

Abstract of thesis entitled

**Achieving Corporate Sustainability
through Environmental Education and Training**

Submitted by

LAW, Man Suet Michelle

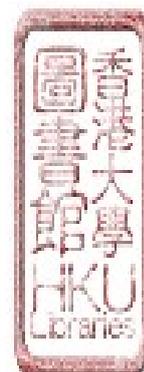
for the degree of Master of Philosophy

at The University of Hong Kong

in June 2014

Education and training are recognized as the crux of developing green organizational cultures in the achievement of corporate sustainability. Should ecology training be linked with the practical work of corporate members? Should they “learn by doing” or “do by learning”? The present study covered the links between environmental education and training and its success in greening the employees and corporate cultures. It investigated the effectiveness of environmental training and models a suitable training approach in developing environmentally aware corporate cultures. The study first revealed the drivers and challenges of implementing environmental education and training in managerial perception. 13 environmental managers of sustainability leading corporations and governmental departments in Hong Kong were surveyed by either face-to-face interviews or mailed questionnaires survey.

The role of environmental education and training in raising employees’ awareness toward a more sustainable manner has been fully recognized by the



surveyed managers. However, engaging employees in environmental learning was found to be the single biggest challenge among the managers. Managers have faced a dilemma when designing training content and training approaches. A wide range of rationales and determining factors were identified in the study. They were employee interests and motivation, training practicability and applicability, justification of resources and continuity of training impacts.

A series of environmental education and awareness training programmes of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) were used as a case study. Evaluation of the training outcomes, in terms of changes in participants' environmental knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, was surveyed by using self-completion questionnaires with retrospective post- and then-test design. Across the 47 responses, the results show that employees gained knowledge and changed their values and behaviour towards the environment significantly. The acquisition of knowledge and attitude change leads to the development of green behaviour both in the workplace and at home.

Training design and approach, relevance and applicability of training content were found to have the greatest impact on the training outcomes. A combination of direct- and indirect- experiences in the training is also essential as the employees have direct contact with nature for affective-based attitudes while a proportion of indirect experience training is responsible for intellectual development. Training should be available for employees from each stratum in the company rather than only focusing on pinpointed management staff since it could promote a workable interface between employees and the corporation. Furthermore, organizational support including supervisory and peer support is vital to the training outcomes by encouraging employees to perform pro-environmental behaviour at work, in turn, greening the corporate culture. This study brings to the conclusion that, even though transition of sustainable corporate culture is a long process, it could be achievable in real-life businesses through utilizing an effective environmental education and training with properly designed strategies.

