Adoption of green jobs in Mauritius: drivers and challenges

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Abstract

This study investigates the drivers and challenges faced by Mauritian organisations in implementing green jobs. Data was collected through online questionnaires to companies in six major sectors of the economy to identify their level of awareness, to investigate their readiness to embark into green jobs while at the same time, assess the drivers and the challenges.

The results showed that the implementation of green jobs in Mauritius is at an early stage and that much needs to be done. Furthermore, Spearman rho correlation found no relation between sector activity and the level of awareness. Moreover, regardless of the sector that the companies are; they face the same difficulties to implement green jobs. The study however showed that firms that do not have green jobs, do engage in green practices like the use of renewable energy, minimising pollution and maximising the use of day light. The major drivers identified were customer preferences and government regulations while the major challenges which emerged were costs and the lack of trained employees.

Based on the findings, recommendations were made with respect to the enhancement of existing regulations and policies, subsidisation of costs and dispensing of training programmes to stakeholders concerned

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Introduction

Growing concern about environmental problems during the past years has made "go green concepts" important for businesses (Yi Yong & Mohd-Yusoff, 2016). In fact, the term 'green jobs' was first introduced as an amendment to the Workforce Investment Act on a pilot basis in USA, it was then defined in the Green Jobs Initiative in 2008 by the UNEP (Renner, M; Sean, S; Jill., K, 2008) to assess, analyse and promote further green jobs through environmental policies in both developing and developed countries (Jarvis, et al., 2011). The expansion of renewable energy, making buildings and industry more energy efficient, and the need to produce fuel efficient vehicles are core components of a new policy conversation taking place in various countries thus giving "green job" an iconic status (Sweeney, 2009).

At the same time, unemployment is now a major challenge worldwide with about 172 million people being unemployed in 2018 globally, with the youth being among those most affected. (ILO, 2019). Thus, the challenge for economies at the dawn of this 21st century is not only to provide jobs to the current and future generations, but to also ensure that jobs provided are "green" so that those concerned are provided with a sustainable living, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 8 which is about

promoting an inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all (ILO, 2017). However, research pertaining to the extent to which organisations are prepared to offer green jobs, including the challenges and constraints they face while doing so still warrants further probing. While the research conducted so far pertains to developed countries like the USA, a lot remains to be done for different regions of the world (Kouri & Clarke 2014) and for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), one of the most vulnerable categories of nations as far as climate change and sustainable development is concerned.

This paper therefore investigates into the drivers and challenges faced by companies in Mauritius in the quest of adopting green jobs.

Literature Review

According to the Workforce Information Council, (2009), green jobs exist mostly in the energy, recycling, and smart agriculture sector. Scully-Russ (2013: 261) advocates that "there is no common nomenclature that can be used across the variety of industries and professional fields that are involved in the emerging industry." Worldwatch Institute, (2009:2) in Kouri & Clarke (2014) defined that green jobs are work in agricultural, manufacturing, Research and Development (R&D), administrative, and service activities that contribute(s) substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. Specifically, but not exclusively, this includes jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies; de-carbonize the economy; and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution. Moreover, green jobs need to be decent by providing good working condition as well as a fair pay, however in practice this rarely exist (ILO, 2013). The transition to green is expected to lead to the loss of some existing jobs and the creation of new jobs and new sectors (Pociovălişteanu, et al., 2015).

Table 1 shows three different definitions of green jobs found in the literature the normative, the industry, and the occupational definition (Scully-Russ, 2013), pp 261).

Table 1: Perspectives and conceptual frameworks on green jobs (Scully-Russ, 2013)

Normative	Industrial	Process/occupational
"Well paying, career track jobs that contribute directly to improving or enhancing environmental quality.... Range from low skilled, entry level to high skilled, high paid jobs, and include opportunities for advancement in both skill and wages.... Tend to be local work transforming and upgrading the immediate built environment and natural environment.... Simply put, if a job improves the environment but doesn't provide a family-supporting wage or a career ladder,... it is not a green job" (Gordon *et al.*, 2008)	"A green job is one in which the work is essentialto products or services that improve energy efficiency, expand the use of renewable energy, or support environmental sustainability. The job involves work in. . .green economic activity categories [i.e. specific industries]. . ." (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010)	"Green activities have different effects on different technologies. A more prudent approach is to focus on the 'greening' of occupations, which is defined as the extent to which green economic activities and technologies increase the demand for existing occupations, shape the work and worker requirements needed for occupational performance, or generate unique work or worker requirements" (Dierdoff *et al.*, 2009, pp. 4)

Ultimately, the tentative though popular consensus agrees that positive employment effects from policies designed to achieve environmental goals constitute Green Jobs. (Kouri & Clarke , 2014). Peters, et *al.*, (2011) stated that green jobs can be characterised in four groups; firstly, by means of the product made, the process used, the industry in and, or the characteristics of the occupation of the jobholder.

Green Product Approach

It includes green products or services that achieve the environmental objectives. Examples of the green products are Hybrid or electric automobiles, insulation products. However, this approach fails to consider the green activities that are not precisely linked with the manufacturing of a particular product or service, such as energy conservation within an organisation (Peters, et al., 2011).

Green Process Approach

This approach takes into account activities that exist within firms like waste management, energy use monitoring, recycling and reusing activities. Various environmental and occupational protection rules have been applied over the years, and businesses incrementally implemented standard and processes that decrease air and water emissions and solid wastes. These activities tend to be more specific to the firm (Peters *et al.,* 2011).

Green Occupation Approach

This approach starts with the identification of the jobs linked to energy conservation and production and environmental protection. The way green businesses are run is very essential for policy planning information. Those occupations include environmental engineers, architects, biologists, agronomists, hydrologists (Peters *et al.,* 2011)

Integrated Approaches

This approach combines elements of two or more of the above approaches, they allow for the establishment of state-level baselines for policy planning purposes (Peters *et al.,* 2011).

For a business to be considered as green, it has to consider at least one of "4Rs" – reduction, reuse, recycling, and recovery and each of those "Rs" can be attained through green business practices (Kassey, 2001) cited by (Čekanavičius *et al.,* 2014). On their part, Renner et *al.,* (2008) identified four types of effects that may happen to traditional jobs during the transition to green job.

Type of effect	Observation
Positive and negative employment effects	• Green policies and business practices can create new jobs or preserve existing ones • However, environmental regulations can, in theory, have negative job consequences (by raising costs, reducing demand, or rendering a factory or company uncompetitive); but, this has proven to be an extremely rare outcome
New job creation and job preservation	• Certain green jobs will be created through the development of new technologies and the emergence of new industries (wind turbines, solar photovoltaics, fuel cells, biofuels etc.) • As existing firms and industries green their operations, current jobs may be transformed and thus preserved against possible loss (implying changes in work methods, retraining)
Direct and indirect employment effects	• Jobs are created directly through increased demand and output induced by environment-related expenditures • Indirect employment effects arise in supplier industries • Induced job effects occur as wage incomes are spent generating demand in additional industries
Temporary and long-term jobs	• Construction and installation jobs (for instance, of a wind turbine) are usually of a short-term nature (as are jobs that are supported by a specific policy measure or programme) • Manufacturing and maintenance jobs, on the other hand, are in principle, of a long-lasting nature

Table 2: Types of employment effects for green economies

On the other hand, Fankhauser *et al.,* (2008) found that the effect of climate policy on employment exists in the following three stages:

In the short term, jobs will disappear in some affected sectors like the carbon-intensive sectors while other jobs will be emerging in low-carbon sectors which are more labour intensive than conventional sectors. This is commonly known as the direct employment effect.

In the medium term, the effect of climate change policy expands to the economy where jobs are created while others are eliminated to adjust the value chain. New jobs like carbon traders, wind power engineers and climate change consultants will be created.

For the longer-term opportunities for investment and growth will be created through innovation and development of new technologies. More jobs are expected to be generated in the research and development of low-carbon technologies which will yield investment and further job-creation. The labour force is projected to possess green skills

Being a Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Mauritius is vulnerable to climate change whereby it was placed 18th by the World Risk Report (UNU, 2014).It is forecasted that it will face further instability of rainfall patterns, increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones and sea-level rise in the future (IOM, 2015). Another challenge faced by Mauritius is the high rate of unemployment of 7.3% in 2016 of which 21 200 were aged between 16-24 (Republic of Mauritius, 2017) showing a slight decrease in 2017 to reach the rate of 7.1 % (Republic of Mauritius, 2018). Various green practices have been initiated at a national level as well at corporate level since the past few years to raise awareness of the population on its importance in the Republic of Mauritius. As an initiative from the ILO to assess green jobs in Mauritius it was found that some opportunities do exist but much needs to be done (ILO, 2013a). The Mauritian textile sector has adopted green initiatives like the use solar water heating systems, recycled wastewater, recycling and natural air-cooling practices (ILO, 2013a).

Despite such initiatives, only around 6.3% of total employment was considered as green jobs in 2010 in Mauritius, which is estimated at 558,100 jobs. The main sectors as per (ILO, 2013a) are mostly found:

a) In electricity generation amounting 23% of jobs, examples are supply of bagasse derived from sugar cane to electricity plants;

b) In agriculture with about 12% of employment can be considered green as well as decent, primarily in sustainable fishing, followed by forestry but also in organic agriculture; and

c) In only some textile companies which are greening their processes –for example the use of solar water heating systems, grey water use, recycling and natural air-cooling – only around 5% of employment in that sector was considered as green.

In order to encourage sustainability, good governance and transparent business practices, the Stock Exchange of Mauritius Sustainability Index (SEMSI) was launched in September 2015. It also captures the price-performance of companies listed on the Official Market or the Development & Enterprise Market which reveal strong sustainability practices against a set of internationally aligned and locally relevant environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria (Stock Exchange of Mauritius, 2015). Furthermore with a view to do away with plastic bags since it does not contribute to the safeguarding of the environment but also to encourage sustainable development, the Environment Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) Regulations 2015 was amended prohibiting the use of plastic bags with or without handles or gussets for carrying goods purchased at a point of sale such as a wholesale or a retail outlet, of plastic bags by exempting biodegradable and compostable plastic bags (Republic of Mauritius, 2016).

However, no research has been conducted till now to gauge the extent to which organisations operating in Mauritius are prepared to adopt green jobs, more so, the factors which will induce or reduce the adoption of green jobs. Therefore, this study aims at investigating into the drivers and challenges faced by local companies in implementing green jobs. The objectives of the research are set out as follows:

1. To identify the level of awareness of green jobs among Mauritian firms
2. To identify the drivers and challenges for shifting from brown jobs to green jobs
3. To investigate into the extent to which local firms are ready to embark on green jobs
4. To propose recommendations which will facilitate the adoption of green jobs among Mauritian companies

Methodology

The present study made use of the descriptive method of research, as it is a way to obtain information about the current situation (Creswell, 1994). This method was found suitable for this study since it intends to describe the existing status of green jobs in the Mauritian sector. Both primary and secondary data were used, in terms of published documents, articles, books, websites, academic journals, local magazines, reports and literatures related to the research problem in order to gain a better insight of the concept. An online survey, in the form of an e questionnaire was found appropriate as a method of primary data collection because of ease of administering, coding, processing and analysing. The online questionnaire was addressed to the General Managers, and Human Resource Managers from sectors such as Agriculture and forestry, Building and Construction, Manufacturing, Business and financial services, Retail and Tourism sectors. A stratified random sampling was used since it was a suitable approach to make equal proportion, meaningful, comparisons between sub-groups in the population (Gay, 1987). This method is also seen as an efficient one as the means of the stratified samples are likely to be closer to the mean of the whole population (Robson, 1993). Consequently, the sample in this study was disaggregated by 6 sectors to address the effect of green jobs.

For the purposes of the survey, the convenient sample size was estimated to be 270 taking into consideration the actual population of 102,527. A sample of 500 was derived with a margin of error of 5 % and confidence level of 90% for the current study. A total of 500 respondents were thus contacted by email to fill the e questionnaire and a total of 150 questionnaires were submitted, however 20 among them were eliminated from the study due to large amount of missing data. A total of 130 questionnaires were retained for analysis. Verification for duplicate IP addresses further demonstrated the trustworthiness of respondents as out of 130 surveys completed, 128 different IP addresses were used.

Kumar (2011) mentioned that any research instrument that is used to collect data for a particular research need to be reliable, that is the instrument should be generating the same output over and over again if the test is carried out repeatedly under the same conditions. In this study, the reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach's α Test and a score of .750 was obtained which indicate as per Nunnally (1978) that an instrument is considered to be reliable if it gets a score of 0.70 or higher.

Findings/ Results

Sector of Activity

SECTOR OF ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY
Food & Agriculture	10
Construction & Building	24
Manufacturing	32
Business and financial services	31
Retail	7
Tourism & Hotel	12
Others	14

Table 3: Sector of Activity

Table 3 indicates the number of companies, sector wise who took part in the study.

The highest being the manufacturing and lowest being retail sector.

Level of Awareness about Green Jobs

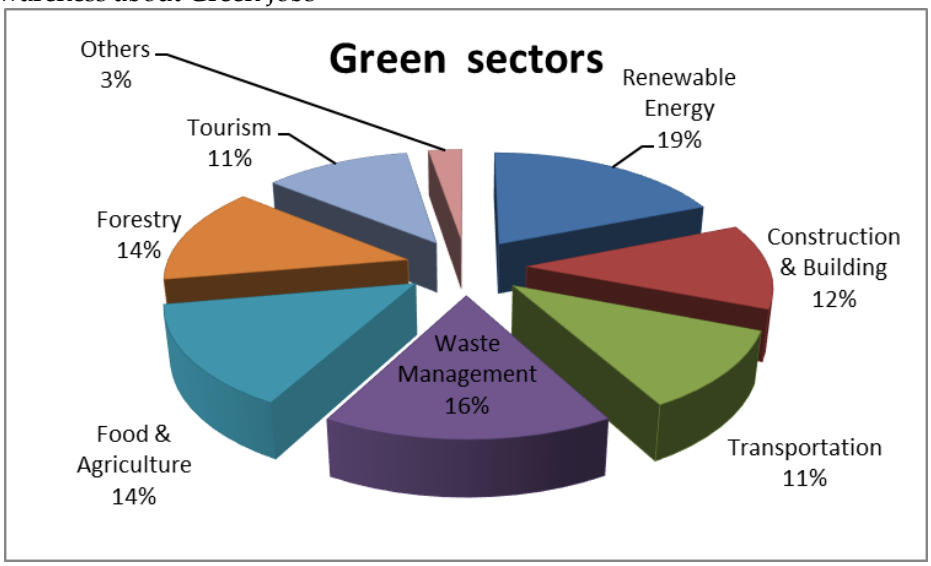

Figure 1: Perception of Green Sectors

The majority of the respondents perceived that the renewable energy sector (19%) and the waste management sector (16%) %) as green sectors as opposed to Transportation and Tourism which were nor perceived as green. As for the sectors categorized as "others", it includes the city planning, conservation, green IT, finance and the ocean economy.

According to Table 4, the median and a mode of 5 show that most respondents have selected 'strongly disagree' to the statement that Green Jobs have a negative impact on the environment. Moreover, a mode of 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents were neutral on whether green jobs offer adequate wages and offer job security.

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Green Jobs are jobs are jobs in the production of goods and the provision of services that have a negative impact on the environment	4.02	5.00	5	1.358
Green Jobs offer adequate wages	2.88	3.00	3	.768
Green Jobs provide a safe working condition	2.49	2.00	2	.900
Green Jobs respect workers' rights	2.45	2.00	2	.827
Green Jobs offer job security	2.81	3.00	3	.864
Green Jobs provide reasonable career prospects	2.48	2.00	2	.837
Green Jobs are jobs in administrative, and service activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality	2.05	2.00	2	1.018

Green Jobs are decent jobs that limit greenhouse gas emissions	2.18	2.00	2	.830
Green Jobs minimize or eliminate waste and pollution	1.89	2.00	2	.696
In the evolution of a green economy, a job that is seen as a green job today might not be the case in the future	2.69	2.50	2	1.055

Table 4: Awareness level of Green Jobs

Drivers and Challenges of Green jobs

The survey inter alia also indicated that:

most respondents (63.1%), representing more than half of the selected sample do not have green jobs;

only 38% of the respondents' company produce or provide green products or services; and

about 58% of the respondents' company do not have an environmental policy

It was also found that the majority of firms that do not have green jobs have the intention to do so either by producing or providing green products or services or by having an environmental policy in the future. In this respect, the drivers and challenges for the adoption of green jobs were further investigated.

Drivers of green jobs

Respondents agreed to the seven statements found in table 5 as follows:

Statements	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Changes in the environment either natural or man-made have a direct on the production of goods	2.19	2.00	2	.855
Regulation and policies passed by the government to promote cleaner production	2.18	2.00	2	.814
Technology and innovation lead to green practices	2.28	2.00	2	.863
Green technology may be influenced by consumer behaviour towards adopting cleaner technologies	2.04	2.00	2	.830
Consumer demand influences green markets, as they have started looking for safer and cleaner products	1.97	2.00	2	.725
Consumers' preferences and habits are changing due to climate change	2.25	2.00	2	.918
Consumers are limiting the demand for products that is considered as a danger to the environment	2.45	2.00	2	.973

Table 5: Drivers of Green Jobs

With means ranging from '1.97' to '2.45', a mode and median value of 2, most respondents agree with the statements on the drivers of green jobs. Interestingly, the most popular drivers being consumer preferences for green products and regulations and policies and lowest one being consumer demands.

b) Challenges for adopting Green Jobs

Table 6 demonstrates the mean, mode, median and standard deviation of the challenges of green jobs.

Statements	Mean	Median	Mode
Lack of Government Policy	2.94	3.00	3
Lack of financial means	3.29	3.00	3
Lack of technical staff with necessary skills	3.35	3.00	3
Lack of relevant information on green jobs	3.26	3.00	3
Costs of products - usually labelled / green products cost more	3.47	4.00	4
Lack of technical support	3.27	3.00	4
Lack of training	3.30	4.00	4
Cost involved in changing the way of doing business	3.52	4.00	4

Table 6: Challenges for Adopting Green Jobs

Costs involved and lack of technical staff were perceived as being the major challenges for the adoption of green jobs by Mauritian companies. The factor contributing least as a challenge was government policies.

Discussions

Based on the findings, the Spearman correlation was used to assess whether there is a relationship between challenges of green jobs and main sector activity and it was found that there is no relationship between challenges of green jobs and main sector activity i.e. irrespective of the sector of activity of the respondents the challenges that they face are the same. This may be explained by the fact that green job is a new concept as stated by Bahauddin & Iftakhar, (2013) and that among the Mauritian Companies, for many organisations this concept is not being applied as they are still focusing on the traditional way of doing business with conventional jobs though they are having negative effect on the environment. Moreover, though several consultations were carried out with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, the Mauritius Employers' Federation and various other stakeholders (ILO, 2013) there is still a lack of awareness of the concept of green jobs. This may have emerged out of the confusion as there is no distinct universally established definition of a green job as mentioned by GHK (2009) cited by Bowen, et al., (2016). Another reason that may explain the lack of awareness could be that it is a challenge to differentiate between green jobs and non-green jobs as the skills are sometimes confusing as indicated by Rademaekers, et al., (2015). Lack of technical support that was found from table 6 which was ranked among the highest challenges could have also contributed to the lack of awareness.

The study probed further to assess whether there is a link between firms that do not have green jobs but who are engaged in green practices. The Pearson r correlation was used as it measures the degree of the association between linear related variables with the assumption that both variables are normally distributed.

The results of table 7 showing the relationship between firms that do not have green jobs, but engage in green practices indicates that most of the results have a significant > 0.05 whereby H0 is being accepted by concluding that there is no relationship between firms that do not have green jobs but engage in green practices.

However, there are 3 variables, namely: use of renewable of energy, minimise pollution and maximise the use of day light where the results are < 0.05 specifying that though those firms claimed that

they do not have green jobs, but they do engage in those green practices in conducting their business activities on a day to day basis.

Practices		Are green jobs available within your organisation?
Recycling	Chi-square	1.409
	df	1
	Sig.	.235
Waste segregation	Chi-square	3.810
	df	1
	Sig.	.051
Use of renewable of energy	Chi-square	8.736
	df	1
	Sig.	.003*
Energy and conservation	Chi-square	1.322
	df	1
	Sig.	.250
Tree planting	Chi-square	.528
	df	1
	Sig.	.467
Minimise pollution	Chi-square	4.620
	df	1
	Sig.	.032*
Use of green packaging	Chi-square	.336
	df	1
	Sig.	.562
Energy efficient air conditioning	Chi-square	3.164
	df	1
	Sig.	.075
Light out policy	Chi-square	.003
	df	1
	Sig.	.959
Measure power consumption	Chi-square	1.110
	df	1
	Sig.	.292
Train employees	Chi-square	1.480
	df	1

	Sig.	.224
Eco labelling	Chi-square	3.381
	df	1
	Sig.	.066
Less printing	Chi-square	1.114
	df	1
	Sig.	.291
Maximise the use of day light	Chi-square	5.889
	df	1
	Sig.	.015*
Smoke free building	Chi-square	1.235
	df	1
	Sig.	.266
Biodegradable cleaning agent	Chi-square	.009
	df	1
	Sig.	.924
Use of operable window	Chi-square	2.110
	df	1
	Sig.	.146

Table 7: Green Practices adopted by companies

*. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level.

According to Peters, et *al.*, (2011), green jobs can also take an integrated approach where it combines elements of green processes, green occupations or green products. Moreover, a business is considered as green when it considers the 4Rs" – reduction, reuse, recycling, and recovery and each of those "Rs" can be attained through green business practices (Kassey, 2001) cited by (Čekanavičius, et al., 2014). Thus, those companies that use of renewable of energy, minimise pollution and maximise the use of day light may be considered as having green jobs always within their companies, but due to a lack of awareness they are not able to mention that. This could also have arisen out of confusion on between the terms 'green practices' and 'green jobs' Rademaekers, et al., (2015).

Conclusion, Limitations & Scope for Future Research

The main aim of this study was to assess the drivers and challenges of green jobs among Mauritian companies. The study found a general lack of awareness about green jobs irrespective of the sector of operation of the respondents. The main drivers of green jobs were identified as being consumer preferences and regulations and policies. However, one of the biggest challenges assessed was the costs involved and also the lack of technical skills.

However, the study also deduced that many companies, although not fully engaged in green jobs, were already imbibed with green practices such as the use of renewable energy, minimising pollution and

maximising the use of day light. This seems to be an encouragement for the adoption of green jobs in Mauritius.

In the light of the findings, it is proposed to enhance existing government regulations to facilitate the implementation of green jobs together with developing a Green Skills Development Plan to promote the development of green job skills which is fundamental for the shift to green jobs. This will be done with the involvement of all stakeholders, including among others the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, Employment Information Centers, the Career Guidance Services, and companies from the private sectors. The government may also establish cost-sharing, financing mechanisms with the private sector to cross subsidise the costs involved in trying to shift to green jobs

At the same time, the researchers realise that the study was limited by the resources available and the small sample size. Further research could concentrate on enlarging the sample and thus having a sector wise perception of the drivers and challenges of green jobs faced by Mauritian companies.

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