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The Role of Sustainable HRM as a Contributor in the Chocolate Industry- An Ethical Approach

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Presented at NFF conference in Reykjavik on August 15, 2024.



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Why chocolate industry?

- ▶ Sustainability issues are industry specific, thus industry-focused research is relevant (Desore & Narula, 2017).
- ▶ Food production is responsible for a significant amount of global greenhouse emissions (Tilman & Clark, 2014; Solazzo et al., 2016).
- ▶ Agriculture and food market are positioned in promoting sustainable development (Silva et al., 2016) and some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are contributing to sustainable food production (especially goal 2).
- ▶ Chocolate industry is argued to face many social, economic and environmental challenges to respond to the high demand (Perez et al, 2022):
 - ▶ E.g., reforestation, child labor, slavery (WWF, 2017; Savage, 2023)
- ▶ Linked to many SDGs, main SDGs to form the sustainability in the industry (Martins et al., 2022):
 - ▶ SDG 2: food and agriculture
 - ▶ SDG 4: education
 - ▶ SDG 8: decent work
 - ▶ SDG 12: sustainable management



“While there is much room for improvement, the Chocolate industry is taking the social and economic issues seriously and striving to make improvements.”

(Savage, 2023)



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“ -- the adoption of HRM strategies and practices that enable the achievement of financial, social and ecological goals, with an impact inside and outside of the organization and over a long-term time horizon while controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedback.”

(Ehnert, Parsa, Roper, Wagner, & Müller-Camen, 2016, p. 90)



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The role of sustainable HRM

- ▶ Sustainable HRM has been proposed to contribute to reaching organizations' sustainability goals (Ehnert et al., 2014).
- ▶ Sustainable HRM can be valuable in advancing SDGs by reminding stakeholders to address the big challenges and HR practitioners can have an impact especially by focusing the attention and working with different stakeholders (Brewster & Brookes, 2024).
- ▶ Common Good HRM can be essential in advancing progress with SDGs in sustainable HRM (Aust, Matthews & Muller-Camen, 2020).
- ▶ Companies have an ethical approach towards their employees via certain HRM themes (employee development, employee engagement, diversity and inclusion, and health and wellbeing) and linked HRM practices (e.g., employee volunteering, recruiting minorities) in the sustainability reporting (Järlström et al., 2024).
- ▶ Considering ethical concerns beyond reporting

HRM's role in contributing to sustainability

- ▶ Three roles identified for HRM in developing sustainable and responsible organizations (Podgorodnichenko et al., 2020):
 - ▶ Strategic support role
 - ▶ Employee advocate role
 - ▶ Social support role
- ▶ The role of HR in action can be explored via two dimensions: 'doing good' and 'avoiding harm' in social, environmental and economic domains (Stahl et al., 2020).



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Purpose of the study

- ▶ The aim of our research is to define the role of sustainable HRM in CSR:
 - ▶ How HR professionals and managers perceive the role of HR in progressing sustainability goals in the chocolate industry?
 - ▶ How involved are HR professionals in developing the CSR strategies?

Research methods

- ▶ Qualitative case study
- ▶ Case companies: companies operating in the chocolate industry
 - ▶ Selection criteria:
 - ▶ Company has a mission or goals in sustainable chocolate production
 - ▶ Acknowledges the sustainability issues within the industry

Potential contribution

Theoretical

1. Contributing to the Common Good HRM discussion from the industry perspective
 - Common good values in the chocolate industry?
 - Evidence of Common Good HRM?
2. Contributing to the HR Roles discussion (Ulrich 1997; Podgorodnichenko, et al. 2020)
 - Perceptions of the members of the HR department?
 - Perceptions of the managers (line managers and sustainability managers) concerning the role of HR?
3. Contributing to Sustainable HRM's role in doing good and avoiding harm in economic, environmental and social domains (Stahl et al., 2020) in the chocolate industry
4. Integrating HR role view by Podgorodnichenko, et al. (2020) and doing good and avoiding harm by Stahl et al. (2020) – see next slide

Potential contribution

	Sustainable HRM activities to promote CSR (Stahl et al., 2020)					
HRM Roles in developing sustainable organizations (Podgorodnichenko et al., 2020)	Doing good			Avoiding harm		
	Economic	Environmental	Social	Economic	Environmental	Social
Strategic support role						
Employee advocate role						
Social support role						

Potential contribution

Practical

1. Developing and training HR professionals
2. Help companies organize HR function to support the reaching of sustainability goals

Thank you!

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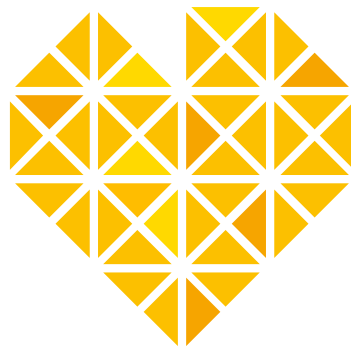
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