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# **Managing (diverse) human resources: a research note on cultural sustainable organizations**

*Amelia Manuti, Maria Luisa Giancaspro, Antonella Campo\**

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## **Abstract**

This paper was aimed to explore the employees' perception of the organizational cultural diversity management practices. To this purpose, the organizational context chosen was that of an Italian branch of a multinational health care company, constantly engaged in managing a culturally composite workforce. To investigate how employees have perceived the initiatives brought about by the company to support diversity management and integrate their foreign newcomer colleagues, a focus group was conducted. Participants were a group of 8 workers belonging to different cultures of origin and employed in the branch at the time of data collection. Discursive data were audio-taped, transcribed and analyzed adopting both computer aided content analysis and discourse analysis. Results were discussed in light with the positive implications of diversity management interventions with reference to learning sustainability.

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## **The strategic value of Diversity Management in organizations**

The concept of globalization has recently increased the importance and role of workforce diversity in organizations in terms of “culture”, among the multifarious facets of workforce diversity (e.g. gender, age, education, skills, etc.). Cultural workforce diversity is rapidly becoming a factor, which needs to be urgently managed within organizations because of its relevant impact on organizational efficiency and performance. More and more people live and work in foreign countries and thus they continually come into contact with the people coming from very diversified cultural origins, involving language, norms, lifestyle, etc. (Zakaria, 2000). Managing people on a global scale inevitably requires dealing with cultural diversity and with the problems regarding motivation, leadership, productivity, authority, etc. (Selmer, 2002).

Yet, perspectives differing from each other about this matter in literature are encountered. A group of authors claims that cultural diversity is an important tool for competitive superiority and therefore they should be supported (Fleury, 1999; Iles & Hayers, 1997). In an alternative view, it is claimed that cultural diversity has negative sides as well as positive sides and should be considered as a resource of problems (Berger, Soper & Foster, 2002). Authors in support of this perspective claim that organizational systems should be constructed in order to maximize the potential superiorities of cultural diversity and to minimize its disadvantages (Kidger, 2002).

In brief, the answer to the question of how this diversity should be managed cannot be given easily. Each organization should find ways to be able to manage cultural diversity by casting management and organization structure and the peculiar conditions, which affect and determine that structure. What is important is to improve the best appropriate employment policies decreasing the negative sides of cultural diversity and bringing the advantageous sides in the foreground by examining them one by one.

This is even more evident while considering ‘diversity’ as the essential condition of a sustainable organizing system, meaning that sustainable organization occurs only when the system encompasses ‘diverse’ actors (Hansmann *et al.*, 2009; Hansmann, 2010). Indeed, organizations are made up by the talents, skills, knowledge of the individuals and this is what makes them working (sometimes even) successfully. Based on this principle, the circulation of such ‘diversity’ leads to the development of very complex patterns of sense-making that contribute to shape a common code to produce, store, and deliver information, useful to constantly renovate “the way we do things around here” (Schein, 1992, p. 10).

Hence, through the process of reflection, involving at a time the individual and the organizational learning process, individuals in organizations undertake more thoughtful, purposeful and value-driven actions, they learn deliberately how to integrate their knowledge with the demands of the situation (Naudè, 2012), in a word, they become ‘sustainable learning organizations’ (Velazquez *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, ‘sustainable learning organizations’ are those that are able to face the challenge of diversity management in the perspective of sustainable development (Hatch & Dyer, 2004).

The present paper was intended to address these issues by showing the preliminary results from a case study.

## **The study: aims, participants, context of the research**

Moving from the theoretical assumptions drawn above, the study described in the paper reported results from a case study whose main aim was to investigate the employees’ perception of the cultural diversity management practices in a multinational context, trying to highlight if and to what extent such perception could be a useful input for a ‘sustainable development’ of the organization, being diversity and integration both pivots of this construct.

The study involved a group of employees of a well-known healthcare company: Johnson & Johnson. More specifically, participants worked in one of its main division, which is called Janssen Italy, whose core business is pharmaceuticals. At first focused on the American market,

within the last 50 years, Jansen has expanded in Latin America, Africa, Australia and Europe. In 1944, being a family company Jansen became an international group. J&J, the acronym that identifies the group, is an organization, which relies upon decentralization of responsibilities and activities. Each local group is managed independently and the top management is directly responsible below a unique central entity, the Group Operating Committee, which coordinates and controls the international operations.

Nowadays, J&J is one of the biggest international group within the field of health and wellbeing. It encompasses 250 companies, which work in 57 countries, handles different products in more than 175 countries and has more than 121.000 employees.

The Johnson & Johnson group is active in three areas: Medical devices and diagnostics, consumer and pharmaceutical. More specifically, the last one is called Janssen-Cilag, and is present in Italy with two sieges at Cologno Monzese (MI) and at Borgo San Michele (LT). The present study considered the first organizational context, because of the special attention it has always devoted toward diversity management. In its mission, the company states its responsibility by highlighting that “we should acknowledge dignity and merits of our personnel, of all males and females working here and all over the world”<sup>1</sup>.

More specifically, at first, Jansen’s HR practices oriented toward sustainability have mostly focused on gender diversity management. While, in the course of the last year, because of its multinational features, continuously in touch with branches and clients all over the world, a special attention has been cast on cultural diversity as to foster integration and collaboration.

Within 2012, Janssen Italy has launched the project “Diversity & Inclusion” whose main aim has been that of creating an inclusive culture where differences are seen as a potential to enhance. More specifically the initiative “At lunch with...” has involved a group of 6 Janssen employees, who are non-Italian citizens and have been asked to provide

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.jnj.com/about-jnj/management-approach>, retrieved on the 3rd of February 2014.



typical recipes, to be cooked by the chef and to be served during the lunch in the canteen to all employees.

The international menus has been sponsored by adverts both in the canteen and on the Intranet website, where a page completely dedicated to the daily menu has been launched. During the International Week, according to country of origin of the meal, employees have found on the tables leaflets about the ingredients and the recipes of the meal and, in addition, curiosities and ‘did you know that...?’ about the Country.

To better investigate how employees have perceived this initiative and the impact of the latter in terms of cultural integration, the present study had conducted a focus group discussion involving a group of 8 workers (4 Italian and 4 foreign employees; 7 males and 1 female – aged respectively 30-60).

They were all high-skilled executives in charge of different tasks and working independently from each other. The countries of origin of the foreign employees were Nicaragua, Russia, France, Brazil and Argentina). Participants were selected because when we collected data they were the single non Italian workers in the company. Moreover, Italian colleagues were involved as to assure a counter-feedback to the study, thus enriching the perception of efficacy of such a diversity management action also on the side of Italians.

The discussion lasted about 60 minutes and was audio-taped. In addition, extensive notes were taken during the discussion, and these were subsequently employed when the tapes were reviewed and transcribed.

Focus-group participants were generally invited to share their personal experience of integration in the incoming organizational context. This often concerned their reactions and coping strategies.

Indeed, the main aims of the study were then to reconstruct through narrative firstly how Italian employees were experiencing this kind of cultural diversity action; secondly how foreign employees perceived the organizational attempt to integrate cultures and to enhance diversity.

Certainly, social desirability could not be excluded since the nature of the topics covered in the discussion were all related to assimilation process the official organizational culture.

Data analysis articulated into two steps.

The first step was addressed to investigate the content of discourses and thus data transcriptions were analyzed with the aid of the software T-lab in order to point out the main recurrent thematic nodes of the discussion, thus comparing participants' contributions.

This first methodological option was aimed at highlighting words occurrences and co-occurrences as to define which were the so-called keywords of the two focus group discussions, those are the words recurrent in terms of statistical significance. Then, the specific "words associations" option allowed to identify a target word and to investigate which were the relationships between these words and the ones that were significantly associated with it. Graphically, this kind of analysis showed an imaginary plan where distance/proximity between words could be measured by a statistically significant coefficient.

The second step adopted diatextual analysis (Mininni, 1992), that is a kind of critical discourse analysis attempting at specifying the dialogical tension 'text-context' which is implicit in every discursive interaction. Such methodological option has allowed focusing on the strict relationship, which binds discourse to the context of utterance and which is so relevant as to understand the process of co-construction of meaning which animates each communicative event. More specifically, discourse analysis performed on the corpus collected in the present study has allowed investigating how the interlocutors did perceive the cultural diversity management practices realized by the organization, as emergent in discourse.

Then, discourse analysis elaborated subjective, polyphonic and unsystematic perspectives and was focused more on dynamic talk-in-interaction procedures than on constant discursive traits manifested by an external point of view. During this stage, much attention was devoted to the explicit and implicit context of the texts collected.

Therefore, the profound meaning implied in the narrative of each participant was caught in the dynamic and reciprocal relations between narrations and explicit as well as implicit (subjective) experiences.

To fulfill such aim, the present study argued that a psycho-semiotic device named "diatext" could be adopted. Indeed, the diatext was "the context as it is perceived by the enunciators of the text, as they imagine it and show that they take it into account" (Mininni, 1992, p. 63).

Therefore, diatextual analysis was based on interpretations whose aim was to increase the value of the “spirit” underlying communication.

Actually, sense did not reside permanently within texts; rather it went through them because of the joint action of the enunciators, who negotiate the frame of the situation (*stake*) which they are actively involved in. The sense could be caught by answering to three basic questions: *Who is saying that? Why does he/she say it? How does he/se say it?*.

**Table 1.** Diatextual markers of the SAM model.

| Questions of<br>Diatextual Analysis  | Dimensions of<br>Diatextual<br>Pregnancy | Diatextual Markers   |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Who is the utterer<br>of the text?   | <b>Subjectivity</b>                      | <b>✓ Agentivity:</b> any textual unit showing if the enunciator is source or goal of action;<br><b>✓ Affectivity:</b> any textual unit highlighting the emotional dimension of texts;<br><b>✓ Embrayage/debrayage:</b> any textual unit revealing whether the enunciator is involved or not. |
| Why the text organizes<br>its world? | <b>Argumentation</b>                     | <b>✓ Stake:</b> aims and interests animating the text;<br><b>✓ Story:</b> scenes, characters, models of action;<br><b>✓ Network:</b> <i>logoi</i> and <i>antilogoi</i> activated within the several narrative and argumentative programs   |
| How the text is built?               | <b>Modality</b>                          | <b>✓ Genre:</b> any reference to the typology of text and intertextual references;<br><b>✓ Opacity:</b> rhetorical figures, frame metaphors, etc.<br><b>✓ Metadiscourse:</b> any expressions of comment and reformulation.   |

These questions organized the interpretative procedures of the “SAM Model” (Mininni, 1999), since they suggested looking for a series of markers, which identified *Subjectivity*, *Argumentation* and *Modality* of discourses (Table 1).

## Results

### *Content analysis*

The first step of data analysis was addressed to perform computer-aided content analysis. The quali-quantitative analysis granted by the software T-lab allowed investigating the words' associations and the thematic nodes' map (Lancia, 2004).

With specific reference to the study presented above, some keywords were selected as to fulfill the main aim of analyzing how both foreign and local workers have experienced the organization's cultural diversity management initiatives. The choice was also guided by a preliminary analysis of the formal public documents, where the company's organizational culture was communicated both inside and outside the organizational borders (e.g., website, leaflets, billboards, etc.). Then, such evidences also supported our interpretation of the associations. More specifically, the keywords chosen were: “Janssen” (the company name), “beliefs system”, “diversity”, “culture”, and “lunch”. For each word, T-lab computed a cosine coefficient, which allowed estimating proximity/distance between words in the discursive corpus analyzed. The more the value was higher the more the words were near in the discourse and thus co-occurred significantly.

As for the key word “Janssen”, the most recurrent associations was found with the words “to born” ( $c=0.37$ ), “to live” ( $c=0.30$ ), “to learn” ( $c=0.25$ ), “multinational company” ( $c=0.25$ ), “positive” ( $c=0.23$ ), “world” ( $c=0.20$ ) and “woman” ( $c=0.17$ ). The analysis of this map allowed to define a representation of the company as a space where workers are engaged most of their time (see for instance the co-occurrence with the word “to live”), thus enjoying this membership (see the co-occurrence with “positive”). The co-occurrence with the word “to born” recalled a mostly used metaphor of the organization as a

living thing, as a person with his/her own identity. Moreover, it could be also associated with the birth of the speaker as a member of the company. The recurrence of the words “multinational company” and “world” underlined the distinctive features of the company and its global breath, which was generally shared by the participants to the discussion. A very peculiar co-occurrence was the word “woman”, which of course was used to refer to the special attention that Janssen had always devoted to this part of its workforce (as mentioned above with reference to the Gender Diversity policy of the company).

A second keyword considered was the word “beliefs system”. This was part of the Janssen organizational culture, and it referred to the whole of values and shared beliefs, which concretely oriented the workers’ attitudes and behaviors. The most significant recurrences in this case were with the words: “important” ( $c=0.33$ ), “diversity” ( $c=0.20$ ), “positive” ( $c=0.20$ ), “work” ( $c=0.19$ ), “quality” ( $c=0.14$ ), “people” ( $c=0.13$ ). These words recalled the milestones of the company’s culture that was the concern for people, both for customers and employees, the quality of work, the concern for diversity, the relevance and importance attributed to this beliefs systems by the Janssen workers (see for instance the link ‘our company’ in the company’s website).

The core of the discussion presented in the study represented a third key word: “diversity”.

The word diversity was mainly associated with the words: “world” ( $c=0.25$ ), “to live” ( $c=0.25$ ), “beliefs system” ( $c=0.20$ ), “positive” ( $c=0.20$ ), “Johnson&Johnson” ( $c=0.15$ ), “to interact” ( $c=0.15$ ), “nice” ( $c=0.13$ ).

The recurrence of the adjectives “nice” and “positive” reinforced the idea that the diversity management initiatives brought about by the company was positively welcomed by workers. Diversity was interpreted as a value, as an opportunity to enrich one’s own worldview in tune with the beliefs system of the Johnson&Johnson group. Such positive attitude was further reinforced by the recurrence of the verbs “to interact” and “to live” that attested the constant engagement of the company and of its members, in taking care of differences and to enhance its potential. Moreover, the word “diversity” is also associated to the word “world”,

which was a further link to the company's tension toward a global inclusive culture, respectful toward any difference.

The focus on the key word "culture" allowed to better specifying the direction of such company policy in diversity management practices, that is cultural diversity management. In this case, the main recurrences were with the words "to think" ( $c=0.35$ ), "to transfer" ( $c=0.33$ ), "to understand" ( $c=0.25$ ), "to know" ( $c=0.23$ ), "different" ( $c=0.23$ ), "country" ( $c=0.22$ ). All these words recalled the tension toward the other, toward what was different.

This tension was but a very positive drift, because it was animated by the wish to know, to understand and to fit to a different culture thus creating a common worldview.

As underlined earlier, such tension became concrete in the actualization of the initiative "At lunch with..." as shown also while analyzing the co-occurrences with "lunch": "to introduce" ( $c=0.35$ ), "initiative" ( $c=0.35$ ), "nice" ( $c=0.23$ ), "country" ( $c=0.11$ ), "diversity" ( $c=0.11$ ), "colleagues" ( $c=0.08$ ), "we" ( $c=0.06$ ). The analysis of words associations allowed to conclude that the initiative was positively welcomed since both foreign and local workers judged it a nice chance to make acquaintance with colleagues and to shape a "we-ness", which was the pivot around which the Janssen group may develop its organizational identity.

### ***Discourse analysis***

The results of content analysis have highlighted some interesting recurrences, which was further investigated through discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 1993).

The discursive space shaped by the focus group discussion has granted a chance to all participants to discuss together about the centrality of the company in the process of identification. The discursive act that better exemplified the discursive construction of diversity in Janssen was that of "celebrating the organization".

Almost each participant highlighted the importance of being part of such a famous and successful organizational context, thus underlining the strict link between personal and organizational identity.

The company was described as a motivating context, very sensitive to the employees' needs and thus careful of diversity management, inclusion and talent enhancement. It was depicted as a familiar and welcoming context where everyone may feel at ease. Discursively speaking, this was testified by the recurrent use of embrayage strategies that witnessed the high involvement and the sense of attachment manifested by the employees, thus confirming the broad consensus toward the organizational mission and vision.

A further confirmation of the high identification was found in the use of subjectivity markers (as for instance attitude markers "I believe", "I agree") and more specifically in the use of argumentation markers such as rhetorical figures.

The metaphor used by the participants in extract 1 recalled the analogical script of the company as a human body, thus having a DNA that was precise distinctive features, which fully corresponded, according to the interviewed employees, to the DNA of its members.

Therefore, being the DNA of the organization the whole of values, norms, assumptions, policies, which actually constitute its beliefs system, this extract confirmed the large perceived fit between person and organization, which characterized this context, and thus the wide consensus to its culture, which wasn't ascribed rather it was perceived to be negotiated and co-constructed with the organizational members.

1. P.P.: "I agree, I am part of this company since 25 years. I have had different tasks and this has allowed me to know different products and different people and this I believe is a very important point of reference in this company that believe very much in the value of people. I believe I have the DNA of the company, but I believe that this DNA is made up by the people who work in it, and it is not produced by the company around those people" (Italian employee).

The discursive construction of "diversity" proposed by participants confirmed the positive attitude toward the organization discussed above. Diversity was meant as a "wealth", as an "added value", as a "drive for development" (see for instance ex. 2).

Such conception derived from the direct experiences of the foreign employees involved in the focus group discussions; anyway, it was

further reinforced in the words of Italian employees who were also involved in the diversity management initiatives (see later ex. 3).

Once more, the recurrence of specific subjectivity markers (personal pronouns and embrayage strategies) highlighted the high involvement and cultural attunement of this part of Janssen's workforce.

2. C.C.: "According to me diversity is an opportunity, it is useful to give people the chance to be inserted apart from their features in different activities within the organizational plant" (Argentinean employee).

E.K.: "According to me diversity is a driver for development then to be diverse means to have the possibility to learn something new and then to enrich one's own culture, worldview and lifestyle" (Russian employee).

P.P.: "To me diversity, I mean diversity in the competences and thus this makes me more motivated to work in team, with colleagues with different skills and competences since it enrich my competence by giving me the chance to take from the team the competences needed to reach a specific goal" (Italian employee).

The view of diversity conveyed by most contributions was thus focused on three pivots: a) equality (e.g. "it is useful to give people a chance to be inserted apart from their features in different activities within the organizational plant"), b) richness of skills and competence (e.g. "diversity in the competences"), c) personal culture and growth (e.g. "this makes me more motivated to work with colleagues with different skills and competences since it enrich my competence").

What was particularly interesting was that this conception of diversity was mostly attuned with the official organizational culture. An example could be drawn once again from the organizational credo communicated in the official website. As shown in the following extract, the company highlighted the value of diversity underlining the equality of workers, the respect for the individuals as precious human resources and the relevance of work experience as growth and development. The synthesis of such cultural view found its climax in the acknowledgement of a "competent management" that was based on an enlightened human resource management.



3. P.P.: “We are responsible to our employees, the men and women who work with us throughout the world. Everyone must be considered as an individual. We must respect their dignity and recognize their merit. They must have a sense of security in their jobs. Compensation must be fair and adequate, and working conditions clean, orderly, and safe. We must be mindful of ways to help our employees fulfill their family responsibilities. Employees must feel free to make suggestions and complaints. There must be equal opportunity for employment, development, and advancement for those qualified. We must provide competent management, and their actions must be just and ethical” (Italian employee).

In view of the above, it is not a surprise that also the Italian employees’ point of view on diversity management was more than positive (ex. 4).

The attention to the “quality of people” is one of the main principles of the organization’s beliefs system, therefore any initiative addressed to this aim was positively welcomed by organizational members who feel so identified. Once more, it recurred the DNA metaphor already used by another participant, thus reinforcing the hypothesis of shared processes of sense making that produce common interpretative repertoires of the organization (e.g. “this is something that we have inside”), which is further reinforced by the recurrent use of the personal pronoun “we”.

4. P.P.: “This company, independently from the country of origin values the quality of people. The quality of people in primis and then the quality of skills owed by those people. It is not a case, as I said before, that this is something we have inside of us because the people who is part of this company has this common DNA. To work with foreign colleagues is so stimulating from a professional point of view but also from a personal point of view. And this makes me more curious to work with them. I think this is very important. It implies not only to accept them but as for all other employees also to give them a feedback, independently from the country of origin, we need continuity in work, we need to share knowledge and practices and to discuss about them” (Italian employee).

All the considerations drawn found final amplification in the evaluation of the Diversity & Inclusion project, and more specifically of the initiative “At lunch with...” which was concretely oriented to the

enhancement of cultural diversity. Janssen has chosen a lunch table as the space of conviviality, friendship and joy.

5. M.E.: “The idea is great for the reasons already explained: to share something, to enhance diversity not only from a professional point of view but also at a personal level. A suggestion is to give more visibility and to spread information about that. It is really great...to take a plate and to share it with other people because at least for 30 minutes I have eaten something from my country. Very very nice! Then with the chefs I enjoyed very much. It was a pleasure to interact with them they couldn’t believe they were cooking that stuff. We experienced this initiative 2 or 3 months ago and they still said “you made us cooking that strange kind of fish!” Truly a very nice experience. Truly” (Nicaraguan employee).

As shown by ex. 5, the use of agency (e.g. through personal pronouns – “I” and “we” – that personalize the discursive contribution), affective (e.g. through the use of positive adjective, emphatics and interpersonal meta-discursive cues such as the adverb “truly”) and embrayage markers (e.g. through the shift between direct and indirect discourse aimed at letting the voices of other participants to be heard) underlined the positive welcome that foreign colleagues have manifested to the initiative.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The case study presented in the paper has granted many interesting insights with reference to the issue of cultural diversity management, paving the way also to some speculations about the strict relationship between HRM and sustainability.

More specifically, the analysis of the data collected have allowed highlighting what happens when diversity management interventions are well fitted and attuned with the official organizational culture. This is an effort that each organization striving to sustainability should accomplish as to define a clear vision and mission, which consequently should be communicated to all employees.

In line with the conclusions drawing the theoretical section of this paper, sustainability is not simply the result of financial and concrete

organizational efforts. Rather it is the output of the negotiation of specific cultural and moral assets.

In this vein, to be sustainable an organization should allow employees to reckon the meaning of the organizational culture, to confront it with one's own values, to adapt it to the daily organizational behavior and finally to feel committed to it, thus granting long-lasting loyalty and engagement to the company. Of course, this chain of value could be further sustained only if employees feel that their commitment to the mission is rewarded by career development opportunities, adequate compensation and a dynamic work environment that allows each to use his or her capabilities for a greater good and to promote sustainable learning, thus resulting in organizational sustainability development. The effect is a high morale, high motivation, high involvement and identification as testified by a rich empirical literature on the topic.

In this frame, Human Resource Management practices play a sensitive role: they could promote cooperation between individuals in organizations they could engender a mutually beneficial co-evolution between the human and the environmental systems, they could contribute to build consensus and to enhance mutual learning in groups. In a word, Human Resource Management practices could help the organization in the aim of pursuing sustainability, thus contributing to shape actual 'sustainable learning organizations' (De Cremer, 2002).

In view of the above, both content and discourse analysis performed in the study have contributed to show how the large consensus among the employees interviewed on the beliefs system proposed by the organization would lead to the definition of a strong, stable and shared organizational identity.

As a consequence, participants have had no difficulty in describing diversity management as an integral part of the organizational culture, as a part of their DNA, thus confirming the whole of values, norms and assumptions which are clearly stated in the official communication tools of the organization, as for instance the official website. In this light, any initiative (as for example "A lunch with"), which has been perceived to be coherent with the core values of the Janssen, that is being open to

change and novelty, being open to new working experience and being open to the enhancement of diversity has been more than welcomed, simply because framed within such vision.

Though its main limitations (the explorative nature of the study, the limited and selected group of participants, social desirability, etc.), the analysis of the present case study has confirmed how powerful Human Resource Management practices could be when aimed at diffusing and sharing organizational culture among the workforce. This is the root of organizational sustainability in its moral dimension (Coblentz, 2002). Consistent with this perspective, the analysis of the diversity management practice adopted in the case study has showed the centrality of learning processes, which have involved individuals as part of the organizational collective.

Hence, these processes of ‘circulation and sharing’ of cultural assets have been mostly oriented to support and implement sustainable development. Even if not explicitly coded as a ‘sustainable’ Human Resource Management practice by the organization, the initiative brought about by the Janssen was proved to be effective in enhancing group development, role-taking, norm formation, collaborative learning, mutual learning, consensus building, and collective decision-making, main pivots of a ‘sustainable learning organization’ (Baron, Kerr, 2003; Scholz *et al.*, 2006).

In sum, though its case-sensitive nature, the study has highlighted some interesting conclusions that would need further investigation, for instance including wider groups of employees invested by the initiative and supporting data collection with more structured measures.

Nonetheless, they have contributed to show that when sustainability is meant as the tension of the organization toward the acknowledgement of its intangible human capital and toward the enhancement of its learning processes, then most probably it would lead to successful objectives in terms of both Human Resource Management and organizational strategic success. This evidence was testified at least in the words of (some) of its workers, who have confirmed that to be a ‘sustainable learning organization’ is beneficial both on the side of the employees and of the company.

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