

The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Human Resource Management: GDF SUEZ's Case

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyse GDF SUEZ's sustainable development report, focusing on its involvement in socially responsible Human Resource Management practices. We seek to know how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) affects HR functions, roles, and activities. According to Fortune magazine, GDF SUEZ ranks first among companies in the world in terms of social responsibility and is among the top 10 global companies across all sectors. Our research focuses on the following practices: recruitment and employment access, training and career development, and well-being in the workplace. These HRM practices seem important to analyse given the context in which companies will have to evolve: ageing of the population, risks of labour shortage, or the war for talent. Our results imply that CSR has a positive influence on employees' advocacy role (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005) because the Group integrates concerns regarding equal treatment, health and safety, and diversity. We also believe that GDF SUEZ Group desires to develop its brand further by presenting itself as a responsible employer to harvest the benefits that flow from that label.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, human resource management, sustainable development report

1. Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are two concepts that are becoming increasingly important to company strategies. Indeed, companies are in search of new practices to increase their productivity and their competitive positions. Moreover, HRM is an indispensable tool for any organisation, and CSR is becoming increasingly crucial for companies' competitiveness.

Igalens and Joras (2002) define CSR as 'the voluntary integration of the social and ecological concerns of companies in their commercial activities and their relations with all stakeholders. CSR satisfies completely the applicable legal obligations and invest in the Human Resources and the environment. The responsibility so defined is the one that any company has to answer to maintain its quality of organised social entity'.

According to the European Commission (2001), 'being socially responsible not only means satisfying completely the applicable legal obligations, but also going beyond and investing "more" in human capital, environment and relations with stakeholders. The acquired experience with the investment in technologies and commercial practices that are ecologically responsible suggests that by going further than more respect for the legislation, companies could increase their competitiveness. The application of social standards overtaking the fundamental legal obligations, for example in the field of training, working conditions or relations between management and staff, can also have direct effects on productivity. This opens a method of managing the change and to reconcile social development and increased competitiveness'. While improving the satisfaction of their various stakeholders, companies utilising a responsible approach could also take advantage of positive effects.

Grimand and Vandangeon-Derumez (2010) also indicate that CSR can be perceived as a substantial forced process not only for the company to show its stakeholders how its policies respond to their expectations but also as an exploratory process establishing the foundations of new regulation. In this view, HR departments should maintain a difficult balance between enforcing the necessary conformity regulations and the will to innovate.

Of the three fundamental constituents of the CSR concept, several authors assert that the social pillar is generally the one on which the greatest emphasis is placed (Grimand & Vandangeon-Derumez, 2010; Fraisse & Guerfel-Henda, 2005; Saulquin, 2004). This pillar focuses on the affable social dimension and its possible links

with HRM.

The objective of this paper is to analyse the sustainable development report of GDF SUEZ Group, focusing on its implementation of socially responsible HRM practices. More precisely, we seek to analyse CSR's influence on methods of managing human resources and on the function and role of HR in ensuring socially responsible behaviour.

We begin by presenting literature that establishes the fundamental concepts of CSR and HRM and the links between them. Next, we specify our methodology and explain our choice of GDF SUEZ Company for our exploratory research. Our analysis will rely on the presentation of certain HRM practices implemented by GDF SUEZ that can be considered socially responsible. Finally, these practices allow us to develop a hypothesis regarding the possible impact of CSR on HRM practices and, in particular, the function and role of HR in GDF SUEZ.

2. Material Studied

2.1 Human Resource Management

HRM is a key asset for companies. According to Becker et al. (1997, in Chrétien et al., 2005), although HRM has long been considered to support other company functions, it is now perceived as a competitive advantage for firms. Peretti (2008) emphasises how the evolution of HRM practices lead to new terms and emergence of stakeholders.

According to Delaney and Huselid (1996) or Schuler and Jackson (1998, in Chrétien et al., 2005), companies must rethink HRM to improve performance and competitive position. These authors emphasise the importance of renewing HRM planning and career programmes. Moreover, HR departments should develop both a more strategic approach for their practices and a strong connection between company strategy and HR policy. By being more business focused, HR departments will be able to create additional value.

According to Dietrich and Pigeure (2005), HRM must respond to companies' objectives, such as performance, profitability, and competitiveness, and should consider people a key asset of the company. HRM will ensure skill development by training, evaluate performance and attempt to increase motivation using specific commitment practices. Sibaud (2003) distinguishes two dimensions of HRM:

- A management dimension that addresses HR function tasks and organisation issues
- A resources dimension that takes into account human capital acquisition, development and promotion.

Becker and Huselid (1999, in Simard et al., 2005) link human resources to sustainable competitive advantage and encourage companies to invest in HRM practices that reinforce positive attitudes towards the firm.

2.2 What Link between CSR and HRM?

More and more companies are establishing practices bound to CSR. If, as asserted by authors, it is the social dimension that is most heavily emphasised in CSR, we can inquire about the existing links between CSR and HRM and how CSR influences HRM practices developed by socially responsible companies.

Indeed, people interviewed by SOFRES in 2001 (in Saulquin, 2004) consider CSR to primarily denounce child labour practices in the Third-World, to encourage positive treatment of staff, and to develop employability. HR professionals interviewed by Coulon (2006) estimate that CSR's major interests are to better involve employees at work and to attract the best employees. These few comments thus imply that influential relationships could exist between HRM and CSR, a conclusion strengthened by Scouarnec's (2005) survey regarding CSR's considerable impact on HR functions, with a very strong presence of HR professionals in CSR files. Weiss (in Moreno, 2008) considers that 'CSR would ensue from the evolution of the working practices and thus from a better consideration of the environmental and social impacts of the companies's activities'. These authors' comments imply a narrow link between CSR and HRM.

Therefore, when both concepts—CSR and HRM—merge, socially responsible HRM practices are established within a company that affect workers primarily in terms of human capital investment (all the capacities, talents, qualifications, and experiences accumulated by an individual that partially determine his capacity to work or to produce for himself or for others), health and safety. The main objective of companies in applying responsible practices is to attract and keep qualified workers within their infrastructures, with specific stakes for HRM.

According to Beaupré et al. (2008), Grimand and Vandangeon-Derumez (2010) or Gond et al. (2011), there are few studies regarding the links between HRM and CSR. In these rare studies, CSR will be perceived 'as an average utility or instrument to emphasis the social rationality of the company' (Beaupré et al., 2008). The same

approach would improve company image, commitment and staff loyalty, and would guarantee good working conditions for employees. These authors consider that when CSR intends to benefit employees, it takes the shape of training individuals to progress in their careers, promoting diversity of all visible minorities, and offering interesting conditions of remuneration, including gratitude and employee profit-sharing in shareholding.

Furthermore, Fraisse and Guerfel-Handa (2005) consider the possibility that HRM could represent a powerful lever that would help companies to adopt more responsible behaviour. HRM could thus support and help to solidify establishment of CSR within companies (Preuss et al., 2009). Redington (2005) and Gond et al. (2011) agree with such a view by emphasizing the key role of HR professionals and effective people-management for successful CSR programmes. On this subject, Beaupré et al. (2008) indicate that change management, training programmes and systems of communication with employees, programmes reconciling private life with professional life and health prevention at work, are examples of HRM practices supporting and strengthening CSR. This role of HRM in CSR development would be particularly crucial in view of the importance of employees' knowledge of the organisation and the skilled labour shortage. Furthermore, Fraisse and Guerfel-Handa (2005) also show CSR's influence in redefining HRM strategies by bringing to light questions of lifelong training, health and safety, diversity, and equal treatment of men and women. For example, Sharma et al. (2009) argue that the designing of performance management system will be impacted by CSR in order to better measure the employees socially responsible initiatives. According these authors, "this becomes important as the internalization of CSR in an organizational culture requires that appropriate behaviours get appraised, appreciated as well as rewarded" (Sharma et al., 2009). A system of mutual influence would thus exist between HRM and CSR, suggesting that HR functions and roles could evolve according to CSR practices established by the company.

Moreover, according to Beaupré et al. (2008), responsible shares of recruitment in a non-discriminatory sense might increase hiring, allowing people to return to the labour market. The persons most often concerned are generally ethnic minorities, old employees, women, persons unemployed for extended periods, and disadvantaged persons.

According to a study carried out by the European Commission (2001), these responsible practices would make the goals of the European strategy for employment attainable, including an unemployment rate decrease, an employment rate increase and a fight against social exclusion.

According to Fraisse and Guerfel-Handa (2005), HRM raises three types of challenges within the CSR framework: the maintenance of employee motivation and the management of skills development, the institution of confidence in management, and the development of employability. Regarding the question of employee motivation, these authors consider that salary is not sufficient; the company must also be able to offer to its staff enriching activities and stimulating projects. This question of motivation is all the more crucial as 'the staff is the only internal partner of the company and, that as such, he plays an essential role in the dynamic of sustainable development' (Férone et al., 2001; Fraisse & Guerfel-Handa, 2005).

In this framework, HR's function would be 'the only function of the company which can give sense and coherence, communicate and innovate with the aim of setting up CSR principles' (Beaupré et al., 2008).

Regarding the staff mix developed by Martory and Crozet (2008), Grimand and Vandangeon-Derumez (2010) state that the HRM practices that can be influenced by the CSR approach are compensation policy (internal and external equities of remunerations), employees' social valuation (privileged internal flexibility, diversity policy regarding recruitments and intern promotion), climate and social behaviour (preventing absenteeism), and the company's social image (investigating social climate, partnerships with training institutions).

On the contrary, other authors believe that the connection between CSR and HRM only concerns some specific domains, such as health and safety at work or prevention of discrimination at work (Kagnicioglu, 2007; Bowsprit et al., 2008). In conclusion, we think a socially responsible HRM influences attitudes and behaviour of company members.

3. Methodology

If Beaupré et al. (2008) conclude that applying a CSR perspective to HRM will not change HRM objectives (to attract, retain, develop and motivate) and that socially responsible HRM will focus more on well-being objectives, we can wonder about CSR's influence on HRM practices and on HR functions and roles. To study CSR's potential impact on HR's function and its roles in a company, we conducted exploratory research by analysing the involvement of GDF SUEZ's HR department in CSR. More precisely, we studied GDF SUEZ's sustainable development report (2012). We read all this report and used a content analysis in order to better

determine which CSR practices were developed in GDF SUEZ and how they were implemented. Simultaneously, we selected 3 HRM dimensions and studied how CSR practices implemented by the Group could affect HR roles.

Because of this report, the company has developed a particular image designed for its stakeholders and improved its legitimacy. Its content highlights HR's methods of supporting the CSR approach and the various roles HR function could play in the company. While aiming to give sense to company activities, discourses also tend to stimulate or dissuade actions (Point, 2007). Several reasons explain our choice to study GDF SUEZ: according to Fortune, GDF SUEZ is the most socially responsible company in the world and is among the ten best companies in the world, regardless of sector. GDF SUEZ has won many CSR prizes (for example, a prize for the best CSR report, prizes for specific actions related to diversity, etc.) and is the only company in its sector to have joined the Dow Jones Sustainability Index of the World (that is, the world index of sustainable development values) in 2003 (ORSE, 2003). While developing activities in the electricity and natural gas fields, GDF SUEZ has a strong commitment to the environment. GDF's vocational plan is extremely simple, according to the company: 'to be useful for people'.

Our analysis proceeds in two steps: we first explain GDF SUEZ's position regarding three HR practices that seem to be very crucial in the current climate. Then, we probe the way in which CSR impacts these practices and HR's functions and roles. More precisely, we studied GDF SUEZ's implementation of CSR by focusing on its sustainable development report. As stated by Garric et al. (2007), such report contributes to the development of a company's specific image for its stakeholders and helps to develop its legitimacy.

4. Socially Responsible HRM Practices

HRM practices currently seem very crucial for companies. Several studies connect some of these HRM practices with companies' commitments to social responsibility. In this study, we will focus on 3 HRM dimensions:

- Recruitment and job access,
- Training and career advancement,
- Health and well-being in the workplace.

According to contextual factors, such as ageing, labour shortage, war for talent, etc., such practices could be very essential for companies. Added et al. (2009) highlight the fact that HR must attract new workers but also must enhance a company's human resources. Moreover, well-being at work tends to be a crucial issue for HR departments at a time when people are talking more and more about psychological stress in the workplace.

By studying the content of GDF SUEZ's sustainable development report, we will attempt to better understand how this company links these three HR dimensions while introducing socially responsible policies.

4.1 Recruitment and Employment Access

While recruitment can be perceived as a practice that either ostracises or helps someone 'fit in' to a company, it is also a socially visible practice: job offers are published, external partners are consulted, etc. There are thus many things at stake in recruitment, both for potential workers and for companies that rely on workers' skills and dynamism to complete projects. Even if companies encounter more and more difficulties in attracting talent, recruitment practices are essential to cope with economic and demographic challenges (ageing, labour shortage, etc.) (Berger, 2012).

Job access programmes can be powerful means to attract qualified labour. In his survey of 106 HR directors, Coulon (2006) notes that these directors do not frequently cooperate with occupational integration agencies and that companies generally offer insecure jobs (temporary contracts, temporary work, etc.).

A socially responsible company should implement recruitment and job access policies closely linked with the societal stakes of sustainable development.

GDF SUEZ has implemented a number of actions allowing recruitment and/or access to more social employment. With a recruitment requirement estimated at 100,000 persons for the period 2012–2017, GDF SUEZ has placed its recruitment policy at the heart of its strategy. The Group has signed an agreement to narrow the gap between its needs and available external resources. The five key missions of this agreement are: 'monitor developments in jobs and skills, and their effects on employment by region; identify potential pathways between jobs; take into account the density of presence of Group companies within countries and regions; anticipate business developments by securing career paths; identify training courses related to business developments' (GDF SUEZ, 2011).

The literature has also highlighted the importance of recruiting a skilled workforce and cooperating with local environments. GDF SUEZ addresses this social issue by adapting its recruitment techniques and employment strategies to current changes. In its sustainable development report, the company emphasises the importance of focusing on its external stakeholders and of integrating its external environment into its recruitment policy. To enhance its attractiveness and staff professionalism, the Group has diversified actions targeting more than 55,000 students per year: targeted recruitment campaigns, partnerships with universities, apprentices' integration improvement, and so on. The Group was able to establish a diversified recruitment policy through much external collaboration. In the same vein, GDF SUEZ also organises projects such as e-recruiting ('to improve the management of applications for all Group entities') and the Source-In ('to offer HR optimised expertise in recruitment') (GDF SUEZ, 2011). In addition, GDF SUEZ seeks to support local employment. The project Touat's (city in Algeria) implementation is designed by GDF SUEZ to 'boost local and national employment and put in place a sustainable local integration strategy, working with the authorities' (GDF SUEZ, 2011). The objectives of this pilot project are 'to strengthen local capacity through training, principally of women, the transfer of expertise, and creation of jobs and sustainable income for future generations' (GDF SUEZ, 2011).

In addition, the GDF SUEZ Company goes further in its investment in social responsibility. It is defined by the mixed nature and diversity of its recruitment. Thus, GDF SUEZ is sensitive to the issue of gender equality in the workplace and has stated that by 2015 'one senior manager in three will be a woman, 25% of managers will be women, 30% of new recruits will be women and 35% of high-potential employees will be women' (GDF SUEZ, 2011). GDF SUEZ is also aware of access to employment for people with disabilities and was able to advance their direct employment to 6% in the French workforce. GDF SUEZ's HR department is also committed to diversity by focusing on four objectives: 'equal treatment, promotion of diversity by targeted and measurable actions, a dedicated phone line to listen to concerns, and the development of partnerships' (GDF SUEZ, 2011). The Diversity Label was awarded to GDF SUEZ by Afnor (the French standards institute) 'in recognition of the Group's actions for equal opportunities and occupational integration over some thirty years' (GDF SUEZ, 2011).

4.2 Training and Career Development

According to Beaupré et al. (2008), De Serres, Gendron and Ramboarisata (2006), the European Communities Commission (2001) and Coulon (2006), companies must reach an acceptable training rate with regard to their payroll. Companies must be capable of investing enough in training to be able to promote the social well-being of their workers (Dibigeon, 2005).

Moreover, there is discrimination in terms of training access among various worker profiles (workers, employees, executives, men-women) in companies. According to Fournier (2004), 'the training benefits more the executives than in the employees or in the workers. As regards the women, we notice the same still stressed drift. The equal access to the professional training thus seems a crucial stake with regard to the disparities of gender'. According to Thu Thao Lê and De Nanteuil (2010), 'in all the sectors, executives have more chance to reach the professional training which is less bound to the execution of the tasks (the cultural training, the development of the personality) while the skilled workers and the foremen are less favourable to this type of training'. Furthermore, according to a survey by CVTS, companies more often train employees from 25 to 54 years old than people under 25. However, employees older than 55 years would benefit less from professional training (Thu Thao Lê & De Nanteuil, 2010).

According to a survey on professional training (CVTS, 2005), women have on average a little less access to training than men. The difference is small: 40.5% participation for men and 38.6% for women. On the other hand, a bigger difference between men and women is found in training duration. 'The male participants receive on average 32.6 hours of trainings, whereas this figure is lower, approximately 5 hours, for the women (27.5 hours). The difference between men and women turns out greater in the companies of at least 1,000 employees and the small firms from 20 to 49 employees'.

We notice that there are still disparities in employees' training access. According to Capron and Quairel-Lanoizelée (2004) and Brammer et al. (2007), professional training must be one of the major concerns of a socially committed company. It is all the more important because training contributes to practices such as mobility, internal promotion, and employees' professional evolution.

Cadin et al. (1997) analyse the disparities by employees' statuses, and find that the supervisory staff generally benefits more from programmes in management of formalised careers. Career management is all the more important as employees become more and more educated and thus desire enriching work and opportunities for growth. It also allows the company to anticipate problems in replacing key positions and, thus, to contribute to its strategy pursuit. In light of demographic ageing and of the shortage of qualified employees that threatens to

appear, companies will be incited to think about their staff's loyalty development and about practices that increase retention and development of employees.

A minimum investment of firms in training is thus desirable to ensure well-being at work and further career development of workers. GDF SUEZ (2011) claims to be attentive to these issues and attempts to maintain, by 2015, 'the level of two-thirds of employees benefiting from at least one training session per year'. GDF SUEZ seeks to identify 'training tracks related to changes in business' and gives employees 'the opportunity to be real agents in their career progression and facilitate the implementation of a personal development plan' (GDF SUEZ, 2011). The establishment of a 'Department for Learning Development' allows staff members access to general and external training. GDF SUEZ also has a management and development policy for Group experts 'to develop the rare technical skills that are currently the province of some 500 specially identified and monitored experts' (GDF SUEZ, 2011). GDF SUEZ put the professional development of its employees at the heart of its business project.

GDF SUEZ's sustainable development report emphasises the development of its management staff and its technical experts ('program to identify, support and develop its high-potential executives') and implements projects such as 'Leaders for Tomorrow' which contribute to the diversity of management teams in attempting 'to know and enrich the lives of those who will one day become management, to prepare these high-potential individuals, and ensure that the best employees stay with the company' (GDF SUEZ, 2011). GDF SUEZ has also developed the project 'Storengy 2015' that gives each staff member the opportunity to build his or her career. In addition, the company implemented in 2011 the META-Next Generation programme, allowing it 'to identify regional talents in IPR GDF SUEZ Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META) and pave the way for succession' (GDF SUEZ, 2011).

GDF SUEZ goes further to support its employees and their career development. The Group supports professional mobility 'in increasing its initiatives to promote spontaneous demands for change of job, region or entity, in fostering a better alignment between internal skills and the needs of the business lines, in strengthening cultural integration, cooperation and equality of opportunities and in encouraging knowledge pooling and the development of innovation' (GDF SUEZ, 2011). The Group also emphasises the impact of mobility in terms of attractiveness, implication and loyalty of employees.

4.3 Health, Safety, and Well-Being in the Workplace

In asking for more and more energy at work and putting pressure on their workers, companies risk having a negative influence on their staff's well-being. Beaupré et al. (2008) state that a poor work environment leads a worker to be involve in his work because he is afraid of losing his job, rather than because of employer recognition. Professional exhaustion, depression, and absenteeism are also negative effects for workers. According to the Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité (INRS), one out of five European workers suffers from a health disorder linked to stress in the workplace. Eurostat (2009, in Dériot, 2010) notes that 28% of European workers (56 million people) are exposed to at least one factor that could disrupt their well-being at work.

In the current climate, health and well-being at work are extremely important HRM issues. According to Lefkowitz (2006), socially responsible behaviours and attitudes include workers' well-being, respect, and the development of positive working environments. The improvement of staff well-being can help attract talent, to reinforce staff loyalty and to motivate employees. In her survey, Scouarnec (2005) emphasises that HR directors of the future will more and more have to address health issues at work and closely work with those in charge of health, quality or safety matters. HR teams will have to more closely consider the working environment. Abord de Chatillon (2005) agrees, noting that health and safety are becoming increasingly relevant to HR activities.

A responsible company should thus listen to its stakeholders, especially its internal stakeholders. In its sustainable development policy, GDF SUEZ cares about the well-being, health and safety of its internal stakeholders. For example, the company has trained its managers in health and safety management and is engaged in a 'Well-Being at Work' process.

GDF SUEZ (2011) seeks to reduce the risks in its subsidiaries and to transform each of its employees into an engaged actor in his own health and safety as well as that of his colleagues: the Group 'encourages the commitment of each entity by constructing a mechanism for its specific challenge, its risk factors and their consequences on the health of employees and on the exposure of employees'. Its social commitment is based on three major challenges: 'to continue to reduce workplace accidents, particularly by preventing industrial accidents; to improve working conditions to reduce the risks related to chemical products, musculoskeletal and psychosocial disorders; and to strengthen our professionalism in health and safety areas' (GDF SUEZ, 2011).

All of these steps contribute to the sustainable development objectives of the company, such as the willingness of the company to reduce accidents and time off and to 'achieve a Frequency rate of less than 6 by 2015' (GDF SUEZ, 2011).

5. Discussion and Results

In this paper, we seek to identify how CSR can impact the way HRM is implemented in companies. The sustainable development report from GDF SUEZ suggests that the Group places emphasis on the three socially responsible HRM practices we focused on in our study. According to GDF SUEZ (2012), an exemplary working environment, employees' professional fulfilment, and diversity and equal opportunities to access employment are its imperatives. The Group is intensely involved in human capital development. As stated by Saulquin (2004), companies that announce their CSR commitment advocate employment creation and preservation or quality lifelong learning. We find also the impact of communication and dialogue in our analysis of the GDF SUEZ report. Even if the Group mentions employee shareholding, we note that it does not speak much about its compensation policy.



Figure 1. Typology of HR roles, Ulrich and Brockbank (2005)

What can we conclude about CSR's potential impact on HRM practices and roles? To answer this question, we utilised Ulrich and Brockbank's (2005) model that distinguishes five specific HR roles:

The strategic partner takes responsibility for organisational diagnosis and tries to solve organisational problems with specific HR plans. He helps a company to change and works closely with line managers. The human capital developer takes charge of staff skills and of career development. The HR leader manages issues and assesses its functions and tries to closely work with and influence the rest of the organisation. He is in charge of establishing the HR programme and defining how people and the organisation work together. According to Arifat et al. (2005), practices such as recruitment, training or performance management must be perfectly managed. The employee advocate listens and responds to employees and attempts to respond to them. Such a role includes paying attention to ethics issues when recruiting. Finally, the HR functional expert suggests administrative HR practices.

All these roles do not seem to be impacted in the same way by the CSR programme implemented by GDF SUEZ. According to this study, the employee advocate's role is affected by the way GDF SUEZ sets up CSR. With a role that favours well-being in the workplace, the HR leader's function must take into account ethics, diversity, or health/safety issues. GDF SUEZ desires to diversify its recruiting policy by attracting students, by favouring block release trainings and apprentice integration, by having women comprise 30% of its workforce, and by supporting access to employment for disabled persons. Communication and climate of trust development also seem to be crucial. For example, GDF SUEZ has developed health management reviews that emphasise listening and dialogue both with colleagues and with social partners. Workers are perceived as playing an active role in their own safety. Health and safety policies help the employee advocate to act in favour of well-being in the

workplace. Some GDF branches have also become involved in specific programmes or trainings favouring well-being at work.

If CSR affects the human capital developer, it is especially at the level of training. For example, health and safety topics influence the type of trainings delivered to workers: more than 1,400 managers were '*trained in the Group approach to health and safety management at the GDF SUEZ University*' (GDF SUEZ, 2012). Moreover, 28.6% of total training hours were devoted to such topics. We note that GDF SUEZ does not speak much about diversity topics when it mentions worker development in the Group. While emphasising its goal to favour employment access for disabled persons, nothing is said by the Group about career development of such workers. Coulon (2006) also noted that even if companies make efforts to recruit disabled people, they make few efforts to integrate them. From a career development perspective, GDF SUEZ seems to focus on equal opportunities for men and women. For example, the Group has defined several targets for 2015, where women comprise 35% of high-potential employees and 25% of managers, and so on. Our analysis leads us to think that CSR implemented by GDF SUEZ is supported by HR practices reported as CSR (training, health and safety, etc.) and, as emphasized by Gond et al. (2011), by practices at the overlap of CSR issues and HR (diversity management, gender equality, integration of disabled employees, etc.). That can raise the question of the clear delimitation of borders between HR and CSR (Gond et al., 2011).

The following table summarises CSR's impact on GDF SUEZ's HRM practices:

Table 1. Impact of CSR on GDF SUEZ HRM practices and on Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) roles

Ulrich and Brockbank roles	HRM practices	CSR concept impacting GDF SUEZ HRM practices
Employee advocate	Recruitment	Diversity (employment access for minority Groups), fairness
	Communication and dialogue	Health and safety
	Well-being	
Human capital developer	Training	Health and safety
	Career development	Diversity (but only gender)

If the HRM practices selected in our analysis do not seem to affect the other three roles established by Ulrich and Brockbank (2005), we note in studying GDF SUEZ's sustainable development report that the Group often emphasises managers' collaboration and partnership. Managers must support the Group CSR project and assimilate GDF SUEZ's Management Way, which identifies expected behaviours for the 30,000 managers. Lam and Khare (2010) emphasize the strong influence of managers on employee behaviour and their commitment to CSR. GDF SUEZ also highlights the importance of innovative HRM practices to make change easier. Thus, the strategic partner's or HR leader's roles could be impacted by this conception. Because GDF SUEZ's sustainable development report does not provide us with enough information to foresee how these roles could evolve, we note similarities between GDF SUEZ's HRM activities and the mediated HR role (Pichault, in Bournois & Leclair, 2004). According to Pichault, such a role has more substantial marketing profile and aims to create a similar picture regarding communication supports, intensive trainings and integrative actions, even if there are several corporate bodies that work differently. While emphasising diversity or dialogue within the Group, GDF SUEZ recognises various CSR actions specific to subsidiaries. Pichault signals that such mediated HR departments closely work with operational members and focus activities on communication and organisational development. According to GDF SUEZ, managers' involvement is crucial to meet the Group's HR goals, to enhance Group human capital and to develop an attractive Group image. Enhancing attractiveness is indeed one of the three themes of CSR policy: according to GDF SUEZ, an exemplary working environment, where people are fulfilled with their job, can persuade young talent to join the Group. The Group can take advantage of a better image and a better ability to attract talent by promoting an HR policy that focuses more on CSR topics. For example, mobility is considered as a means to attract and retain talent and to secure commitment (GDF SUEZ, 2012). As stated by Garric et al. (2007), a sustainable development report is a real public relations tool that builds company legitimacy and makes notoriety perpetual. With such CSR appropriation, the company tries to show it is meeting stakeholders' expectations by introducing specific policies. According to Saulquin (2004), HR directors are particularly interested in CSR because of its effects on corporate image improvement.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we sought to identify the links between CSR and HRM and, more precisely, how CSR affects HRM practices. While the literature emphasises HRM support for CSR policies, we think that such CSR activities can affect the way a company applies HRM practices. To understand the CSR-HRM link better, we conducted an exploratory study by analysing the sustainable development report by GDF SUEZ. We focused on three HRM practices that seem to be essential in today's working environment: recruitment and employment access, training and career development, and well-being in the workplace.

Our analysis of GDF's sustainable development report leads us to conclude that CSR is more influential on employee advocates' role by leading HR departments to take into consideration fairness, health and safety, and diversity topics while introducing HRM practices. To a lesser extent, human capital developers seem also impacted: they must focus trainings on CSR related topics (such as health and safety) and promote career development based on professional equalities. These practices depicted in the sustainable development report from GDF affect the Group's attractiveness and bring the function of HR closer to a mediated role by developing a socially responsible employer image that can have positive consequences.

We are aware of this study's limits. Interviews with managers in GDF SUEZ (in particular, HR professionals or diversity managers) could help us to better understand the impact of CSR on HRM. To know which HRM practices are essential to solidify the commitment to social responsibility, we could extend our analysis by studying other Groups' sustainable development reports. If HRM practices used to support CSR policy do not alter HRM goals (to attract, retain, and develop talent), we think such practices could help to achieve these goals in the present and future working environment, which potentially lacks labour (Beaupré et al., 2008).

Furthermore, we believe that this research could benefit more from other managers of companies that are concerned to increase their social performance as a factor of profitability, while providing to their workers socially responsible human resource management practices that can positively influence their working conditions and generally well-being at work.

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