Employee Empowerment as an Agent of Change Toward a Sustainable Organization in the Green Economy Paradigm
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ABSTRACT
This research discusses the role of employee empowerment as agents of change in creating sustainable organizations, focusing on implementing the green economy concept. Using the literature review method, this article presents research results that illustrate the importance of employee empowerment in facing organizational change, whether through change management, skills development, or active participation in decisions. The concept of the green economy is a key focus, highlighting the need for organizations to adopt sustainable and responsible practices for the environment and society. The research results show that employee empowerment is crucial in accelerating organizational transformation towards a green economy while maintaining competitive advantage and minimizing negative impacts on the environment. The practical implication of this research is the important role of human resources professionals in facilitating the change process and supporting employees to adapt to an ever-evolving business environment. Thus, this article contributes to expanding understanding of how employee empowerment can be the key to creating sustainable organizations in the modern era full of challenges

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INTRODUCTION

In today’s rapidly evolving and competitive landscape, organizations must continually adapt to maintain their edge. Improved employee performance plays a vital role in increasing productivity and sales. These changes are often driven by factors such as mergers, acquisitions, alliances, restructuring, global competition, and technological advances. As companies seek global expansion, they often rely on human resource development professionals for advice and assistance. Rapid changes in today’s business environment force organizations to continuously innovate and adapt. In this context, improving employee performance is not only a necessity but also the main strategy for achieving operational efficiency and competitive advantage. Through various initiatives such as training and skills development, companies can ensure that their employees have the necessary competencies to face new challenges.

In addition, changes in organizational structure through mergers and acquisitions can create new opportunities as well as challenges, such as the integration of different work cultures and operational systems. Effective human resource development is very important in ensuring the integration process runs smoothly and the expected synergies can be achieved. In the context of globalization, competition is increasingly fierce with players from various parts of the world. Companies must be able to understand and adapt to global market dynamics. Continuously developing technology also requires organizations to continuously update their systems and processes. This is where the role of human resource development becomes crucial, not only in improving technical skills but also in developing leadership and change management abilities. Thus, companies that want to remain relevant and competitive must invest time and resources in strategic and sustainable human resource development. It’s not just about supporting individual growth, but also about building a resilient and adaptive organization amidst ongoing change.

Employees play an important role in driving organizational change and should be involved in the planning process. The responsibility of Human Resources (HR) professionals is to protect employees from the negative impacts of change and facilitate a smoother transition for those involved in implementing organizational change. HR practitioners play an important role in maximizing the effectiveness of an organization’s workforce to improve organizational processes by encouraging profitable employee behavior. Employees can react to proposed changes with a positive attitude (willingness to change) or a negative attitude (unwillingness to change). A positive attitude indicates employee approval and motivation to implement change, while a negative attitude reflects disapproval, lack of motivation, and sometimes resistance to change (Furxhi, 2021). When employees are involved in change, HR professionals, including specialist service providers, mentors, advisors, business partners, strategists, and change agents, should be involved. Among them, change agents play a crucial role in facilitating the process. When employees are involved in change, HR practitioners who specialize in service provision, mentoring, advising, strategic planning, and acting as change agents should actively participate. Change agents are valuable because they facilitate the change process. They can ensure
employee commitment and implement changes that affect employee responsibilities efficiently. Maintaining employee commitment during periods of change is critical to improving adaptive performance (VanDenHeuvel et al., 2020). HR practitioners must have a thorough understanding of the change process to understand the framework and plan the change implementation carefully. The importance of education lies in its ability to advance individuals' thought patterns and behavior, enabling them to learn and seek information about their environment. This understanding helps them monitor and protect the benefits for themselves and others, as well as the environment. Contemporary lifestyles, characterized by development practices that rely heavily on natural resources, significantly threaten existence. Development that only focuses on production systems has the potential to endanger lives. (Damayati and Mutiya, 2023).

In the era of globalization and rapid technological development, organizations are faced with the challenge of continuing to innovate and adapt to maintain competitive advantage. One of the key factors that contribute to an organization's success in facing change is empowering employees as agents of change. Employees who are actively involved in the change process not only help the organization in optimizing productivity and sales but also play an important role in creating a sustainable organization. Professional human resource (HR) development is very important in supporting employees to adapt to changes that occur, whether through mergers, acquisitions, alliances, organizational restructuring, or rapid technological developments. In the context of a green economy, the role of employees as agents of change becomes increasingly relevant. The green economy concept emphasizes sustainable development, resource conservation, and environmentally conscious social practices. Therefore, empowering employees within this framework involves improving not only individual performance but also their role in promoting environmental sustainability and social well-being.

Empowering employees through education and training about the green economy can increase their awareness and knowledge about the importance of maintaining a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability. In addition, empowered employees tend to have a positive attitude toward change, demonstrate readiness for change, and contribute actively to the implementation of initiatives that support sustainability. This article will discuss the importance of empowering employees as agents of change in creating sustainable organizations, focusing on implementing the green economy concept. Through various case studies and the latest research, this article will explore strategies and best practices in optimizing employee roles to achieve sustainable organizational goals in this challenging modern era.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Prioritizing the lifestyle of modern society which is highly dependent on the exploitation of natural resources seriously threatens existence. Likewise, emphasizing production systems solely to maximize economic profits has negative impacts on the environment and social sustainability. This has led to increased greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss due to deforestation, and widening income gaps between individuals in rich and poor countries. These challenges require effective solutions. The concept of a green economy is emerging as a promising approach, linking development measures, resource conservation, and environmentally sustainable social practices. According to Asrudi & Puspa (2021), economic potential also needs to be considered in developing the green economy. Public education about the green economy is very important for empowerment. This model prioritizes entrepreneurial creativity while maintaining environmental balance. Implementing a green economy is very important to comprehensively overcome economic challenges by managing resources and energy efficiently. So far, the green economy concept has proven invaluable in shaping policy and comparing alternative development paths. This involves considering several criteria, including economic, social, cultural, political, and ecological sustainability. Economic policies and practices must give priority to sustainability by managing waste production, utilizing natural resources responsibly, and ensuring the well-being of workers, as well as promoting health and education, all to foster a sustainable future. Encouraging greater commitment to adopting a green economy is essential to promoting sustainable living (Kristianto, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a literature review method to examine the role of employee empowerment as agents of change in achieving sustainable organizations in the context of a green economy. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to collect, analyze, and synthesize various studies that have been carried out previously, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study. The data used in this research comes from international journals and relevant books that discuss human resource development and the green economy. This selection of sources aims to ensure that the information collected covers the latest developments and diverse views in this field. The data collection process involved searching the literature through academic databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR, using relevant keywords such as “employee empowerment,” “change agent,” “sustainable organization,” and “green economy.” Articles and books that met the inclusion criteria were then analyzed in depth to identify the main themes and conclusions that could be drawn. The results of this literature review are presented descriptively in narrative form, which allows researchers to construct a clear and structured picture of how employee empowerment can contribute to the achievement of sustainable organizational goals. With this approach, it is hoped that this research can provide useful insights for practitioners and
Researchers in developing effective and sustainable human resource development strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Change management is a systematic organizational process that aims to facilitate the acceptance and integration of change by employees in the business environment. It involves the transformation and adjustment of both the entire organization and its parts, to maintain or increase productivity, revenue, market competitiveness, and internal coherence. HR plays a crucial role in change management because its strategy is concerned with anticipating the future, dealing with uncertainty, fostering innovative thinking and learning, implementing new approaches, and overseeing implementation. Organizations that have successfully aligned HR policies with strategic change initiatives, training programs, and employee relations processes have demonstrated skilled change management capabilities. A comprehensive change management program should include provisions for communication, broad stakeholder involvement, and necessary training for personnel. Implementation plans can be rolled out in stages or piloted initially, with careful monitoring throughout the process to ensure fitness for purpose. (Armstrong, 2021).

Change agents are individuals or groups tasked with initiating and overseeing change in an organization. These agents can come from internal sources, such as managers or employees appointed to manage the change process. In many forward-thinking and innovation-oriented companies, both managers and employees undergo training to acquire the skills necessary for change management (El-Dirani, et al., 2019). According to Lunenburg, change agents can take on three different roles: as a consultant, assisting employees in collecting and analyzing data from inside or outside the organization to address problems; as a coach, equipping organizational members with new skills to adopt new approaches; and as researchers, not only train employees but also design evaluation frameworks to address current and future challenges.

The concept of a green economy relates to an economic system that improves human well-being and social justice while reducing environmental risks and natural resource scarcity. At its core, a green economy is characterized by an emphasis on resource efficiency, minimal carbon emissions, and inclusiveness in social aspects. Another definition put forward by Söderholm (2020) states that a green economy is an alternative vision for achieving economic growth and development. The green economy aims to encourage economic progress and improve people's lives by advancing environmental and social goals. The green economy concept focuses on increasing social welfare without causing risks to the environment (Antasari, 2020). Therefore, it is very important to consider the environmental impact during the production process, including pollution, production waste, and resources used. Producers should refrain from activities that damage the environment, such as careless disposal of production waste which causes significant environmental damage, or excessive and irregular extraction of natural resources which can disrupt the natural balance. In simple
terms, resources must be used efficiently and by regulations to ensure sustainability. (Damayanti and Mutiya, 2023).

To move towards a sustainable organization in the green economy paradigm, empowering employees as agents of change is very crucial. A green economy requires a commitment to managing resources and energy efficiently, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving biodiversity, and improving social welfare. Empowering employees means involving them in every stage of the change process, providing them with the necessary training, and encouraging them to actively participate in decision-making. This not only improves employees' technical skills but also develops leadership and change management abilities. By championing a green economy, organizations can ensure that their economic policies and actions prioritize sustainability through the regulation of waste disposal, the use of natural resources, and the promotion of welfare, health, and education for workers. (Kristianto, 2020). Therefore, a commitment to adopting a green economy is an important step in ensuring a sustainable future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article describes the importance of empowering employees as agents of change in creating sustainable organizations, especially in the context of implementing the green economy concept. In an ever-evolving business landscape, organizations are faced with various changes, both internal and external, that require adaptation and innovation. Change management is crucial in maintaining competitive advantage and ensuring operational continuity. Empowering employees through education, training, and active involvement in the change process enables them to become effective change agents. By understanding and supporting the concept of a green economy, employees can contribute to organizational efforts to improve social welfare while minimizing negative impacts on the environment. The role of human resources (HR) professionals is also critical in facilitating the change process and optimizing employee engagement. Change agents, as part of HR practitioners, can help identify challenges, design strategies, and implement initiatives that support organizational transformation toward a green economy.

In the context of globalization and technological developments, organizations need to adopt a sustainable and responsible approach towards the environment and society. By integrating green economy concepts into their strategies, organizations can achieve sustainable goals, including economic growth, environmental preservation, and increased social welfare. Thus, the conclusion that can be drawn is that empowering employees as agents of change in the green economy paradigm is an important step in creating a sustainable organization, which can face future challenges sustainably and responsibly.
FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to carry out further research related to the topic of Employee Empowerment as an Agent of Change Toward a Sustainable Organization in the Green Economy Paradigm in order to improve this research and add insight to readers.

REFERENCES


