UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE ECONOMICHE ED AZIENDALI "M.FANNO"

CORSO DI LAUREA MAGISTRALE / SPECIALISTICA IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

TESI DI LAUREA

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
GEN Z AND THEIR DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF TYPICAL SUSTAINABLE HRM CHARACTERISTICS IN THE WORKPLACE

RELATORE:

CH.MO PROF. MARTINA GIANECCHINI

LAUREANDO/A: LISA REICHHALTER

MATRICOLA N. 2006021

ANNO ACCADEMICO 2021 – 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis revolves entirely around the topic of Sustainable HRM. The focus of the paper is the research question: Which attributes do individuals of Generation Z expect regarding Sustainable HRM? To create a sufficient understanding of the topic, a literature review has been made. This also introduces the work and begins with a clarification of how sustainability is related to human resources and how the term Sustainable HRM came into existence. Then, the four models Socially Responsible HRM, Green HRM, Triple Bottom Line HRM and Common Good HRM are explained. Best practice examples are also mentioned. Followed by the eleven characteristics that have emerged in the course of theoretical work. Since these eleven characteristics were created in the literature, this paper wants to find out if people name the same characteristics. A special focus was placed on Generation Z, as they are the ones who are already or will soon be entering the workforce. In addition, it was interesting to explore whether there are different perceptions or expectations from different generations, gender, education level and cultural backgrounds regarding Sustainable HRM. For this reason, four further hypotheses were formulated. *H1: There are differences between the origins and cultures of individuals in terms of their conception of Sustainable HRM. H2: There are different perceptions about Sustainable HRM based on the type of education. H3: There are divergent perceptions of gender about Sustainable HRM. H4: There are cross-generational variations in perceptions of Sustainable HRM.* To answer the research question and the hypotheses, a qualitative study was conducted, where a total of fourteen people (mainly from Generation Z) were interviewed. The expected outcomes were based on articles reporting on differences as well as on three theories, namely Social Identity Theory, the Signaling Theory and also the Attraction-Attrition-Selection Theory.

Keywords: Sustainable HRM, Generation Z, Differences, Gender, Educational Background, Level of Education, Generations.

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INTRODUCTION

People are essential for companies. Without employees, an enterprise would not work, since they are a very valuable capital. To organize the employees of each organization, the Human Resource (HR) department was introduced. Over the past decades, the significance of that department has changed significantly. In earlier days workers were seen as a replaceable resource, nowadays companies have appreciated the value of motivated and engaged personnel. It is widely known that a highly satisfied and encouraged staff is much more efficient than a dissatisfied workforce. This has made numerous employers concerned about the welfare of their employees. Because satisfied employees are not only more efficient but also have other positive influences on the entire company, for example, they let the company stand in a good light (good reputation), it is easier and cheaper to find new potential workforce, etc. Additionally, the concept of sustainability has also become increasingly relevant in recent years.

These allegations are also mentioned in the paper of Stankevičiute and Savanevičiene. They claimed that since 1980 the development of research in the field of human resources has increased steadily. However, most research has focused on HR and its impact on organizational performance. Therefore, the main takeaway was that HRM translates strategy discourse into professional reality and contributes to economic success. In this context, the two authors emphasize that further issues must be taken into regard. First, many studies have defined organizational performance outcomes primarily in terms of economic indicators, ignoring employee well-being, even though organizational outcomes are multidimensional. Employee well-being is primarily addressed as a link between HRM and performance when examining the routes by which HRM affects organizational performance. Employees are therefore typically speaking considered as a means rather than an aim when it comes to mainstreaming writing in HRM. The two aforementioned factors enable drawing the conclusion that employee problems have, up to now, received little primary attention in the HRM field. The concern for employee well-being, however, is particularly alarming given that current research findings and statistical data indicate unsatisfying difficulties in both the labor market and work relationships. For instance, the sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) found that 21% of employees are too weary after work to do the essential household chores, and 13% of workers believe that their jobs prohibit them from spending as much time with their families as they would like to. Additionally, 26% of employees in the EU28 think that their job harms their health. The so-called EU28, which are the six original members of the association of nations that preceded the EU, performed some studies (Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2020). In 1957,

the Treaty of Rome created the European Communities, which included Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands (Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2020). However, roughly 15% of employees in the EU28 regularly put in long hours, and 26% believe that the job in reference has a detrimental impact on their health. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

The debate over sustainability in general management dates back to the 1990s, but it is still difficult to explain in the HRM scholarship (Aust et al., 2020). However, the two authors Dyllick and Muff's suggestion that businesses should put more of their attention on helping to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) rather than Corporate Sustainability (CS) objectives raised the stakes in the CS scholarly debate (Aust et al., 2020). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals were enacted by the United Nations in 2015 as a global call to action to eradicate poverty and safeguard the environment. To guarantee that by the year 2030, peace and prosperity would be experienced by everyone. (United Nations Development Program, 2022) On the other hand, CS is based on the idea that companies maximize positive effects for society and stakeholders and minimize negative ones (Lin-Hi, 2022). However, employee burnout, workplace stress, health issues, or problems juggling work and personal obligations are thus vitally significant issues nowadays. If employers want to have staff to operate their businesses in the future, a situation like this forces HRM to be rethought. Some academics contend that sustainable HRM, which relates to resource regeneration, development, and renewal, might be a potential answer for reintroducing humanity to HRM. From a sustainability perspective, dealing with people in such a way as to ensure that current and potential employees have firstly the desire to work for a specific organization. Secondly, the ability to perform tasks in a manner appropriate for business and thirdly the possibility to work in terms of health, stress or work-life balance is a survival strategy for organizations. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Within the last decades, the term Sustainable Human Resource Management (Sustainable HRM) was introduced more and more. The concept of sustainability has a long history and dates back to Aristotle's time. The Brundtland Commission defined in the report, named "Our Common Future " sustainable development as "development that fulfills the demands of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs" in 1987 (Emas, 2015). This was the time period when the idea began to gain acceptance. It was said that corporate sustainability necessitates firms to handle interrelated and interdependent economic, environmental, and social challenges at various levels as it was transferred from

societal level sustainability to the business level. Corporate sustainability (CS) transforms how people see corporate performance by emphasizing a broader notion of result, which addresses multiple bottom lines by considering more outcomes than just financial ones. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Therefore, HRM scholars pushed attention to the difficulty to establish more sustainable HRM systems to enhance human sustainability together with HRM systems that contribute to reaching the corporate sustainability goals of the organization. This implies to use of the term sustainability as a measure to fulfill the corporate sustainability objectives and as a way to design and implement human resource practices as well as processes. Despite the fact, as mentioned previously, that HR activities impact not simply just employees but also the human, social and environmental surroundings of companies. People contribute essentially to the success of a company's strategy. (Aust et al., 2020)

Many scientific works related to Sustainable HRM are theoretical. So also, one of the basic pieces of literature in this paper, where typical characteristics for Sustainable HRM were established. Exactly where this paper would like to tie up and make an empirical investigation. To generate added value in this area of science. Thus, this paper wants to find out utilizing interviews whether persons of Generation Z have the same ideas of attributes of Sustainable HRM as mentioned in the literature. Thus, this work aims at testing the mentioned theoretical features in practice. Therefore, this paper also focuses on testing the literature work Designing Sustainable HRM: The Core Characteristics of Emerging Field from Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene. One goal besides the research question is to figure out if the answers of the qualitative research are consistent with the theoretical assumptions. Furthermore, it will also be considered whether there are certain differences between the interviewees regarding their origin/culture, education, gender and generation. Thus, the following research question **"Which attributes do individuals of Generation Z expect regarding Sustainable HRM?"** has arisen.

CHAPTER I: EVOLUTION AND RELATEDNESS OF THE TERM SUSTAINABLE HRM

The first chapter starts with a discussion of the development of the term Sustainable HRM. In addition, it is explained how it can be applied. After stating how the term Sustainable HRM has developed over the last decades. The paper explains what sustainability in HRM means and how it can be understood. Whereby also some important terms are defined.

Development and application of the term Sustainable HRM

Sustainable HRM is a relatively recent concept. Although the area has lately seen a rapid evolution, it is acknowledged that no literature is coherent and that sustainable HRM may be interpreted in terms of a variety of complementary frameworks. The absence of a consensus definition for the notion might be attributed to the fact that the area is still in its immaturity. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018; Wikhamn, 2019) The concept of Sustainable HRM is understood to mean a framework for managing people to produce advantageous short- and long-term financial, social, human, and ecological consequences. The method is founded on the idea of sustainability. (Kramar, 2022)

The end of the 1990s saw the first publications on sustainable HRM in Germany, Switzerland, and Australia. The German method refers to organizations as open systems, resource-dependent systems that depend on a steady influx of resources to be alive, fulfill their purposes, and achieve their goals. It was established in the context of sustainable resource management. The Swiss approach, on the other hand, places more emphasis on a normative interpretation of sustainability as a means of establishing moral and ethical values. Given that human resources are initially more "consumed" than "produced," Sustainable HRM is defined by fostering employability, encouraging individual accountability, and providing a positive work-life balance. The Swiss model views businesses and employees as equal partners and conceptualizes sustainability as a shared benefit: Sustainable HRM supports meeting individual demands and preserving an organization's competitiveness. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Not just the paper of Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene (2018) cited the works of Ehnert, Mariappanadar, Kramar, De Prins et al., Guerci, Shani, and Solari by connecting sustainability and HRM more systematically and conceiving sustainable HRM. Also, Wikhamn (2019) used some of these authors for their work.

Ehnert made a tremendous contribution to developing and maturing the discipline of sustainable HRM. She described Sustainable HRM as the pattern of planned or developing human resource strategies and practices intended to facilitate organizational goal fulfillment while simultaneously reproducing the HR foundation in her study on the topic (Wikhamn, 2019; Ehnert, 2009). The author established a more comprehensive knowledge of Sustainable HRM, while also establishing its foundation in the literature on strategic HRM and extending it with different frameworks. More recently, Ehnert et al concepts of sustainable HRM highlighted two elements. First of all, various, maybe at odds with one another economic, ecological, and social aims are acknowledged. In terms of attracting qualified workers and retaining a healthy workforce, the multiple bottom line approach undoubtedly helps the organization increase its performance and acts as a foundation for long-term organizational stability. However, the incorporation of sustainability into routine HRM procedures raises questions about tensions and conundrums as firms may come up against competing demands. Such requirements might be for employees to be accessible around-the-clock and the need for them to have a work-life balance. Second, it is acknowledged that there are intricate linkages between HRM systems and their contexts (internal and external), with a focus on those that regulate externalities and permit the sustainable reproduction of resources. According to the perspectives of sustainable HRM, the company is seen as an open system that has to grow and renew its HR at least as quickly as it somehow consumes them. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018) Ehnert understood sustainable HRM as a design choice for the employment relationship and as a way to support long-term business growth. He contended that sustainability is more than just being ecologically and economically sound. It also involves other issues including justice, participation, health and wellbeing, employability, and employee development. (Wikhamn, 2019)

By using the paradox theory as the foundational strategy for sustainable HRM, Ehnert made a substantial contribution to the field of sustainable HRM (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018). The organizational paradox theory is an explanation of the nature and control of conflicting needs. In the past, the prevailing paradigm in organizational theory portrayed conflicting demands as compromises or decisions that could be made by selecting one course of action. Contingency theory was first proposed by academics like Joan Woodward, Paul Lawrence, and Jay Lorsch in the late 1960s. It contends that people may overcome these tensions by taking the environment and context into consideration. Briefly said, according to contingency theories, various situations will need different forms of management (Moniz, 2014). An alternate strategy is provided by paradox theory, which contends that these conflicts cannot be settled. Paradox theory contends that rather than resolving conflicting demands, players must embrace, engage, and negotiate tensions that are not just incompatible but also

interrelated and enduring. (Carmine & Smith, 2021) In the context of HRM, this suggests that sustainable HRM also results in certain conflicts and contradictions. To theorize about sustainable HRM, Ehnert employed contradiction as a lens. He highlighted three major paradoxes of sustainable HRM after recognizing that contradictions might exist in pairs or more and work concurrently. Tensions exist between utilizing human resources effectively and preserving their capacities, between relational and economic rationality (in this case, the key goal is to preserve social legitimacy by behaving responsibly), and between short- and long-term impacts. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Mariappanadar's articles on sustainable HRM might also be classed as "improving social and environmental health," if you want to go even further. The author used the notion of stakeholder damage and negative externalities as the foundation for sustainable HRM. In other words, something that costs the organization less for its activities or business practices than they save is referred to as a negative externality. According to the social cost theory, the expenses are placed on the weaker members of society, such as employees and their families. Private cost-plus external cost equals social cost (Nasrudin, 2022). Individuals directly involved in economic transactions or activities bear the private cost (Nasrudin, 2022). In the meanwhile, those not directly associated with the transaction are responsible for the external cost (Nasrudin, 2022). But someone needs to bear and cover these costs, which is not surprising. This suggests that businesses hurt their workforce by squeezing every last drop of talent out of them and keeping them from attaining their goals for work-related wellbeing. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

De Prins et al. were to present the ROC model by revising the conventional HRM literature with an emphasis on stakeholder, institutional, ethical HRM, and critical HRM theories. Three building pieces make up the model: respect, openness, and continuity. Openness refers to environmental awareness and an outside-in perspective on human resource management. On the other hand, continuity reflects a long-term approach in terms of economic and societal sustainability. Respect is expressed by a renewed focus on respect for employees as internal stakeholders in the organizations. This model is predicated on the idea that sustainable HRM represents a later stage in the history of HRM thought. Strategic HRM thought has become closely associated with mainstream HRM in recent years. In order to provide a framework for sustainable HRM that can connect theory and practice, numerous theoretical stances outside of the strategic HRM tradition needed to be investigated and evaluated for their potential contributions. (De Prins et al., 2014; Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Guerci et al. 's investigation of sustainable HRM from the viewpoint of stakeholders added to the subject of sustainable HRM. Any person or group that may influence or is

influenced by an organization's activities, choices, policies, practices, or goals is referred to as a stakeholder. The current concept assumes that an organization must consider all stakeholders, which conflicts with the traditional perspective. This reflects the shareholder value theory. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018) According to shareholder theory, maximizing shareholder value is management's main goal. Other business stakeholders, such as workers, suppliers, consumers, and society, come last on the priority list behind this goal. Due to the theory, managers and boards should put the interests of shareholders first by protecting and expanding a company's assets as they are the true owners of such assets. (O'Connell & Ward, 2020)

Organizations identify their stakeholders and prioritize them as a result of limited resources and reason. Different key stakeholder matrices are suggested based on the stakeholders' characteristics, such as power, legitimacy, and urgency. According to two criteria in the Zaugg stakeholder matrix—importance for sustainable human resource management (high, medium, low) and affinity to an organization—employees have deemed the stakeholders of the greatest significance (internal, internal and external, external). Without becoming too technical, the main takeaway from HRM literature is that workers are significant stakeholders. But the goal of sustainable HRM is to meet the demands of all significant stakeholders. Guerci et al. claim that an organization's ability to integrate the interests of various stakeholders is a key factor in determining its success. Given that this integration is accomplished through the human resource management function, analyzing the sustainability dimension in HRM while keeping stakeholders in mind is a crucial part of organizational activities. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Sustainable HRM has lately received greater attention from scholars and practitioners due to its growing relevance. This judgment is supported by two facts. First, more articles are being written about sustainable HRM, covering a range of topics, including Wikhamn investigates how sustainable HRM affects the relationship between innovation and customer satisfaction; Baum focuses on sustainable HRM in the tourism sector (similar to Ehnert); Vihari and Rao examine the causes and effects of sustainable HRM; Järlström, Saru, and Vanhala investigate how top managers create sustainable HRM; etc. Second, several special issues on sustainable HRM were created, including Management Review (2016), Special Issues in the International Journal of Manpower (2016), and Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration (2014). (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

In conclusion, the researchers have slightly varied perspectives on sustainable HRM. The article adopts the viewpoint that sustainable HRM represents the next, complementary stage in the

history of HRM philosophy. Strategic HRM's widely accepted tenets are reframed and revised; nonetheless, sustainable HRM does not invalidate its constituent parts. Sustainable HRM can incorporate elements of strategic HRM in the same way that strategic HRM comprises the operational operations of people management. Given that it incorporates numerous bottom-line outcomes and shifts from a short-term to a long-term viewpoint, sustainable HRM is viewed as an extension of strategic HRM. Therefore, the primary distinction between strategic and sustainable HRM relates to HRM's larger objectives. When it comes to strategic HRM, organizational performance particularly in terms of financial results takes center stage. Sustainable HRM, on the other hand, recognizes a range of results, including social, human, environmental, and financial ones. Furthermore, sustainable HRM expressly recognizes that HRM has a detrimental impact on stakeholders in addition to employees. However, as was previously noted, sustainable HRM incorporates all of the elements of strategic HRM; when managing people, the emphasis is simply on resource regeneration, development, and renewal. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Intercourse of sustainability and HRM

There is no doubt that the HRM field has made great progress in terms of advancements. The research over the past 30 years has provided more than enough factual proof that managing human resources improves organizational performance. Becker and Gerharts already investigated that topic in 1996. But in this case, the issue of understanding performance in terms of results comes up. While in empirical study, the major definition of success was in terms of financial success, leaving out employee success. Naturally, findings relating to human resources were included in a lot of studies; nonetheless, they mostly acted as a significant intermediary between HRM and the financial outcomes of a business. As a result, human resources were seen as a means rather than an objective, and efforts to establish a relationship between HRM and performance were made at the price of worker happiness. Ironically, this disregard for employee needs contributed to the effectiveness of HRM discipline. It is undoubtedly that human resource management has considerable economic potential and organizational performance. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018; Becker & Gerhart, 1996)

Human Resource Management contains the intangible assets that an employer derives from its workforce. These are each employee's particular knowledge, abilities, and motivation. To make sure that these resources may be used as effectively as possible for the organization's goals, human resource management (HRM) is required. (Agentur Junges Herz, 2022) In another HR it is defined similarly. Employment relations have historically followed the economic

imperative, which is defined as the relationship between an employer and an employee through which individuals sell their labor. In this way, it is feasible to maximize the use of human resources to improve financial outcomes. The rules of resource scarcity, shortage, damage, or extinction also apply to humans when they are seen as resources, though. Although workers are viewed as a vital resource for the company in mainstream HRM, employee problems are not given top attention. Contrarily, according to the conflicting outcomes approach, HRM is not advantageous for employees and could even be damaging to them. As a result, HRM may have a detrimental impact on people. However, even in modern times, HRM does not exist to directly benefit employees. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Businesses need to reconsider their duty and business strategies to address both the internal problems in employee relations as well as the external pressure from society and labor market difficulties. Corporate sustainability is often used to describe organizational endeavors that demonstrate the incorporation of social and environmental issues in company operations and relationships with stakeholders. Corporate sustainability discussions use a multiple bottom line strategy to focus on success aspects that go beyond financial results. The worth of human resources is acknowledged as being more than their immediate financial utility in this manner. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018) The basic definition of sustainability as "development that fulfills the demands of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs" was debated by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 (Amini & Bienstock, 2014). The WCED report's talks centered on resource efficiency and sustainability, or an organization's relationship with the environment. This means basically that the environment, economics, and society must all be considered at the same time for sustainable development. (Amini & Bienstock, 2014; Wikhamn, 2019).

Sustainable human resource management has emerged as a new perspective on the employment relationship and has grown in importance over the past ten years. It is defined as 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. Organizations have begun integrating aspects of corporate social responsibility (CSR), such as initiatives geared toward sustainability, into their policies and plans as a result of external pressure. Additionally, a growing number of big businesses and enterprises have begun to provide an annual sustainability report that includes details on their efforts to sustainably manage their human resource. (Wikhamn, 2019) Sustainable HRM is viewed as an employment relations design choice. According to Wikhamn in the paper of Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene,

sustainable HRM emerges around soft concerns such as providing an acceptable work environment and circumstances, giving possibilities for growth, and being sensitive to workers' physical and mental well-being at work. In terms of thinking about HRM, sustainable HRM is the next stage. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

CHAPTER II: THE FOUR SUSTAINABLE HRM MODELS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

Within this chapter, the development of four sustainable HRM models is discussed in detail. The four models are Socially Responsible HRM, Green HRM, Triple Bottom Line HRM and Common Good HRM. A brief presentation of good HRM methods is also addressed. Three very current topics and problems are considered here. They reflect work poverty and unsafe working conditions in supply chains, a lack of labor representation, and (youth) unemployment and job instability.

Evolving four sustainable HRM models

Human resources have been around for a very long time. It dates back to the creation of the first organizations in history. However, at that time it was not yet called HR. In the literature, a distinction is made between two concepts: hard HRM and soft HRM. These two models have had a significant impact on the HRM debate since the 1980s (Aust et al., 2020).

The Michigan Hard HRM model places a strong emphasis on strategic control and gauges HRM's effectiveness in terms of the firm's financial success. Because it is founded on organizational structure, strategic control, and processes for managing people, the Michigan model is referred to as "hard" HRM. This one-dimensional objective, which is viewed as the only goal of the business, emphasizes the necessity to use "best practices" in hiring, reviewing, rewarding, and developing human resources to generate shareholder value. Concerns from larger societal or environmental stakeholders are not or very barely considered. (Aust et al., 2020; Sadalla & Gado, 2018)

Inspired by the approaches of the human relations movement in industrial relations and employee welfare has incited a developmental, humanist soft HRM approach. The soft human resource concept promotes a more thorough employee-stakeholder emphasis that has also steadily developed since the 1980s. This model's HR strategy is based on the ideas of commitment, flexibility, and quality and seeks to improve performance by implementing a high-involvement relationship management strategy, such as reward systems and work systems. It focuses more on the human side (Sadalla & Gado, 2018). Here the behavior is frequently self-regulated and supported by a culture of trust and cooperation. The main concern is still shareholder value and is focused on organizational performance-related HR outcomes, like commitment, engagement, and loyalty. Apart from the fact that the HRM purpose is two-dimensional in the soft HRM model and refined to incorporate wider, long-term consequences,

for instance, individual well-being, organizational effectiveness as well as societal well-being. The significance of ecological issues and larger global socioeconomic problems for HRM, however, had not yet been acknowledged. The need for a more sustainable HRM model that better captures how companies are evolving and moving toward more multi-stakeholder views have just lately been raised by academics. (Aust et al., 2020)

At some point, the context-based literature evolved. This stands hardly in contrast to Hard and Soft HRM by emphasizing the social, cultural, and legal goals and multiple roles of HRM. To assist employees to meet the expectations of role partners within the organization (i.e., supervisors, peers, subordinates) at organizational boundaries (i.e., customers and clients), and beyond (i.e., family and society). Context-based approaches argue for an integrated system of value-mutuality, which should bridge the strategic versus human, economic rationality versus relational rationality, and efficiency versus fairness dichotomies to ultimately achieve the desired HR outcomes of performance, fairness, and social legitimacy rather than prioritizing either strategic necessities or human needs. (Aust et al., 2020)

The global business environment has drastically altered over the last 10 to 15 years, and many businesses are now regarded to be pursuing several goals. As a result, rather than focusing just on financial criteria, they are now redefining success in a broader view. (Wikhamn, 2019) A multidimensional sustainable HRM model is emerging that considers long-term influences like climate change, biodiversity, urbanization, and workforce demographics rather than just short-term financial issues. Also, social capital and natural resources are increasingly seen as priceless assets comparable to economic capital. Therefore, it is acknowledged that these resources need to be protected suitably by generating people-management methods that consider the evolution of social, environmental, and human capital. (Aust et al., 2020)

Nearly 20 years ago, the phrase sustainable HRM first surfaced. Since then, this topic has been thermalized in many papers. To be able to categorize this research, it makes sense to use the four sustainable HRM dimensions. (Aust et al., 2020)

According to the authors Dyllick and Mu's business sustainability theory, the first dimension looked at the organizational perspective. They distinguished between an outside-in view, where the focus was on the society and the sustainability difficulties it is experiencing. And on the other side is an inside-out perspective, which emphasizes the business itself. Organizational-level sustainability actions are of interest from an inside-out perspective. Through improved organizational identity and individual task performance, for example, organizational-level sustainability initiatives are focused on reducing business risk and maximizing (re-)shareholder value from an inside-out perspective. In contrast, from the outside in, the organization's main objective is to contribute positively to resolving sustainability

concerns and serving the environment. From the latter perspective, they ask themselves how to use their business assets and resources to address some common environmental, social or economic struggles. (Aust et al., 2020)

The second feature of our typology focuses on the inputs of each kind of Sustainable HRM. Sustainable HRM inputs are defined as sustainable HRM competencies, such as skills, knowledge, and attitudes, like raising awareness for the accountability of HRM for the impact of decisions, integrating short- and long-term goals, and/or assisting in regenerative organizational and HRM practices. (Aust et al., 2020)

Our third feature of sustainable HRM types focuses on how HRM creates sustainable HRM processes to restructure company practices to fit the new viewpoint and goals. This can happen, for instance, by managing the opportunities and risks of not being sustainable, or by integrating sustainability into organizational and HRM activities. (Aust et al., 2020) Our fourth dimension finally considers sustainable HRM outputs, which are characterized as the values or resources produced by HRM, such as the realization of ecological, social, and human values. Our categorization yields four distinct subtypes of sustainable human resource management, namely triple bottom line, socially responsible, green, and common good. (Aust et al., 2020)

Socially responsible HRM

Interest in socially responsible human resource management, which focuses on cultivating positive relationships with employees as a function encouraging sustainable organization-building, has grown in recent years. This is a result of our knowledge of how crucial personnel procedures and employees are to putting sustainable development policy into action. (Bombiak & Marciniuk-Kluska, 2019) As already mentioned sustainable HRM was originally used to describe socially responsible HRM practices. There exist various definitions of it. This concept is centered on protecting human capital, furthermore, it accomplishes social and economic goals. In a subsequent evolution, others came to understand socially responsible HRM as both an implementation tool and a crucial component of a company's sustainability or CSR strategy. This kind of sustainable HRM is present in current sustainability reporting. Businesses utilize these reports to outline their HR initiatives. It not only promotes the growth of sustainable organizations but also serves as a powerful tool for gaining a competitive edge, improving relationships with staff members, raising their levels of happiness, loyalty, and motivation, and enhancing the company's external and internal reputation (Bombiak & Marciniuk-Kluska, 2019). Another exposition according to Mariappanadar reads as businesses are accountable for the communities in which they operate as well as the individuals who are indirectly employed

through their supply chains in addition to the people they direct. The organizational perspective is from the inside-out in each of these methods. Using socially responsible HR practices will lessen the effects on corporate operations and business risks. As a result, the economic objective supports the social purpose. (Aust et al., 2020)

Green HRM

The last ten years have seen the emergence of the so-called green HRM, a novel sustainable HRM strategy. It is mostly focused on how corporate organizations may be environmentally sustainable. This model was created to encourage and enhance staff members' ecological knowledge and conduct, which would eventually help a company minimize its carbon footprint and uphold its green reputation. Although still inside-out, this HR strategy varies from prior sustainability/CSR initiatives. That it places more emphasis on motivating employees to adopt behaviors that will help businesses improve their environmental records. In recent years have been an increase in research interest in green HRM. Green HRM practices, for instance, have been shown to have a significant impact on sustainable success. These practices include green hiring, green training and green compensation. Green hiring reveres for instance the selection of candidates for jobs that require green characteristics or incorporate green tasks. While green training means that companies offer educational opportunities for environmental understanding. Latter (green compensation) focuses on connecting rewards to the accomplishment of environmental objectives. However, this environmental aim is also anticipated to serve an economic purpose, much like socially responsible HRM does. As a result, the organizational viewpoint is still from the inside out. However, the processes of Green HRM practices remain poorly understood and subject to inadequate investigation. Regarding the ability of green HRM practices to address stakeholder concerns and have a good environmental impact, there is a dispute as well. Because of this, not all HR professionals are convinced that encouraging environmentally friendly workplace practices should be a basic HRM role. (Aust et al., 2020; WU Wien, 2022)

Triple bottom line HRM

The Triple bottom line HRM focuses on the HRM's alleged economic, environmental, and social goals all at once. It is stated that this model is now the most widely used conceptualization of Sustainable HRM and catches more and more attention from enterprises. (Colbert & Kurucz, 2007) It is based on the triple bottom line idea proposed by Elkington in 1997. Economic, environmental, and social organizational goals are maximized and balanced in the bottom line HRM. This method demonstrates that HRM can be understood more broadly when it is viewed

as a general approach to people management that focuses on employee-oriented practices, such as employee well-being or involvement. Whereby it also considers the impact of HRM on its social and ecological environments, like resource regeneration and/or ecological goals. In contrast to the previous two approaches, this one redefines performance in terms of people, profits, and the planet as well as shared values and multidimensional results. The triple bottom line approach is based on the widely held belief that its three aspects are inexorably linked. The model incorporates potential sources of paradoxical sustainability issues, even if they aren't often acknowledged openly or conflict, uncertainty, and competition. Sustainable HRM and green HRM techniques have not comparably encountered these tensions. They demonstrate an effort to meld commercial and nonbusiness interests within this model. (Aust et al., 2020)

The maximization of economic performance, for instance, may occasionally be hampered by financial investments made to achieve environmental goals and additional spending on employee development and training. This causes managers to be unsure of the importance of particular performance metrics. Wider, multifaceted objectives that differ from traditional, single-purpose economic aims can trigger adverse reactions from other targets. For example, if a company wants to introduce innovative work methods it leads to increased responsibilities and task pools for employees. May well bring consequences such as increased stress, role ambiguity, uncertainty and turnover. As already mentioned, the triple bottom line definition has expanded the scope of sustainable HRM beyond a social, societal, or human component and is the justification for why it is essential for businesses beyond social responsibility. A multifunctional emphasis, however, can also foster friction at the organizational level, interdepartmental rivalry for scarce resources, and generate diverse expectations and demands. Alternative approaches to managing paradoxical conflicts are required because of such inherent contradictions. To clarify the conflicts that arise when companies work to manage environmental, social, and economic issues, as well as the role of public policy in that process, it is possible to refer specifically to the paradox theory (Ozanne et al., 2016). The paradox method assumes that tensions are inherent in complex systems and that sustainability depends on simultaneously responding to conflicting but related requirements (Ozanne et al., 2016) It affects how an organization may successfully adopt a sustainability strategy through certain HR practices. (Aust et al., 2020)

Common good HRM

Academics and practitioners alike are becoming more interested in alternative so-called outside-in models as a response to mounting criticism of current business models' failure to adequately address the issue of sustainability. These models do this by redefining the purpose

of business in terms of common good values. A fundamental shift in how we view the function of business and the contributions of HRM may be seen in this approach, Common Good HRM. All three of the aforementioned categories have modified the traditional corporate objective of financial gain to some extent to respond to external demand for greater social and ecological responsibility (inside-out view). A common good perspective, however, posits that businesses must make an effective contribution to resolving the sustainability difficulties that the world is jointly confronting. Including that commercial organizations have a long-term self-interest in preserving our way of life. Therefore, Common Good HRM prioritizes communal interests over individuals once or more realistically treats them on an equal footing. (Aust et al., 2020)

This presumption is based on the realization that despite the recent popularity of triple bottom line frameworks, environmental management techniques together with organizational sustainability programs, have had a little overall good social or ecological impact. According to Dyllick and Muff, this is because these projects do not address the "big problems" of our time. These failures highlight the urgent need for a new way of thinking about business and human resources. In tandem, recent trends such as Millennials' interest (purpose-driven careers), heightened consumer expectations of CSR, and increasing pressure from governments and investors to work for the common good may prompt some companies to consider adopting such a strategy. (Aust et al., 2020)

Common Good HRM differs from all other models in using a larger, multifunctional, and outside-in frame of reference. It has implications for how we now interpret the goals, issues, and results of HR. Organizations must review not only their operational practices and procedures in light of regulatory compliance but also their traditional profit-oriented viewpoint and shift their attention to the impact on the environment and society. This requires a change in the business perspective from inside-out to outside-in. The main goal of Common Good HRM is to assist businesses in making contributions to global ecological and social advancement, as opposed to concentrating on commercial goals. Inputs in Common Good HRM relate to applying HRM skills, knowledge, attitudes, and competencies to advance the common good and address the great issues of our day. Implementing common good HRM would entail that HR managers assume to create an organizational culture based on common-good principles and implementing HR procedures based on ideals like dignity, solidarity, and reciprocity. (Aust et al., 2020)

It would require an openness to non-business goals like societal justice, workplace democracy, job security, environmental preservation, and human rights to redefine Sustainable HRM results in this manner. HRM places a strong emphasis on the local and global context of businesses, acknowledges the reciprocal, individual, and collective components of business

activity, and has as its primary goal advancing the common good in all its forms (economic, social, ecological, and human). In the existing institutional and organizational frameworks, which are primarily economic in nature, a shift in mindset will be difficult. But over the past ten years, several movements have emerged that are focused on advancing the common good. (Aust et al., 2020)

The central idea is to approach problems from the outside in to address one of the big challenges (climate change, corruption, migration…). Second, the principle deals with the realization that equitable employment relations are necessary for Common Good HRM to build relationships of trust and achieve organizational success. The third principle embodies the notion that Common Good HRM offers chances for democratic workplace representation to create locally tailored HR solutions to complicated global concerns. Fourth, the Public Good HRM makes the supposition that the psychological contract will be fulfilled to guarantee a well-functioning work environment. (Aust et al., 2020)

The figure below demonstrates a table with a good overview of all four types of sustainable HRM. To sum it up, the blue one (Socially Responsible HRM) contributes to economic and social values (with emphasis on economic worth). The second one (Green HRM) supports economic and ecological benefits, but also an emphasis on economic value. Whereby the orange bar (Triple Bottom Line HRM), as the name says focuses on the triple bottom line values (economic, ecological and social). Still priorities the economic benefits. The last method (Common Good HRM) addresses the common good. In contrast to the others, this model weighs the finding of solutions for grand sustainability difficulties more than the economic profit. (Aust et al., 2020)

Socially Responsible HRM	Green HRM	Triple Bottom Line HRM	Common Good HRM
Purpose: Inside-out, i.e. economic and social purpose (the latter as long as it serves the economic purpose) **Inputs/Key concerns:** Creating an awareness of the impact of business on people beyond organizational boundaries and present time frames **Process/How:** Socially responsible HR behavior, practices, strategies, and culture, e.g., health and well-being initiatives **Outputs/Values created:** Economic and social values, e.g., enhanced organizational social reputation, employer attractiveness	**Purpose:** Inside-out, i.e. economic and environmental purpose (the latter as long as it serves the economic purpose) **Inputs/Key concerns:** Using HRM to embed Green values across an organization; implementing Green workplace practices **Process/How:** Green HR behavior, practices, strategies, and culture, e.g. Green recruitment, Green awareness training, Green rewards **Outputs/Values created:** Economic and ecological values, e.g., growing employee engagement with reduced carbon footprint	**Purpose:** Inside-out, i.e. economic, environmental and social purpose (the latter two as long as they serve the economic purpose) **Inputs/Key concerns:** Uses HRM competencies, skiIls, knowledge, attitudes, to create win-win-win situations **Process/How:** Behavior, practices, strategies, cultures etc., enabling contributions to CS and to perform HRM sustainably **Outputs/Values created:** Triple Bottom Line, Quadruple Bottom Line, e.g., Cross-generational (green) management, secures the transfer of knowledge and skills to future generation (economic sustainability) and enhances older workers self-esteem and well-being (social sustainability)	**Purpose:** Outside-in **Inputs/Key concerns:** Uses HRM competencies, skiIls, knowledge, and attitudes to contribute to the common good and to help in solving "grand challenges" **Process/How:** HR practices and behavior enhancing common good values, e.g., trustful employment relationships **Outputs/Values created:** Social and Ecological Sustainable Development Impact, e.g., Decent working conditions in supply chains, employment creation, economic democracy

Figure 1: Classification of Sustainable HRM Types (Dyllick & Muff, 2016)

Descriptions of Good HRM Practices

Due to Aust et al, there exists a rise in the evidence that common good HRM might bridge the gap between CS business practices and their impact. The degree to which these alternative models can be incorporated into the present economic system and how this will affect the role and function of HRM are also areas of considerable doubt. (Aust et al., 2020)

The following three paragraphs discuss three issues that are prevalent around the world: work poverty and unsafe working conditions in supply chains, a lack of labor representation, as well as (youth) unemployment,and job instability. (Aust et al., 2020)

Business Human Rights as a response to exploitation of workers and poverty at work

Due to economic constraints, suppliers in emerging economies are more prone to adopt lax labor regulations that might lead to human rights abuses such as child labor, forced labor, and

hazardous and unpleasant working conditions. Additionally, the so-called "in-work poverty" phenomenon is a result of reactions to cost constraints in both industrialized and developing nations. Despite doing paid employment, many workers are on the poverty line. HRM may advance as a result of the Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights, which were adopted by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council in 2011. The agreement is founded on the UN's "Protect, Respect, Remedy" concept, which states that corporate management, not only politicians and lawmakers, are now responsible for preserving human rights. This might be changed by companies, which are adopting a common good HRM. Enterprises must focus on reducing poverty through the supply chain by using fair-wage-certified vendors. In addition, they could support small vendors to improve their capacity, or businesses use contracts to ensure future purchases from and payments to vendors. The brand Patagonia, which produces outdoor gear is a very good example of fair human rights within their supply chain. (Aust et al., 2020)

Self-management and workplace democracy as a response to the absence of a labor voice
Lack of a labor voice is a significant social issue because of the rise in low-wage, unstable, and unusual work contracts, as well as worker migration difficulties and employers' animosity against unions. The trend toward successful corporate sustainability is inextricably tied with concerns about workplace democracy and mutually understood understandings of productivity and value creation. To enable direct employee engagement in decision-making processes and room for employees' ideas and expectations, an organizational climate of workplace partnership is necessary for a mutually beneficial HR strategy. Aust et al. argue that democratic models of management would work better. Since democratic techniques place significantly greater value on employees' dignity, comprehensive information exchange, and participation in decision-making than restrictive. The morning star company, which is the largest tomato processor, is a role model when it comes to implementing democratic management in their daily work structures. (Aust et al., 2020)

As a reaction to (youth) unemployment and job instability, employment creation
Unemployment among young people is one of today's major problems, one that both industrialized and developing nations struggle to address. The development of technology in the past has led to the creation of new employment and an increased income for everybody. National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) research indicates that in the postindustrial global future, this influence won't be enough to balance out present negatives (un)employment developments like the quick progress of automation and artificial intelligence. In cases where

excessive automation is not cost-effective and labor has a comparative advantage, Aust et al. contend that a Common Good HRM is the best model to offset the job displacement effects of automation by generating employment opportunities through the matching of local skills with local product and service requirements. The grassroots, value-based movement known as the economy for the common good (ECG) is founded on two fundamental ethical principles: employment creation and job stability. The Austrian organic herbal tea and spices producer Sonnentor has created employment opportunities in certain regions. Also, their business culture is based on the five central common good values: human dignity, cooperation and solidarity, ecological sustainability, democracy, and transparency. (Aust et al., 2020)

The figure below demonstrates a table with a good overview of all four types of sustainable HRM. To sum it up, the blue one (Socially Responsible HRM) contributes to economic and social values (with emphasis on economic worth). The second one (Green HRM) supports economic and ecological benefits, but also an emphasis on economic value. Whereby the orange bar (Triple Bottom Line HRM), as the name says focuses on the triple bottom line values (economic, ecological and social). Still priorities the economic benefits. The last method (Common Good HRM) addresses the common good. In contrast to the others, this model weighs the finding of solutions for grand sustainability difficulties more than the economic profit. (Aust et al., 2020)

Figure number two shows a summarized and graphical overview of the previously described examples of common good HRM.

Global Challenges	Common Good Policy Area	Illustrative examples for Common Good HRM practices
In-work poverty and exploitative working conditions in supply chains	Business human rights	Corporations create awareness, train and pay suppliers for improving working conditions and to reduce poverty by ensuring fair pay and equal opportunities for social mobility
Lack of labor voice	Workplace democracy and self-management	Teams are responsible for recruitment (staffing), training and remuneration decisions, fair and transparent co-worker evaluation, and opportunities for self-assessment feedback systems.
(Youth) unemployment and job insecurity	Employment creation	Money generated by the company is used to generate employment in the firm and/or community

Figure 2: Global and Common Good HRM (Aust et al.,2020)

CHAPTER III: ELEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF SUSTAINABLE HRM

The third part is all about the defined eleven characteristics of Sustainable HRM. This part is heavily based on the paper of the two authors Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene. The characteristics (long-term orientation, concern for employees and the environment, profitability, employee participation and social dialogue, employee development, external partnership, flexibility, compliance beyond labor standards, employee cooperation, fairness, and equality) will be discussed in detail.

General Framework

As mentioned above, this chapter is based on the chapter on Development and application of sustainable HRM from Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene. The traits of sustainable HRM illuminate the potential applications of sustainability in HRM. For HRM to merit the title sustainable, several qualities must be present. They also suggested, due to their research, to distinguish two things: fundamental methodologies and traits of sustainable HRM, drawing on earlier studies. As a "roof" for qualities, underlying approaches operate as keynotes in this way, supporting the notion that approaches and characteristics should be in line with one another. The three approaches, namely paradox theory, theory of negative externality and stakeholder damage, and stakeholder theory. These three are already well-established in the literature and used by the authors for their papers. The article suggests in total eleven qualities of sustainable HRM. Including **long-term orientation, concern for employees and the environment, profitability, employee participation and social dialogue, employee development, external partnership, flexibility, compliance beyond labor standards, employee cooperation, fairness, and equality.** (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Since the chapter mentioned is already a few pages back and to make it clearer to the reader, here is a recapitulation and a short extension of the three theories.

Paradox theory

By using the paradox theory as the foundational strategy for sustainable HRM, the author Ehnert made a substantial contribution to the field of sustainable HRM. Since he employed paradox as a lens for his sustainable HRM theory. Ehnert recognized three major paradoxes of

sustainable HRM (Tensions between deploying human resources efficiently and maintaining their capabilities; tensions between economic rationality and relational rationality; and tensions between short and long-term effects). Sustainability places firms in circumstances where they must concurrently address several desirable but incompatible economic, environmental, and social goals at the corporate and societal levels. This translates to sustainable HRM producing various conflicts and contradictions in the HRM setting. (Ehnert, 2009)

A paradox is defined as contradictory yet connected elements (dualities) that exist concurrently and endure across time; such elements look logical when taken individually, but are illogical, inconsistent, and nonsensical when juxtaposed (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Organizational conflicts are well-suited for the study of paradox theory. Concerning the paradox of organizations. It is observed that instead of selecting between what were once opposites (such as planning vs. flexibility, mass market vs. specialized), businesses now have to find a middle ground. And using the both/and method rather than the either/or approach is the key to handling paradoxes or conflicts. (Pinto, 2019)

Theory of negative externality and stakeholder damage

Understanding the social concerns or negative externality (NE) of organizational activities and how sustainable human resource management (HRM) methods may be used to produce a sustainable society are of great interest to practitioners and scholars. A NE is the price society pays for the harm an organization's activities cause to its workers and the surrounding area. This led to the assumption that businesses hurt their workforce by squeezing every last drop of talent out of them and keeping them from obtaining successful work-related well-being outcomes (Mariappanadar & Kramar, 2014). The majority of the time, increased employee burden enhances organizational effectiveness and reduces personnel expenses, but it also has a detrimental impact on the workers, their families, and the community. However, the expenses associated with the negative effects of excessive workload on employees, their families, and the community are carried out and paid for by the employees and the community rather than the company. Negative externalities frequently lower the level of life for society as a whole and employee families. Sustainable HRM has been proposed as a remedy at the institutional level for minimizing harm to employees (Mariappanadar, 2016). (Mariappanadar, 2014)

Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder Theory is a way of looking at capitalism that emphasizes the connections between a company's clients, partners, workers, investors, communities, and other parties with an

interest in the organization. According to the principle, a company should produce value for all stakeholders, not only shareholders. (Stakeholder Theory, 2018)

The Stakeholder Theory of organizational management and corporate ethics, which tackles morals and values in managing an organization, was first described by R. Edward Freeman in 1984. He declared: "The 21st century is one of the Managing Stakeholders. Executives must generate as much value as they can for stakeholders without making compromises. Because they can align the interests of their stakeholders, great businesses persist". (Stakeholder Theory, 2018)

Due to the influence of stakeholder claims on an organization's social, environmental, and financial performance, sustainability and stakeholder theory and management are two issues that are interconnected. The growth of the firm's sustainability can be prompted by a cooperative relationship between the organization and its stakeholders. (Guerci et al., 2014)

Description of the characteristics

Long-term orientation

A common characteristic of many family companies is the long-term orientation (LTO), which is identified as the tendency to prioritize the long-term ramifications and influence of decisions and activities that manifest after a considerable amount of time (Lumpkin et al., 2010). This characteristic is often seen within family firms. Futurity (which displays a concern for the future), continuity (which emphasizes bridging from the past to the future), and perseverance are the three elements of long-term orientation that have been identified (it underlines how decisions and actions in the present affect the future). (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018) To make these aspects a bit clearer, they are explained in more detail in the upcoming paragraphs.

Futurity is the idea that it is useful to predict, plan for, and assess how to present activities that will have long-term effects. According to futurity, a firm's dominant coalition is aware of the desired future and takes the initiative to make a certain future. (Lumpkin & Brigham, 2011)

Continuity is predicated on the idea that things that persist a long time and endure have worth. It, therefore, includes preservation, consistency, and durability. Continuity considers the progression of time or the factors from the past that have an impact on the present. It is also interested in how enduring goals and legacy problems influence present-day choices and deeds. (Lumpkin & Brigham, 2011)

The diligent effort needed to endure throughout time is referred to as perseverance. It is predicated on the idea that current efforts will eventually pay dividends. Perseverance is necessary for merely existing, yet its overall result is beneficial. Or in other words, some things need time to become valuable. It is related to frugality, tenacity, and hard work in studies of culture. (Lumpkin & Brigham, 2011)

In general, long-term thinking is essential for people management when considering various HRM procedures, from hiring through firing. Long-term orientation, addressing employee recruitment, and retention are driven by the issues that companies are experiencing, such as demographic shifts, free mobility of people, or the mismatch between the current capabilities of workers and those needed for the future. Organizations are often able to determine the availability of human resources in the future through the examination of the past, present, and future. Forecasting and labor market research might improve sustainability in HRM since it is simpler to choose the most suitable candidates when more precise labor market information is available. (Zaugg et al., 2001) Being the most suitable option from a sustainability standpoint entails meeting the organization's demands over the long term at a price the organization can pay. A sustainable HRM demands more work in selecting the candidates who will contribute over the long term and throughout changing circumstances, therefore tactics like "hire and fire" or "fire and forget" conflict with this. (Ehnert et al., 2014) Also, studies conducted in the UK and the USA indicated that graduates and other job seekers are aware of an organization's environmental sustainability factor and utilize this information when making employment decisions. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018) The same results were also confirmed in a smaller survey in connection with a university project in Innsbruck.

Care of employees

Humans are at the core of concerns for sustainable development, as was previously mentioned. In light of this, each business is responsible for making sure that it retains a healthy and productive staff throughout time. It is undoubtedly difficult to define what is meant by the concept "care of workers," even if the preponderance of actions that consider employees as "an aim in themselves" might fall under this category. However, the current paper care for employees is seen in terms of health and safety, work-life balance, compensation, and workload. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

The term Health and safety management was found plenty of times in different sources and contains more aspects, such as risk management, product quality, etc. In this context, it reflects concern for employees. Employee health, which covers a range of issues like illnesses,

mortality, ergonomic work environments, and stress, appears to be an important area of study addressing the need to reconsider people management (Zink, 2014).

As dual-career families, high job expectations, and long working hours have become the norm, work-life balance is another factor in how employers are taking care of their staff. Also, Zaugg et al. argued that one of the fundamental goals of sustainable HRM is to have a healthy work-life balance. The diverse working-time models provide a meaningful impact on work-life balance. (Zaugg et al., 2001) And it is increasing in relevance for many companies and especially young employees. There is also the theory that there is no real difference in personal or professional life. This is founded on the notion that the value of human liberty and the broader notion that businesses should look out for the interests of the people they touch. It is undoubtedly difficult to balance work and personal life. Experience shows, nonetheless, that businesses that successfully manage these difficulties may reap two rewards. Once it is a part of the employer value proposition in addition to first aiding in employee retention. The ability to balance work and life is made possible by providing employees with time-related, informational, financial, and direct support. (Hoeppe, 2013) The important thing is that these family-friendly policies should satisfy both organizational and personnel demands. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

To have a healthy and productive workforce, care for employees should be considered workload. Fair compensation is crucial as a result of taking care of employees, and it should be obvious why the minimum wage is necessary. There are at least three main situations when an employee has a right to obtain fair compensation. First, remuneration ought to be equitable when compared between individuals. Companies have a responsibility to treat all employees equally, regardless of whether pay scales are determined by seniority, success, or some other factor. Second, remuneration should be fair in an intrapersonal comparison sense. If a person's contribution to a company increases in duration and (perhaps) responsibility, she should be compensated commensurately more. While the first two contexts of fair pay are based on equality, the third one is non-comparative and relates to the idea of a minimum salary, and is based on well-being. The case for a minimum wage should be convincing if we view employees as people deserving of respect. People need a certain basic quality of life since they have objectives and interests. Shortly, job activities are meant to guarantee a certain minimal level of life and to shield workers from the stress that results from thinking about options for existence. Therefore, utilizing labor as a simple instrument for profit and paying minimal salaries are not acceptable justifications for doing so. Neither is maximizing shareholder profit. (Rowan, 2000; Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Care of environment

Although environmental protection is a top priority for green HRM. The recruitment and selection of personnel heavily emphasize environmental responsibility, focusing in particular on a younger generation that is becoming more environmentally conscious or highly qualified workers. An environmentally conscious employer branding competes for these workers and enhances employer desirability. According to the signaling hypothesis, applicants draw conclusions about an organization's future goals based on its environmental image and reputation. (Renwick et al., 2013) There is enough proof to conclude that reputation matters, especially for young applicants. It also covers sustainability. The study's findings imply that firms that prioritize sustainable development are more likely to attract individuals who are eager to work there. (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021). In addition to branding, numerous other actions can be taken to care for the environment when hiring and selecting people. These actions include using technology, incorporating environmental criteria into the recruitment messages, and choosing candidates who are knowledgeable enough about environmental issues to fill open positions. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

The training and development of employees might incorporate environmental care. As well as assessing an employee's work performance in light of environmental factors and offering feedback on advancement, is reflected in employee performance management and assessment. Applying financial and non-financial incentives for environmentally responsible conduct may also be considered rewarding. Overall, environmentally responsible behavior in daily activities might take the form of rational power use, prudent document printing, shifting paper-based tasks to electronic platforms, sorting of garbage, and alternative commute possibilities. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Profitability

A condition in which an enterprise is making a profit is referred to as profitability. Generally, when the total of all revenues exceeds the total of all costs within a reporting period, profitability results. (Bragg, 2022)

For a long time, organizational activities have been dominated by the pursuit of profit. Typical financial measures have been the net profit ratio, earnings per share ratio, profits, return on investment and many more (Bragg, 2022) Such measures are no longer the main criterion for success as firms increasingly commit to sustainability. Given that the economic aspect of sustainability maintains its significance, this does not in any way discount the character of a corporate organization; rather, a natural alliance of the three components is highlighted. An

organization's ability to compete in the marketplace and maintain its financial stability are key factors in its long-term survival. Most business choices, if not all of them, are related to economic effectiveness. This indicates that any traditional human resource management function may be realized using the financial resources provided by the economic sustainability component. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

In conclusion, it may be said that every corporate organization strives for economic effectiveness and that the sustainability factor does not take away from that aim. It's critical to avoid using the chase of economic performance to excuse the consumption of human resources and detrimental effects on workers, society at large, and the environment while acknowledging the need for funding for human resource management. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Employee participation and social dialogue

Employee involvement in organizational choices has garnered the interest of scholars and practitioners with a variety of organizational methods, such as management and humanistic approaches, during the course of decades of organizational study. The management strategy emphasizes involvement as a tool to strengthen workers' ties to and loyalty to their companies. The humanistic perspective sees engagement as advantageous for societal needs fulfillment and personal progress. According to both strategies, employee views of their relationships with the company may increase as a result of engagement. (Joensson, 2008)

The word participation, which means sharing, involvement, or inclusion, has its roots in the Latin word "particeps," which means "participating." People who participate also offer their experiences and ideals to the collaborative effort. They take ownership of the initiatives and assume responsibility for their success in this way. (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, 2022) On the other side literature, Wilpert views participation as a multidimensional concept. This concept is contending that participation covers a range of ways in which people or groups can protect their interests or participate in the decision-making process. Because of their multidimensional character, issues to be solved, involvement types, and intensity all have a significant role. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

The degree of influence, or intensity of involvement, reflects the degree to which the right interests may be protected. Whether the employees participate as a group or individually is referred to as the mode of participation. Additionally, employee engagement may be used to

make choices on a variety of issues, including those that are related to the workplace (referred to as "proximal issues") and organizational difficulties (referred to as "distal issues"). "Proximal concerns" concern the workers' immediate working circumstances. Managing job duties and scheduling time are two instances of these problems. Distal concerns, such as decisions about organizational strategy or financial decisions, are connected to employees' distal organizational environment in the interim. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018; Joensson, 2008) Given that involvement enables the shift in how employees are treated from being treated as objects to being treated as subjects, it appears that employee engagement has previously been impliedly or directly emphasized when discussing sustainable HRM. Despite this, the ability to make decisions that are linked to responsibility is a requirement for participation. Zaugg stresses that involvement is more than just a two-way connection between the employees and those in charge of human resource management. Employees, management, and human resource professionals make up the narrowly defined tripartite connection; nevertheless, a multipartite relationship should be evaluated in the wider meaning (peers, external advisors, relatives, budget organizations, etc.). (Zaugg, 2009; Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

In conclusion, it is crucial to analyze the intensity, form, and kind of involvement as well as the problems that need to be resolved in the framework of sustainable human resource management. Enabling employee participation is a requirement for an organization, but it is not sufficient on its own. Employees must actively participate in human resource management, with forms of participation that are in line with types of participation and actual participation in the solving of both "distant" and "immediate" problems. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Employee development

Individual career progression and corporate competitive advantage both depend on human capital. The growth of knowledge, skills, and talents that contribute to an organization's economic value is a crucial talent management project and is becoming more and more important to both individuals and businesses. McCauley & Hezlett stated that employee development includes "the enhancement of a person's capacity to successfully perform in his or her current or future employment and work for an organization". Activities that assist employees to develop professionally include formal education, work experiences, professional connections, and assessments of personality, skills, and talents. (Dachner et al., 2021)

When considering staff development in the context of sustainability, it is important to keep in mind that future-oriented skill sets and capacities should take precedence over any

present skill sets and capabilities. As a result, long-term thinking and recognizing workers as both key assets and change agents are connected to employee development [95]. Additionally, the discussion over corporate sustainability is made more difficult by investments in future skills since the business environment is always changing and requires a dedicated effort to respond, including in terms of staff abilities. Each firm should decide in advance whether it will regard its personnel as "zero inventory" or as a "time-phased investment." This leads the theory to the conclusion that workers should be treated as investments rather than as expenses. In case the employee turnover is low, it is as or more vital for the firm to spend on continual training and education for the workers than on infrastructure and equipment. In general, employee skill development benefits both the employer and the employee (future employability and career options), producing a win-win situation. As a result, corporate experience shows that reducing training and development during economic crises leads to longer-term issues for both parties. Employee development as a trait of sustainable HRM may be examined from a variety of perspectives, some of which are discussed here. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Following the paradox theory, corporations undoubtedly pay attention to the conflicts in the area of recruiting new employees. There are primarily two choices: either purchase skills from the market or build flexibility through delay. The ability for businesses to target specific talents they now lack makes buying appealing. However, purchasing has come under fire for being pricey and going above and beyond what businesses can afford to spend. Additionally, hiring personnel from outside the company may result in internal career mechanisms being let down and aggravate current workers. Flexibility through deferral is based on the notion that workers should have the opportunity to reach their full potential over the long term and in a variety of roles, such as through job rotation. (Becker, 2011) In essence, from an HRM standpoint, the solutions above appear suitable. Mainstream HRM would choose to purchase since skilled workers quickly produce financial value for the company. Meanwhile, employee development that values on-the-job training and completing a variety of duties is how sustainability in HRM is demonstrated. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Given the significance of employee development's economic value, training expenditures are still a topic of contention in businesses. The company could minimize staff training and development due to concern over employee turnover. According to an empirical study, one of the major elements determining earnings is the intensity of the investment made in training. The expenses of personnel turnover are outweighed by the financial results of operations and the economic value of training. The principle of sustainability is violated by the suggestion that employees pay for their training since it assumes that they are the only ones

who gain from training. This runs counter to empirical results where management recognized the importance of growth for both the company and the individuals inside it. The concept of lifelong learning is greatly supported by such acknowledgment. The relevance of training styles and methods may be seen in the context of sustainability. Some organizations have switched from in-person instruction to online instruction to save costs, standardize training materials, and address challenges related to geographic distance. The lack of connection with seasoned colleagues and the opportunity to learn about the organizational culture are two clear negative effects of technological advancement. When a coordinated strategy is used, including both online and in-person engagement sessions, sustainability becomes more prominent. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018) A quite current research paper declared that a cost-sharing approach creates a win-win situation for both the employee and the employee (Dachner et al., 2021). Proactive development techniques give businesses a way to invest in human capital to improve company performance while avoiding potential hazards (Dachner et al., 2021).

Examining the transfer of experience inside an organization requires a focus on mentorship and setting up the right environment. Additionally, it is sensible to commend employees for their efforts in passing on expertise, and as a result, they may be more forthcoming about imparting their expert knowledge to the new hires. It's crucial to remember the indirect benefits of employee development because it's a crucial component in tempting new recruits and gives workers who want to leave their positions better chances to find other employment. As a result, the employability of the population has increased; nevertheless, it should be noted that training and development activities convey to staff members that the company is interested in keeping them on a long-term basis. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

External partnership

This trait primarily relies on the stakeholder theory and sustainable resource management, which considers an organization's potential to supply the resources required for conducting business over the long term. From a sustainability standpoint, a company must make sure that it not only recruits and keeps workers today but also maintains access to the target demographics. By encouraging their regeneration and making investments in the environment, Ehnert's sustainable HRM model promotes a balance between the consumption and reproduction of human resources. Relationships with external partners are considered as contributing value on the path to sustainable HRM. Since it emphasizes tight collaboration with human resources. Expense compensation for training, grants, encouragement of lifelong learning, and collaboration with universities and other educational institutions by attending

courses are a few examples of relationships that are mutually beneficial for employers and employees. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

External collaboration helps a firm become an employer of choice since it may leverage events like job fairs or other types of collaboration with universities to draw in the best candidates. However, if candidates' talents are equivalent, sustainability always favors local personnel, and as a result, actions that also support local communities. Even if businesses have the right to recruit locally or internationally. Sustainable employment practices suffer when staff is not actively trained and developed. Sustainable employment practices are negatively impacted by traditional accounting methods that do not take employee training and development into account as an asset or future benefit. Employee skill inventories, performance reviews, job expansion, job enrichment, and internal promotion are all examples of effective approaches in this area. Once they are hired by the company, employees need to receive the proper training. Even highly competent workers require some lead time before they can contribute independently. (Lindgreen et al., 2012)

Partnerships with the outside world also place a high value on inter-organizational connections. From the standpoint of sustainability, organizations must help one another develop their human resources. Therefore, it is highly important to invest in external education or the competitors will do it. Companies should also consider an outside-in strategy. Here stakeholders as well as the external environment have an impact on what HRM does internally. The principle of the outside/inside approach, states that HRM produces a value that is partially supported through external partnerships. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Flexibility

In strategic HRM literature, the idea of flexibility is well known and well-established. Alternative sorts of flexibility are frequently seen as functional and numerical flexibility. Both underlie many ways to manage people. Functional flexibility, which is typically defined as the capacity to adapt to changes in the business, depends on long-term mutual investment in employment relationships. In other words, functional flexibility refers to both the capacity to carry out a range of disparate jobs and the practice of transferring employees from one activity to another to maintain their productivity. On the other hand, numerical flexibility is the capacity of the company to modify the number of personnel employed to fit the changes in the business demands. It also relates to cost reduction. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

It is assumed that numerical flexibility is barely in line with the sustainability notion since it represents a cost-cutting method and is related to the short-term outlook. Functional flexibility has a substantially greater added value. Functional flexibility is often made available

via personnel replacement and task rotation. Flexibility in the rotation is advantageous to both the company and the employee since it delays the decision on whether a person is a good fit for the position. Additionally, job rotation enables people to improve their employability while also enabling managers to comprehend the critical value-creating processes of different divisions. It should be emphasized as well that functional flexibility demands dedicated and knowledgeable workers, which may be attained by making investments in training programs and long-term employment partnerships. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Flexibility is primarily seen in terms of employee demands as the quality of sustainable HRM. Due to several factors, flexibility should be handled with caution. First, flexibility entails addressing organizational goals while also considering the unique demands of employees that may arise due to personal or family issues. Even though they should ideally be linked, the reality is typically difficult since it is difficult to balance the requirement for flexibility and human resource planning. Second, not all empirical evidence is consistent, and some of it contradicts theoretic insights and empirical results that flexibility improves employee well-being. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Different articles show that flexible work is becoming more and more crucial in companies. Especially for the younger generation, which is either now entering the labor market or studying. Generation Z, often known as Gen Z, includes all birth cohorts between 1995 and about 2012 (unternehmer.de, 2022). It is the generation that will follow the Millennials, sometimes referred to as Generation Y, who were born between 1981 and 1995 (unternehmer.de, 2022). Growing up in a digitalized world is one of the most distinctive characteristics and traits that the younger generation brings with them (unternehmer.de, 2022). The Generation Z members who participated in a survey defined it as employing a location and time that is convenient to the employee and having flexible work hours. Work-Life Balance and employer branding both include the notion of work flexibility. Additionally, it is a characteristic that sets companies apart in the modern labor market. Workplace flexibility reduces human resources risk by fostering an environment where young workers from Generation Z may develop their sense of identity and commitment. (Stankiewicz-Mróz, 2020) It is also possible to discover through simple communication with young adults that the values they hold about their jobs differ from those of previous generations. In addition, many of them will mention work-life balance and that flexible working hours are important to them. The pandemic (Covid 19) in particular has accelerated flexibility and digitization in companies. Many young employees would like to have the option of working from an online office.

Compliance beyond labor regulations

Every organization must comply with the law to operate. It is asserted that adhering to labor laws is a necessary foundation for long-term HRM. The well-known and frequently used sustainability frameworks, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework or the United Nations Global Compact, also include information on whether the organizations' actions, specifically their labor practices and their human rights practices, are following the law. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018) The COBIT framework is another one that provides a more organized approach and has many standards. It is typically employed by larger businesses, particularly by those interested in mergers and acquisitions (M&A).

Nevertheless, simply abiding by the rules and laws won't help you manage people sustainably. A more comprehensive strategy that goes beyond labor laws is required to implement sustainability in HRM and profit from it since obeying institutional rules does not always imply that a specific firm is sustainable. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Employee cooperation

In their study, Brown and Shields stated that the tournament theory predicts that rival employees will go to great lengths to sabotage the efforts of their coworkers (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018). When incentive systems are based on relative rank rather than absolute production levels, tournament theory can be used to explain behavior. As a result, this theory has been utilized by management researchers to analyze a variety of intra- and inter-organizational competitions, including competition among franchisees, invention contests, and promotion contests. (Connelly et al., 2014)

Employees may boost their performance and receive rewards by doing this. In terms of economic and social consequences, collaboration at work, however, is far superior to rivalry. For instance, it is emphasized that collaboration encourages increased productivity and quality, lowers absenteeism, lowers the likelihood of labor conflicts, and boosts overall job satisfaction. Employee collaboration may be developed and improved through sharing information, fostering trust and respect within a business, or via open, proactive communication. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Fairness and equality

It would appear that treating employees justly and fairly entails having the same expectations for their rights, obligations, and privileges across the board. Namely, rules, responsibilities, and

rights are intended to be the same for everyone throughout an organization. Overall, it was noted that diversity factors, such as gender, age, ethnic background, education, and health, were important, particularly in the context of hiring. Therefore, sustainability in HRM seems to relate to fairness and diversity in hiring practices. From the hiring process to daily work activities, all employees are subject to the same regulations and have the same duties and rights. The degree to which a worker feels appreciated impacts how managers or coworkers shape the culture of the company. The written responses from top managers explained how the amount of sustainability that existed was determined by how employees saw fairness and equality. Fair treatment is therefore only the base upon which sustainable HRM's concept and meaning may be developed. All employees should be treated equally, according to the top management. (Järlström et al., 2018)

The paper of Järlström et al. (2018) cites a very nice statement in terms of fairness/equality and sustainable HRM: "*As a firm, we operate ethically in everything we do, and with everyone. We treat our employees as equally as possible. We get involved with difficult matters, too. We invest in leadership, and that way ensures that leadership in our organization is of a high caliber. We take the needs of both employees and the organization into account. Ethicality is the cornerstone of good human resource management even now. In the future, it will be the lifeblood of good human resource management as well as of management, in general.*"

In contrast to the prevalent, economically outcome-focused HRM, these statements highlight several subtle ethical HRM considerations for sustainability. It encourages the equitable treatment of all employees by highlighting employees as a stakeholder group. (Järlström et al., 2018)

It became more or less the norm for human resources to be used more than they were being developed. A trained and healthy workforce is more difficult for businesses to maintain as a result of such treatment, which has led to employee health concerns, problems balancing work and personal life, and other harm to employees, their families, and society at large. External considerations, such as demographic shifts or greater demand from external stakeholders, together with internal problems in employment relationships, necessitate a paradigm shift in HRM if businesses are to recruit and retain human resources for conducting business in the future. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Within this section, eleven sustainable characteristics for human resources, which are defined by the paper of Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene were explained. The two authors identify if cooperation can be classified as a sustainable employer, especially in terms of

employee treatment. To sum it up the characteristics are called: long-term orientation, care of employees, care of the environment, profitability, employee participation, and social dialogue, employee development, external partnership, flexibility, compliance beyond labor regulations, employee cooperation, fairness, and equality.

The research from the named authors proposes that in real life they have to divide them into two concepts. On one side are the traits of sustainable HRM and on the other side the underlying methodologies. The underlying approaches serve as some kind of "roof" for the characteristics. Whereby, the underlying methodologies operate as keynotes in this way, supporting the notion that the characteristics should be consistent with the approaches. The paradox theory, theory of negative externality and stakeholder harm, and stakeholder theory was was offered as techniques that were articulated in this paper on sustainable HRM. (Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018)

Sustainable Development Goals

At this point, it is relevant to mention the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the European Union. Since they partly coincide with the characteristics found in the literature and a view, articles also named these goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sometimes referred to as the Global Goals, were enacted by the United Nations in 2015 as a global call to action to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee that by the year 2030, peace and prosperity would be experienced by everyone. The 17 SDGs are interconnected; they acknowledge that decisions made in one area may have an impact on results in others. Sustainability in terms of social, economic, and environmental development must be balanced. Countries have agreed to give those who are falling behind the most priority while making progress. The SDGs aim to eradicate AIDS, hunger, poverty and prejudice against women and girls. The SDGs must be achieved in every setting, and this requires the creativity, knowledge, technology, and financial resources of the whole population. (United Nations Development Programme, 2022)

Figure 3: 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations Development Program, 2022)

All 17 objectives are seen and named in figure number three. Here for instance it would make sense to consider the outside-in approach. If companies would take a look at the current problems and topics in the first place, and then establish a strategy based on these common objectives, would be sustainable. Logically, the strategies must also be profitable for the enterprises, otherwise, they cannot survive in the competition. Suppose a business takes one of these goals and then looks into the inside of their own company and analyses where and how it could best be implemented. This would be a best practice for Common Good HRM to be profitable on the one hand and sustainable on the other hand.

Greenwashing in the context of sustainable HRM

Employee satisfaction, internal disputes, and engagement are all improved by work-life balance. A balanced employee is better able to contribute to the productivity of the firm and reduce disputes among workers and employees and management since they feel inspired and less stressed. As already stated previously sustainability regarding companies, is a multidimensional approach. Because of that, it is also important to consider the employees as well, since they are part of the stakeholders. Work-life balance is a concept that falls under the classification of Sustainable HRM. This term indicates that the employees are put in the center to increase the efficiency of the workforce. Whereby the integration of diverse aspects of an employee's life is referred to as work-life balance. (Iddagoda et al., 2021)

By putting into practice numerous ecological practices including resource conservation, pollution reduction, and environmentally sustainable business management, the process of "greening" is defined as the process of doing environmentally favorable acts. On the other hand, greenwashing refers to organizations making up facts to give the impression that they are environmentally conscious to stakeholders. According to recent studies, the popularity of green views has increased greenwashing. It's becoming more and more common to refer to actions as "green" even though they have nothing to do with protecting the environment or conserving natural resources. As a result, real green projects are being undermined as stakeholders, including stakeholders, employers, and employees, grow dubious of green methods. Determining whether actions genuinely include greenwashing is crucial. (Iddagoda et al., 2021)
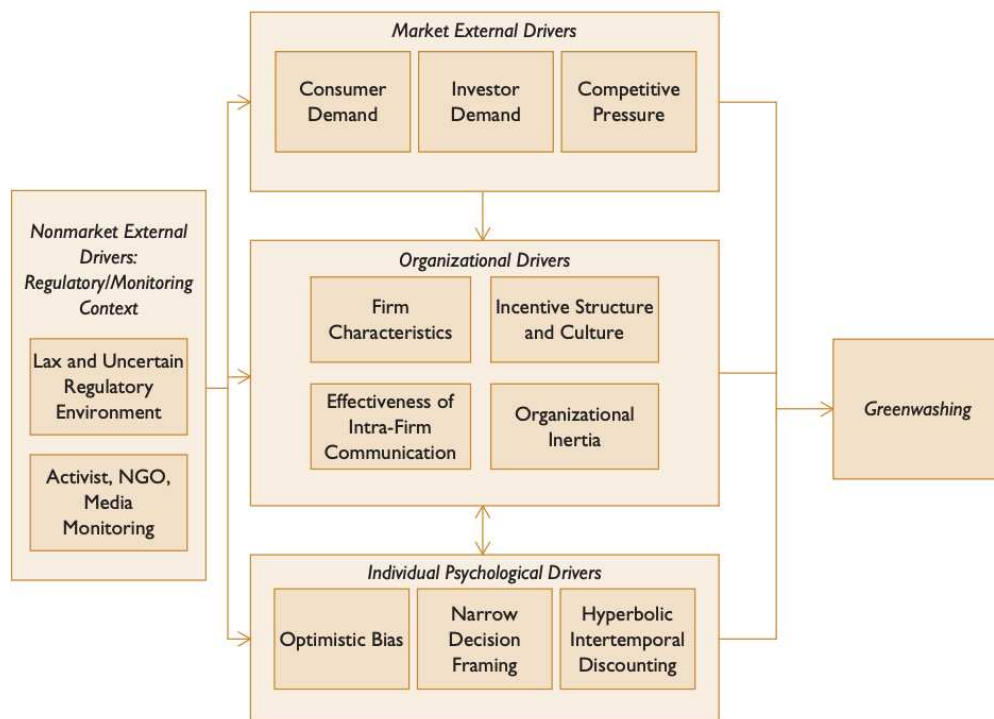
Figure 4: Sources of greenwashing (Delmas & Burbano, 2011)

As illustrated in the figure there are multiple reasons/drivers for the phenomenon called Greenwashing. A significant external organizational driver of corporate greenwashing is the regulatory environment. However, institutional characteristics by themselves are unable to account for different corporate strategies. External market factors have a significant role in promoting greenwashing. A business's response to external factors is moderated by key firm features, incentive structures, ethical atmosphere, the efficacy of intra-firm communication, as

well as institutional inertia. Additionally, managers' decision-making processes are influenced by personal psychological and cognitive characteristics, which in turn affect how external drives translate into action motivation. By influencing the accessibility and accuracy of information regarding organization greenwashing and environmental performance that consumers, investors, and supervisors themselves can access, as well as by fostering an atmosphere of uncertainty regarding the implications of engaging in greenwashing, the regulatory context indirectly influences the other drivers of greenwashing. (Delmas & Burbano, 2011)

CHAPTER IV: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains the theoretical framework for the empirical research which was conducted within this master thesis. People are different. In conclusion, they also have different perceptions of their workplace and how they imagine sustainable HRM practices. Such phenomena are also explained by theories. To substantiate the behavior of persons also in the theoretical sense, the social identity theory, the signaling theory, and also the attraction-attrition-selection theory was used for this work. These will be discussed in more detail in this chapter. For this paper, I decided to focus on four different classes, namely gender, generational as well as educational and cultural differences. These four factors were selected because there are the greatest differences expected. Generations are especially highlighted since I decided to focus on Generation Z. Members of this classification are the ones who are currently starting their careers or still studying. For each of the four differentiations, a hypothesis was established, which will later be tried to be proven based on the survey. The hypotheses are *H1: There are differences between the origins and cultures of individuals in terms of their conception of Sustainable HRM. H2: There are different perceptions about Sustainable HRM based on the type of education. H3: There are divergent perceptions of gender about Sustainable HRM. H4: There are cross-generational variations in perceptions of Sustainable HRM.* Moreover, the research which was conducted to figure out the relevant characteristics were based on literature and not on practice. To make a small contribution to science in this area, I would like to investigate whether the defined characteristics (see eleven characteristics) are described by people from Gen Z. In addition, this work aims to figure out if there exist some differences between age/generation, gender, education and culture.

Theoretical Background

In the very first part of this chapter, the focus is put on three different theories in order to prove the practical actions of persons. The three theories are the so-called social identity theory, the signaling theory and also the attraction-attrition-selection theory.

Social Identity Theory

The British man Henri Tajfel made a significant contribution to science with Social Identity Theory in 1979. It is his most important contribution to the field of psychology. Social identity is the feeling of self that a person has depended on their participation in a community (McLeod, 2019). The hypothesis from Tajfel and Turner in 1986 contends that group membership affects

how people perceive themselves (Chaudhary, 2018). People frequently identify themselves with high-status groups with the objective to boost their self-esteem (Chaudhary, 2018). Tajfel and Turner claimed that seeing people as either "us" or "them," or as belonging to an "in-group" or "out-group," involves three mental processes. Economists refer to this as the in-group/out-group dynamic (them). In order to improve their perception of themselves, individuals of an in-group will look out for flaws in an out-group, according to the central component of social identity theory. These categorizations happen in a certain order. The first step is called social categorization, followed by social identification and the final step is called social comparison. (McLeod, 2019; Practical Psychology, 2021)

| Social Categorisation | → | Social Identification | → | Social Comparison |

Figure 5: Steps of Social Identity Theory (McLeod, 2019; Practical Psychology, 2021)

Social Categorization

Categorization is the initial step. In order to comprehend and recognize items, we classify them. We categorize people, including ourselves in a manner quite similar to this to comprehend the social context. Because they are helpful, we utilize social categories like black, white, female, old, Muslim, and so on. If we can categorize someone, that reveals information about that person. Similar to this, we learn something about ourselves through understanding the categories to which we belong. We define proper behavior in terms of the standards of the groups we are a part of, but you can only do this if you know who is a member of your group. A person may be a member of many groups. (McLeod, 2019; Practical Psychology, 2021)

Social Identification

In the second step, known as social identification, people take on the identity of the group to which they have assigned themselves. The likelihood is that, for instance, if a person identifies as a student, he/she will start acting like one and embrace the characteristics his/her associates with students. The person will act following group norms. The affiliation with a group will have emotional importance, and his/her self-esteem will become entwined with group participation. (McLeod, 2019; Practical Psychology, 2021)

<u>Social Comparison</u>

Lastly, there is social comparison. Individuals often compare one group to other groups after classifying themselves as members of a group and identifying with that group. The group must compare well to other groups if they are to sustain their self-esteem. This is crucial to comprehending bias because, once two groups decide they are competitors, they are compelled to compete so that the participants may continue to feel good about themselves. (McLeod, 2019; Practical Psychology, 2021)

According to social identity theory, a company's increased reputation may persuade potential workers to join to improve their self-esteem and, consequently, their self-concept. As a result, candidates' opinions of the company have an impact on how they identify with it, and a better sense of organizational identity may help recruit more employees. (Chaudhary, 2018)

Signaling Theory

According to the signaling hypothesis from Rynes in 1991 (Chaudhary, 2018), when two parties (individuals or organizations) have access to various types of information, the signaling theory may be used to explain behavior. Most of the time, the decision to transmit (or signal) that information rests with the sender, and the recipient decides how to interpret the signal. Information has an impact on how people make decisions in their homes, workplaces, and governments. People base their judgments both on private information, which is only accessible to a small portion of the public, and publicly available information. Knowledge asymmetries develop between individuals who possess private information and others who would be able to make better judgments if they did. This is also known as Principal Agent Theory. Reducing information imbalance between two parties is at the heart of signaling theory. (Connelly et al., 2011)

For instance, when people are searching for a job, they interpret the information they come across as indicative of more general organizational traits. As a consequence, people may conclude the employing organization using the informational signals they gathered during their recruiting and maintenance experiences with the company. (Chaudhary, 2018)

Attraction-Attrition-Selection Theory

The theory or model arrives from industrial and organizational psychology that states that individuals are attracted to organizations that share values with their values, personalities, and needs. The organization, in turn, typically hires people with attributes that fit the organizational

culture. Those coworkers who do not fit the organizational climate naturally leave over time. As a result of this process, the qualities of the workforce at the business become more uniform. Therefore, the attraction-selection-attrition model (ASA MODEL) postulates that if people are placed in an organization that is inconsistent with their personal beliefs, they will resign, resulting in the persistence of a group of people who share those values. (Sam, N., 2013)

This viewpoint asserts that individuals are drawn to organizations that have traits and functions that seem to be similar to their own and that meet their needs. As a result of a better fit between their beliefs and orientation and the organization's culture, people with these traits will be more drawn to it than others. (Chaudhary, 2018)

Different perceptions in the workplace

The part "different perceptions in the workplace" supports the assumption that there exists some difference between people and their perceptions, based on their origin/culture, gender, education, and especially generations. Within this literature framework, the paper wants to highlight that there might be some differences between the interviewees.

Differences cultural background

Today, organizations must deal with the growing importance of sustainability. By adopting and putting into practice activities that meet the needs of the company and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining, and improving the natural, [social], and human resources that will be required in the future, organizations work to implement sustainability initiatives as part of their corporate strategy. However, it is not a simple task to implement sustainability projects in many nations and areas of the world. Organizations must be aware of the sociocultural distinctions that influence how sustainability projects are interpreted and assessed internationally. How people use their natural resources and their willingness to adopt sustainable methods may both be influenced by socio-cultural values. Sustainability may depend on the local environment, with national culture having a big impact on how society expects businesses and organizations to address social and environmental challenges. Organizations must adapt their sustainability strategies to the local context in light of these cultural variations. (Tata & Prasad, 2015)

According to the definition of Hofstede in 1980 culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another (Akhtar, 2000). Realston stated that a civilization's culture is defined as the common ideals and ideas that prevail at a given moment in that society. Undoubtedly there exist plenty of definitions for culture in the literature. To distinguish between different national cultures, Hofstede established five

cultural traits: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and uncertainty avoidance. (Tata & Prasad, 2015)

Power distance

The degree to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a nation anticipate and accept that power is allocated unequally is referred to as this component of national culture. It is the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a nation. Beliefs and perceptions about sustainability can be influenced by values related to hierarchy and power. People in high power distance cultures are less inclined to value sustainability and more likely to accept social injustice as an unavoidable aspect of society. People in these societies tend to see inequality as a necessary byproduct of power and are more tolerant of it. Organizations in high power distance societies are highly organized and hierarchical, with organizational choices based more on loyalty and preference than on merit. As a result, these cultures are less inclined to value employee equity or human rights. This has a negative correlation with environmental performance as determined by the World Economic Forum's Environmental Sustainability Index. In contrast, social and human sustainability projects are more likely to be discussed freely and seen as vital in low power distance cultures. These cultures emphasize equality and place responsibility on management to reduce injustices, whether they are societal or environmental. Sustainability is more likely to be prioritized in these cultures. (Tata & Prasad, 2015)

Individualism vs. Collectivism

During a study, Hofstede pointed to the conflict between individualism and collectivism as a crucial aspect that explained why work values varied across various countries. The degree to which members of a society choose to operate as individuals rather than as members of in-groups can be seen as a general reflection of individualism vs collectivism. For instance, he stressed the fact that individualistic people are more motivated by intrinsic work outcomes, such as personal initiative, autonomy, challenge, etc. In these societies, social bonds are flimsy and group affiliations are subject to frequent alteration (Tata & Prasad, 2015). On the other hand, collectivistic people place a strong emphasis on collective objectives (welfare, harmonious relations, sharing, responsibilities, etc.). individuals in these cultures prioritize the needs of the group over their own (Tata & Prasad, 2015). Even though different conclusions have been found between individualistic and collectivistic cultures based on diverse studies, all have found cultural differences. (Akhtar, 2000) The views and behaviors of collectivists encourage the desire to share scarce resources, support what is best for society as a whole, and

are more consistent with environmental preservation and societal advancement. In short, they tend to be more sustainable. Such individuals are more willing to accept higher taxes to support the collective as a whole. In contrast, individualistic societies' emphasis on self-interest is less likely to be aligned with ideas that promote sustainability. For instance, managers in these cultures can think that shareholders should come first over all other stakeholders. (Tata & Prasad, 2015)

Masculinity vs. Femininity

These values speak to an emphasis on monetary achievement as opposed to the quality of life; they are the social expression of the aspects of personal character and conduct commonly connected to gender. There is an emphasis on the pursuit of material objectives and power in societies with high levels of masculinity. Cultures with high levels of femininity, that place a strong emphasis on nurturing, belonging, helpfulness, and quality of life and are more likely to appreciate actions that advance the environment and benefit society. In such societies, life fulfillment takes precedence over career satisfaction, and there is a higher conviction in assisting the weak, as seen by aid to developing nations. Contrarily, managers from cultures high in masculinity tend to place less emphasis on social support, community needs, and community cooperation as well as the relative importance of assertiveness, materialism, and individual achievement. They are also less likely to believe in the value of sustainability. (Tata & Prasad, 2015)

Long-term vs. Short-term orientation

This explains how different civilizations place a different emphasis on the future. Long-term cultures place more significance on future-oriented virtues like tenacity, thrift, and the willingness to submit oneself to authority for a cause. Therefore, in a long-term population, managers value making sacrifices that will benefit the organization and society in the future. Managers in such cultures are more inclined to believe in forgoing immediate gains to accomplish environmental preservation for the benefit of future generations because sustainability is by definition long-term focused. Morals including personal stability, the need for instant satisfaction, and keeping up with others are prioritized in societies that value the short term. Their managers may be more inclined to value the present and put more emphasis on immediate rewards, even at the expense of future benefits. (Tata & Prasad, 2015)

Uncertainty avoidance

The degree to which people of a culture perceive uncertainty and uncharted territory as a danger is what is meant by this aspect of national culture. It relates to how well a culture accepts uncertainty and contextual requirements. People want to avoid unclear circumstances and feel uncomfortable without the structure of rules and regulations in high uncertainty avoidance societies. Low uncertainty avoidance cultures demonstrate receptivity to change and a willingness to take chances. Predictability is likely to be desired in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, which can reduce the risk of straying from society standards and increase the likelihood of conformity. Organizational impediments to innovation are probably present in these societies. The idea of adopting sustainability may make people think of the numerous hassles connected with new methods of doing things and changes in the protocol since sustainability is likely to result in considerable modifications to organizational processes. Therefore, sustainability is likely to be seen in high uncertainty avoidance cultures as dangerous, expensive, and inconvenient. However, mixed findings have been found in empirical research regarding sustainability and uncertainty. (Tata & Prasad, 2015)

It has been demonstrated that cultural differences do exist. If one now brings this in connection with the theories described before, one can apply here the Social Identity Theory as well as the Attraction-Attrition-Selection Theory. The former states that people divide themselves into different classes and feel they belong to one and behave according to its norms. Thus, different perceptions of Sustainable HRM could be explained by different cultures. The latter theory explains why people leave the company or stay longer. Whereas said members of a certain culture have similar or the same values, which in turn means that if employees do not agree with certain principles of the organization they leave and vice versa. This implies that there must be differences in their beliefs. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) emerges: **There are differences between the origins and cultures of individuals in terms of their conception of Sustainable HRM.**

Educational differences

Within the last decades, the number of young people, who are enrolled in a university or educational organization has increased dramatically. An American study investigated how educational paths during the transition to adulthood relate to changes and stability in work values. They explored the relationship between postsecondary education and the levels and rates of change in work values during the eight years after high school using panel data. Initial gaps between individuals who completed their education with a high school diploma and those who earned postsecondary degrees widened noticeably along several value dimensions.

Postsecondary students show higher change on average. Young individuals who continued their education beyond high school originally gave influence at work more weight and job security less weight than other young people. Over time, these inclinations become stronger. High school graduates gradually downplayed the significance of incentives along various dimensions, such as extrinsic, altruistic, and social, whereas postsecondary graduates more closely adhered to their starting attitudes. The results are in line with the theory that work values influence educational investments but also vary as students progress through their education. Overall work values are flexible and adapt to the paths that young people adopt as they make the journey to adulthood. (Kirkpatrick & Elder, 2002) Similar findings have been found in a different study where it is shown that adequate training and education of employees encourages or demonstrates a more sustainable behavior from the employees (Abbas et al., 2021). But of course, other factors might influence that, for instance, it is shown that it is also important that the company exemplifies the desired behavior (Abbas et al., 2021).

Again, there are often differences based on people's education. For example, there are also professions where a different or even less academic education is required. If you put two of these people next to each other, they will express themselves differently and probably have different ideas about sustainable personnel management in the workplace. Since they also often look at certain things from different perspectives.

This can be proven by the theories mentioned at the beginning. Especially the second theory applies here, namely the signaling theory. An author named Spence used the labor market to mimic the signaling role of education when he developed the signaling theory in 1973. There is a shortage of knowledge regarding the competence and quality of job candidates for potential employers. Therefore, the applicants acquire a certain knowledge to demonstrate their worth and lessen information asymmetries. Given that less qualified applicants would not be able to bear the demands of a university degree, this is probably a trustworthy indication. (Connelly et al., 2011) However, the other two theories are also effective, as was already the case with cultural disparities. Which gets us to the second hypothesis (H2). H2: **There are differences concerning Sustainable HRM based on the type of education.**

Gender differences

It is clear that in the past there has been a certain stereotype of gender. This has not exactly benefited women in terms of careers. This is what can be called old-fashioned sexism, which includes supporting traditional gender norms along with a variety of attitudes and actions that imply women's inferiority. Positive progress has been made in the previous 50 years to close

this gender gap. Particularly noticeable changes may be seen in management and professional positions, which have grown increasingly integrated. But still there exist some differences according to the genders, especially in regards to wage. The number of males joining traditionally "female" occupations has remained relatively stable, and desegregation generally slowed in the 1990s. In a study of gender pay effects, it was found that although the tasks performed by men and women differed little or not at all, men were assigned a significantly higher wage than women. Such behavior might be categorized as neosexism or modern sexism. Neosexism, also known as modern sexism, is correlated with traditional sexism to some extent but tends to be more directly linked to individual opinions about women's employment than traditional sexist sentiments. (Alksnis et al., 2008)

Another paper regarding work values and genders stated that studies on female disparities in labor values often fall into one of three categories. First, some studies demonstrate a considerable sex gap in work values. Women generally value people, the environment, a compassionate boss, and short-term professional objectives more than men do. Men, on the other hand, tend to value money, independence, influence, responsibility, and long-term career goals more than women do. It has been suggested that these disparities in labor values may not be caused by sex in and of itself, but rather by several other variables. These include education and training, sexism in the workplace, and salary disparities, as well as institutional hurdles that are manifested in occupational segregation and a lack of promotion chances for female employees. When confounding effects of some of these characteristics are maintained constant, this second group of research has demonstrated that work values do not differ significantly by sex. The third group of research that is conducted suggests that when confounding variables are held constant, work values differ across the sexes. The remaining variations, however, are negligible. (Akhtar, 2000)

Several papers have shown different results. Some found little to no difference between genders in the impact on their work perceptions and some did. Therefore, it will be interesting to determine whether or not there is a difference between the sexes in connection with sustainable HRM. There might still exist some differences between the gender within a work setting. Here is where it can be linked to the three theoretical concepts. All three of them can be applied to gender differences. In case there exist some differences between the gender's perceptions regarding the topic of this paper, it can be explained with the underlying theoretical framework. Due to the fact, people categorize others since everybody has a desire to be included to strengthen their self-esteem. Therefore, if certain attributes of a company might be seen as a

typical male, this could lead to an organization consisting predominantly of men. The signaling theory also applies in this case. If there is any information or signals from the companies that represent a typical male culture or in any way disadvantage women or their ideas, women will hardly apply. Another case would be that women would tend to quit if they are not in the flow of the overall values and beliefs. Since some companies and industries employ predominantly men and women, I conclude that there are differences in the ideas of certain values in connection with Sustainable HRM. This also leads to the third hypothesis (H3). H3: **There are divergent perceptions of gender about Sustainable HRM.** There will likely be more discussion on this topic in the future. This is because gender is being redefined these days and more openness is being shown here. There is often not only male or female but also transgender, gender neutral, non-binary, etc. Several papers have shown different results. Some found little to no difference between genders in the impact on their work perceptions and some did. Therefore, it will be interesting to determine whether or not there is a difference between the sexes in connection with sustainable HRM.

Generations in the Workplace

As already mentioned, the aim was to demonstrate that there might be some differences between people's perceptions within their workplace. Whereby, here especially the generations are highlighted. Because it is shown multiple times that different generations think and act differently and therefore also support contrasting beliefs.

Companies usually employ people of different ages. It is very important to consider that different generations have diverse perceptions and desires, due to different influences in their environment. A generation is described as a group that experienced significant life events within the same year of birth (adigiconsult GmbH, 2022), as well as significant changes throughout these events (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). Every generation's consuming habits and fundamental social ideals are shaped by the environment and values that surround it throughout its formative years (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). Because of their different characteristics, they must be recruited and managed differently.

Within the following paragraph, this paper will explain more in detail five generations, beginning with the oldest generation, namely Seniors, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Particular focus was placed on the youngest generation mentioned here, Generation Z.

Different Generations

<u>Seniors</u>

People who are born between 1900 and 1945 are generally considered Seniors. These groups of now elderly men and women lived in the era of the great depression and survived the second world war, which lasted from 1939 until 1945. Also, the period of equality of opportunities falls in their period. The people from that time were very committed to the rules and some of them also participated in the war. Something like that naturally shapes a generation for life. It was also very typical that they married because of their tradition. The Seniors preferred letters as their medium and the communication was mostly done in an oral setting. For instance, in waiting rooms, in corridors of the supermarkets or also in the square. This generation strived to own their own homes. They were also very committed to their careers and followed the motto job is for life. (Gallo et al., 2022)

<u>Baby Boomer</u>

This generation came to the world from 1945 until 1960. They grow up during the time of the economic and demographic boom. The very famous Hippy culture and the quite well-known Woodstock Festival were also a part of their maturity. Typical characteristics for them are that they are politically and socially engaged and these groups of people are rebellious. Since they already lived in a more modern time, their most desired medium was the television. Almost like the previous generation (the Seniors), they enjoyed communicating in a face-to-face setting. Therefore, they choose to talk over the phone or in physical meetings over writing dozens of emails. For Baby Boomers, one of the highest priorities was to have a secure and stable job. Their attitude regarding professional life was more organizational, which means nothing else than that careers and jobs are defined by employees. (Gallo et al., 2022)

<u>Generation X (Gen X)</u>

People from this generation are nowadays in their 40's or 60's, which implies that they must be born between the years 1960 and 1980. Gen X witnessed the very historical fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. As well as Andy Warhol and Pop Art and the period of consumerism. Many of them were smugs and apathetic. Moreover, Generation X was posed between self-assertion and self-destruction. It was also the time when the first computers came to households. That is probably the reason why they selected personal computers over other mediums. In comparison to the Baby Boomers, Gen X networked via emails and SMS (Short Message Service). They have been pioneers of the first great technological revolutions, together with selfies and group

chats. For these groups of people, their work-life balance became more relevant to them. Also, the behavior in their work changed and they became early portfolio careers, which means that they were or are again quite loyal to their professions. (Gallo et al., 2022)

Millennials

The Millennials or also often called Generation Y (Gen y) are born somewhere between 1980 and 1995. Her life was marked by the nine-eleven (11/9) attack on the twin towers in the United States. Reality Shows were launched during their period and the first Social Media channels were created (for example Facebook, and YouTube …). The character of Gen Y was considered or is considered narcissistic as well as receptive and spoiled. Smartphones and Tablets were already quite common at that time and therefore also their most preferred medium to interact with others. Differences are also recognized within their communication behavior. Millennials are strongly convinced of the sharing economy. That is also the reason why they communicate often over Social network platforms. This generation wants freedom and flexibility in their lives. These desired features are also identified within their professional lives. Millennials are digital entrepreneurs and they want to work with instead of for the organizations. (Gallo et al., 2022)

Generation Z (Gen Z)

Gen Z is these people who are right now studying or entering work life. They are relatively young since they saw the world for the first time from 1995 to 2019. The economic crisis and the huge technological evolution were very present during their teenage time. A classic characteristic of them is that they tend to be hyper-connected all the time hyper-connected with the internet, social media, or other platforms. These people are immersed in virtual dimensions and born in virtual culture. Therefore, they are also very often called digital natives, since they are always surrounded by a digital environment. Digital applications and digital media are a completely natural part of their everyday lives. (unternehmer.de, 2022) Smartphones have become an indispensable part of everyday life, and together with virtual reality (VR), they are the most commonly used interface for connecting. Social Media channels, such as Instagram, YouTube, Spotify, etc. used to share and create content for their community. But also, Generation Z strives for security and stability. In terms of careers, they are quite multitaskers since they are moving seamlessly between organizations. (Gallo et al., 2022)

To give an example of the different desires of Gen Z, let's have a quick look at an American survey. According to a recent survey explained by the World Economic Forum, Generation Z

is more concerned with ethical purchasing practices than with brand names. It is also shown that their positive behavior towards sustainability inspires others as well. Digital natives display more informed purchasing behavior than other generations. (The Baker Retailing Center, 2021)
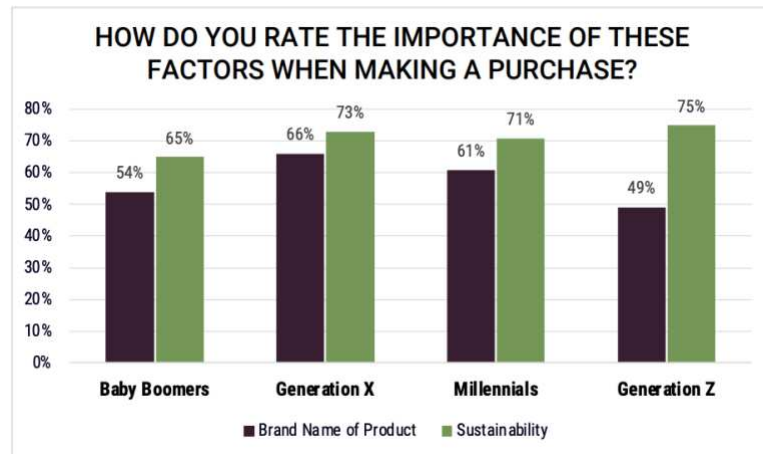
Figure 6: American Survey (The Baker Retailing Center, 2021)

Generation Z and their perceptions of job values

As seen before, every generation has certain traits and a different attitude concerning their occupation. As a result, also, the young members of generation Z or also known as the mobile generation (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015) have different ideas when it comes to their working environment. The upcoming paragraph will describe that mindset and attributes a bit more in detail.

A study with 276 university students has shown that the social environment is vital for Generation Z, which is accustomed to teamwork, according to the obtained data. When they enter the corporate world, the social milieu has a significant impact on the culture of the corporation. Employers have a responsibility to focus on establishing more jovial and amiable relationships outside of the hierarchical workplace culture to foster a sense of teamwork. This generation seeks to secure their future and is self-assured. They understand that working is crucial to realizing their ambitions and that not doing so would make them sad. The corporate world places a high value on happiness. If they are unable to discover this contentment in their place of employment, they may consider readily leaving their position.

These generations value their freedom and detest being told what to do. There is no distinction between men and women in this. It is crucial to be autonomous and to question authority. (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015)

Even while conventional and cultural values differ when it comes to age groups and gender when it comes to achieving independence, Generation Z eliminated this imbalance. Additionally, they are devoted to their beliefs and regard their employment as a holy duty. The established societal structures and the notion that women shouldn't work due to religion are both challenged by Generation Z. As may be inferred from this outcome, the digital natives are more aware and don't accept traditional manifestations without researching them and exploring their own beliefs. (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015)

According to the Millennial Branding consulting and Questionnaire Company study, there are notable outcomes between Generation Y and Z workers' working perspectives. (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015)

Approximately 80 percent of Generation Z (77%) and Generation Y (81%) would welcome working with technology. Also, both generations like to participate in hands-on projects (Gen Z 76 %, Gen Y 81%). Even though the two age groups picked a corporate office as their preferred work setting. Millennials (45 %) prefer traditional offices, while the youngsters (28%) like better modern offices. Due to that their second choice of job setting is co-working spaces, which operate independently of the employer (Generation Z 27%, Generation Y 26%). It is also shown that Gen Z has a slight tendency for a home office. Moreover, the younger generation. Moreover, the mobile generation (61%) is more eager than Generation Y (56%) for managers to value their opinions and listen to their ideas, and Millennials (58%) are more enthusiastic than Gen Z (46 %) for managers to give them the freedom to work independently. (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015)

If they wish to be stable in the national and worldwide competitive market, current and future managers of the business world must abandon old company culture and adapt to technological advancements. Accordingly, businesses must make a significant effort to upskill their employees for them to be happy at work, comprehend Generation Z employees, and maintain strong relationships with them. (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015)

This study focuses specifically on Generation Z in the interviews. However, it will also try to determine, based on individual interviewees, whether there are differences between the generations in terms of their ideas on the subject of Sustainable HRM. Research already conducted has shown that different age groups act differently. The reason behind this is that they have grown up in a completely different environments with divergent circumstances. In theory, this can again be supported by the three theoretical approaches described. Particularly

interesting here is the theory of signaling and the attraction-selection-attrition model. On the one hand, it has become more difficult for employers to recruit employees in the past. This means that if certain information sends unfavorable signals, it is unlikely that certain applicants will decide to apply for the position or even become interested in it. The same works in the attraction-selection-attrition model, because it is relevant for young people that they share their values with the company. This leads to the fourth hypothesis (H4). H4: **There are cross-generational variations in perceptions of Sustainable HRM.**

Summary

This chapter clarifies once again why the research question: "Which attributes do individuals of Generation Z expect regarding Sustainable HRM?" has emerged. One of the fundamental articles is called "Designing Sustainable HRM: The Core Characteristics of Emerging Field" it explained eleven typical characteristics of Sustainable HRM. Since it is still a theoretical/literature work, I decided also to test if the qualitative research is consistent with the theoretical assumptions of that work. During my research, I have not yet come across any empirical study that focuses on the requirements or ideas of the younger generation (Gen Z) in connection with sustainable HRM. Most studies have referred to different values of the generations, but not about the still relatively young topic of human resource management and sustainability. I would like to use this work to test the theoretical concepts and assumptions. Since this thesis also wants to investigate whether there are variations in the statements depending on different genders, age groups, cultures, and educations. The research also focused on finding differences between these categories. This is also the reason why the 4 hypotheses were made next to the research question. *H1: There are differences between the origins and cultures of individuals in terms of their conception of Sustainable HRM. H2: There are different perceptions about Sustainable HRM based on the type of education. H3: There are divergent perceptions of gender about Sustainable HRM. H4: There are cross-generational variations in perceptions of Sustainable HRM.* These will be tested in the course of the empirical research and confirmed or rejected at the end. Particular attention is paid here to the youngest generation mentioned in the text, namely Generation Z. The literature Research has proven that diverse age groups have different personal values and characteristics. In addition, it has also been found from existing papers that there may be differences between genders, education, and culture. Whereby here in particular a focus is put on the origin/culture of persons. In this regard, differences in the interviews are quite expected, as seen in H1 to H4.

Three theoretical concepts also explain why or how these differences arise. The paper refers to the following theories: social identity theory, signaling theory, and also attraction-

attrition-selection theory. The first one refers to which group people feel belongs to since individuals tend to classify people according to certain attributes. In addition, humans increase their self-worth by belonging to groups. The second concept explains how information asymmetries are solved. Basically, due to different signals that the transmitter sends to others. Whereby possible employees are in this case the receiver, which receives some signs and information through the signals. These crowds make decisions based on the information they gain through different signals. Finally, the last one discusses why people tend to leave or stay within organizations. It depends on whether people can identify with the values and standards of companies. If they feel out of place or dissimilar, they tend to leave the enterprise. All these theoretical concepts suggest that there should be variations in conceptions of human beings.

Additional scientific value is generated in this paper by the fact that the theoretical approaches are also tested in practice and one can determine whether these deviate from the theoretical ones. In addition, this could also be interesting for organizations of any kind. Because Sustainable HRM is an extremely current topic that will very certainly be addressed more and more often in the future and thus gain relevance. Also because of the 17 sustainable development goals, which are issued by the World Commission on Environment and Development and should be attained by the year 2030. Logically, not only people with the same origin, gender, education, and age are employed in enterprises. Whereby globalization as well as the possibility to follow his professional activity online have a clear influence. This has led to more diversity in companies. If employers now know what their employees want from them, this could influence their decisions and their dealings with their employees. Not only the employee retention and organization affected but also the acquisition/recruitment process is affected. If an employer knows exactly about the behaviors and desires of the people he is looking for and hires, he can adapt it exactly to the employees. For example, in the recruitment process, he can advertise certain things that are relevant to the target group. This is where Generation Z comes into play once again. The study focused particularly on this age group, as they are the employees of tomorrow. Thus, one should know well about their characteristics and ideas.

CHAPTER V: METHODOLOGY

As already mentioned previously, the paper consists of two main parts. The first one is the theoretical/literature research part, where some suitable articles were selected, analyzed, and summarized. This section, on the other hand, comprises the empirical part.

To give the reader a better understanding of the paper, the mythology chapter clearly explains how this paper was developed. To create a clear structure, the theoretical part is explained first, followed by the empirical component.

Literature Research

Every research paper needs a theoretical aspect. Since that serves as the basis to build an empirical part on it. Therefore, the paper defines very briefly the definition of literature research.

Literary research is nothing else than the gathering of data on a particular literary work (Wilkerson, 2001). It is used to build the thesis, define possible ideas and look for reliable resources (Wilkerson, 2001). A quality literature review summarizes, dissects, assesses, and synthesizes the pertinent literature in a given area of study. Whereby, a body of published knowledge or resources on a certain subject or field is referred to as literature. Examples include academically significant books and journal articles. It is unnecessary to include every single literature work on this topic, but the most important sources should be included, which are outlining the essential discussions, patterns, and gaps in your particular field of study. By summarizing what has already been done, what is widely acknowledged, what is emerging, and what the current level of thought is on the subject, it sheds insight on how knowledge has developed within the discipline. Literature evaluations often point out topics that have not been well studied or that have received insufficient attention. (Monash University Australia, 2021)

The introduction to the topic of sustainable human resource management has served to develop a basic understanding and general overview of the topic. Subsequently, it was also used as a basis for the second section. The literature is intended to provide a framework on which to build empirical ideas. For this thesis, the theoretical part was written first, followed by the collection of ideas for the empirical study and the research question.

The two papers "Common Good HRM: A paradigm shift in Sustainable HRM? "by Ina Aust Ehnert, Brian Matthews, and Michael Muller-Camen and "Designing sustainable HRM: The core characteristics of emerging field" by Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene have already been proposed by the supervising professor Martina Gianecchini. These two articles form the

basis of the theoretical part of this paper. Their concepts and ideas were used as a foundation. On the one hand, these include the four classifications called Socially Responsible HRM, Green HRM, Triple Bottom Line HRM, and Common Good HRM. On the other hand, the 11 characteristics of sustainable HRM (long-term orientation, concern for employees and the environment, profitability, employee participation and social dialogue, employee development, external partnership, flexibility, compliance beyond labor standards, employee cooperation, fairness, and equality) in companies and their underlying approaches, called Paradox theory, Theory of negative externality and stakeholder damage and Stakeholder theory form the core.

After carefully analyzing these papers and already partially merging certain passages, I researched for more literature. The reading and the research itself were the largest and most time-consuming parts of the work. Often the sources of the basic literature were looked at more closely. If this was relevant, it was included in the paper. In addition, further research was conducted. In the beginning, more general keywords were used, such as Sustainable HRM, Characteristics, Current Trends, Definition, etc. In the course of the writing, more and more details were searched for specific concepts or definitions. This included different theories such as green HRM, common good HRM, stakeholder theory, paradox theory and many more. As already mentioned, the keywords also went more and more into detail.

The very first approach was to read the articles suggested and adapted by me. In the beginning, the search medium "Research Rabbit" was used. Research Rabbit is software aimed at academics, to support them to discover papers relevant to their research. It scans the publicly available information about what is reported in different papers and also considers who cites them and who whom they are cited. Therefore, the software identifies what works are similar to each other and can recommend some useful texts. (Konik, 2021) In addition to the initial research, I created an Excel spreadsheet containing relevant aspects of different papers. This includes the number of the article, the name, the link, as well as the place where it was discovered, and also the relevance, which was recorded. The relevance was color-coded green, money, and red to make it clear which papers were important. Green stood for relevant, yellow for neutral, and red for unimportant. Of course, this was only the first impression, so my opinion about it has changed a few times. In general, it was mostly during the literature search that a paper was only skimmed for the time being. This meant that the relevance was judged by the abstract, the introduction, and the conclusion. If the article was classified as very impressive, several passages or even the entire article were read.

Number	Name	Link	Place found	Relevance	
1	Common Good HRM: A paradigm shift in Sustainable HRM?	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1053482218303917?via%3Dihub	Prereading		
2	Designing Sustainable HRM: The Core Characteristics of Emerging Field	https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/12/4798	Prereading		
3	Sustainable human resource management: six defining characteristics	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/1744-7941.12321	Research Rabbit		
4	Sustainable human resource management: six defining characteristics	https://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/ijhrs/article/view/17086/13245	Research Rabbit		
5	Future directions in electronic/digital HRM	https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstream/handle/10072/382290/ThitePUB6847.pdf;jsessionid=9942668B3ECAFA4DCD23D3DBA93916F0?sequence=1	Research Rabbit		
6	Current Trends in HRM	http://www.annals.seap.usv.ro/index.php/annals/article/view/212/189	Research Rabbit		
7	What You Can Do to Improve Ethics at Your Company	https://hbr.org/2016/12/what-you-can-do-to-improve-ethics-at-your-company	Google Search		
8	How to Attract Talented Expatriates: The Key Role of Sustainable HRM	file:///Users/lisareichhalter/Downloads/sustainability-11-05373.pdf	Google Search		
9	The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on Employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Moderated Mediation Model of Grit and Meaning Orientation	file:///Users/lisareichhalter/Downloads/sustainability-12-05411.pdf	Google Search		
10	The Symbiotic Bond of Income Equality and Organizational Equilibrium	https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/21/9267/htm	Google Search		
11	Employer Branding: Sustainable HRM as a Competitive Advantage in the Market for High-Quality Employees**	https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41783721.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A8474f3badfdf8033581fa0cf283d82bf&ab_segments=&origin=	Google Search		

Figure 7: Screenshot of Excel Table for Literature Research

In the course of the research, the search medium changed. Thus, Research Rabbit and the Excel sheet were no longer used. This was because during the work it was found that another medium, namely Mendeley, worked much better.

Mendeley is a free reference manager that may assist anyone with citation management, bibliography creation, and reference gathering. The following makes the platform Mendeley that powerful. First, users may share their findings with others on Mendeley, basically another academic social network. Secondly, researchers can work together online in open or closed groups and search the Mendeley group's collection of more than 30 million publications for articles. It allows people to connect with other academics and the most recent research in your field with Mendeley. The platform connects also with ScienceDirect since it is now owned by Elsevier, the top supplier of scientific and health information. (University of California Irvine, 2022) The shift from the other platforms to Mendeley was justified from what I said mainly because on one hand it was not as time-consuming as the manual creation of the Excel sheet and on the other hand, I was already much more familiar with this medium.

Empirical Research

Empirical research is an Investigation that is based on empirical observation and measurement of phenomena is research that the researcher has personally experienced. The information obtained in this way may be compared to a theory or hypothesis, but the conclusions are still

grounded in experience. Although secondary data from a literature study could provide the theoretical underpinning, the information acquired is entirely primary data. (Emerald Publishing, 2022) Whereby a logical investigation of a set of assumptions and ideas is called theoretical research (Edgar & Manz, 2017). Such work is based on other literature and wants to create a model or an assumption based on other theoretical work.

Every research has at least one central research question. These fundamental questions guide the reader through the paper and build in other words the red line. The questions should be a definition of the central problem in the topic of the investigation, whereby it should have a (small) scientific contribution to the topic. The overall goal of a paper should be to inform the reader about the topic and finally provide a valid answer to the research question. (Emerald Publishing, 2022) This paper is investigating two research questions. The central question focuses on the perception of certain attributes of Generation Z regarding Sustainable HRM and the second one deals with typical characteristics of greenwashing and also about Sustainable HRM.

In the field of empirical research, there are main variants that can be distinguished, namely qualitative and quantitative. These studies gather different types of data as well as diverse data collection techniques. Studies that are quantitative focus on numerical or quantifiable data. Qualitative studies, on the other hand, rely on firsthand experiences or written materials that explicitly show how individuals think or act in a certain social context (for instance interviews). (Grand Canyon University, 2021) The conducted study for the research question is qualitative since there are some interviews done to test the theory/literature and to possibly find significant differences between the answers. And to do so it makes more sense to do it in this way because I want to figure out if they have the same attributes or not. Moreover, there is also the advantage of possibly getting a better understanding of their background. The desire to get beyond the familiar and into the world of the participants, to view the world through their lens (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). To do so to create discoveries that will aid in the creation of empirical knowledge is possibly the most fundamental motivation for deciding to do qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). A qualitative researcher needs to be inquisitive, imaginative, and unafraid to trust his or her gut (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

As mentioned before, this paper is about interviews, because this paper wants to prove that the theoretical concepts can be applied in practice. To answer the research question on the one hand and to prove the four hypotheses on the other hand. Therefore, the first step is the selection of study subjects. Since the study is very much about Gen Z individuals, candidates are easily found in the university. Thus, the university is a source of respondents. Of course, friends or friends of friends also help. To have a certain distance or degree of neutrality, close friends are

not used for these interviews, but rather acquaintances or outsiders. Of course, I knew some of the participants before, but I am not in a very close relationship with them. However, this also had an advantage, so I already had a better picture of them and could put myself in their shoes better. A small pool of interviewees represents older persons. That is, people from previous generations, predominantly Millennials and Gen X. Finding access to volunteers from an older target group are a bit more complicated. In total there are fourteen interviewees. Eight of them are male and six are female. There are of course other variations of gender today, however, all of my participants felt they belonged to one of the two sexes (male/female). Due to the reason that this study was focusing on Generation Z, most of the participants to be precise ten people are from that generation. Four interviewees are members of the Millennials and one person is still from Gen X. To guarantee cultural diversity, the interview partners have in total eight different nationalities. The nationalities are Italy, Poland, China, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, and Ecuador. The candidates also have different levels of education from various sectors. Craft teachings or other training were classified with the term "Specialized Training". Otherwise, the current education or the highest education was mentioned. From Bachelor's to Master's to Ph.D., everything is included. The profession is also evident; if a person is still studying, he/she is titled as a student; if he/she is already working in the professional world, this was also mentioned. The table down here gives a quick summary of all the interviewees.

Name	Generation	Sex	Origin/ Culture	Education/ Occupation	Sector
Silvia	Gen Z	Female	Italy	Specialized Training (quite similar to Bachelor)/ former educator	Upbringing, wellness and yoga
Armin	Gen Z	Male	Italy	Bachelor/ Marketing Employee	SEO, Online Marketing
Isabel	Gen Z	Female	Italy	Master/ Student	Tourism, Management & IT
Olga	Gen Z	Female	Poland	Master/	Management & IT

				Student	
Michaela	Gen Z	Female	China	Master/ Student	Linguistic, Management & IT
Peter	Gen Z	Male	Austria	Master/ Student	Management & IT
Diego	Millennial	Male	Belgium	Bachelor/ Technical Engineer	Technical Engineering
Matthias	Gen X	Male	Germany/ Austria	Bachelor/ Specialized Training	Gastronomy, Artist & Designer
Julia	Millennial	Female	Italy	Ph.D./ Professor and Scientist	Gender Studies, Music, Psychology
David	Millennial	Male	Netherlands/ Austria	Specialized Training/ Cook	Fine Dining Cooking
No Name	Gen Z	Female	Italy	Master/ Marketing Employee and Student	Publication
Marcelo	Millennial	Male	Ecuador	Ph.D./ Scientific Researcher	Civil Engineer, Hydraulic engineer, Hydro Informatics, Water resource management
Wolfgang	Gen Z	Male	Italy	Master/ Technical Assistant and	Management & Economics, Informatics,

				Student	Software Engineering
Lukas	Gen Z	Male	Italy	Specialized Training/ Chef Waitress	Gastronomy

Table 1: Interview participants

The preparation of the interviews was done before interviewing people. As a model or best practice approach, I used mainly two books I got considered from my supervisor. The books are called "Interviewing as Qualitative Research" and "Basics of Qualitative Research". In the beginning, it was important to have an overall structure within the interviews and not miss out on some relevant questions. Of course, nobody will be able to predict exactly how a conversation develops but to have a fundamental I decided to develop some fundamental questions. Many questions arise in the course of the interview; however, it is not wrong to have a few questions in the background so as not to lose the thread. Also, the questions had a structure based on the book ... based. I decided to use a three-step series. The author of the book conducted three interviews with each participant. The first one focused on the historical life background of the participant. The second one was all about the details of the experience regarding the topic and the last one dealt with the reflection of the meaning of the experience. Since three interviews per candidate are beyond the scope of this paper, I conducted them all in one go and structured the questions accordingly.

Every interview started with an introduction, where I tried to break the ice, so to say. It consisted of a short presentation about myself and the project, what the aim is, and so on. It was also relevant to ask the candidates if they are fine that I use the data and record the discussion. Afterward, I asked the people about their lives, their background, and their occupations. The object was to create a bit of a context to understand their assumptions a bit better as well as to know where they are from, which gender and many other things. The actual entry into the topic happened with the first question, namely what the respondents understood by the term Sustainable HRM. If someone had a wrong or incomplete idea of the term, I briefly clarified or corrected them. This is the basis of my interviews.

The questions that followed, also focused on the experience participants have already had with the Topic or what they would like to see from their employers. This was quite an

interesting question because I just let the participants talk and made a couple of follow-up questions to clarify some things.

The last questions dealt with the understanding of the meaning of their experience. For me, it was also relevant to ask them if they believe that there exist some variations between the four categories. Often the people stated it already before that question.

Before the actual interview, I tried the structure a couple of times with myself to make sure I do not miss out on anything and to guarantee a smooth conversation. So, I went from interview to interview, and within one and a half weeks all fourteen interviews were done. Some of the interviews have been held in English and some of them in German, because it was more convenient for the participants. During the conversation, I made some notes where I could make some follow-up questions. All conversations have been recorded with my Smartphone or with the online tool for meetings called Zoom. Due to security reasons, I saved all the audio packages on my portable computer to have them stored at least twice. The transcription was done with an online tool named "trint". This was a huge help, regarding time management. Afterward, I went through each of the transcripts and controlled for mistakes, because of noisy situations the tool could make incorrect sentences.

The next step was to analyze all the conducted interviews. This was done manually, whereby I went through each document and marked testimonies, which I could classify. The classification was marked with different colors. The classes are listed in the section with the results. Each color had a different meaning. Simultaneously the table above was completed, to hold on to the most relevant facts about the participants. The identified classes were in total 25 including the impact of Covid 19 (explained later on). By the end of the analysis work, some characteristics have been merged, because they had a similar meaning. But this will be explained more in detail within the results part.

After finishing with the analyzing part, I went again through the transcripts. The first question was meant to create some context and to understand the interviewed people better. The results are shown in the first table above. To create a nicer overview of the question *"What do you understand under the term Sustainable HRM?"*, the interview documents are compared with each other. The same thing happened with the upcoming standard questions. You can find them in the second table in the chapter on one result. Since there are more comments and notes on that, I created an excel sheet (figure nr. 8), which demonstrates how often certain things have been mentioned. The very last question was all about the surveyed beliefs, there exist some differences between different genders, cultural backgrounds/origin, education, and age. Also, here the results are mentioned within the result section.

CHAPTER VI: RESULTS

After a short introduction of the participants and the project itself, everyone was asked to define on their own the term Sustainable Human Resource Management. Most respondents did not yet know the word itself. However, they could derive it from somewhere. It was particularly interesting that people with an academic background (Bachelor, Master or Ph.D.) found it easier to derive the term as people who never went to University. The answers varied by the sector in which people were working.

However, almost all of the interviewees have Sustainable HRM with hiring, finding interests of employees and creating a work environment so that employees stay longer in the company. Quite often, the term was also associated with costs and efficiency. Sporadically, things like development, fairness, health and rights were also mentioned.

Only one of the respondents stated that they understood it as a strategy that tries to help the environment. This person also brought a good example. On one hand, she was convinced that companies always have efficiency and profit in mind, but for instance, Amazon has done a lot of good in one area and created many new jobs there. This question does not offer too much scientific added value. However, it served more as an introduction to the topic and was also interesting to know what people think of it and how they derive it. In addition, I was able to enlighten one or the other a bit, in case someone could hardly imagine anything.

Characteristics of Sustainable HRM

The following questions, among others, have allowed personal experiences to play in. Since the interviewees were asked whether they had already come into contact with Sustainable HRM somewhere in their lives and whether they would have liked more from their employers in their situations. You were also asked directly which features you would consider typical for Sustainable HRM. They were also asked whether their generation had specific ideas about their employers and what these ideas were. These questions not only wanted to explore experiences but also to find out what characteristics they consider Sustainable HRM. Thus, these questions formed the core of the interviews.

As already mentioned, to analyze all the interviews and interpret the results accordingly an excel sheet was used. When certain words were called during the conversations, I marked them according to the established categories. Whereby, the various categories arrived from the interviews themselves. To gain a better overview, I changed some of the classes or put them together. The ones, which have been combined, mean quite similar things. In any case, both

tables are attached and saved. In the end, there are 25 categories defined by the interviews. See the list below.

1. Training & Career Development
2. Work Climate
3. Feedback & Compliance Culture
4. Communication
5. Updated/Modern
6. Efficiency
7. Separation of personal and professional life
8. Benefits
9. Passion & Motivation
10. Appreciation and role model from supervisors
11. Transparency
12. Work-Life Balance
13. Fluctuation of Personal & Place
14. Flexibility & Home office
15. Equipment
16. Environmentally sustainable
17. Diversity
18. Creation of Jobs
19. Routine
20. Salary
21. Hierarchy & Structure
22. Long Term Orientation
23. Self-realization
24. Safety & Health
25. Influence of Covid 19

Even though the Influence of Covid 19 is not a category, I found it relevant to mark it, since it was mentioned sometimes.

Anyway, with the help of the excel sheet, I was able to gain a quite good overview, of how many times certain aspect was mentioned. The ones which have been mentioned more often are therefore more relevant since people remembered them more frequently. Table number 8 shows in detail how often something is mentioned.

Characteristics	Michaela	David	Julia	Wolfgang	Olga	Matthias	Silvia	Armin	Lukas	Isabel	Peter	Diego	Marcelo	No Name*	Sum of x
Training and Career Development	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	13
Work climate	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	13
Feedback & Compliance Culture	x	x				x	x			x	x			x	7
Communication	x	x				x	x	x		x	x	x			8
Updated/Modern	x			x	x										3
Efficiency	x						x	x		x					4
Separation of personal and professional life	x														1
Benefits		x	x	x	x			x				x	x		7
Passion/Commitment/Motivation		x					x		x	x	x	x	x		7
Appreciation & example from superiors		x			x	x									3
Transparence		x					x								2
Work Life Balance	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	13
Flexibility/Home office		x	x	x									x	x	5
Fluctuation of Personal & Place		x							x	x	x	x	x		6
Equipment		x			x										2
Environmentally Sustainable	x			x	x										3
Diversity		x							x	x	x			x	5
Creation of Jobs					x										1
Routine									x						1
Influence of Covid 19							x		x				x	x	4
Salary		x				x	x	x					x		5
Hirarchy and Structure					x	x	x	x					x		5
Long term oriented		x					x	x		x		x			5
Selfrealistion and Contribution to an overall goal		x				x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	9
Safety & Health							x					x	x	x	4

*The girl did not like to tell her real name

Figure 8: Excel Table of Interview outcomes

*Legend for screenshot: Gen Z = green color, Millennials = blue color, Gen Y = orange color

The table demonstrates an overview of how many times these characteristics are called by the different generations, genders, origins and by educational backgrounds. In general, all the characteristics are grouped by the amount of time and therefore also the level of relevance. The groups are called most named characteristics (training & career development, work climate, work-life balance), second most named characteristics (self-realization and communication), frequently named characteristics (feedback, benefits, passion & motivation and fluctuation), sometimes named characteristics (long term orientation, hierarchy & structure, salary, diversity, flexibility, efficiency, safety & health and influence of Covid 19) and seldom named characteristics (updated, appreciation & example from supervisors, environmentally sustainable, equipment, transparency, creation of jobs, routine and separation of personal and professional life). All of this will be described in more detail below.

Most named characteristics

The most relevant characteristics, named by the participants, are training & career development and work climate and work-life balance. These are mentioned in total by thirteen out of fourteen people. Also, as often have the participants thought about work-life Balance to be precisely thirteen out of fourteen times. Whereby all people from Gen Z mentioned training & career

development same with work climate. The only ones which did not mention these things were the only Gen x person and one Millennial.

Training & Career Development

This word was named very often, but also in different contexts. Training & Career Development indicates an initial introduction and training in the company when someone starts a new job. Moreover, it is also referring to additional courses or other education to support the employees to grow in their professions. The Ecuadorian candidate described this as highly relevant and talked about a personal experience where he did an internship. In that company (he did not want to name the place or the name of the company) the responsible manager did not like to give them access to the internet when it was not especially needed. For him, this was very disappointing, since he deliberately kept his people from further training and information. Another person said he would very much appreciate it when his future employers would pay or partly pay for possible advance training.

Work Climate

Working conditions are also mentioned very often and regardless of the sector, everyone was thinking about this. It almost seemed as if this was a basic requirement for all candidates. Especially people who have talked about their not-so-great experiences in this regard have emphasized this once again. The term Work Climate includes many things. Such as a good working atmosphere with nice and supportive coworkers, friendly managers but also things like physical wellbeing. An example of that would be ergonomic chairs for office workers or one candidate also mentioned in the industry sector. People should reduce lifting heavy things so that they do not need to retire early because of back pain. Others also argued that they need to be very confident in their work, while others stressed an equal and very respectful treatment of all employees, regardless of their origin or other aspects. For instance, the Ecuadorian guy said that in general there are differences in the working culture of the Sudamericana and e.g. Europe. The working culture in Latin countries is more talkative whereby the ones in the other parts tend to be more kind of rude to them. Even sometimes they had language barriers. Another interesting example that was mentioned, is when for instance companies are announcing new positions, they should first consider filling the positions internally and let the employees go first.

Work-Life Balance

Also, work-life Balance is something almost everyone was thinking about regarding Sustainable HRM. Many participants were mentioning that younger people tend to have more free time. Or at least that they can structure their working day, for instance, that they have a deadline but that they can decide whether they work today 12 hours and tomorrow 3 or if they start working at 10 am instead of at 9 am and finish later or earlier. Some also said in a slightly negative way that the younger generations expect to earn way more and want to work less. The Chinese girl told me that younger people in China stay just exactly within the contracted working hours, as a sort of rebellion against the dramatic overload in the previous times. Moreover, she said*:" And it's a really interesting topic in China, I would say it's very different. So, as we all know, we have very cheap labor force. So, the companies would definitely ask you to overwork a lot of times because they think that if you're going to leave this position other people will come to replace you that is normal in business. But especially China, because everything is changing super-fast and we've got tons of population. ... but for all the companies I think is not sustainable because you spend the time to cultivate your employees and you just let them go that easily and it's not a good investment. So, the young people and artists, especially from the people who are gone after 2000, we have a very, very special characteristics. ... They said they have zero tolerance for overworking or the overload of working. ... there's very, very heated debates about whether the Generation Z people are correct for them to be like this or not."*

Most named characteristics			
Characteristic	**Training & Career Development**	**Work Climate**	**Work Life Balance**
Generations (Gen Z, Millennials, GenY)	Gen Z: 9/9 Millennials: 4/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 9/9 Millennials: 3/4 Gen Y: 1/1	Gen Z: 9/9 Millennials: 4/4 Gen Y: 0/1
Gender (Men, Women)	Men: 7/8 Women: 6/6	Men: 7/8 Women: 6/6	Men: 6/8 Women: 6/6
Cultural Background* (IT, AUT, DEU, PL, CH, NL, BE, ECU)	IT: 7/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 2/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 1/1 PL: 1/1 ECU: 1/1	IT: 7/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 3/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 1/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 1/1 ECU: 1/1	IT: 7/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 2/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 1/1 ECU: 1/1

Education (Training, Bachelor, Master, Ph.D.)	Sp. Training: 3/3 Bachelor: 2/3 Master: 6/6 Ph.D.: 2/2	Sp. Training: 3/3 Bachelor: 2/3 Master: 6/6 Ph.D.: 2/2	Sp. Training: 3/3 Bachelor: 1/3 Master: 6/6 Ph.D.: 2/2

Table 2: Most named characteristics

*Some people have more than one cultural background, therefore they are counted double.

Second most named characteristics

Also, very often mentioned characteristics are self-realization and communication. Whereby self-realization was pronounced nine times out of fourteen. Communication was said slightly less, in total eight out of fourteen times. Also, here illustrates the table a summary of all facts.

<u>Self-Realization</u>

The term self-realization means that certain very strong values and preferences of enterprises need to correspond with the ones of their employees. So that people find a sense in what they do and they also support these beliefs very strongly. They also have a quite strong desire to contribute to a bigger goal, which the company strives to achieve. It does not need to be something huge, for example, it can also just be a very good dinner service in a gourmet/fine dining restaurant.

In some contexts, the interviewees were also thinking about following personal intentions outside their workplaces, such as education in different sectors independent from their work skills abroad. For instance, one girl said that she went for a couple of months to Nepal to participate in yoga and massage courses.

This term goes almost hand in hand with the characteristic called passion & commitment. Sometimes the lines here are very blurred but still, I decided to make two out of them since they seemed to be in different contexts something different. It will be discussed more in detail later on.

<u>Communication</u>

The word communication was mentioned by a couple of people whereby the word is referring to clear communication with others. This can start with the job interview when the recruiters explain the work tasks and the conditions very clearly. Communication is also a big part of the work itself, to coordinate tasks for instance and do them adequately. This term is quite similar to feedback & complaints. Some things overlap here and adequate feedback is at some point

also communication, but since it was highlighted by some participants I found it relevant to make an own category out of it.

Second most named characteristics		
Characteristic	**Self-Realization**	**Communication**
Generations (Gen Z, Millennials, GenY)	Gen Z: 5/9 Millennials: 3/4 Gen Y: 1/1	Gen Z: 4/9 Millennials: 3/4 Gen Y: 1/1
Gender (Men, Women)	Men: 6/8 Women: 3/6	Men: 6/8 Women: 2/6
Cultural Background* (IT, AUT, DEU, PL, CH, NL, BE, ECU)	IT: 4/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 3/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 1/1 BE: 1/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 1/1	IT: 2/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 3/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 1/1 BE: 1/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 1/1
Education (Training, Bachelor, Master, Ph.D.)	Sp. Training: 2/3 Bachelor: 3/3 Master: 3/6 Ph.D.: 1/2	Sp. Training: 2/3 Bachelor: 3/3 Master: 2/6 Ph.D.: 1/2

Table 3: Second most named characteristics

*Some people have more than one cultural background, therefore they are counted double.

Frequently named characteristics

The following categories are mentioned in almost every second person. Therefore, I assume that this is still quite relevant for people but not for instance the previous characteristics. The term feedback & compliance, benefits, passion & motivation was counted seven of fourteen times. The classification fluctuation on the other hand was said six times.

Feedback & Compliance

With the word feedback, the candidates intended working feedback for good performance but also unpleasant performance. Since it is good for the motivation and also for them to realize from a more neutral perspective how well they perform and where they could improve

themselves a bit. One person even mentioned that she would appreciate it if their employers would have given her more feedback. The Chinese girl talked about a similar experience but more in the recruiting process. She stressed the fact that companies don't reply to her when and why she got rejected during the application period.

Also, compliance organizations fall in this category. That's a person who takes care of employees' complaints but also wishes. In case there should be a problem or some certain wishes to overcome unlikely situations.

Benefits

Benefits seem to be quite relevant for a lot of people. Interestingly many candidates told me that they do not attach so much importance to benefits. Even if they are nice to have, they are not a must-have. However, benefits are a huge word and can cover many things, such as transportation opportunities, leisure time opportunities (reduced gym, swim opportunities in Hotels), food and canteen offers, firm events and many more.

Passion & Motivation

As the word already indicates, it is all about the passion for a profession. This is not that easy to hold. One person, who works in gastronomy told me he almost lost his joy in his job, due to a bad working climate, missing communication and massive overworking. As already mentioned this is very similar to the classification of self-realization. Because if someone is very passionate about his occupation it is also somehow a part of self-realization.

Another part of this term is motivation. It is also somehow the task or challenge of a company to motivate their employees continuously. This can be done intrinsically with rotations within the business or also promotions or extrinsic with other benefits. Someone mentioned if people stay motivated there is a visible difference in their performance.

Also, an element is a commitment here. This happens when people take their work seriously and are ready to put in some effort. A girl told me that she somehow lost her commitment and this was also a reason for her to resign. The reason, therefore, was the unsuitable behavior of her supervisors, who sort of chewed out another employee instead of talking to her.

Fluctuation

The term fluctuation refers to the fluctuation in the form of workplaces as well as personnel. This means that especially younger generations prefer to work in different places rather than to stay at one company for their entire life. They also really like to try out new works, such as the

girl who wants to switch from childcare to a yoga teacher or masseur. Other enterprises or other positions in various countries are also interesting for them. Probably because they are more open and like to try out new things.

Some, especially in the gastronomy sector, mentioned it makes sense if their coworkers have already been in other restaurants or hotels. People who have seen some other gastronomic organizations bring more experience with them.

Frequently named characteristics				
Characteristic	**Feedback**	**Benefits**	**Passion & Motivation**	**Fluctuation**
Generations (Gen Z, Millennials, GenY)	Gen Z: 5/9 Millennials: 1/4 Gen Y: 1/1	Gen Z: 4/9 Millennials: 3/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 4/9 Millennials: 3/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 3/9 Millennials: 3/4 Gen Y: 0/1
Gender (Men, Women)	Men: 3/8 Women: 4/6	Men: 5/8 Women: 2/6	Men: 5/8 Women: 2/6	Men: 4/8 Women: 2/6
Cultural Background* (IT, AUT, DEU, PL, CH, NL, BE, ECU)	IT: 3/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 3/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 1/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 3/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 2/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 1/1 ECU: 1/1	IT: 3/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 2/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 1/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 1/1	IT: 3/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 1/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 1/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 1/1
Education (Training, Bachelor, Master, Ph.D.)	Sp. Training: 2/3 Bachelor: 1/3 Master: 4/6 Ph.D.: 0/2	Sp. Training: 1/3 Bachelor: 1/3 Master: 3/6 Ph.D.: 2/2	Sp. Training: 3/3 Bachelor: 1/3 Master: 2/6 Ph.D.: 1/2	Sp. Training: 1/3 Bachelor: 1/3 Master: 2/6 Ph.D.: 2/2

Table 4: Frequently named characteristics

*Some people have more than one cultural background, therefore they are counted double.

Sometimes named characteristics

The next couple of classifications is named from less than half of the interviewees. So, the frequently called terms are long-term orientation, hierarchy & structure, salary, diversity,

flexibility & home office, efficiency, safety & health and also the influence of Covid 19 (even if that is not a characteristic of Sustainable HRM). The first five characteristics have been mentioned five times. Whereas the latter three came to word only four out of fourteen times.

Long Term Orientation

In this word, people meant that employees stay for a longer period in the same firm. Actions and Benefits that companies initiate are also focused on further future development. A master's student said that a company where he worked for a short period (three months) allowed them some simple benefits, such as fruit baskets. Employees who stayed longer, received more privileges, such as opportunities for education and training.

Hierarchy & Structure

This classification refers to three things. The first one is a hierarchy, whereby people prefer a flatter hierarchy. This is visible in different sectors. Interviewees from gastronomy as well as from the social sector mentioned these things.

The second one is responsibilities. One person complains about a chaotic work setting, because the responsibilities and the borders, therefore, have not been distributed. In her opinion, this should be clear because it helps extremely during work.

A clear work organization and structure are also very desirable for most people. Candidates discussed deficiencies at that point as well. Moreover, he mentioned that the system in Ecuador is very corrupted and the high unemployment rate can be exploited by employers. Whereas in Europe the system works much better and has way more structure. The only person from generation Y stated that he liked to work in a more chaotic and less structured way.

Salary

Compensation is still a relevant thing. People are also referring to the current situation with inflation. So that everything is becoming more expensive and some companies or institutions are still not willing to pay people more for their work. Although some interviewees stressed that it should not be the only motivation, even if it is highly relevant to everybody's life. It is important to compensate employees for their performance appropriately.

Diversity

Diversity can be understood in more than one direction. One of them is diversity in working tasks, to not just repeat everything continuously. The motivation of the candidates needs to receive new and challenging tasks.

The term can also be understood in rotations in different departments or locations of the company itself. For instance, one girl mentioned that positions should be filled internally before hiring new employees. Others suggested that people should work also in lower positions or more physically demanding positions for a short time to value their work more and to know many parts of the enterprise.

Under diversity can also mean cultural diversity within the company. This is especially the case in bigger companies or universities. Cultural diversity can bring a lot of different perspectives and creative/innovative ideas with it.

Flexibility & Home Office

Flexibility and the home office are quite similar to work-life balance. Since some candidates mentioned the working hours but never remote working. In conclusion, I made two different classifications.

Here flexibility is related to the home office and the possibility to work in other parts of the world. One participant compared this to freedom. At least some people do not want to be bound to a certain location. It is clear to them that not all professions allow that opportunity, for instance, people who work in administrative offices or factories.

Efficiency

Efficiency can also be seen from different perspectives. Of course, efficiency is meant to work constructively. Humans appreciate it if they do something which makes their point of view some sense.

On the other hand, it can indicate that an organization needs to allocate resources thoughtfully. To save costs and to use their capital in the very best way.

Safety & Health

Safety indicates that some people are looking for more security in their work. Somebody said that older generations were looking for those conditions more precisely, same as in underdeveloped or poor countries.

Health is, in general, more referring to working conditions so that people can work longer and stay fit. Such as ergonomic chairs or also movable desks. It could even be something people look for health-related things, such as health insurance and such staff.

Influence of Covid 19

As already brought up, the influence of Covid 19 is not a characteristic of Sustainable HRM. But because quite some people talked about the impact of the pandemic, I found it interesting to include it in the results. Somebody mentioned that workers see work more as something nice rather than as something stressful. Another person talked about the shift of familiar people into different occupations because they do not want to be alone all the time. Someone also mentioned that Covid has accelerated digital settings, such as remote working and so on.

Sometimes named characteristics				
Characteristic	**Long Term Orientation**	**Hierarchy & Structure**	**Salary**	**Diversity**
Generations (Gen Z, Millennials, GenY)	Gen Z: 3/9 Millennials: 2/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 3/9 Millennials: 1/4 Gen Y: 1/1	Gen Z: 2/9 Millennials: 2/4 Gen Y: 1/1	Gen Z: 4/9 Millennials: 1/4 Gen Y: 0/1
Gender (Men, Women)	Men: 3/8 Women: 2/6	Men: 3/8 Women: 2/6	Men: 4/8 Women: 1/6	Men: 3/8 Women: 2/6
Cultural Background* (IT, AUT, DEU, PL, CH, NL, BE, ECU)	IT: 3/7　CH: 0/1 AUT: 1/3　NL: 1/1 DEU: 0/1　BE: 1/1 PL: 0/1　ECU: 0/1	IT: 2/7　CH: 0/1 AUT: 1/3　NL: 0/1 DEU: 1/1　BE: 0/1 PL: 1/1　ECU: 1/1	IT: 2/7　CH: 0/1 AUT: 2/3　NL: 1/1 DEU: 1/1　BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1　ECU: 1/1	IT: 3/7　CH: 0/1 AUT: 2/3　NL: 1/1 DEU: 0/1　BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1　ECU: 0/1
Education (Training, Bachelor, Master, Ph.D.)	Sp. Training: 2/3 Bachelor: 2/3 Master: 1/6 Ph.D.: 0/2	Sp. Training: 1/3 Bachelor: 2/3 Master: 1/6 Ph.D.: 1/2	Sp. Training: 2/3 Bachelor: 2/3 Master: 0/6 Ph.D.: 1/2	Sp. Training: 2/3 Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 3/6 Ph.D.: 0/2
Characteristic	**Flexibility**	**Efficiency**	**Safety & Health**	**Influence of Covid 19**
Generations (Gen Z, Millennials,	Gen Z: 3/9 Millennials: 2/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 4/9 Millennials: 0/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 3/9 Millennials: 1/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 3/9 Millennials: 1/4 Gen Y: 0/1

GenY)				
Gender (Men, Women)	Men: 2/8 Women: 3/6	Men: 1/8 Women: 3/6	Men: 3/8 Women: 1/6	Men: 2/8 Women: 2/6
Cultural Background* (IT, AUT, DEU, PL, CH, NL, BE, ECU)	IT: 3/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 3/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 1/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 3/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 0/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 2/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 1/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 1/1	IT: 3/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 0/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 1/1
Education (Training, Bachelor, Master, Ph.D.)	Sp. Training: 0/3 Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 3/6 Ph.D.: 2/2	Sp. Training: 1/3 Bachelor: 1/3 Master: 2/6 Ph.D.: 0/2	Sp. Training: 0/3 Bachelor: 1/3 Master: 2/6 Ph.D.: 1/2	Sp. Training: 2/3 Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 1/6 Ph.D.: 1/2

Table 5: Sometimes named characteristics

*Some people have more than one cultural background, therefore they are counted double.

Seldom named characteristics

All other remaining categories are discussed rarely. Updated, appreciation & example of supervisors and environmentally sustainable are named three out of fourteen times. Even less often came transparency and equipment to words. In total only two out of fourteen candidates mentioned this term. The creation of jobs, routine and separation of personal and professional life are counted just by one person each.

Updated

The asked people intend with the word updated modern firms or in many cases also Start-Up's. In general, businesses apply methods appropriate to our time. For instance, someone mentioned the names agile and Scrum. Scrum is a very flexible model to develop and processing projects.

Somehow it is also materialistic and technical stuff meant to be updated. So, in certain professions, specific tools and resources are needed. Technical developers, scientists and so on.

Appreciation & example from supervisors

This term goes almost hand in hand with communication, feedback and respect. Because it refers to the valuation of the work. More than one participant complained that their employers lacked at that point. This was quite disappointing and demotivating.

The second term example from supervisors addresses that the superiors should exemplify what he wants his staff to do. One guy highlighted that point since for him that was highly motivating.

Equipment

Adequate equipment is a prerequisite for good work. This was a relevant aspect as well. On the one hand, the equipment is modern, as mentioned previously.

On the other side, it is appreciated that the employer allows their employees to take personal computers (PC) home with them. So that they can work from home too and do not need to buy the stuff on their own. Especially during the pandemic lockdowns were an important fact.

Environmentally Sustainable

This was interesting for me because I expected that more people would associate the term Sustainable HRM with sustainability in general. Surprisingly only very few combined it with environmentally sustainable. When it was mentioned it was quite brief. The interviewees were indicating responsible use of resources of all kinds. Friends of the Polish woman wouldn't work for Nestle. Nestle is a huge food group, but its actions are sometimes very harmful to the environment. The woman was here referring to Nestle with the water reserves in Africa.

Transparency

This means nothing else than that the company is honest with its shareholders and especially with its staff. Part of this honesty is financial honesty as well as strategic honesty. So that all employees know how the current situation looks and in which direction plans the company to go.

Creation of Jobs

Surprisingly only one single woman talked about the creation of jobs as a sustainable contribution. She made a nice example about Amazon, which built a subsidiary in a very isolated region. Outside this region, there were many small villages, and the company created plenty of workplaces. The young Polish women formulated it like that: *"For example, in Poland Amazon, build a big, big warehouse in the middle of nowhere. ...So, people from small villages have jobs, have jobs there. I mean, of course, I don't believe it's like there are good will that they want to help people because it's not like that. And the end of the day, it's always about*

profit. But the outcome is that people who were unemployed earlier, they have more or less normal jobs and they can earn decent money....”

Routine

Routine sounds a bit strange, especially because flexibility was ranked that highly by the participants. It was in an interesting context since the person was mentioning as well that diversity in work tasks or places is relevant to keep employees motivated. He explained it as a routine within the daily work tasks, so that everything works smoothly.

Separation of Professional Life

The last characteristic is referring to a mobile application called WeChat in China. In this app, everybody can do everything. From ordering food to booking a hairdressing appointment and chatting with friends. Therefore, people in China prefer to keep private and professional life apart, since they already have so many things in one.

Seldom named characteristics				
Characteristic	**Updated**	**Appreciation & example from supervisors**	**Environmentally Sustainable**	**Equipment**
Generations (Gen Z, Millennials, GenY)	Gen Z: 3/9 Millennials: 0/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 1/9 Millennials: 1/4 Gen Y: 1/1	Gen Z: 3/9 Millennials: 0/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 1/9 Millennials: 1/4 Gen Y: 0/1
Gender (Men, Women)	Men: 1/8 Women: 2/6	Men: 2/8 Women: 1/6	Men: 1/8 Women: 2/6	Men: 1/8 Women: 1/6
Cultural Background* (IT, AUT, DEU, PL, CH, NL, BE, ECU)	IT: 1/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 0/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 1/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 0/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 2/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 1/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 1/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 1/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 0/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 1/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 2/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 0/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 0/1
Education	Sp. Training: 0/3	Sp. Training: 1/3	Sp. Training: 0/3	Sp. Training: 0/3

(Training, Bachelor, Master, Ph.D.)	Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 3/6 Ph.D.: 0/2	Bachelor: 2/3 Master: 1/6 Ph.D.: 1/2	Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 3/6 Ph.D.: 0/2	Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 1/6 Ph.D.: 1/2
Characteristic	**Transparence**	**Creation of Jobs**	**Routine**	**Separation of personal and professional life**
Generations (Gen Z, Millennials, GenY)	Gen Z: 1/9 Millennials: 1/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 1/9 Millennials: 0/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 1/9 Millennials: 0/4 Gen Y: 0/1	Gen Z: 1/9 Millennials: 0/4 Gen Y: 0/1
Gender (Men, Women)	Men: 1/8 Women: 1/6	Men: 0/8 Women: 1/6	Men: 1/8 Women: 0/6	Men: 0/8 Women: 1/6
Cultural Background* (IT, AUT, DEU, PL, CH, NL, BE, ECU)	IT: 1/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 1/3 NL: 1/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 0/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 0/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 1/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 1/7 CH: 0/1 AUT: 0/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 0/1	IT: 0/7 CH: 1/1 AUT: 0/3 NL: 0/1 DEU: 0/1 BE: 0/1 PL: 0/1 ECU: 0/1
Education (Training, Bachelor, Master, Ph.D.)	Sp. Training: 2/3 Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 0/6 Ph.D.: 0/2	Sp. Training: 0/3 Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 1/6 Ph.D.: 0/2	Sp. Training: 1/3 Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 0/6 Ph.D.: 0/2	Sp. Training: 0/3 Bachelor: 0/3 Master: 1/6 Ph.D.: 0/2

Table 6: Seldom named characteristics

*Some people have more than one cultural background, therefore they are counted double.

The qualitative research demonstrates quite clearly that people mentioned more than eleven characteristics, as in the theoretical paper from Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene. Sometimes I had the impression that people did not know how to formulate things or they just did not think about them. Because from time to time the candidates had a very similar definition to the theory, but as soon as I asked them to tell me some typical characteristics of Sustainable HRM, they did not think about it anymore. Funnily I think some people meant similar things but named it differently.

Combining this with the research question: *Which attributes do individuals of Generation Z expect regarding Sustainable HRM?* The answer is the following list.

1. Training & Career Development (9/9)
2. Work Climate (9/9)
3. Work-Life Balance (9/9)
4. Feedback (5/9)
5. Self-realization (5/9)
6. Communication (4/9)
7. Benefits (4/9)
8. Passion & Motivation (4/9)
9. Efficiency (4/9)
10. Diversity (4/9)
11. Flexibility & Home office (3/9)
12. Long Term Orientation (3/9)
13. Hierarchy & Structure (3/9)
14. Updated/Modern (3/9)
15. Influence of Covid 19 (3/9) → not a characteristic
16. Fluctuation of Personal & Place (3/9)
17. Environmentally sustainable (3/9)
18. Salary (2/9)
19. Separation of personal and professional life (1/9)
20. Appreciation and role model from supervisors (1/9)
21. Transparency (1/9)
22. Equipment (1/9)
23. Creation of Jobs (1/9)
24. Routine (1/9)
25. Safety & Health (1/9)

These are all the 25 terms that named the interviewees from Gen Z. Next to it there are written numbers, those are the number of people. For instance, nine out of nine people said work climate. Such a listing makes the preferences of the participants visible. Due to that reason, it is possible to say the first three listed terms (1 to 3) are the most relevant ones. Followed by the classification feedback and self-realization (4 to 5), which were called significantly less (five out of nine times) than the previous ones. The subsequent five (6 to 10) words are slightly less

relevant because they are named four out of nine times. Every third person from the digital natives mentioned the next seven (11 to 17) features. Whereby salary (18) is counted just twice. The remaining ones (19 to 25) are all called by a single person from this generation.

The remains still the same, when taking the other generation (Millennials and Gen X) into consideration. Just the preferences will change a bit, as it is illustrated in the upcoming tables.

Classified characteristics

As they have already seen, these are some properties. To shorten this a bit and provide a better overview, the above 25 properties have been grouped into a total of nine classes. A more comprehensive view allows the screenshot from the updated excel sheet (figure number 9). Whereby, the list down there is structured, by the highest ranking (most often mentioned). However, it is relevant to say here that some boundaries of the ten classes blur into each other. Self-realization and training & career development can be counted as part of the care of employee category. However, these characteristics have been mentioned so often that I consider it significant to make a separate class out of them. If we now look at the compensated variant of the excel spreadsheet as shown in figure number 9, the priorities of the classes change. Which will soon be discussed better more in detail.

1. Care of employees
2. Self-realization
3. Training & Career Development
4. Flexibility & Transparency
5. Long term orientation
6. Efficiency
7. Physical Workplace
8. Impact of Covid 19
9. Care of environment

Care of Employees

This is the biggest classification since it contains plenty of features, which were named during the conversations. Further above, all the listed properties were mentioned. This division here includes the following attributes: work climate, communication, benefits, diversity, fluctuation of personal & place, salary, separation of personal & private life, appreciation and role model from supervisors, routine, safety & health, of course also fairness & equality and hierarchy &

structure. Diversity can mean different tasks in the work itself and the hiring of people with different cultural backgrounds. A more detailed explanation is under the title diversity.

Together with the following two classes (self-realization and training & career development), these three classes contain by far the most frequently mentioned characteristics. Each of these categories is mentioned by all participants (fourteen out of fourteen). In other words, all generations, sexes, educational backgrounds, and cultures represented find these qualities extremely important

Self-realization

As mentioned earlier, this is a subheading of the previous class. For instance, one quote from a young man was (translated from German to English): "*So for me, it's working together for a common success. Um. That is, also in the professional added value or not only offer leisure activities and offer options where you ... can recharge from work. But I am simply of the opinion that if you enjoy your job incredibly much, have such an incredibly good working environment and also have a super boss, that the working time itself is no longer relevant, but is much more in the foreground, that you are happy to work five hours longer for a common goal, where it is simply also worth it. And I believe that this communication of values from the boss to the employee, this transporting of these values, ...*" This citation is a good example of how blurred the borders between the classifications can be. This section consists of work-life balance, self-realization itself and passion & motivation.

As explained earlier, this class was also rated as very relevant by all participants (fourteen out of fourteen).

Training & Career Development

Here it is the same as with the previous division. This class includes training & career development and feedback.

The same as with the previous two classes (care of employee and self-realization) also applies here in terms of significance (fourteen out of fourteen).

Flexibility & Transparency

This separation could also be partially counted among the very first class. Since, as already mentioned several times, the boundaries to each other can become blurred. Terms such as flexibility and home office have been mentioned very often. Thus, this deserves its class. The term transparency is also included here.

There is a small change in the flexibility section. By merging the characteristics mentioned, the number of the mentioned characteristic has increased by two. Now every second candidate has addressed this division, namely seven out of a total of fourteen people. Whereby these seven interviewees are divided into four members of Gen Z and three members of Millennials. Since predominantly more female interviewees (four) discussed this aspect here than male interviewees (three), it could indicate that women place more value on it due to their biological circumstances. Educationally, several degrees are represented, two Ph.D., two specialized training and three master's students. In terms of origin, the participants come from Austria, Holland, Italy, Poland and Ecuador.

Long Term Orientation

This section includes all actions that a company undertakes to retain its personnel in the long term. Thus, the characteristic long-term orientation clearly belongs here.

About this division, not too much or nothing at all changes compared to the previous table. This is simply because it always contains only this single characteristic, so it was named by slightly more than a third of the candidates (five out of fourteen). Of these five candidates, 3 are from Gen Z and two are from the Millennial group. The genders are also balanced (three males and two females). The same goes for the level of education, as there are two who have completed specialized training, two with a bachelor's degree and one who is doing a master's degree. In total, this section represents four cultures (Belgian, Dutch, Austrian and Italian).

Efficiency

This class refers to efficient work that also leads to profitability somewhere. In short, the property efficiency is included here.

There are no changes in this category compared to the previous table. In total, this term was mentioned four times out of fourteen. It was only discussed by the so-called digital natives (Gen Z). These are four women and one man who have various educational backgrounds (two master's degrees, one bachelor's degree and one specialized training). The candidates were mainly of Italian nationality (three) and there was only one Chinese candidate.

Physical Workplace

A pleasant workplace supports us in our daily tasks. This is also the view of the interviewees. That is why the physical workplace division has emerged. This includes features such as equipment and updated/modern. Whereby the latter could not only be packed into this category but also belong to the class of Fairness & Equality. The reason behind this is that the property

updated/modern does not only concern the equipment but also the management style or the organization and the hierarchy.

By the conclusion of the two properties, the preference in the Excel sheet has changed and has grown twice as much as before. This means that this category was mentioned four times out of fourteen. Three of them belong to Gen Z and one to Millennials. It was striking that it was mentioned by three women and one man. This could be an indication that the physical space is more important to women, as well as a modern organizational structure (reverence to modern and Scrum). The level of education of the candidates is relatively high here, namely one Ph.D. student and three Master's graduates. The nationalities represented are Polish (one), Chinese (one) and Italian (two).

Impact of Covid 19

The last class is not a property, which has also been mentioned dozens of times. However, I decided to present it as a separate class anyway. Somebody with plenty of work experience even stated that (translated from German to English): *"…, and since the Corona crisis, is somehow. Work becomes a recovery period for bodies, … "*

There were, of course, no changes in this classification. As before, this topic was recalled four times out of fourteen. The gender ratio was very balanced (two female candidates and two male candidates), as was the level of training. Namely one Ph.D. student, one Master and two who have completed specialized training. Culturally, mainly Italy (three) is involved and the rest of the participants are from Ecuador.

Care of Environment

Smart or especially sustainable companies are also interested in their environment. This leads us to the next class, namely care of the environment. This includes the category of environmentally sustainable as well as the creation of jobs.

Here, too, there is little or no change. Although two characteristics were merged here, the person who voted for the creation of jobs was also named environmentally sustainable. Thus, there is no change compared to before and three out of a total of fourteen persons addressed this category. Interestingly, this aspect was raised exclusively by the youngest generation (Generation Z). In this case, there were two females and only one male. This could indicate that environmental protection is more important to women, and could be investigated in greater detail in a larger study, for example. All of these people come from higher educational backgrounds (Master's students). There are no abnormalities in the cultures, this opinion is represented by three cultures, Chinese, Polish as well as Italian.

Characteristics	Containing Characteristics	Michaela	David	Julia	Wolfgang	Olga	Matthias	Silvia	Armin	Lukas	Isabel	Peter	Diego	Marcelo	No Name*	Sum of x
Training and Career Development	training & career development, feedback	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	14
Care of employees	work climate, communication, benefits, diversity, fluctuation of personal & place, salary, separation of personal & private life, appreciation and role model from supervisors, routine, safety & health	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	14
Phisical Workplace	equipment, updated/modern efficiency	x		x	x	x										4
Efficiency	efficiency	x						x	x			x				4
Flexibility & Transparence	flexibility, transparence		x	x	x	x		x						x	x	7
Care of environment	environmentally sustainable, creation of jobs.	x				x	x									3
Influence of Covid 19	influence of Covid 19							x		x				x	x	4
Long term orientention	long term orientation		x					x	x			x	x			5
Selfrealistion	work-life balance, self realization itself, passion & motivation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	14

*The girl did not like to tell her real name

Figure 9: Updated Excel sheet

One part of this qualitative research was also to test if the named characteristics (long-term orientation, concern for employees and the environment, profitability, employee participation and social dialogue, employee development, external partnership, flexibility, compliance beyond labor standards, employee cooperation, fairness and equality) are the same as the ones described in the theory. The list is way more features listed than in the theory named. But a big part of them intends the same things. Whereas some of them are not even mentioned by the candidates. This is described more in detail in the discussion.

Differences between generations, cultural backgrounds, genders and education

This section is focusing on the last couple of questions in the interview. Which are containing the topics of differences between age groups, cultural backgrounds, sexes and levels of education and their perception of the workplace. Whereas the hypotheses H1 to H4 will be answered. *H1: There are differences between the origins and cultures of individuals in terms of their conception of Sustainable HRM. H2: There are different perceptions about Sustainable HRM based on the type of education. H3: There are divergent perceptions of gender about Sustainable HRM. H4: There are cross-generational variations in perceptions of Sustainable HRM.*

Generational differences

After I asked the participants for stereotypical characteristics of Sustainable HRM, I wanted to ask them as well about the differences between the four features. Namely generation, cultural background, gender and education. Due to that reason, I asked them if there exist some certain must-haves or perceptions from their generation (mostly Gen Z, Millennials or Gen X) against their employer. Everyone answered this question with a yes. One woman from the Millennials

summarized it quite nicely (translated from German to English): *"So, if I now differentiate it from the generation before. But I could imagine that flexibility is more important now. Or that the change of jobs and places is more important, for example with the older generations, whose parents often worked in the same company all their lives and stayed there. .... But I think that my generation is more willing to work more than the next generation later on."* The most frequently mentioned difference is that the younger generation demands more free time. This is also accompanied by more flexibility. Flexibility here means above all self-determination of working hours and no longer having to be tied to a particular position. Many respondents stated that work must also be meaningful and that they would like to participate in the realization of certain corporate goals. Moreover, the work itself needs to be fulfilling and make fun for them. Self-realization, i.e. the pursuit of one's own goals and desires that are not directly related to work, also plays a major role. It was also often mentioned that young workers change their jobs much more often than older people.

Not so often mentioned, for example, was the change in the reputation of hierarchies and authorities. Today, flat hierarchies are better regarded than the classic organizational model according to the candidates. One person also pointed out that the actual ecological sustainability effect can also be relevant, especially for newcomers. The example of Nestle also fits in well here. One candidate also believes that the role of women has changed again and that women are now more self-confident and also demand more from their superiors. When I asked some of the candidates why they believe it is like this, I got quite interesting answers. He argued that employers tend to hire young employees also because they are technically more affine than the more elderly society. Therefore, they are ready to accept these requirements and demands

When it comes to the subject of salary, the candidates are not in complete agreement. The majority claim that salary is no longer the decisive criterion, but it is not completely irrelevant either. Since it clearly influences everything relevant in life, education, food, health and so on. However, there was also the opinion that salary comes first. According to the experience of the participant, the first question in your environment is always how much you earn.

Now compare that with the significant older generations. Most have mentioned that their parents were more or less always in one company, so they hardly ever changed companies. They also attached great importance to security. In other words, a secure job and a secure salary. The salary was also in the foreground. In addition, the behavior and the corporate hierarchy were different. The respect for superiors was much higher than it is today. In addition, people were less choosy when choosing their profession. The candidates believe that this is because in

the past the opportunities were limited and there were not too many jobs. Today, people can choose because there are many more open positions and they often have a higher education.

Relating this now to the fourth hypothesis H4: *There are cross-generational variations in perceptions of Sustainable HRM.* Based on the statements of the interview partners, I can confirm this hypothesis. On one hand, because they all answered yes to that certain question. Secondly, they were able to explicitly name examples in comparison with older generations. The most mentioned characteristics (training & development, work-life balance and work climate) were mentioned about the same number of times by everyone. It is somewhat striking here that two of the three words (training & development and work-life balance) were not mentioned by Gen X at all. The second most frequently mentioned terms (self-realization and communication) were mentioned approximately equally often by everyone in this context. The same was also true for frequently named characteristics (feedback, benefits, passion & motivation and fluctuation). Except for feedback, which was only mentioned by Millennials, all others were also mentioned about the same number of times. With the sometimes-named characteristic, it is the case that the words were mentioned by relatively few. For this reason, they are not so decisive. However, it was found that efficiency was only mentioned by Gen Z. However, the opinions of Generation Z and Millennials were often quite similar. There was just a slight difference since the Millennials believe they are ready to work a lot more than the younger generation. One of them found it also relevant to clarify health insurance conditions within a work contract. Still, they appreciated the flexibility and the meaningfulness of the work as well. One person from the Millennials mentioned the role of women, as already explained in the previous paragraph. This might be something interesting and probably more relevant for them since in our generation this is already established. Another reason why many things were similar was that perhaps the age difference was not too great. Interestingly, the Generation X person was the only one to claim that hierarchies aren't what they used to be. Therefore, I assume that at that time it was the beginning of flat hierarchies and it made a significant difference. Since it also occurred to the person immediately.

Cultural differences

During the conversation, I talked with the people also about culture or origin based on different perceptions between them and their employer. Almost all answered with yes, they think there exist variations. One person was not sure about that and one person said no. The no came from a guy who is working in the tourism sector. It is probably a bit different. The reason for all these variations might lie in the different environments in which people grow up. For instance, how

developed a certain country is, the language barriers, the way they got raised and so on. A family who has a mindset that wants to achieve many things and works very hard for it and maybe the parents have an advantageous working position with numerous benefits. The likelihood that the children will see this and want to have it is high. Somebody came up with the example that in the Netherlands people accept other languages and most of them speak English fluently. While in Latin America the majority of the population speaks only Spanish. In Poland, the demand for sustainable enterprises is not yet or hardly present, the Polish woman said. There you don't see any real sustainable actions from the companies.

Other countries have other conditions. Particular conditions contain other insurance systems, unfamiliar languages, different ideas about work-life balance/holidays or opposite religions. The working culture is also highly divergent. In some regions, humans work every day, even if they are sick. *One guy mentioned: "...different cultures and also different, uh, economics in different countries make a difference. Let's say I have an aunt in South Africa and there the, the views on employment are very different. And where some people just work enough for them to go through the next month, next week or something, and then they just stop and um, and then just a very different view on, and work in some parts. But in other parts it's like, um, the complete opposite...."* On the other side of the world, in China, I was told that it was quite normal to work overtime all the time. As a kind of rebellion, especially the young generation (Gen Z) keep the working hours exactly. Therefore, men and women in dissimilar situations have other priorities. One made a personal experience in a business where he was doing an internship. The owner of the organization was not willing to give his employees internet access. He was preventing them from growing as a professional, but the workers there were accepting that situation because they were earning a stable salary.

Other interviewees viewed this from another perspective. Many things in this regard depend on how the responsibilities react to stereotypes. Even if it is not timely or adequate due to the candidates there still exists some indifferences between foreigners and locals. Luckily it is getting improved and many demands a higher understanding from companies. Because of all of that, some foreigners might be intimidated and insecure and therefore too shy to ask for better conditions.

In the Theoretical Background section, four hypotheses were proposed. H1 focuses on the area just described. *H1: There are differences between the origins and cultures of individuals in terms of their conception of Sustainable HRM.* If we now review the results of the studies conducted, we can claim that the hypothesis is confirmed. Not only for the reason that all participants answered in the affirmative to the questions about whether there are culturally

conditioned differences in the expectations of your job. But also, because certain differences could be identified. If we now take the experience of the Chinese candidate, we see that people especially Generation Z are not willing to work more than the contract says. Also, the way of working differs from each other (see Africa example). Or in Poland, hardly any people demand sustainable measures from their companies, apart from initial attempts by Gen Z. There was also the example that in Italy it is not appropriate to negotiate salary. In other countries, this is completely normal. In Ecuador, people accept to be held back in their professional careers for a stable salary. These are all examples that show that these differences are not. The most named characteristics are called by all cultural backgrounds quite similarly. In the table with the second most named terms, it is somewhat noticeable that the Italians have named both terms (namely self-realization and communication) the least often. However, a certain deviation is clear, since Italian was the most frequent nationality of the candidates (7 in total). However, in the case of communication, it is strikingly few, since only 2 out of 7 mentioned the term. With the frequently mentioned characteristics as well as with the sometimes-mentioned ones nothing is striking. The conducted study is too small and contains too little cultural diversity to establish a clear significance based on the characteristics listed. This requires a much larger survey, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

Gender differences

As for the gender issue, some would disagree. The majority, however, believe that women are unfortunately still somewhat disadvantaged. While others are not quite sure, because in recent years much has been done for equal rights. In addition, in the younger generations, genders are tolerated quite differently and sometimes even merge into each other. Thus, some think that there are not so great differences in this regard.

On the other hand, many thoughts of biological predispositions, whereby women may legitimately demand more flexibility. Of course, if they have a child, they have to bring it into the world and take care of it afterward. Therefore, someone formulated it like that (translated from German to English): "I believe with generation Z less up to naturally biological kind, yes reasons, which make simply certain circumstances or adjustments simply necessary compellingly necessary, because if a woman has children and becomes pregnant. Then it must perhaps be possible that one can also sometimes doctor's appointments perceive, which are perhaps in the afternoon and at a one can arrange accordingly working hours perhaps around it, without that one must take now a day of vacation. "Also, a valuable thought came up within one conversation, which talked about Iceland. There, for example, maternity leave is divided equally between men and women.

Furthermore, the salary factor and the opportunities for advancement were also criticized somewhat. Female employees often earn less than their male colleagues in the same position. In addition, it is somewhat more difficult for women to advance professionally. Although there are regulations that the management levels/executive boards should be divided, this is not yet a reality in numerous cases.

Theoretically, you could also look at a reference value in a company. If there is a slightly misogynistic culture there, fewer women will report there or are likely to be intimidated. Consequently, they will not overcome this and demand more. Another aspect that was mentioned was the dress code. Where there could also be differences.

In the present time, other genders are also tolerated more and more. Someone from the artist or designer industry brought an example. In this scene a few years ago, there was already a very high tolerance for people with other gender preferences, especially gays were seen there with pleasure. So, this probably also depends very much on the industry in which one is

If one connects this now with the hypotheses which were set up before this topic. Namely hypothesis *H3: There are divergent perceptions of gender about Sustainable HRM.* The hypothesis is partly confirmable, by looking back at the candidates' affirmative responses to the question in this context. This means that if there are indeed differences, they are relatively small. Characteristics such as training & career development, work climate, work-life balance, long-term orientation, hierarchy & structure, diversity or feedback are named by females as often or almost as often as by the males. In comparison the following characteristics are less often or half as often mentioned by women than by men: self-realization, communication, benefits, passion & motivation, fluctuation, salary and safety and health. Indeed, women are still somewhat neglected in some areas compared to their male colleagues. One of the applicants also said that he and his buddy were only selected because they are male. However, in conclusion, no significant differences were found in the evaluation here either. Smaller assumptions are, for example, that more female participants voted for flexibility or that a female candidate thought about sustainability. If the participants had been a little older or had already had children, the answers might have been different. This would perhaps be a point where future research could dock on.

Educational differences

Again, there was some uncertainty among the volunteers. However, here the majority agreed on existing differences between the level of training and the demands or expectations from employers. This was justified by the candidates by the fact that a higher level of training also

entails costs and effort. This also creates an advantage that causes or justifies them to demand a higher salary and better conditions. However, this does not depend solely on education, but also partly on the professional experience that someone can show. A long education does not necessarily mean that someone automatically performs better work. These two factors (education and work experience) improve the qualifications of people, thus increasing their negotiating power, since they are easy and could change companies at any time. Thus, higher education is a privilege somewhere. In addition, educated people are usually also better informed about current problems, a good example here is environmental sustainability/climate change.

Interestingly, someone also stated that at some point women have to decide whether they want to have a career or have children.

An exciting cultural example comes from Ecuador, where a degree is a ticket for poor people to leave poverty. *"...it depends where. What is your background? In Ecuador when the gap between the poor and the rich is high, you have the higher gap between the rich and the poor. Getting a degree is a ticket to get a two to get rid of the poor from poverty. ...But this has become a problem, in Ecuador, because you have a lot of like professionals that doesn't have a job. And here in Italy or America or Europe, for instance, you don't necessarily need to have a higher degree to get a good job... I also have met people that have decided not to study, to start to work because they have a perception that they can study is a waste of time. But it depends on the cultural and the cultural environment. .... But to high up in a company, you need to be skilled....",* said the man from Ecuador. Summarized, there is not enough work for all professions in the South American country. Compared to Europe, there you don't necessarily need an optional degree to get a good job. However, anyone who wants to move up the corporate ladder needs a certain amount of education and degrees.

A hypothesis was also made on this subject. *H2: There are different perceptions about Sustainable HRM based on the type of education.* Just like the previous hypotheses, the majority of respondents believed that there are differences between the perceptions of a job depending on the levels of education or degrees. This could also be determined by the questioning of the candidates. The best example is that of a candidate who said that she used to be satisfied with every salary. She has already worked for 600 euros per month. However, she would no longer do this today, because she has several education and work experience. Such examples could also be confirmed by other testimonies. This does not only have to be in a monetary form. One of the Ph.D. students said that he likes new challenges and this is also a criterion for him. The evaluation also showed that flexibility is relevant. The most frequently counted characteristics

(training & career, working climate and work-life balance) were mentioned equally often by every degree/training level. The same was true for self-realization, passion & motivation and communication. Fluctuation and benefits were mentioned slightly more often if you put them to the other degrees. Feedback was not mentioned at all. It is not possible to say the remaining characteristics, as they were mentioned by very few. But as already mentioned, further research would be helpful to substantiate this.

In conclusion, it is important to mention that a couple of interviewees stated that it's unlikely one single thing, which forms the perception of the workplace. Moreover, it is a mix of many factors. As an example, the level of education depends on the upbringing of the family and the norms they received from their relatives but also from the county and the possibilities they got. Women are treated in countries differently, let's think of an extreme example, namely India, where women are not treated the same way as in Scandinavia for instance. In conclusion also female education, culture and the overall perception of life will be diverse.

CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

This section has the aim to link the empirical part with the theoretical part. Beginning with the four sustainable HRM types (Socially Responsible HRM, Green HRM, Triple Bottom Line HRM and Common Good HRM). Here one part is focusing on the common global struggles. Next, the matching of the eleven characteristics is described. Afterward, the three theories (Social Identity Theory, Signaling Theory and Attraction-Attrition-Selection Theory), which explain the differences, are dealt with in more detail. Finally, a comparison of the cultural, educational, gender and generational differences is made.

At the very beginning of this thesis, there have been described four mains Sustainable HRM Models, called Socially Responsible HRM, Green HRM, Triple Bottom Line HRM and Common Good HRM. Taking a look at the answers to the interviews and trying to assign the statements to a certain type of model, is the Socially Responsible HRM model. The answers to the first question (*What would you understand under the term Sustainable HRM?*) of the participants would in all cases except for one match with the first model. Of course, I also agreed with the candidates and clarified it a bit when they gave their definitions. It was important to me in the first place that they understand what they can do with the expression and I did not want to change their opinion or influence it differently. First of all, every person was convinced that all companies are using an inside-out approach. This excludes the Common Good HRM since it is the only one with an outside-in approach. In other words, they are looking first at their problems and desires before they try to solve the problems of society. Moreover, all participants were thinking about economic and also partly social purposes. Many mentioned initiatives to take care of the employees in a long-term perspective, which creates awareness of the impact of business also beyond the organizational boundaries. The named initiatives and ideas followed socially responsible behavior, and cultural as well as health-being actions. Whereas the output economic and social value, for instance, it enlarged the reputation and the attractiveness of employees. I could not assign the second type, the Green HRM to a conversation, because everyone was referring to the social purpose. The Polish girl was the only one, who was actively thinking about the environmental aspect and some examples. For that reason, I decided to classify her point of view as Triple Bottom Line HRM.

Luckily there have not been too many experiences from the three global challenges. Namely, in-work poverty and exploitative working conditions in supply chains, lack of labor voice and (youth) unemployment and job insecurity. Even if there came to word some examples for the first global challenge (Nestle and Africa example), no personal experience was made on

that. Probably because everyone lives right now in Europe, which is a well-developed country. But there were narratives about the lack of labor voice struggles. Thinking of the internship of the Ecuadorian guy, he was telling me the story of the company owner who did not provide his employees with internet access. People there complained about it but at some point, they just accepted it. Here workplace democracy would be accurate. This is actually against the right of education. It was the same thing with the woman, who told me that one of their co-workers was pushed out until she resigned or was fired. The woman was not fine with that treatment and one of the reasons she quit was that. The same policy could be used here (workplace democracy and better communication) could be used there to solve this problem. Examples of the last global challenge were brought up by the Ecuadorian man, the Polish girl, and an Italian woman. The man was referring to the high poverty rate in his place of origin. The Polish woman named the action of Amazon, which was built in her land of origin and subsidiary to create more work. Finally, the Italian person said that her mother would have taken any job because there have not been so many options. In all these examples, an appropriate policy would be to create new work as explained in the Theory. In some of the examples, this was also realized. Others, however, probably need a few more years of development.

As already discussed earlier, part of this qualitative research was also to test if the named characteristics correspond with the eleven characteristics (long-term orientation, concern for employees and the environment, profitability, employee participation and social dialogue, employee development, external partnership, flexibility, compliance beyond labor standards, employee cooperation, fairness, and equality) from Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene. Some of those eleven terms have been mentioned by the participants. Even if not directly, which means they were describing the terms but did not know how to title them. Whereas none of the interviewees was thinking about certain attributes. Things such as long-term orientation, care of the environment, flexibility, fairness and equality or profitability were said more or less directly during the conversion. The term care of employee, employee participation, employee development and employee cooperation were not directly classified in the excel spreadsheet. But e.g. work climate, health & safety strongly refer to care of employees. The same applies to training & employee development for employee development and so on. Words that have not been named at all were an external partnership and compliance with labor regulations. The latter one has probably not been said because it is too obvious and humans see it as granted. The participants revealed attraction and recruitment when they defined the term Sustainable HRM. Maybe that could have been a slight hint for external partnership, but they never say something about collaborations with companies or universities.

Let's consider the social identity theory, which explains why a certain group follows similar or the same standards and norms. As we have seen in the fourteen interviews many answers are quite similar. That might be interrelated with that theory. For instance, people from the same age group have quite correlational assumptions. Seeing it from a different perspective many people want to study and there exist various study programs and topics or also with certain works or in prestigious companies. Whereas the latter one is not that relevant anymore, since none of the participants even came close to that statement. Based on this sense of group or belonging as well as the shared values, they push their self-esteem. Another method is to make other groups worse and thereby place themselves above them. Probably some of them also identify with that and they are proud of it to be part of the intellectual/academic layer of society. That might be one reason why so many answers are similar. In the study sample, there have been two people from gastronomy and their answers were super focused on their branch. The same thing was visible with the girl in the social sector.

Another suitable theory for this theme is the signaling theory. As mentioned in the theoretical background chapter, organizations radiate certain signals. Humans, especially customers or also applicants react or see these signals. Through the interviews, I have come to understand that people no longer want to work just anywhere. Instead, they have to feel comfortable. The same thing often happens in recruitment processes. If people don't feel comfortable or don't feel the vibe, they won't work there if they can afford it. This fact has often been referred to as self-realization or in that candidates have said it has to be the overall fit. Or it is just a matter of time until they leave and look for a different job.

Similar things predict the attraction-attrition-selection theory. This theory states that companies/institutions attack humans with correlating values and in conclusion, they also hire or accept these people. Therefore, the likelihood that the team has overlapping standards is quite high. Thinking about the experience of the Italian girl in the social sector, where the company pushed the other employee out. This was for sure against her norms so she quit. These things confirm such theories. The same woman also took yoga and massage courses in Nepal and she enjoyed it because people who have the same mindset will probably also go there. Thus, the probability that they also get along well with each other and have the same vibe is high. Maybe due to that she also wants to switch the sector to massage and yoga.

As explained in the section of the theoretical background, there exist different cultural backgrounds and in conclusion various norms. During the meetings, this was confirmed again and again. The same was also true for other levels of training/degrees. On the Internet, you can

find numerous scientific articles about different behaviors of generations. These have also been confirmed in the course of the interviews. On the one hand, they focus more on leisure time and flexibility, and different experiences with various companies. As far as gender is concerned, no definitive answer was found in theory. However, I was able to determine that people assumed that women have different ideas due to biological conditions. Although I could not prove it directly in the interview, there is a suspicion that women with a family (or who want to start a family) have different priorities.

CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION

This thesis has described in great detail the theoretical concepts of Sustainable HRM. In particular, the four Sustainable HRM types have been addressed. The four models are Socially Responsible HRM, Green HRM, Triple Bottom Line HRM and Common Good HRM. The first three follow an inside-out method in contrast to Common Good HRM which uses an outside-in method. Inside-out means that the other aspects are also considered, but the priority is always directed towards profitability. For example, the first model considers the social and economic components. However, economic efficiency is in the foreground. The same is true for Green HRM, where the environmental and economic aspects are represented. It is no different from the Triple Bottom Line Model, where social, economic and business perspectives are considered. The Common Good approach is much more about first looking at the problems of society and then developing a supportive and economic measure.

Afterward, the three most current global problems (in-work poverty and exploitative working conditions in supply chains, lack of labor voice and (youth) unemployment and job insecurity) were briefly discussed and how they can be solved or improved with a Common Good perspective.

A large part of the literature was taken up by the eleven characteristics, which are titled typical characteristics for Sustainable HRM in the theory. The eleven characteristics are the following: long-term orientation, concern for employees and the environment, profitability, employee participation and social dialogue, employee development, external partnership, flexibility, compliance beyond labor standards, employee cooperation, fairness, and equality.

The theoretical part of the work was concluded with a justification of why there are differences between generations, genders, levels of education/graduation and cultural backgrounds concerning the topic of sustainable HRM. This was covered on the one hand with literature that proved that there are differences, except for gender, where they did not agree. Three theories support this, namely the Social Identity Theory, the Signaling Theory and the Attraction-Attrition-Selection Theory. The former assumes that people want to feel they belong to a group and that they then share the same ideas and norms as other group members; this and the devaluing of other groups increases their self-esteem. Signaling Theory assumes that organizations send signals to recipients in the form of information, advertising, etc. The recipients can be, among others, potential applicants. They will use all the information they receive to form a picture of the company/institution. The last theory states that organizations emit certain values which automatically attract people who share these values. Consequently,

in companies or other organizations, you will always find people with the same mindset/values. If these values turn out to be wrong for the person, he will leave the company again.

All this pursued one goal in the work, which was to answer the research question. *Which attributes do individuals of Generation Z expect regarding Sustainable HRM?* In addition, this thesis also aims to determine whether the character traits established in the theory correspond to the statements of the candidates. Moreover, the study also focused on finding variations between generation, gender, level of education and cultural background. To find this out, a qualitative study with a total of fourteen partial surveys was conducted. Whereby, ten out of the sample are members of generation Z, four are Millennials and one is still from generation Z. Also, four hypotheses have been created. *H1: There are differences between the origins and cultures of individuals in terms of their conception of Sustainable HRM. H2: There are different perceptions about Sustainable HRM based on the type of education. H3: There are divergent perceptions of gender about Sustainable HRM. H4: There are cross-generational variations in perceptions of Sustainable HRM.*

The outcome of the interviews were twenty-five characteristics, which are the following: training & career development, work climate, feedback, communication, updated, efficiency, separation of personal and professional life, benefits, passion & motivation, appreciation and role model from supervisors, transparency, work-life balance, fluctuation of personal & place, flexibility & home office, equipment, environmentally sustainable, diversity, creation of jobs, routine, salary, hierarchy & structure, long term orientation, self-realization, safety & health and influence of Covid 19 (the latter one is not a characteristic). These are the attributes, which expect in people from Gen Z concerning the topic of Sustainable HRM. To allow the reader a more comprehensive overview, the twenty-five categories have been classified again into in total of nine suitable divisions. These are called: care of employees, self-realization, training & career development, long-term orientation, care of environment, flexibility & transparency, efficiency, physical workplace and impact of Covid 19.

Many of these characteristics are similar to the ones described in theory. Even if the amount of terms is larger, many of these terms overlap with one of the eleven theoretical characteristics. Only two have not been named at all (external partnership and compliance beyond labor ship). Also, the four hypotheses have been confirmed, based on the statement of the interviewee. The value of this thesis is to view the theoretical part from a more practical perspective. Moreover, it is also interesting for companies to see which attributes are relevant, especially Gen Z's.

To support the outcome of the four hypotheses it would be suitable to conduct a bigger study. Further research should also focus on differences between branches since it has been noticed that many gave answers specific to their sector. Additionally, it could be proved that women with a family have different perceptions of their workplaces than women with no family.

In my opinion, such things as Sustainable HRM are becoming more and more relevant. One side is because the resources of the world are becoming rarer and rarer and on the other side since organizations are or will be kind of forced to follow such approaches. Not only from future employees but also from the government and new regulations (link to 17 sustainable EU goals). Let's see what the future brings.

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