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THE RISE OF GREEN JOBS IN A CHANGING WORLD

Nurul Hayani Abd Rahman
Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Cawangan Kedah
nurulhayani@uitm.edu.my

Abidah Saad
Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Cawangan Kedah
abidahsaad@uitm.edu.my

Rabitah Harun
Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Cawangan Kedah
rabitah@uitm.edu.my

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, green jobs have emerged as a focal point for addressing critical environmental challenges while simultaneously advancing economic development. Defined as roles that contribute to the preservation or restoration of environmental quality, green jobs span diverse industries, including renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and waste management (Boone et al., 2023). This growing emphasis reflects the global shift toward sustainable development and a low-carbon economy, aligning economic progress with ecological stewardship (Schneider et al., 2022). Governments, organizations, and communities are increasingly aware of the pivotal role these jobs play in mitigating climate change, improving resource efficiency, and promoting social equity (Abbas et al., 2023). This article discusses the dynamics of green job creation and offers valuable insights into their transformative potential for labor markets and sustainable development (Lobova et al., 2022).

GREEN JOBS POTENTIAL IN MALAYSIA

The rise of green jobs is closely tied to evolving environmental policies and growing demands for sustainable practices. Renewable energy sectors like solar and wind power exemplify rapid job growth driven by technological advancements and policy incentives. In Malaysia, the development of the solar photovoltaic (PV) industry has positioned the country as a leading exporter of solar panels, generating significant local employment in manufacturing, installation, and maintenance (Tang et al., 2022).

Sustainable agriculture also offers green job opportunities, particularly through organic farming and precision agriculture. Government initiatives such as the National Agrofood Policy (NAP) and the Malaysian Good Agricultural Practices (MyGAP) certification program promote eco-friendly practices, creating roles for agronomists, soil scientists, and sustainable farming consultants (Abbas et al., 2023). The National Agrofood Policy 2021-2030 (NAP 2.0) is Malaysia's plan to improve the country's agriculture and food industries in a sustainable and modern way. It focuses on ensuring enough safe and affordable food, making farming more productive and profitable, and protecting the environment.

The waste management and recycling industry further highlights Malaysia's green job potential. Policies promoting a circular economy, as outlined in the National Waste Management Policy, have increased the demand for expertise in recycling technologies, waste-to-energy systems, and sustainable packaging solutions (Muhammad et al., 2023). Companies

specializing in e-waste management also exemplify the growing niche of green employment within the waste sector (Abd-Mutalib et al., 2023). Despite these advancements, transitioning to a green economy presents significant challenges. The displacement of workers from carbon-intensive industries necessitates strategic workforce reskilling and equitable labor policies to prevent economic insecurity and social inequalities (Schneider et al., 2022). Additionally, the uneven distribution of green jobs, with urban areas like the Klang Valley offering more opportunities than rural regions, underscores the need for targeted interventions to ensure inclusivity (Lau et al., 2022).

The integration of education and training systems is essential for aligning workforce skills with the competencies required in emerging green sectors. Programs focused on sustainable technologies, eco-innovation, and resource management can foster a resilient workforce capable of driving a green economy. Collaborative efforts among governments, private enterprises, and educational institutions, as reflected in initiatives like the Green Technology Master Plan (GTMP) and various public-private partnerships, are vital to ensuring a just and inclusive transition (Yusoff et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

The development of green jobs in Malaysia reflects the nation's dedication to harmonizing economic growth with environmental sustainability. Key sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and waste management demonstrate notable advancements in generating employment while tackling pressing environmental issues. Nonetheless, the transition to a green economy presents significant challenges, including workforce displacement from traditional industries, regional disparities in job availability, and skills mismatches in emerging green sectors. Overcoming these hurdles necessitates a comprehensive strategy focused on workforce reskilling, equitable labor policies, and targeted investments in education and training programs. Collaborative efforts among government, industry, and educational institutions, exemplified by initiatives like the Green Technology Master Plan, are critical to further ensure the success of a just and inclusive transformation. By fostering innovation, ensuring equitable access to green opportunities, and strengthening sustainable practices, Malaysia stands firm at the forefront of the global movement toward a sustainable economy, advancing both economic development and environmental stewardship.

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