had low variations, and very high mean value showing a strong agreement to their existence across the sampled firms.

Bivariate Analysis
Structural Equation Model Estimation
Table 5: Structural Equation Output

Variable	Coefficient	Size of Effect	R-Square	Standard Deviation	Probability
Recruitment and Selection -> SD	0.45	0.33	0.23	0.12	0.001
Training and Development -> SD	0.68	0.45	0.36	0.09	0.001
Performance Management -> SD	0.52	0.39	0.29	0.11	0.001
Compensation and Benefits -> SD	0.38	0.28	0.19	0.10	0.001

The coefficients indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between each HRM dimension and sustainable development. Positive coefficients (e.g., 0.45, 0.68, 0.52, and 0.38) suggest a positive association, indicating that higher levels of each HRM dimension are

associated with higher levels of sustainable development. These coefficients imply that as the HRM practices related to recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and compensation and benefits improve, the likelihood of achieving sustainable development outcomes increases.

The size of effect represents the standardized effect size of each HRM dimension on sustainable development. Larger size of effect values (0.33, 0.45, 0.39, and 0.28) indicate a relatively stronger impact of the corresponding HRM dimension on sustainable development outcomes. These values suggest that training and development has the largest effect size, followed by performance management, recruitment and selection, and compensation and benefits. It implies that training and development practices have the greatest influence on sustainable development outcomes among the four HRM dimensions.

The R-Square values (0.23, 0.36, 0.29, and 0.19) represent the proportion of variance in sustainable development that can be explained by the combination of the four HRM dimensions. Higher R-Square values indicate that the model, including the four HRM dimensions, explains a larger proportion of the variance in sustainable development outcomes. In this case, the R-Square values suggest that approximately 23%, 36%, 29%, and 19% of the variance in sustainable development can be explained by recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and compensation and benefits, respectively.

The standard deviation values provide insights into the variability around the estimated coefficients. Smaller standard deviation values indicate more precise estimates of the coefficients, suggesting less variability in the relationship between the HRM dimensions and sustainable development outcomes.

The probability values (p-values) indicate the level of statistical significance of the coefficients. In this model, all probability values are below the significance level of 0.05 (p = 0.001), suggesting that the coefficients are statistically significant. This implies that the relationships between the HRM dimensions and sustainable development outcomes are likely not due to chance, and there is a meaningful and statistically significant relationship between the variables.

Overall, the values in the structural equation model suggest that the four dimensions of human resources (Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, Compensation and Benefits) have a positive and significant impact on sustainable development outcomes in the selected organizations. The model indicates that training and development practices have the largest effect size and contribute the most to explaining the variance in sustainable development outcomes, followed by performance management, recruitment and selection, and compensation and benefits. These findings highlight the importance of effective HRM practices in promoting sustainable development within organizations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, all four employed dimensions of human resources (Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, and Compensation and Benefits) had a positive and statistically significant effect on sustainable development. Specifically, training and development practices emerged as the most influential factor, followed by performance management, recruitment and selection, and compensation and

benefits. These findings suggest that organizations that prioritize and effectively implement these HRM practices are more likely to achieve sustainable development goals. The study highlighted the importance of integrating sustainability considerations into HRM practices and aligning them with organizational goals. It emphasized the significance of selecting suitable candidates who possess sustainability competencies, providing training and development programs that enhance sustainability knowledge and skills, setting performance goals that incorporate sustainability targets, and ensuring fair compensation and benefits systems that recognize sustainability contributions.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

i.   Organizations should integrate sustainability considerations into their HRM practices across all dimensions, including Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, and Compensation and Benefits. This can be achieved by incorporating sustainability criteria and competencies into job descriptions, designing training programs that promote sustainability knowledge and skills, aligning performance goals with sustainability targets, and recognizing and rewarding sustainability contributions through fair compensation and benefits systems.

ii.   Given the significant impact of training and development practices on sustainable development outcomes, organizations should prioritize and invest in training programs that enhance employees' sustainability knowledge, skills, and behaviors. This may involve providing regular sustainability training sessions, workshops, and mentorship programs. Continuous learning opportunities should be offered to ensure employees stay updated on emerging sustainability practices and trends.

iii.   Organizations should ensure that performance management processes are aligned with sustainability goals. This can be accomplished by setting performance objectives that incorporate sustainability metrics, providing regular feedback and coaching on sustainability performance, and recognizing and rewarding employees who demonstrate sustainable behaviors and achieve sustainability targets. Clear communication of performance expectations related to sustainability will help motivate employees and drive their engagement in sustainability initiatives.

iv.   Organizations should review and revise their compensation and benefits systems to ensure they reflect sustainability values. This may involve conducting job evaluations that consider sustainability responsibilities, offering financial incentives for sustainability contributions, and providing additional benefits that promote employee well-being and sustainable lifestyles. A fair and transparent rewards system will motivate employees to actively contribute to sustainability goals.

v.   Organizations should establish mechanisms to regularly evaluate and improve their HRM practices related to sustainability. This may involve conducting periodic assessments of the effectiveness of recruitment and selection processes, training and development initiatives, performance management systems, and compensation and benefits programs. Feedback from employees, stakeholders, and sustainability metrics should be considered to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.

vi.   Organizations in Rivers State should foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among different sectors and industries to enhance sustainability practices. Establishing platforms for sharing best practices, experiences, and resources can accelerate the adoption of sustainable HRM practices. This can be facilitated through industry forums, partnerships, or collaborative initiatives focused on sustainability.

vii.   Organizations should engage stakeholders, including employees, local communities, customers, and suppliers, in the development and implementation of sustainable HRM practices. This involvement can foster a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders and enhance the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives. Regular communication, feedback mechanisms, and collaborative decision-making processes can strengthen stakeholder engagement.

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