

## **Green candidate selection for organizational environmental management**

ADJEI-BAMFO, Peter <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5009-2578>>, BEMPONG, Bernard, OSEI, Jane and KUSI-SARPONG, Simonov

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**Peter Adjei-Bamfo\***

Department of Public Administration and Health Services Management  
University of Ghana Business School,  
P.O. Box LG. 78, Legon, Accra, Ghana  
Email: [bamfopeter@gmail.com](mailto:bamfopeter@gmail.com)

**Bernard Bempong**

Southampton Business School, University of Southampton, Southampton S017 1BJ  
United Kingdom  
Email: [bfbempong@yahoo.com](mailto:bfbempong@yahoo.com)

**Jane Osei**

Department of Public Administration and Health Services Management  
University of Ghana Business School,  
P.O. Box LG. 78, Legon, Accra, Ghana  
Email: [janeosei@ymail.com](mailto:janeosei@ymail.com)

**Simonov Kusi-Sarpong**

Southampton Business School, University of Southampton, Southampton S017 1BJ  
United Kingdom  
Email: [simonov2002@yahoo.com](mailto:simonov2002@yahoo.com)

*\*Corresponding author. Email: [bamfopeter@gmail.com](mailto:bamfopeter@gmail.com)*

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## **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** This paper proposes a new typological environmentally sustainable human resources management evaluation framework for aiding green candidate selection process for environmental management of local government agencies in developing economies.

**Design/methodology:** Presenting the narrative of developing economies local government context, this paper conducted an extensive review of relevant existing literature on Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) and green recruitment and selection.

**Findings:** Drawing on Siyambalapitiya et al. (2018) and the Resource-Based Theory (RBT), our paper proposes and discusses an evaluation framework for guiding organizations' green candidate selection process. The framework comprises of seven (7) stages which begins with "training recruiters on green candidate assessment" to "making selection decision and inducting selected candidate" on organization's environmental management policies and practices, and its green values.

**Research implications:** Application of the proposed framework has implications for enhancing organizations' efficiency, reducing cost, eliminating environment waste, as well as fostering green culture among employees. This paper also extends the strand of RBT by explaining how organizations could assess and select job applicants with significant intangible capability such as environmental management skills, knowledge and values to foster its competitive urge and sustainability.

**Originality/value:** This paper makes two main contributes to the GHRM literature: i) proposes a new typological environmentally sustainable human resources management evaluation framework; and ii) focuses the framework on developing economies and local government organisations context, something that is currently non-existent.

**Keywords:** Green candidate selection; green recruitment and selection; environmental management; sustainable organization; developing economies; local government; green human resource management; resource-based theory

**Article classification:** Research paper

## **1 Introduction**

The organizational management literature suggests that human resources is extremely important to organizational success and long-term survival (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2012; Jabbour & Renwick, 2019; Jabbour et al., 2013; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Thus, availability of the requisite human resources has in recent times become a strategic tool for management to drive organizational performance (Guerci et al., 2015). For instance, Eddy (1981: 56) argue that, 'without the meaning that are provided by the human mind, organizations are only piles of stone and metal and blobs of ink on pieces of papers.' In the wave of global agenda for promoting

sustainable development, Jabbour and Santos (2008) stated that, the human resource management (HRM) practice could facilitate economic, social and environmental performance in organizations. Hence, the organisational sustainability agenda.

Due to the rise of racism and social marginalization, protests against capitalism, environmental degradation, and the drive for innovations, the contribution of human resources management has been re-examined in both public and private sectors organizations (Shah, 2019; Ren et al., 2017). However, little is known about how the human resources management practice may be used to stimulate sustainability among local government organizations in developing economies context. This paper contributes to the literature by proposing a multi-criteria decision framework for aiding green candidate selection for environmental management of local government agencies in developing economies.

Local government organizations are responsible for the general welfare of their communities. Particularly, they deliver several forms of services to citizens which are meant to improve their social, environmental and economic status (Nsarkoh, 1964). These responsibilities which are also aligned with the tenets of sustainable development put local institutions at the forefront of pursuing the global sustainability agenda. Studies such as Adjei-Bamfo et al. (2018) and Ishii (2013) have explored HRM practices among local government institutions. For example, Adjei-Bamfo et al. (2018) in their study titled “recruitment and selection into Ghana’s local governments: theory and practice” argue that local governments of developing economies with growing democracies are increasingly gaining autonomy to undertake human resources management functions. Although this was not different in the context of Philippines from Ishii et al.’s (2013) study which identified that political patronage influences the process.

Notwithstanding, the human resources management practices in local government institutions often involve a set of highly structured and complex procedures in most developing economies. This is to promote the capacity building of local government staffs and to facilitate recruitment and selection of the needed manpower for these institutions as well as to commit itself to the improvement of the general welfare of their constituencies. With the fact that these agencies have a principal responsibility of ensuring environmental health of its communities, there is the need to pay critical attention to recruiting staff that have knowledge, behaviour and skills in environmental management systems. The practice which is termed green recruitment or green candidate selection ensures that new recruits share an organization’s environmental management values and that they understand its environmental culture (Jackson et al., 2011). In the context of local government of developing economies, this paper attempts to answer the research question: “how can green candidate selection process be evaluated”? In answering this question, this paper draws on existing literature on HRM for sustainable organizations, green recruitment in local governments of developing economies, and the Resource Based Theory (RBT). Emerging findings are then used to develop a multi-criteria decision framework for aiding green candidate selection in local government organisations. Thus, this paper makes the following contributes to the academic literature: (1) proposes a new typological environmentally sustainable human resources management evaluation framework; (2) focuses the framework on developing economies and local government organisations context, something that is currently non-existent.

The paper proceeds as follows. In Section 2, relevant theoretical and empirical literature on the topic are reviewed and discussed. This is then followed by the methodology and research approach used for this paper in section 3. Section 4 presents a discussion of key findings. Finally, conclusions, limitations and directions for future research are provided in Section 5.

## **2 Conceptual and Literature Review**

### **2.1 Organisational Environmental Management**

The increasing global environmental damage requires organisations to be responsible in managing their environment impacts (Sarkis, 2018; Khan et al., 2018; Orji et al., 2019a,b; Bai et al., 2019a). In the light of the linkage amid organisations and the universal environmental circumstances (Kusi-Sarpong et al., 2016; Kusi-Sarpong et al., 2019), most organisations have started to adopt a more proactive ways of managing their operations (Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016; Kusi-Sarpong & Sarkis, 2019; Nanda et al., 2019; Bai et al., 2019b) by taking actions that are productive and strategies that mitigate environmental challenges (Sarkis, 2019). A large number of empirical researches have confirmed a positive relationship between environmental management practices and organisational performance (Yang et al., 2010; Zhu et al., 2012; Sarkis & Zhu, 2018). For example, this is affirmed by Murari and Bhandari (2011) that organisations make more profit as a result of preserving the environment. Hence, it is highly essential to have a balance between business development and environmental management (Kusi-Sarpong et al., 2015).

Maintaining an effective environmental management system in an organisation demands the incorporation of environmental management strategies into strategic goals of the organisation (Ren et al., 2018; Lozano, 2013; González-Benito et al., 2011). According to González-Benito et al. (2011), the processes of environmental management allows organisations to synchronize and regulate their environmental initiatives. Hence, the effectiveness of an organisation's environmental processes results in achieving anticipated environmental management objectives (Sarkis et al., 2011). This may include management of environmental risks, adherence to environmental regulations, staff commitment towards achieving environmental objectives among others.

Achieving such objectives will further ease and enhance environmental performance of the organisation. This assertion has been supported by Fahimnia et al. (2015) who argued that enhancing environmental processes will most likely reduce the implications of non-compliance with environmental regulations. Effectiveness of organisational processes to a large extent induces positive employee perception about the organisation and their behaviours towards organisational environment (Pham et al., 2019; Masri & Jaaron, 2017). Proper environmental management improves general organisational performance (Sarkis et al., 2011) as it is positively reflected in employee productivity and behaviour (Paillé et al., 2015; Pham et al., 2019).

### **2.2 Conceptualizing Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)**

Generically, the term "green" has been described as something mostly considered relevant to or in favour of the natural environment (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). GHRM has been described by Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) as the integration of environmental concerns into all the policies and activities undertaken to greening the workforce with benefits to society, organisation, natural environment and the employees. Thus, the aspect of human resources management that is characterized with the transformation of ordinary employees by instilling pro-environmental behaviour into the employee's behaviour in order to attain organisational objectives and add substantially to ecological sustainability (Pinzone et al., 2019; Yusliza et al., 2019). GHRM is intended to make, augment and preserve in each employee a green attitude. An organisation's environmental management success is to a large extent dependent on the contributions from human resources management within the organisation (Renwick et al., 2013; Renwick et al., 2016; Moraes et al., 2018). This is corroborated by Jabbour and Santos (2008) who argued that the outcome of an organisation's environmental performance entails support from human

resources through implementation and preservation of the environmental management system in an organisation.

The genesis of GHRM was conceptualized by Wehrmeyer (2017) in his edited book titled "Greening people: human resources and environmental management". Thereafter, there have been several conceptualizations of the term. For instance, Mampra (2013), conceptualized it as using HRM policies to ensure the sustainable use of organisational resources and encourage environmentalism which in turn enhances employee satisfaction. Zoogah (2011) on the other hand describes it as the adoption of human resources policies, values and practices to endorse the use of organisational resources while preventing inconveniences arising from environmental anxieties in organisations. Basically, GHRM comprises of two key elements – protection of knowledge capital and environment-friendly human resource practices (Yusliza et al., 2019; Mandip, 2012). GHRM does not only involve creating awareness of environmental management but also includes socio-economic well-being of both organisations and employees in general (Yusliza et al., 2019).

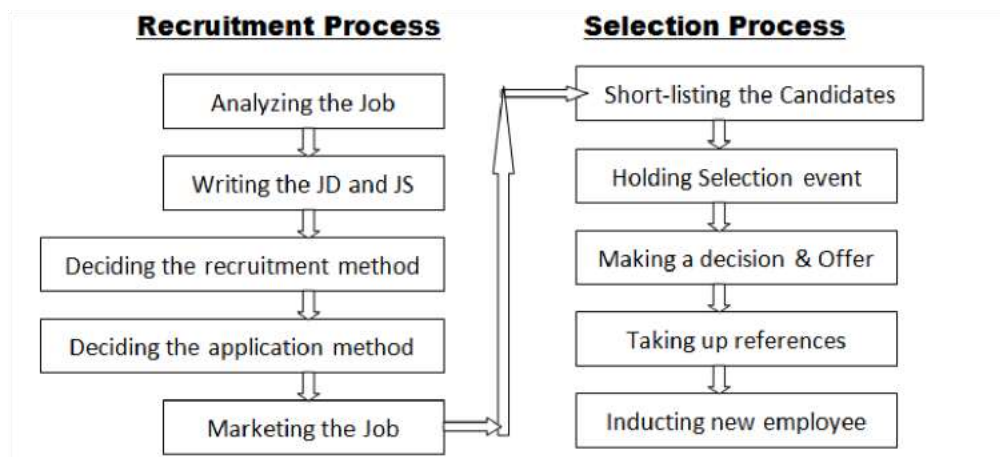
Accordingly, greening in the context of HRM can be conceptualized into four; protecting natural environment, maintaining natural environment, reducing environmental pollution and creating gardens and natural places (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014). Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) further explains that, natural resources can be protected by keeping them in their original shape and protecting them from losses; conserving means to use natural resources cautiously so that the future generations can also benefit; atmospheric, water and air pollution must be reduced considerably and lastly, establishing parks with plants, trees and lawns around. Arguably, employees can be described as green when they possess the above mentioned four characteristics. These characteristics can be simplified as protectionist, conservationist, non-polluter, and creator (Bechtel et al., 2012).

In implementing environmentally-friendly initiatives, a human resources expert has a major responsibility to get the support of employees. GHRM is about greening employees by involving them in decision making and actions that affect their jobs (Yusliza et al., 2017; Ren et al., 2018) with respect to organisational environmental strategies. This is an important vehicle to avert pollution at the workplace (Kusi-Sarpong et al., 2019). According to Mandip (2012), involving employees could be through the formation of environmental teams consisting of people who are environmentally oriented. Another element of GHRM is green training and development which is purposed to enhance employee environmental awareness and knowledge, develop a right and proactive attitude towards environmental issues and develop proficiency for sustainable use of resources (Aragão & Jabbour, 2017). Amongst these, environmental training is perceived as one of the key components of human resource practices (Jabbour et al., 2013). Training employees on environmental issues help in the implementation of environmental management policies in an organisation.

Besides training, other GHRM practices that aims to enhance organizations' environmental management systems include green recruitment and selection, green compensation and green performance appraisal. To encourage employees to exhibit environmental behaviours and sustainable development, it is imperative to adopt a green performance management approach to ease its adoption (Gholami et al. 2016). Green compensation on the other hand allows a reward system for employees who exhibit green behaviours and engage in green activities in the organisation (Yong et al., 2019). This can significantly motivate employees towards exhibiting green behaviours. Our paper focuses and discusses green candidate selection.

### 2.3 Green recruitment and selection

Among the HRM functions, employee recruitment is one of the most critical due to its ability to alter the organizational culture (Guerci et al., 2015). With a properly planned recruitment process, an organization is able to drive a positive organizational culture towards achieving its goals. It is important to clarify the main difference between the terms recruitment and selection as they are often being applied interchangeable. Recruitment, on the one hand, is the process of generating a pool of qualified job applicants (at the right place and time) for a particular job whilst selection, on the other hand, is making a 'hire' or 'no hire' decision with respect to each job applicant (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2012). Employee recruitment and selection is the process of engaging the services of employees with required skills by organization. The process involves determining the required characteristics for effective job performance, based on a job analysis and then measuring them against the skills of the applicants.



**Figure 1: Recruitment and Selection processes**

Selection refers to choosing the best candidate(s) fit for the job description. Candidate selection encompasses short-listing the received applications to orienting them to the job environment. From figure 1, candidate selection involves screening the pool of applications received for the job opening. In the recruitment and selection process, the pool of candidates is foremost screened for their suitability to the job specification and then short-listed for further evaluation stages such as competitive examinations and/or interviews (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2012). Per the outcome of the selection events, recruiters make their selection decision. In specific cases, references are consulted regarding the background of the selected applicants not ensure that there is no misrepresentation from the candidates. Le and Keiner (2000) termed failure to do this as negligent hiring. Negligent hiring is a legal risk which can cause an organization to fail (Le & Keiner, 2000). In this light, Wriston argued, "I believe the only game in town is the personnel game. My theory is that, if you have the right person in the right place, you don't have to do anything else. If you have the wrong person in the job, there's not a management system known to man that can save you" (cited in Foulkes & Livernash, 1982: 43). Therefore, it is important that a robust selection system is implemented to ensure that the right candidates are selected to perform the job responsibility.

The burgeoning green GHRM literature have mostly emphasized green recruitment (Guerci et al., 2015) – paying little attention to green candidate selection (Ren et al., 2018; Jabbour, 2011; Yong et al., 2019). For example, studies like Jackson et al. (2011), Shah (2019) and Guerci et al. (2015) suggests that, adopting green business practices attracts high quality candidates who also share environmental management values of the organizations. Specifically, these scholars who also draw on the two main literatures of HRM and environmental management (Jabbour &

Jabbour, 2016; Jabbour & Santos, 2008; Guerçi et al., 2015) highlights that organizations are more likely to attract highly qualified employees who also share in their green values (Kusi-Sarpong et al., 2015). This has a potential for organizational environmental sustainability. In the Italian context, for example, Guerçi et al. (2015) examines how organizations have succeeded in attracting prospective job applicants through their environmental sustainability-related messages they communicate to the public. Hence, the literature has paid little attention to green candidate selection. Thus, knowledge on how human resource managers of environmental management-oriented organizations evaluate and select job candidates who share in their green values or have essential environmental management skills and knowledge for organizational environmental sustainability begs for understanding. With the increasing attention for climate change and corporate environmental management, organizations – both private and public also feel obligated to play a role. We respond to this research gap by proposing a framework to guide green candidate selection in the context of local government.

## **2.4 Local government and environment management**

The role of local government in community development cannot be over emphasized as they provide services from ‘*cradle*’ to ‘*grave*’. Globally, local government actively provide services such as basic health care and education, social welfare, internal transport, maintaining laws and order, local works and housing, firefighting and other emergency services, traffic regulation, streetlight maintenance, water supply, environmental services, and garbage collection/waste management among others (Akinboade et al., 2012). However, in the context developing economies local government more emphasizes is placed on environmental sanitation management (Chong et al., 2016; Faniran et al., 2017). For instance, local governments in Indonesia have had primary responsibility for delivering sanitation services (Chong et al., 2016). Similarly, in Nigeria, local governments have been actively involved in ensuring proper sanitary practices among their respective citizens. For instance, Ibadan municipality in the Oyo State of Nigeria enforces monthly environmental sanitation exercise during which citizens are enjoined to participate in activities such as storing, collection and disposal of solid waste (Faniran et al., 2017).

Goal six (6) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seeks to ensure the sustainable management and availability of water and sanitation for all. Among other targets, the goal seeks to assist and strengthen the involvement of local communities in improving sanitation management, which most developing economies seem to struggle with (G-MDGs Report, 2015). This situation is not different from Ghanaian case where local governments are tasked to provide inter alia environmental services (Nsarkoh, 1964). Section 10 (3e) of Ghana’s Local Government Act 1993 (Act 462) provides that the local government is responsible for the development, improvement and management of human settlements and the environment in the district. Despite the tremendous progress made in Ghana during the past years regarding environmental management laws, policies and programs such as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Act 1994 (Act 490) and the National Environmental Sanitation Policy (NESP) of 1999, studies show that challenges of environmental sanitation management persist (Oteng-Ababio et al., 2013). We argue that developing economies local government agencies may leverage green candidate selection practices to enhancing their effectiveness in addressing this challenge.

Critical among the numerous challenges of local governments, is the issue of limited skilled human resource (Antwi & Analoui, 2008). Hence, the substantial effort by national leaders to building local level human resource capacity. Recent development in local government practices particularly in developing economies has observed an increasing trend of autonomy in human resource responsibilities (Adjei-Bamfo et al., 2018). In Ghana, for example, part 1, section 2.6.1



of the LGS-Human Resource Operational Manual (2013) clearly provides the basis for recruitment and selection of local government personnel. It orders that “appointing authority, in filling any vacancy within the Service, must first take into consideration the following: the organizational Human Resource Plan, the existence of vacancy, the approved scheme of service, existing establishment schedule vs. actual staff strength, exit of the existing employees/replacement, new positions on account of service expansion, identified talent gaps, job descriptions for positions, Manpower/Financial clearance by Head of Service/Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning as well as Consultation with the Public Services Commission and Sector Ministries as appropriate.” Therefore, supporting their responsibility of advancing sustainable development and environment management agenda in their local communities by attracting and selecting personnel with keen background, knowledge and skill in environment management practices.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

There has been the emergence of several environmental management models/frameworks over the years which are categorised by scholars. For instance, Meima (1994) categorized environmental management into four: i) anthropocentric (moral or ethical matter); ii) financial profitability of the environmental management; iii) environmental management as a “function of quality”; and iv) ensuring the capability of the actions of manufacturing companies with the natural environment. A typical example is the reduction in organisational emissions. Simpson (1991) on the other hand categorized environmental management into three main clusters namely: the ‘Why Mes’, the ‘Smart Movers’ and the ‘Enthusiasts’. He explained that the “why mes” are those organisations who are involuntarily improving their environmental performances as a result of an exposure gained through an event. “Smart movers” on the other hand take advantage of green consumers to enhance their competitiveness over other organisations. The “enthusiasts” are those organisations that have surpassed compliance and embedded into their business strategy, the environmental management strategies.

A conceptual model by Stegers (1990), also classifies organisational environmental management into four: innovative, offensive, defensive and indifference. In the view of Steger (1990), innovative organisations are those with high environmental risks and limited ecological-based opportunities for development whereas the offensive organisations also have substantial possibility to manipulate opportunities related to environmental market. The defensive organisations on the other hand adopts a strategy to address environmental risks at all cost as a result of the high risk, whilst indifference, are organisations with low environmental risks and minimal ecology opportunities for development. Roome (1992) also offer another category of environmental management model. According to him, organisational environmental strategies can be categorized into “non-compliance, compliance, compliance-plus, commercial and environmental excellence and leading edge”. These have been described by Ketola (1993) as “stable, reactive, anticipatory, entrepreneurial and creative” in Ansoff’s strategic posture analysis. These strategies are essentially associated with ecological values. However, compliance-plus goes ahead of current ideals and standards. This incorporates the assimilation of environmental management methods into the overall organisational management system. Excellence and leading edge on the other hand appreciates environmental management and distinguishes the prospects risen as a result of ecological upheaval and endeavour to advance environmental management. This strategy gives an organisation a competitive advantage over the other.

For the purposes of this paper, however, we adopt the Resource-Based Theory (RBT) which explains organizations’ sources of sustained competitive advantage by the organizations’

resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). The theory explains in an organisational-specific perspective why organisations may excel or fail in the market place (Dickson 1996). The RBT explain organizations' resources and capabilities as bundles of tangible and intangible assets – including management skills, organizational processes, as well as the information and knowledge the organization controls that may be used to choose and implement organizational strategies (Barney et al., 2011). In this present study, we draw on the RBT to explain how organisations can harness the environmental management knowledge and skills of its human resources through an effective green candidate selection process towards organisational environmental sustainability and growth. Some studies on HRM and GHRM that have either recommended and/or drawn on the RBT (Wright et al., 2001; Jabbour et al., 2017) are discussed towards positioning the contribution of this present study.

For example, in the views of Wright et al. (2001), the RBT gives a better understanding of how important human aspects are when initiating new organisational practices. Jabbour et al. (2017) also suggested that the RBT is one key theory that has helped in comprehending the growth of GHRM in organisations. Particularly, Yong et al. (2019) observed that organizational environmental management capacity may serve as an intangible asset that could enhance organizational environmental sustainability and competitiveness as this improves its reputation. Thus, GHRM practices help enhance processes by “improving efficiency, eliminating environmental waste, and fostering green behaviour, resulting in greater efficiency and cost reduction”. Therefore, green employers must brand themselves and develop green criteria to attract and evaluate job candidates who are environmentally-conscious and with values that align with that of the organizations. Extending the strand of RBT, this present study offers a framework for evaluating and selecting job candidates with green consciousness and with green values that aligns with those of the organizations towards its environmental sustainability.

### **3 Research Approach**

In this study, we adopt a qualitative approach to answer the two main research questions: i) what is the nature of green candidate selection practices? and ii) how can green candidate selection process be evaluated? Presenting the narrative of the practice among developing economies local government agencies, this paper conducts an extensive review of relevant existing literature on green HRM and green recruitment and selection.

From the research questions, authors foremost framed nine (9) phrases which were used for the search in popular academic databases such as Emerald Insight, Oxford Academic, Springer, ScienceDirect, Sage, Wiley Online Library, Elsevier, JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, and Google Scholar. These phrases include ‘sustainable organizations’, ‘organisational environmental management’, ‘green business’, ‘green human resource management’, ‘green recruitment and selection’, ‘green human resource management in local government’, ‘green recruitment in local governments’, ‘green human resource management in developing countries’, and ‘local government and environment management’. Articles obtained were further screen and selected base on the relevance of their titles, abstracts, and contribution to the green HRM literature.

To enhance robustness of this study (Yin, 2003), data from the selected peer-reviewed articles were analysed and discussed along with relevant books, institutional publications, policy documents, and evaluation reports of developing economies on organizational environmental management and GHRM characteristics: specific and general information from the selected articles. The specific information captured research objectives, the method used, geographic settings, and key findings of selected articles, whilst the general information comprised title, publication date, and author (s) details.

Peer-reviewed articles were analysed using the thematic content analysis technic. The thematic content analysis was used to analyse emerging data from the literature of varied methods towards enhancing the evidence base of this review (see Rousseau et al., 2008). The proposed evaluation framework for green candidate selection was discussed along the key elements of the theoretical framework to ensure ecological validity.

#### 4 Findings and Discussion

A strong environmental knowledge and commitment is desired for an organization's image and identity and to guide the actions of its human resources towards environmental sustainability. As argued by Grolleau et al. (2012), organizations will better strengthen their own green initiatives by recruiting and selecting employees with environmental consciousness, rather than investing to train existing employees to be environmentally conscious. Such a position can influence human resource policies and consequently shape job description and employee recruitment and selection processes. However, specific studies on how to undertake green candidate selection to compliment the GHRM literature is limited (Yong et al., 2019). This study attempts to address this gap. This present study contributes to the GHRM literature by presenting a framework for evaluating and selecting employees who are environmentally committed and have the requisite technical skills and knowledge on environmental management.

Jabbour et al. (2010, p. 1057) define green selection as the “selection of people committed and sensitive to the environmental issues, with a potential contribution to the environmental management of a company”. Thus, organizations must examine job candidates to determine whether they have requisite environmental competences important to the firm and for performing the specific job (Wehrmeyer, 2017). Once the job analysis and description have been completed, organizations must employ such screening methods that ensures that only the candidates’ who are sensitive and committed to environmental issues have a potential to be short-listed for the job (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Drawing on Siyambalapitiya et al. (2018) and the RBT (Barney et al., 2011), this study proposes and discusses an evaluation framework to guide organizations green candidate selection process.

**Table 1: Green candidate selection process framework for organizational sustainability**

Stage	Green candidate selection process	Sources
1	Train recruiters on green candidate selection	Sarkis et al. (2010); Pinzone et al. (2019)
2	Develop green job description	Renwick et al. (2013); Tung et al. (2014)
3	Use of green information technological systems	Bai et al. (2017); Bai & Sarkis, 2013; Nanda et al., 2019
4	Integration of environmental questions in selection	Renwick et al. (2013); Ren et al. (2018)
5	Assess candidates’ knowledge of organizations’ green brand	Renwick et al. (2008); Renwick (2018)
6	Short-list candidates with environmental commitment	Jabbour et al., (2008); Siyambalapitiya et al. (2018)

7	Make selection decision and induction	Wehrmeyer (2017); Jepsen & Grob (2015); Yong et al. (2019)
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#### **4.1 Green candidate selection process**

##### **4.1.1 Train recruiters on candidate environmental assessment**

To implement an effective green candidate selection system, recruiters must be knowledgeable about environmental management practices and how to apply it in the recruitment process as well as to assess job candidates on them (Wehrmeyer, 2017; Pinzone et al., 2019). Particularly local government agencies, usually mandated to promote sanitary and healthy environment, should foremost train their recruiters on the green values, the organization's environmental brand and green recruitment and selection processes (Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016). They need this training because they have the potential to project the organizations green values and determine which job candidates possess desired environmental knowledge, commitment, and values that are common to that of the organizations', make the organization effective and give it a competitive urge (Pinzone et al., 2019). Especially in developing economies, such training will also help sensitize and reorient management and human resource managers to exhibit environmentally responsible behaviours and as leaders, they will influence the culture and values of local agencies and the community.

##### **4.1.2 Develop green job description**

After training recruiters on how to assess the environment management knowledge, skills and commitment of potential job applicants (Shah, 2019), the organization must also develop a green job description (Jiang et al., 2019). Green job description refers to job responsibilities that may be performed through an environmentally friendly manner (Renwick et al. 2013; Jiang et al., 2019). Green job description of vacant positions must be developed and must outline all the specific areas of job tasks that require environmental management knowledge and skills (Tung et al., 2014). Green job description will serve as a great guide for recruiters and management of environmental health and safety unit of various local government agencies. This will guide the determination of environmental management qualities, the educational background, experiences, and desired candidates' commitment and sensitivity to environmental issues. For the purposes of transparency, these environmental requirements of the desired candidates are often stated in the job advertisement and communicated to all potential applicants (Jabbour, 2013).

##### **4.1.3 Use of green information technological systems in selection process**

Environmental consciousness affects organizational processes and practices. Contemporary organizational processes have adopted technologies that reduce environmental waste (Bai et al., 2017; Bai & Sarkis, 2013), improves efficiency (Nanda et al., 2019), and foster green behaviour that results in efficiency and cost reduction (Yong et al., 2019). Green candidate selection process is no different. Organizations can adopt environmentally friendly and cost saving processes. For example, Jepsen and Grob (2015) in their study on sustainability in recruitment and selection observes that organizations use of technology to reduce paperwork is an environmentally friendly act. Hence, they recommended organizations to apply technology in advertising vacancies, receiving and distributing applicants' resumes to recruiters, checking references, and sending out offer letters and employment contracts. Adjei-Bamfo et al. (2019) suggests that local government agencies are also employing digital technologies in service delivery. Depending on the nature of the job, these agencies may also extend the use of these technology to induction through the use of webcams. Green information technology systems in the long run helps to save

time, energy, and carbon emissions associated with travels to the work premises during the selection process (Bai & Sarkis, 2013; Uddin et al., 2012; Przychodzen et al., 2018).

#### ***4.1.4 Integration of environmental factors/questions in selection methods***

Irrespective of the nature of job, organizations must develop relevant questions or adopt evaluation tools that helps candidates to proof or demonstrate their knowledge and skills as well as experiences in environmental management (Renwick et al., 2008; Ren et al., 2018). The evaluation tools must also examine the green values of the candidates and match them with those of the organization (Chaudhary, 2019). The evaluations tools could comprise either or a combination of interviews, competitive exams and role play among others. This is often based on the green job description and specifications developed after analysing the job (Yong et al., 2019). Outcomes of the assessment and evaluation process usually provide environmental signals that will help the selection decision by recruiters of local government agencies. Through this process, recruiters identify candidates' personal attributes and environmental competencies. They are also able to determine the candidates' level of awareness of environmental problems of the local community and environmental behaviours that align with the job description.

#### ***4.1.5 Candidates' knowledge of organizations' green brand***

Organizations are poised to enhance their competitiveness and sustainability by adopting environmentally friendly practices. They also communicate these environmental management practices and their green values to the general public and particularly to their potential human resources (Guerci et al., 2015) to attract highly skilled candidates who are environmentally sensitive (Renwick et al., 2008; Renwick, 2018). Hence, during the green candidate selection process, recruiters must assess candidates' knowledge of the local government agency's green practices, brand, and values (Yong et al., 2019; Jabbour, 2011). This will give recruiters an idea about each candidate's understanding of the local agency's core objectives, its green practices and green values as well as how the values of the candidates align with these. To some extent, this step may help to determine the candidates' commitment and sensitiveness to environmental issues and the agencies' environmental management system.

#### ***4.1.6 Short-list candidates with environmental commitment***

Assessing the level of commitment of candidates (Jabbour et al., 2008; Siyambalapitiya et al., 2018) against the local government organization's environmental management system is critical for sustainability and success of the local agencies. Based on the evaluation, the local government organization should also short-list candidates with high commitment and sensitivity to environmental issues. Whilst the assessment processes adopt relevant approaches to reveal which of the job applicant exhibits the desired environmental management knowledge and behaviours to execute the job description (Pinzone et al., 2019), the short-list reduces the pool of job applicants to a smaller size on which further assessment is undertaken. At this point, recruiters may either put the short-listed candidates to another round of assessment (depending on the size) or conduct references checks to avoid any potential misrepresentation or negligent hiring in local government organizations (Le & Keiner, 2000).

#### ***4.1.7 Make selection decision and induction***

Decision about selected candidates with environmental management knowledge and values are now made. Here, recruiters on behalf of the local government organization or even the local government organization itself, ranks the short-listed candidates who qualify for the job opening. Based on the rank, high quality of staff with key skills who are suitable to perform the specific

job description and has demonstrated commitment and sensitivity to green issues are finally contacted for official contract by the local government agency. At this point, local government organizations should endeavour to adopt efficient green information technologies such as emails and telephones (Uddin et al, 2012). Jepsen and Grob (2015) suggested that, selected candidates may be taken through an induction to re-orient them about the local agency's mission, its environmental management policies and practices, its green values, and environmental management system in general (Yong et al., 2019).

## **5 Conclusions and Implications**

In this paper, we argue that developing economies local government agencies may leverage green candidate selection practices towards enhancing their effectiveness in addressing their poor environment conditions and sanitation challenges. Responding to the research question on how organizations can evaluate job applicants using a green candidate selection process, this paper offers a green candidate selection framework. The paper discusses seven (7) stages of green candidate selection process which begins from training recruiters on green candidate assessment to making selection decision and inducting selected candidate on local government organization's environment, green policies and practices, and green values. These processes result in efficiency, cost reduction, eliminate environment waste, and foster green behaviour among selected job candidates.

The paper contributes to the limited green candidate selection literature in the larger GHRM literature. This paper contributes to the GHRM for sustainable organization literature with a framework for guiding green candidate selection process in the context of developing economies local government agencies. The paper further extends the strand of the Resource-Based Theory by explaining how organizations could select job applicants with intangible capability – environmental management skills, knowledge and values, to foster their competitive urge and sustainability (Barney et al., 2011; Jabbour et al., 2017).

As with any other research, this study is also limited to some extent and these limitations offer some potential directions for future research. First, future research on the topic may employ qualitative research approach to explore green candidate selection practices of various local government in developing economies. This would help determined how those practices conform to our framework. Second, we urge future researchers to use longitudinal design to apply and study how the elements of our framework on organizational environmental sustainability and competitive advantage as GHRM and RBT advances.

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