

Unpacking Proactive Human Resource Recruitment and the Sustainability of Selected Manufacturing Industries in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

A plenitude of research efforts exist on human resource recruitment that adjusts an organization's hiring and selection to suit sustainability goal. However, there is dearth of empirical research evidence in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study examines proactive human resource recruitment and its effects on the sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu state, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 387 respondents from a total population of 12,152 top, middle and low-level staff using Taro Yamane formula, from six (6) firms drawn from 7UP Plc., Nigeria Breweries Plc., (NB) Nigeria Bottling Company, Guinness Nigeria Plc., MTN communication Ltd and GLO communication Ltd respectively. The Bowley's proportional statistical method was employed for allocation of sample size. Primary data was generated through a self-administered questionnaire, interview and complimented with the secondary data. Five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 - 5 was used. Human capital theory was the theoretical framework of analysis. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance while statistical package for the social science (SPSS 25.0 version) was used for data analysis. From the findings, the study noted that, employee's referral had significant impact on social sustainability (t - statistic = 6.720; p - value = 0.001 < 0.005). Outsourcing of employees had significant impact

on environmental sustainability (t - statistic = 5.823 p - value = 0.001 < 0.005). The study concludes with recommendations for keen interest in having talented professionals, attracting and hiring individuals that align with environmental, social responsibility and sustainability performance.....

Keywords Proactive, human resource recruitment and sustainability.

Introduction

One of the turning points in the 21st century globally is the shaping of workforce to lend credibility to long term social, environmental and economic objectives. That is why green recruitment and selection is a rising trend in human resources management that adjusts an organization's hiring and selection practice to suit environmental sustainability goals. The broad focus is to hire qualified candidates who share organization's pledge to environmental responsibilities. More so, organizations actively seek employees with proven commitment to sustainability through their experiences, values and skills. It is evident when organizations apply digital technologies to selection process in order to lower waste of paper, engage in virtual interviews to bring down travel related carbon emissions coupled with adding questions that border on environmental awareness and sustainability in the interview process (Andah, et al., 2024).

On account of this, the relationship between manufacturing industries and sustainability is their thorough use of resources, energy consumption and environmental impact. Amidst that, the lack of concern of manufacturing companies and the government on the harmful effects of their activities on the environment translated to turbulence where the industries are located hence their inability to attain sustainability (Onayemi et al. 2022). In order to mitigate the challenges that emanate from that, the relevance of proactive human recruitment became necessary to control the anomalies by ensuring that employees are equipped with the right skills to implement and sustain it. In an attempt to incorporate sustainability, manufacturing industries became mindful of attracting, hiring individuals that align with environmental and social responsibility (Shao et al., 2024). As soon as a sustainable workforce is instituted proactive human resource would make training and development programs available to improve the skills and knowledge in green technologies, sustainable manufacturing processes and environmental regulations (Sahin et al., 2024). Even though there is a burgeoning empirical research effort on environmental awareness and sustainability, very little has been done in Enugu state. This reality creates a huge gap in scholarly understanding of the link between employee referral, outsourcing of employee, social, economic and environmental sustainability. Consequently, this study interrogates proactive human resource recruitment and its effects on the sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The success of any organization predominantly depends on human effort which evolves through identification and attracting of quality employees generated from recruitment policies. Despite that, multiple challenges hover around the sustainability of manufacturing industries ranging from high resource intensity and industrial waste generation. Their operations often translate to reduction of environmental strength such as water and air pollution, deforestation (clearing of forest) and greenhouse gas emission (when a planet is heated by solar radiation retained by its atmosphere). Amidst that, there is a culture of godfatherism, employee's referral on the social sustainability and inadequate environmental management. This led to the inability of enterprises to attract trained employees to the organization in order to fulfill their work expectation and requirement. These constrained the transition to sustainable production in organizations. Another problem is the outsourcing of employees where organizations authorize representatives (specialist or efficient services provider) to perform major tasks. In other words, it is the procurement of products or services from sources that are external to the organization. Outsourcing business operations and processes is usually inevitable in instances where a specific firm has no knowledge or skills for performing specific tasks within the organization. This causes lack of specialized training and reduced oversight (Achilike et al., 2024). Jointly, the complexity of the previously identified lapses leaves the following questions to be addressed:

What is the relationship between employees' referral and social sustainability?

What is the relationship between outsourcing of employees' and environmental sustainability?

Objectives of the study

Broadly, the study examines unpacking proactive human resource recruitment and its effects on the sustainability of selected manufacturing industries. Specifically, the study aimed to achieve the following:

Investigate the relationship between employees' referral and social sustainability

Examine the relationship between outsourcing of employees and environmental sustainability

Hypotheses

The following hypothetical statement will be tested in this research:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between employees' referral and social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between employees' referral and social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between outsourcing of employees and environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between outsourcing of employees and environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Review of Literature

Proactive

Proactive concept talks about initiative, being creative, preemptive, resourceful, thoughtful, futuristic, focused on time, change and vision oriented. A proactive concept and action is a change agent that can improve almost any situation by initiating positive change. This involves using positive synergy which involves patience and commitment to transfer the frame of reference from weak and inefficient resource to strong and efficient one (Convy, 1992).

Human Resource Recruitment

Human Resource Recruitment includes those practices and activities carried out by the organization in order to identify and attract potential employees. Recruitment is a process of attracting a pool of high-quality applicants so as to select the best among them. It is a process of discovering the sources of personnel to meet the requirement of the staffing agenda and attracting adequate number of employees needed by the organization. Human Resource Recruitment is an important aspect of human resource management which determines organizational success. Top performing companies devote considerable resources and energy to creating high and standard recruitment system. According to Griffin (1977) recruitment means securing the right people for particular jobs which can take the form of advertising for large group of employees or tracking out skilled individual for specific work. This means that not any person with paper qualification is eligible for recruitment. A choice has to be made on who is the right candidate for a particular job. Forster (2005) is of the view that recruitment are those activities in human resource management which are undertaking in order to attract sufficient job seekers who have the necessary potentials, competencies and traits to fill the needed vacancies and assist the organization to achieve its objectives. It's a conscious action taken by human resource or groups that reduces harm to the recruitment of employees in an organization or actively advantageous to ecological sustainability. In the same direction, a notable advancement made in human resource management is the adoption Electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM), which uses digital tools to improve human resource processes like recruitment, performance appraisal, training, and employee engagement. E-HRM has been lauded for its ability to reduce costs, improve decision-making, and streamline workflows, in order to improve organizational efficiency and sustainability (Mwita & Kitole 2025).

Sustainability

The concept of sustainability is evolving, hydra headed and another word for sustainable development. The multiple definitions are all targeted at the human impact on the interconnectedness of people, organizations, product or services, organisms with each other and their environment. Sustainability therefore means keeping intact the ability of the earth to maintain or keep in existence the weight of mankind. Sustainability ensures that resources are used in a way that allows them to be maintained for a long term without causing harm to the environment or future generations. It is about meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. This often involves balancing economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection. In consonance with the above submission, Saruchera, (2025) infers that, sustainability

uncovers how human behaviour, social structure and cultural context interact to achieve efficient resource management. Given that, there is no sustainability without considering resource distribution. Amidst that, the alliance of personal attitude, social norms and perceived behavioural control influences pro-environmental behaviour which is a conscious action taken by human beings or groups that reduces harm to the environment or actively advantageous to ecological sustainability. In the same vein, it is the overall environment required to bring forth the goods and services necessary to help human life and lifestyles (Fischer et al., 2023).

Empirical Review of Literature

Several studies were carried out by different researchers on human resource recruitment and sustainability. One of these studies was conducted in Ghana by (Kodua et al., 2025) in responding to Driving Green Innovation: Unlocking Strategies for Effective Green Human Resource Management Implementation in Ghana. The objective was to investigate strategies for implementing Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in Ghanaian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The study made use of a structured questionnaire; data was collected from 199 respondents across various organizational roles. Non-parametric techniques, such as Kruskal-Wallis H test, Wilcoxon signed-rank test, and Kendall's W to rank 18 identified GHRM strategies were used for data analysis. Findings revealed accessing green grants and subsidies, implementing strict regulations and enforcement, organizational culture, conducting cost-benefit analysis, utilizing green rating and labeling. A ranked strategy framework to guide managers, policy makers and stakeholders in developing effective Green Human Resource Management practice in resource-constrained arena. More importantly, there is need to align adjust to financial, cultural and regulatory strategies to support Green Human Resource Management. The previous and present studies were similar because they focused on human resource while the difference was that the previous study used non-parametric techniques, such as Kruskal-Wallis H test, Wilcoxon signed-rank test, and Kendall's W to rank 18 identified GHRM strategies were used for data analysis while the present study will use mean scores, SPSS and analysis of variance (ANOVA). In the same vein, the paper titled Merit-based recruitment and employee effectiveness: A bivariate study of selected southern Nigerian public enterprises Akpoyibo (2025) was targeted at assessing the correlation between merit-based recruitment practices and employee effectiveness in selected public enterprises in southern Nigeria. Data was generated through a structured survey and interview. A sample size of 302 was generated from the population of the study. SPSS, and correlation were found to be significant at 0.05 level. Finding revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between merit-based hiring and employee effectiveness in the public enterprises. It emphasized encouraging a culture of having the individual whose current skills, qualifications, and experience profile match the organization's current jobs and roles requirements would be 360 degrees helpful and lucrative within the organization in general. It recommends institutionalizing merit and competence-based system by policy makers and organizational practitioners in order to achieve efficiency.

In another study, the objective was to examine the complexities of labor relations in these enterprises, emphasizing informal employment structures, employer-employee power asymmetries, and workforce management strategies. Findings shows the vulnerabilities of workers and explores employer driven initiatives that can enhance labor conditions. Again, there is need for stronger labor protections, structured employment policies, and proactive human resource management to balance business sustainability with equitable labor practices. It recommends examining the impact of digitalization, automation, and alternative worker representation mechanisms on employment relations in small-scale enterprises (Chukwu et al., 2025). However, the title of the previous paper was 18 words which appears very long. The methodology of the study was not explicit. No population size and sampling technique used. Stretching further, the article written by Piwowar-Sulej (2020) titled human resources development as an element of sustainable HRM e with the focus on production engineers. The purpose of the article is to present the development of human potential in an organization against the background of other detailed sustainable HRM principles, to be followed by confronting the theory and the research results on the development of future competencies referring to industrial engineers in Poland as the professional group responsible for implementing the idea of cleaner production and Industry 4.0. Three research projects based on the survey method and representative data from Eurostat and Statistics Poland were used. Findings revealed that, industrial companies in Poland have more of a short-sighted perspective in terms of developing the potential of their engineers. The focus of Human Resource development practices was basically on current needs that do not align with the Sustainable Human Resource Management principles of a long-term perspective and flexibility. Again,

there was obvious lack of employee participation in the process of making training related decisions, which is another principle of sustainable Human Resource Management. Amidst that, environmental sustainability continued to suffer as an area of knowledge in terms of training, and the cooperation with external educational institutions. This is in tandem with the work of (Jeronimo et al., 2025) titled: green work-life synergy: Exploring pathways from green HRM to organizational environmental performance. The objective of this study is to examine how this interplay between individuals' environmental mindset, work and private life influences the relationship between green HRM and organizational environmental performance. Serial mediation analysis was used. Data was generated from 237 employees of a Portuguese consultancy firms certified for their pro-environmental services and initiatives. Findings emphasized the crucial roles of green human resource management practices in recruitment and selection, rewards, performance appraisal in promoting organizational environmental performance. The study recommends the adoption of green behavior both at work and in personal life. Although it has a lesser influence on organizational environmental performance compared to the strategic implementation of green HRM practices. The previous study was foreign and made use of serial mediation analysis while the present study is local and will use SPSS and ANOVA.

A common opinion exists between the previous study and that of Alfadel & Nalband (2025) whose aim was to investigate the relationship between GHRM practices and SD, focusing on the mediating effect of GC. Data was generated from 250 employees in private-sector organizations and analyzed using structural equation modeling through Mplus. The study made use of theory of planned behavior. Findings showed that, GHRM practices significantly influenced both green creativity and sustainable development. It recommends integrating environmentally focused HRM strategies and cultivating a culture of innovation, in line with the sustainability objectives. In the previous study, structural equation modeling through Mplus was used for analysis while the present study will use SPSS and ANOVA. The previous study did not show how, the population size was generated while the present study will use Taro Yamane formula to generate the sample size. It agrees with the work of Rehman et al. (2025) who authored a paper titled: how green HRM practices, organizational citizenship behaviour towards environment, technological competence and resistance to change influence the environmental performance of Saudi universities. This study employed ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory and change management theory to examine the effect of GHRM practices on the organizational citizenship behaviour towards environment (OCBE) and environmental performance (EP) of universities in Saudi Arabia. The study also investigated the moderating effect of technological competence and resistance to change on the association of GHRM practices with OCBE and environmental performance. Results demonstrate that, all three GHRM practices (green training and development, green employee involvement and green performance appraisal) have a positive and significant impact on OCBE, which subsequently influences EP. Results demonstrate that all three GHRM practices (green training and development, green employee involvement and green performance appraisal) have a positive and significant impact on OCBE, which subsequently influences EP. The title of the article is about 22 words which is cumbersome while that of the present study is about 16 words.

Gap in Literature

Although the research on human resource recruitment continues to rise steadily, previous studies were foreign based and reflected on merit-based recruitment practices, effects on administrative decision-making etc. Only few studies were found to focus elsewhere and non-concentrated on Enugu State, Nigeria. In other words, the inadequacies, incompleteness and incommensurability the current literature has not addressed, created the yawning knowledge gap this study will fill.

Theoretical Framework

Human capital theory was developed by Becker (1962) and Rosen (1976). The theory argues that workers have skills or abilities which they accumulate through training and education. This theory is of the opinion that people possess innate ability, behavior and personal energy and these elements make the human capital. It is the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals that create value. That is why the key point has to be directed on the means of attracting, retaining and developing human capital. Individuals generate, retain and use knowledge and skills (human capital) to create intellectual capital. This knowledge is further enhanced by the interaction between the social capital and the organization to generate institutional objective which the organization possess. The human capital theory considers people as assets and stressed that investing in people by the organization would bring about good returns to the organization. Similarly, Armstrong (2024) concurred that human capital theory is

closely linked to the Resource Based View (RBV) of firms. People and their collective skills, behaviours, education, abilities and experiences as well as their ability to utilize them in the interest of organization are recognized as significant source of competitive advantage. When these humans feel supported, invested in and developed, the chances are high that workers would remain in the organization (Wisdom 2026).

Human capital theory frames employee knowledge, skills, and health as organizational assets rather than mere expenses. For manufacturing industries, applying this theory to proactive recruitment means strategically hiring based on an applicant's potential for continuous learning, long-term adaptability, technological innovation to directly drive long-term operational and environmental sustainability in order to improve the economy. That is why organizations use employee referral to attract workers they would train and develop in order to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. Moreso, outsourcing of employees who are experts in their field became relevant so that, they could generate, retain and use their knowledge and skills (human capital) to create intellectual capital within the organization. Furthermore, to influence sustainability outcomes, proactive recruitment deliberately source for talents (human capital) with specialized environmental and sufficient supply of social knowledge. Similarly, when such workforce skills and knowledge are handled and dealt with appropriately as a place of capital in expectation, organizations are motivated to imbibe the ability to perform task driven by long-term environmental and social possibility.

3. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The projected population of this study was Twelve Thousand one Hundred and fifty- two (12,152) top, middle and low-level staff of six (6) firms drawn from consumable goods and communication industries that are quoted in the Nigerian stock Exchange in Enugu State as: 7UP Plc., Nigeria Breweries Plc., (NB) Nigeria Bottling Company, Guinness Nigeria Plc., MTN communication Ltd and GLO communication Ltd respectively.

Table 1: Distribution of Population by Towns and Companies in Enugu State

S/N	Towns	7UP	NBL	Guinness	MTN	GLO	NBC	Total
1	Enugu	325	410	315	490	400	600	2540
2	9 th Mile Ngwo	1825	2512	1450	45	30	2348	8210
3	Obollo - Afor /Orba	150	184	45	64	82	65	590
4	Nsukka	220	260	110	86	58	78	812
Total		2520	3366	1920	685	570	3091	12152

Source: Authors Fieldwork (2026)

Sample Size Determination

A sample of **387** respondents was selected through a simple random sampling technique. The simple random sampling was used to select respondents with needed characteristic to be part of the study because it gives the entire population the equal chance of being included in the sample. The simple random sampling by Rand function was used to illustrate six manufacturing industries in Enugu State drawn from consumable and communication industries. Sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formulae $n = N/1+N (e^2)$. The Bowley's proportional statistical method was employed for allocation of sample size, with respondents drawn from 7up, NBL, Guinness, MTN, GLO, and NBC respectively. It assumes that a population should be divided into simple homogenous strata. The cost of sampling and variance of observation are roughly equal across all strata. This helps to eliminate potential sampling bias or misrepresentation.

Table 2: Sample Size Allocation

S/N	Organization	Top Level Employee	Middle Level Employee	Low Level Employee	Total
1	7UP	12	20	48	80
2	NBL	15	26	66	107
3	GUINNESS	14	17	30	61

4	MTN	5	7	10	22
5	GLO	7	9	9	18
6	NBC	19	30	50	99
Total					387

Bowley's Questionnaire Allocation Formula, $Q = (AXS)/N$

Key: **Q** = No of questionnaire allocated. **A** = No of employee in a given organization. **S** = Total sample size in a given organization & **N** = Total population.

In the light of table 2 item 1, 7up was statistically revealed as ($7UP = 2520 \times 387/12123 = 80$). It illustrates that, 7up had a total population of 2520 multiplied by the sample size of 387 divided by the total population of all the manufacturing industries 12123 and we arrived at 80 as its allocated sample size. Item 2 in table 2 uncovered that ($NBL = 3366 \times 387/12125 = 107$) the total population of NBL was 3366 multiplied by the sample size of 387 divided by the overall population of all the manufacturing industries 12123 which gave 107 as its allocated sample size. Furthermore, is represented in figures as follows: ($Guinness = 1920 \times 387/12125 = 61$). It simply means that Guinness had a total population of 1920 multiplied by the sample size of 387 divided by the total population of all the manufacturing industries 12123 and 61 was allocated as sample size. From statistical evidence, ($MTN = 685 \times 387/12125 = 22$). It indicates that 685 was the population of MTN multiplied by 387 divided by the overall population of the manufacturing industries 12123 which produced 22 apportioned sample size. The output of ($GLO = 570 \times 387/12125 = 18$) revealed that the population of GLO 570 was multiplied by 387 sample size, divided by 12123 total population of all the industries and it showed 18 assigned sample size. Finally, the ($NBC = 3091 \times 387/12125 = 99$) uncovered that, a population of 309 was multiplied by 387 sample size, divided by total population of manufacturing industries 12123 equals to 99 its allocated sample. Suffice that, the sum total of allocated samples to the manufacturing industries gave the cumulative sample size of 387.

Instrument and Method of Data Collection

The primary data was generated through a self-administered questionnaire, structured on five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 - 5, complemented with oral interview cum secondary data.

Validity and Reliability

Five experts who hold PhD in management with minimum of 10 years' experience in corporate management vetted the questionnaire and established the face, content and construct validity. The validation criteria were based on clarity of words and relevance of the objective of the study. A test – retest method was used for reliability. Pre - test was done using questionnaire administered to the respondents of the selected organization. Cronbach's alpha was used to ascertain the reliability coefficient of the test because it provides a clear numerical value from 0 to 1, it efficiently measures internal consistency and requires only a single test of administration.

Table 3: Reliability Coefficient of the Test

Organization	First Response (x)	Second Response (y)		
7UP 1	5	4	1	1
NBL 1	5	3	2	4
Guinness 1	5	3	2	4
2	4	3	1	1
MTN 1	5	4	1	1
2	4	2	2	4
GLO 1	5	4	1	1
2	5	3	2	4
NBC 1	4	2	2	4
2	4	2	2	4
Total				33

$$r = 1 - 6Ed^2/n(n^2 - 1)$$

$$1 - 6(33)/12(12^2 - 1)$$

$$1 - 6(33)/1716$$

$$1 - 198/1716$$

$$1 - 0.115$$

$r=0.8847$

The computed Cronbach's alpha is 0.88. The reliability of the test instrument is very strong as $r, > 0.5$.

Methods of Data Analysis

One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance while statistical package for the social science (SPSS 25.0 version) was used for data analysis.

4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Table 4: Percentage and Mean Scores of Respondents on the relationship between employees' referral and social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State

S/N	Variables influenced by employees' referral	SA 5	A 4	UD3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean
1	A good number of staff hired in our organization through referral method support socially responsible goals of our organization.	750	480	240	40	17	1527	3.9
		150	120	80	20	19	387	
		39%	31%	21%	5%	4%	100%	
2	Our company believes in employee referral system of recruitment because it builds workforce that drives social sustainability initiatives.	800	440	270	34	10	1554	4.0
		160	110	90	17	10	387	
		42%	28%	23%	4%	3%	100%	
3	Employees hired on referral system of recruitment are passionate about social sustainability of the organization.	700	400	354	40	12	1497	3.9
		140	100	115	20	12	387	
		36%	26%	30%	5%	3%	100%	
4	Referral method suggest that the applicants will demonstrate commitment to sustainability goals.	900	480	180	40	7	1607	4.2
		180	120	60	20	7	387	
		47%	31%	15%	5%	2%	100%	
5	Our organization prefers employees' referral to other methods of recruitment practices because it supports sustainability goals of the organization.	500	800	186	30	10	1526	3.9
		100	200	62	15	10	387	
		26%	52%	15%	4%	3%	100%	

Source: Authors Fieldwork (2026)

The study established that, respondents to table 4: item 1 indicate that a greater percentage of the respondents agreed that a good number of staff hired in our organizations through referral method supported social responsibility goals of our organization as the following statistics revealed (39% SA, 31% A, 21% UD, 5% A & 4% SD. Mean Score = 3.9). In the same manner, the result on table 4: item 2 also revealed that, the percentage and mean score on our company's believe in referral system of recruitment because it builds workforce that drives social sustainability initiatives are as follows: (42% SA, 28% A, 23% UD, 4% D, & 3% SD. Mean Score = 4.0). Statistically from table 4: item 3 the result of respondents on employees hired on referral system of recruitment are passionate about social sustainability of the organization are as follows: (36% SA, 26% A, 30% UD, 5% D, & 3% SD. Mean Score = 3.9). Regarding responses from table 4: item 4 that, referral methods suggest that the applicants will demonstrate commitment to sustainable goals of the organization has the following results: (47% SA, 31% A, 15% UD, 5% D, & 2% SD. Mean Score = 4.2). In the same context, table 4: item 5 respondents on our organization prefers employees' referrals to other methods of recruitment practices because it support sustainable goals of the organization showed the following results: (26% SA, 52% A, 15% UD, 4% D, & 3% SD. Mean Score = 3.9).

Table 5: Percentage and Mean Scores of Respondents on the Relationship between Outsourcing of Employee's and Environmental Sustainability of Selected Manufacturing Industries in Enugu State?

S/N	Variables influenced by outsourcing of employee's	SA 5	A 4	UD3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean
1		900	500	180	32	4	1616	4.2

	Our company prefers recruiting candidates who demonstrate commitment to sustainable manufacturing practices from outside than hiring.	180	125	60	18	4	387	
		47%	32%	16%	5%	1%	100%	
2	Outsourced staff in our organization are passionate about eco-friendly.	875	520	195	24	5	1619	4.2
		175	130	65	12	5	387	
		45%	34%	17%	3%	1%	100%	
3	There is job security for every outsourced staff that promote environment regulation.	550	800	165	30	7	1552	4.0
		110	200	55	15	7	387	
		28%	52%	14%	4%	2%	100%	
4	Our applicants remain in our organization because our organization is passionate about eco-friendly.	425	404	447	80	12	1368	3.5
		85	101	149	40	12	387	
		22%	26%	39%	10%	3%	100%	
5	Our organization rewards any outsourced staff who practices waste reduction.	950	440	180	40	7	1617	4.2
		190	110	60	20	7	387	
		49%	28%	16%	5%	2%	100%	

Source: Authors Fieldwork (2026)

In the light of respondents' opinion from table 5: item 1 on their company preferring recruiting candidates who demonstrate commitment to sustainable manufacturing practices from outside than hiring revealed the follows: (47% SA, 32% A, 16% UD, 5% D, & 1% SD. Mean Score = 4.2). The respondent's perception as shown on Table 5: item 2 revealed the following: (45% SA, 34% A, 17% UD, 3% D, & 1% SD. Mean Score = 4.2). it was evident from the foregoing that, outsourced staff in our organization are passionate about eco-friendly environment. Majority of the respondents from table 5: item 3 depicted that, there is job security for every outsourced staff that promotes environment regulation as follows: (28% SA, 52% A, 14% UD, 4% D, & 2% SD. Mean Score = 4.0). In the same direction, table 5: item 4 brought to limelight applicants who remain in organizations because their organizations are passionate about eco-friendly environment as follows: (22 % SA, 26% A, 39% UD, 10% D, & 3% SD. Mean Score = 3.5). It was also evident from table 5: item 5 that, organizations reward any outsourced staff who practices waste reduction as the following results depicts: (49 % SA, 26% A, 16% UD, 5% D, & 2% SD. Mean Score = 4.2).

Test of Hypotheses

Two hypotheses formulated were tested and decision taken based on the decision rule as follows: Reject H_1 if p -value > 0.05

Hypothesis I

H_0 = Employees referral did not have significant impact on social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

H_1 : Employees referral had significant impact on social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

Table 6:

Model Summary

Modal 1	R	R Squared	Adjusted R Squared	Std Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
	.901	.826	.825	.23055	1.895
Predictor: (Constant), Employees referral					
Dependent Variable: Social Sustainability					

Source: SPSS Version 25

ANOVA^a

Modal	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Score	F	Sig
1. Regression	59.057	1	59.057	18.111	0.00 ^b
Residual	1045.236	386	3.0650		
Total	1104.293	387			

Dependent Variable: Employees referral

Predictor: (Constant): Social sustainability

Coefficients^a

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Modal	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	1.659	0.870		18.111	0.000
Employee referral	0.570	0.092	___ - .951	6.720	0.000

A Dependent Variable: Social sustainability

In testing hypothesis, I: employee's referrals were regressed against social sustainability. The result of single-regression analysis on the impact of employee's referral on the social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

Social sustainability = 1.659 + 0.570 employee's referrals

The empirical result showed that coefficient of employee's referrals had positive and significant relationship on social sustainability. This means that employee's referrals had positive and significant impact on social sustainability in Enugu state. The result of t-statistic showed that coefficient of employee's referrals was statistically significant because the value of t - statistics (6.720) was greater than the p - value = (0.001). The result of the F - statistics showed that the overall regression of the hypothesis was statistically significant. This was because the observed value of F - statistics (18.111) was greater than p - value = (0.001). The R squared signified that 90.1% of the population was represented in the sample size which indicated a very good representation. However, we rejected the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which concludes that employee's referral had significant impact on social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

Hypotheses II

H₀: Outsourcing of employees did not have significant impact on environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

H₁: Outsourcing of employees had significant impact on environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

Table 7:

Model Summary

Modal 1	R	R Squared	Adjusted R Squared	Std Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
	.857	.864	.865	.20055	2.001
Predictor: (Constant), Outsourcing of employees					
Dependent Variable: Environmental Sustainability					

Source: SPSS Version 25

ANOVA^a

Modal	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1. Regression	43.780	1	43.646	9.152	0.00 ^b
Residual	1702.176	304	4.768		
Total	1045.965	305			

Dependent Variable: Outsourcing of employees

Predictor: (Constant): Environmental sustainability

Coefficients^a

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Modal	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	0.267	0.75		3.568	0.000
Cost Efficiency	0.465	0.008	___ - .969	5.823	0.000

A Dependent Variable: Environmental sustainability

In testing hypotheses three, outsourcing of employees was regressed against environmental sustainability. The result of single-regression analysis on the impact of outsourcing of employees on environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State was shown as follows:

Outsourcing of employees = $0.267 + 0.465$ environmental sustainability.

The empirical result showed that outsourcing of employees had positive and significant impact on environmental sustainability. In other words, outsourcing of employees had positive and significant impact on environmental sustainability in Enugu state. The result of t-statistic showed that cost-efficient strategy was statistically significant. This is because the value of t statistics (5.823) was greater than the p - value = (0.001). The result of the F-statistics showed that the overall regression of the hypothesis was statistically significant. This was because the observed value of F - statistics (9.152) was greater than p - value = (0.001). The R squared signified that 80.64% of the population was represented in the sample size which was a very good representation. However, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which concludes that outsourcing of employees had significant impact on environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

Employees referral had significant impact on social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State (t - statistic = 6.720; p - value = $0.001 < 0.005$ level of significance).

Outsourcing of employees had significant impact on environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State (t - statistic = 5.823; p - value = $0.001 < 0.005$ level of significance).

Discussion

Impact of employee's referral on the social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

The t-statistic = 6.720; p - value = $0.001 < 0.005$ level of significance. This indicates that the regression result is statistically significant as the p-value is less than 0.005 level of significance used in the study. Employee's referrals have positive and significant impact on the social sustainability. This is tandem with the submission of Balogun and Cheema Pasha and Javed (2015) who infer that, there is a strong, positive and significant association between overall green Human Resource Management practices and employee's performance. The study is also agrees ith the work of Temitope, Johnson and Juliana (2022) who carried out a study to examine the role of green human resource management (GHRM) practices on environmental sustainability with employee behavior as a mediating variable. The verdict of the study worked together with the discovery of (Edih, et al., 2017) that examined referral recruitment and workers efficiency: Perspective of Nigerian Ports Authority. It revealed that referral recruitment had positive and significant effect on workers efficiency and organizational performance. Of prime importance is that, employee referral enhances candidates' quality, accelerates the process of recruitment, improves employee engagement and loyalty. It is a cost-effective hiring process because of lower advertising expenses and shorter hiring cycles. Furthermore, the cost is better by approximately 30% compared to conventional recruitment methods. That was an indication that cost diversity, inclusion of workers and organizational culture improved. (Gai1 & Omuya 2024).

Impact of outsourcing of employees on environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

The t-statistic = 5.823 p - value = $0.001 < 0.005$ level of significance. This indicates that the regression result is statistically significant as the p-value is less than 0.005 level of significance used in the study. This implies that outsourcing of employee has positive and significant impact on the environmental sustainability in Enugu State. The outcome of the study is in line with the findings of Azhar, Yang, Rui and Majid (2024) who carried out a study to investigate how green human resource management and green innovation affect environmental performance in pursuit of the ultimate objective of carbon neutrality. Empirical finding revealed that three factors significantly influenced environmental performance: green HRM, innovation, and competitive advantage. Similarly, the outcome of the study is in line with the finding from the work of (Hadjriet et al., 2019) who explored the effect of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) on the environmental performance of PAUD

schools, emphasizing the role of an environmentally friendly organizational culture as a mediating factor. Empirical findings revealed that GHRM significantly influenced environmental performance, both directly and indirectly through the organizational culture. The empirical finding also supports the work of Mandip (2012) who investigated green human resource management: People management commitment to environmental sustainability. The findings revealed that green human resource management has a positive significant relationship with organizational sustainability. Empirical findings from that study are not in tandem with findings from the study of Daily and Huang (2001) who conducted a study on achieving sustainability through attention to human resource factors in environmental management. Their findings revealed that human resource (HR) factors like training, employee empowerment, top management support, teamwork, and rewards systems are main components for the achievement of sustainability goals in the organizations.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study examined proactive human resource recruitment and its effects on the sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu state, Nigeria. The result showed that the two factors had positive and significant relationship with social and environmental sustainability respectively. The findings revealed that employee's referral had significant impact on social sustainability (t - statistic = 6.720; p - value = $0.001 < 0.005$). Outsourcing of employees had significant impact on environmental sustainability (t - statistic = 5.823 p - value = $0.001 < 0.005$). The study concludes that knee interest in having talented professionals, attracting and hiring people that align with social and environmental sustainability performance should be observed.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

Industries should take knee interest in having talented professionals who know how social responsibility is related with sustainability performance. Since employees' referral had significant impact on social sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State.

Manufacturing industries should focus on attracting and hiring individuals that align with environmental and social responsibility.

Industries should build a sustainable workforce that can contribute to the social responsibility goals of the organization by promoting ethical labour practices, fair wages, and safe working conditions.

Since outsourcing of employees had significant impact on environmental sustainability of selected manufacturing industries in Enugu State, management should know that the quality of the institutions or organization is dependent on the quality of people it employs through the process of recruitment. Therefore, recruitment and selection decision, policies, practices and procedures should ensure that institutional recruitment and selection are based on competence and qualified standard...

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