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Employer Branding and Triple Bottom Line Approach/Fair-trade – a new perspective for HRM

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Abstract

Employer Branding, triple bottom line approach and fair-trade have been discussed massively in academic literature through a lot of lenses. However, there is no paper or empirical evidence representing 'HOW' HR can play an integral role in linking employer branding to triple bottom line approach and fair-trade. Therefore, this study aims to answer that missing link. A qualitative research method was applied using semi-structured interviews – wherein a total of 9 participants in sustainability roles were interviewed – working in UK and India. The main research question of this study is – "How can HR play a pivotal role in linking triple bottom line approach (i.e. Corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability and ethics) and fair-trade to employer branding?". On one hand the existing literature, manages to some bits of this question which is - explaining what these concepts are and how previously research shows links of HR and CSR, HR and sustainability; but upon the analysis of the qualitative data, new themes emerged and brought to attention certain barriers faced by the organisation. This study identified three main methods through which HR can act as a link, namely, contextualisation, collaboration and communication. Nonetheless, the barriers that were found out were – lack of motivation amongst the managers (which trickles down to their teams), and double-hatting by the employees. In closing, it can be stated that with the use of data and HR analytics – the organisations can attempt to overcome these barriers, and build an employer brand that can attract, retain and motivate top talent.

Key Words: CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), Sustainability, Triple Bottom Line Approach, Fair-trade, Employer branding, HRM (Human resource management)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research context and rationale

A fundamental predictor in recruitment and retention of employees – is the attractiveness of the organisation to those employees. Therefore, over several years, Human Resource Management functions have applied marketing thinking to formulate HR strategies – which is called employer branding (Sparrow and Otaye, 2015). As per 2007 CIPD research (*Employer Branding: the latest fad or future of HR?*, 2007), the major reasons for employer branding were identified as – brand power, credibility, employee engagement and labour market conditions. Even after a decade, this concept remains quite relevant and continues to enhance an organisation's strategic influence, credibility and in building an engaged workforce. An integral aspect influencing the process of employer branding is psychological contract – which as CIPD suggests, is the 'deal' between the employer and the employee, better known as – employee value proposition.

The world of work and the context of work is witnessing a myriad of changes – from climate change, use of natural resources, employee well-being, value chains and the global economic crisis – impacting the business activities on all the stakeholders. As a result, there has been an increased emphasis on enhancing the "social, environmental and economic systems within which a business operates" (*Responsible and Sustainable Business: HR leading the way – A collection of "thought pieces"*, 2012). Colbert and Kurucz (Colbert and Kurucz, 2007) further suggest a three way focus for organisations – on the "social, economic and environmental performance" known as triple bottom line. Having stated about triple bottom line and fair-trade, and its increased significance, the two sectors that are going through massive transformations regarding this, are the food and beverage sector and the hospitality sector; these transformations being – fair-trade, green hoteliering, energy saving initiatives, waste management initiatives. But to make these initiatives tangible and thereby strengthen the employer brand – is where the HR comes into picture.

1.2 Research gaps and aims

There has been extensive research on sustainability and growing importance of triple bottom line approach with the changing work world (*Responsible and Sustainable Business: HR leading the way – A collection of "thought pieces"*, 2012; Colbert and Kurucz, 2007). Yet, there

is no empirical evidence showing the role of HR in linking employer branding to triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade. Thus, the purpose of this study is to understand the ways in which HR can play an integral role in strengthening the employer brand using triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade, with the following aims –

(i) Understanding the importance of triple bottom line and fair-trade in strategy and operations of the business

(ii) Presenting the perspectives of the current employees on how HR can lead and embed these practices at workplace

(iii) Identifying key challenges and organisational barriers faced by companies in the process of adopting triple bottom line approach and fair-trade

(iv) Demonstrating the role of HR in linking employer branding to triple bottom line and fair-trade

1.3 Dissertation structure

The flow of this dissertation is as follows – first of all, literature covering theoretical framework regarding triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade are presented, followed by an in-depth qualitative analysis of data (collected in the form of interviews) which is explained further in detail – leading to the chapter of Findings. The dissertation is concluded with the chapter of Discussions – closing the loop of the study.

2. Literature Review

The literature review comprises of a general overview of corporate social responsibility, sustainability, ethics and fair-trade and branches out into a discussion of the influence of adopting these practices and initiatives on the human aspect of the organization highlighting pertinent concepts such as employee engagement, employee value proposition and the role of human resource development professionals. Furthermore, it highlights the effect of sustainability indices on corporate performance. A basic understanding of the concepts mentioned will aid in formulating the research questions (which are later presented in the study) and making connections of those research questions with the literature.

2.1 A general overview of triple bottom line (CSR, Sustainability, Ethics), Fair-trade and HR

For many organizations, Corporate Social Responsibility is a signal to the various stakeholders associated with the organization that the firm is concerned about the environmental and social issues. On the contrary, these very organizations, invest in Corporate social responsibility initiatives with a motive (if not an expectation) to increase their profitability and bottom line (Falkenberg and Brunsael, 2012). A very initial definition of CSR by (Bowen, 1953) and Carrol (Carrol, 1999), explains CSR as “the obligation of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society.” With the evolution of this definition, and the focus shifting from an organisation’s economic and technical interests (Davis, 1960, 1975b; Carrol, 1999) to that on employees, consumers, suppliers and communities (Johson, 1971; Carrol, 1999), the most commonly used definition is that of Davis (Davis, 1975a; Carrol, 1999) – “Consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical and legal requirements of the firm to accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks” (Davis, 1973; Carrol, 1999). It can, therefore, be understood, that CSR is built on five dimensions, namely – environmental, social, economic, stakeholder and voluntariness (Dahlsrud, 2008). This thereby, leads to a definition, which encapsulates these dimensions and is formed by the Commission of the European Communities (Dahlsrud, 2008) – CSR is a “concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (Dahlsrud, 2008, p. 08).

Corporate sustainability can generally be defined as a business approach which leads to the creation of long-term shareholder value by tapping onto opportunities and managing risk from economic, environmental and social dimensions. Another concept which started appearing in the late twentieth century was that of "Ethical Investment" which directed focus on ethics. It essentially started gaining importance as an investment vehicle which analysed the values and concerns of the investors in terms of the conduct and impact of business activities (Williams, 1999; Gardiner, Rubbens and Bonfiglioli, 2003). Ethical investment is oftentimes used interchangeably with "social responsibility investment" (SRI) (Mallin, 2004). It specifically states that investors are governed by a sense of moral duty (Etzioni, 1988). Therefore, the parameter, from an investor's perspective, changes from temporary outsized growth to an above average growth, since they are not only concentrating on the maximization of shareholder's wealth but also maximization of stakeholder's welfare.

Table 1: Definitions of Key Concepts

Definitions	**Author(s)**
Employer Branding "The package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company." "Image associated with an organisation, uniquely in its role as an employer." "An organisation's image as seen through the eyes of its actual and potential employees."	(Ambler and Barrow, 1996, p. 187) (Knox and Freeman, 2006, p. 697) (Kimpakorn and Tocquer, 2009, p. 534)
Triple Bottom Line It is defined as an accounting framework with three parts – social, environmental or ecological and financial, to create greater business value.	(Elkington, 1997)
Fair-trade "Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and	FINE (2001) - Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO); International Fair Trade Association (now the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO)); Network of European Worldshops (NEWS!) and European Fair Trade Association (EFTA).

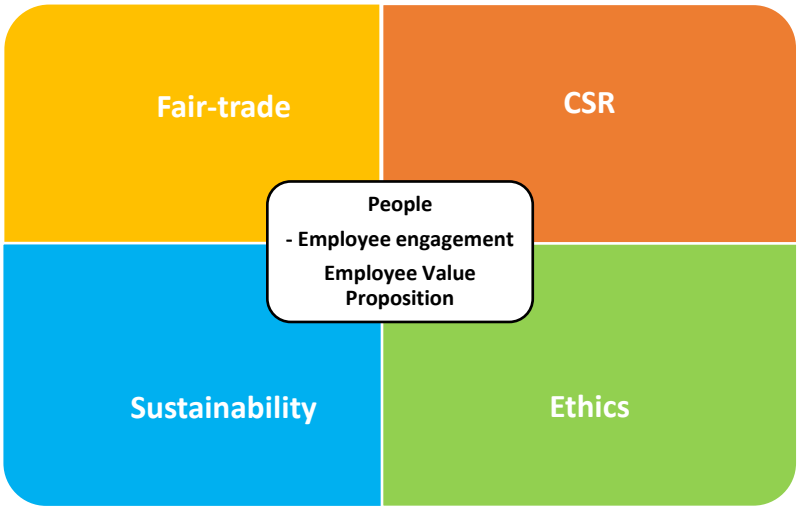
securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers."	

Considering the definitions and meanings of these key concepts, what then makes CSR, ethics, and sustainability integral for an organization? According to Potts and Matuszewski (Potts and Matuszeweski, 2004), companies that are perceived to be ethical, have the ability and potential to recruit and retain the crème de la crème from the available workforce pool and also foster positive, long-term relationships with various stakeholders – vendors, customers, investors, and stockholders. Cassidy (Cassidy, 2003) suggests that the absence of high standards of corporate governance may lead to under-performance of businesses, whereas, presence and implementation of strong governance on a system based on ethics would result in the better and significantly stronger performance of a business. Ethics is not just confined to a moral issue but is also helpful in building stronger and better community relations (Moir, 2001) which further leads to improved long-term corporate financial performances (Allen, 2001).

To gain an in-depth understanding of what motivates or demotivates firms from adopting and implementing ethics, CSR and sustainability initiatives – an interesting, well-known and frequently cited perspective is provided by the Freidman vs Freeman debate. Shareholders' theory by Freeman – which draws on the work of Adam Smith – states that the only responsibility of a firm or an organization is to create profit. According to him, firms that engage in activities which do not fulfil the purpose of shareholders have misunderstood the fundamental nature of free economy. Hence, Freidman states that – "there is one and only one social responsibility of the business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits as long as it stays within the rule of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud" (Freidman, 1970, p. 126). On the flipside, a counter-theory provided by Freeman (Freeman, 1984) is the Stakeholders' theory which argues that there exists an interdependence between social and economic activities. Social activities cannot be differentiated from economic activities because social activities impact economic activities. Freeman states that firms must, not only satisfy the owners and shareholders, but also the various stakeholders associated with the firm – community, public, and its employees.

The above explanations of the elements of triple bottom line i.e. sustainability, corporate social responsibility and ethics; and fair-trade – consist of one overlapping element which is the people (as represented in the diagram below). For the purpose of this research, the aspects of people - who are the key stakeholders and the area of focus for an organisation's success – that shall be thrown light upon are employee value proposition and employee engagement.

Figure 1: Triple bottom line, fair-trade and People



2.2 Employer Branding and Human Resource Management

The definitions of Employer branding have evolved over time – one of the earliest being by Ambler and Barrow which states that employer branding entails functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by the employer. It was further refined in the 2000s as a process of building an 'identifiable and unique employer identity' and as an 'organisation's image as seen through the eyes of its actual and potential employees'. For the purpose of this research, some parts of employer branding such as employee engagement and employee value proposition in connection with triple bottom line approach and fair-trade shall be explored – which are further explained in the following paragraphs.

2.2.1 Employee engagement in fair-trade companies

Fairtrade began in 1946 in the United States of America, when Ten Thousand Villages (formerly known as Self Help Crafts) began purchasing needlework from Puerto Rico, which led to the establishment of the first formal 'Fair Trade' shop in 1958. In the European context, Fair Trade gained popularity with Oxfam UK around the late 1950s when it started to sell crafts made by Chinese refugees in Oxfam Shops. Similar initiatives were being promoted in the

Netherlands around the same time and in 1967, the first importing organization – Fair Trade Original was established. By the late 1960s and 1970s, in countries like Asia, Africa and Latin America – many Non-Governmental Organisations and socially motivated individuals – realised and recognised the need for fair trade marketing organisations which would be a means to provide advice, assistance and support to the disadvantaged producers – with the end goal of achieving equity in international trade.

There has been an exponential growth in the sales of Fair-Trade goods – especially the goods with a Fair-Trade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) certification mark, over the last decade. With the market conditions getting better and showing a rise in the consumption and sales of fair trade goods - £2 billion in 2007 (a 47% increase from 2006) (*Unpeeling the Banana Trade*, 2008); this topic is gaining a fair amount of academic attention from researchers analysing this model from a wide range of theoretical perspectives such as – economics (Leclaire, 2002; Maseland and de Vaal, 2002; LeClaire, 2003; Lindsey, 2004; Hayes, 2006; Mann, 2008); political economy (Berlan, 2004); anthropology (Berlan, 2008); social geography (Goodman, 2004); development economics (Tallontire, 2000, 2002; Paul, 2005); network theory (Renard, 1999, 2002; Raynolds, 2002; Nicholls and Alexander, 2006); law (MacMolian, 2002; Dine and Shields, 2008); global commodity chains (Whatmore and Thorne, 1997; Raynolds, 2002); gender studies (Barrientos, Dolan and Tallontire, 2003; Lyon, 2008) and business ethics (Moore, 2004).

Elaborating on the business ethics perspective of fair-trade and understanding why it is becoming a highly important area of attention – one of the factors identified is – employee engagement. While there are numerous definitions of this concept, the most enduring is by Kahn (Kahn, 1990) – which focuses on 'how' employees perceive their work roles and "express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally". The Utrecht University group of occupational psychologists (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) present a more concentrated definition of employee or work engagement consisting of three elements – vigour (energy, resilience and effort), dedication (enthusiasm, inspiration, pride) and absorption (concentration and being engrossed in the work). This meaning gives makes employee engagement more tangible. But, from a wider perspective, it can be argued that factors such as awareness of the business context, clear line of sight of the job role, purpose and the objectives of the organisation, also affect and constitute employee engagement.

CSR is gaining importance as both – an integral issue in organizations and as a fundamental topic of academic discussion. Jenkins (Jenkins, 2006) highlights the importance of employee 'buy-in' as a crucial step to ensure CSR is embedded in the organization. Conceptual understanding about the usefulness of HR to build concrete foundations of the triple bottom line philosophy in the organization has been brought to light by Cornelius (Cornelius *et al.*, 2008). However, the strategy or method – as to 'HOW' these policies should be implemented

has not been discussed or described. Employee engagement is of utmost importance and is preliminary for any organizations to attain their objectives (Lado and Wilson, 1994); and to be able to nurture creativity and improve performance (which in turn would positively affect employee engagement), HR assumes a fundamental role in the process and takes the responsibility as the organization grows towards success (Bacon *et al.*, 1996; Kotey and Slade, 2005). Even though there is literature that draws attention to internal stakeholder dialogue and duties of the organization to its employees(Spence and Lozanzo, 2000; Murillo and Lozanzo, 2006; Perrini, Russo and Tencati, 2007); involvement of employees in CSR (Maclagan, 1999) and impact of CSR on recruitment (Greening and Turban, 2000), there exists a need to gain deeper insights into how HR practices can complement and support CSR and sustainability goals.

2.2.2 Integration of Corporate Social Responsibility and EVP (employee value proposition)

Human resources offer a potential source of competitive advantage, thereby leading to an increased demand for highly skilled and qualified employees. The availability of high value jobs being significantly more than the number of suitable job seekers, creates a challenge for human resource management to attract and retain high-quality workforce, over a long term, as a tool to ensure sustained competitive advantage (Schuler and MacMillan, 1984; Wright and McMahan, 1992; Wilkinson, Hill and Gollan, 2001). Cable and Turban (Cable and Turban, 2003) state that the desire to be an employee of an organization is influenced by the employee's positive perceptions of an organization's reputation. Primarily, the reputation includes public evaluations of a firm with respect to other organizations (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). Turban and Cable (Cable and Turban, 2003) state that a huge pool of job seekers are attracted to organizations with better reputations.

The social dimension of sustainability includes concepts such as corporate social performance (CSP), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Corporate ethics (Ehnert, 2009b, 2009a). On one hand, corporate ethics focuses on the moral facets of an organization (Ehnert, 2009b), and CSR, on the other hand, touches light upon the organization's relations with the stakeholders and its voluntary social and environmental activities in its daily operations. Corporate social performance is an analysis of whether the organization is able to meet the pre-set CSR goals and objectives (Turban and Greening, 1997; Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Greening and Turban, 2000). According to certain studies, Corporate Social Responsibility and employee attractiveness share a positive relationship. Turban and Greening (Turban and Greening, 1997) suggest that there is enhancement in corporate reputation and thereby, attractiveness (as an employer) when ratings of an organization are published and therefore,

this motivates the job aspirants and increases the level of eagerness and willingness amongst the job applicants to be associated and seek employment under socially responsible organizations (Greening and Turban, 2000). Similarly, Albinger and Freeman (Albinger and Freeman, 2000) analyzed the effects of corporate social performance on different jobseekers and concluded that corporate social performance positively affects employee attractiveness.

As times are changing, for organizations to be successful, it is essential that they are able to attract, motivate and retain a talented pool of workers. The competition becomes a notch higher due to the limited availability of extraordinary workers(Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2008). Evidence suggests that a company's corporate social responsibility activities are legitimate, compelling and one of the most effective way to attract and retain top talent. To name a few examples of organizations – who wanted to strengthen their name as a socially responsible company and in-turn attract and keep a good talent pool – are Home Depot, Delta Air Lines and SAP. The CEOs of these high-profile companies pledged to involve/deploy a large number of employee volunteers on various community projects. These efforts reaped benefits and were understood as sensible decisions – as stated by Jim Copeland, Jr. former CEO of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, "The best professionals in the world want to work in organizations in which they can thrive, and they want to work for companies that exhibit good corporate citizenship" (Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2008).

Generally stating, corporate social responsibility initiatives focus on and reveal the values which govern the organizational culture of a company and therefore, becomes a quintessential part of "employee value proposition". Building on the concept of employee value proposition – as per recent studies, it is an important aspect that is considered by managers for talent management. Not only do corporate social responsibility initiatives humanize the company (over and above the other factors at work), they also depict the organization as a provider – contributor to society – as juxtaposed to the image of being an entity with the sole purpose of maximizing profits. Some researchers explain this concept as, "a paycheck may keep a person on the job physically, but it alone will not keep a person on the job emotionally."

More often than not, corporate social responsibility serves as an authentic point of differentiation for a business or an organization or company – owing to the numerous forms that it can take(Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2008). A lot of companies – irrespective of their size – big or small, including blue-chip names like Cisco Systems, General Electric, and IBM, lay emphasis on the concept of employee engagement in CSR and consider it as a "strategic imperative."

Another interesting perspective underscored is that of "internal marketing" – considered as the most appropriate rubric which can use Corporate Social Responsibility to acquire and retain employees (Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2008). Internal marketing states that companies manage their employees by viewing them as internal customers (similar to how

organizations fulfill the needs of their clients) and design “job-products” – which would consist of salary, benefits packages, and job responsibilities. If designed effectively, these job products can directly and positively affect job satisfaction, employee retention, and productivity thereby impacting the employer as a brand.

It is echoed throughout the literature that Corporate Social Responsibility, as a concept, refers to an organization’s commitment to enhance and improve the well-being of society through activities, practices, and contribution of corporate resources. Nevertheless, there exists divergence in the execution of these practices and thus, leading to question the effectiveness of CSR in managing talent.

In order to understand Employee returns to CSR, it is first important to understand the key outcomes of corporate social responsibility from a psychological perspective – the psychological drivers of CSR outcomes and the links between CSR initiatives and outcomes. A recent study by PWC (Price water house Coopers) LLP accentuated the need of CSR in organizations by highlighting employee motivation as one of the top two factors that helped chief executive officers make the business case for CSR activities – 58% of respondents rated CSR, second only to reputation/brand at 79%. Fulfillment of personal needs makes it more likely for employees to identify with the company. Tying this to the Social Identity Theory – identification is a psychological concept that showcases the extent to which employees feel that their sense of self overlaps with their sense of their employer. Those employees who strongly identify with the purpose of the organization, incorporate the organization’s characteristics into their own selves and view the success of the company as their own (Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2008). Here is an example in the case, employees at The Timberland Co. have been known to have ‘cult-like’ sense of belonging owing (partially, if not fully) to the company’s CSR initiatives. CSR can, therefore, be pinpointed as an integral factor in identification among consumers, employees and job applicants in different contexts.

2.2.3 CSR and HR

There is significant skepticism regarding HRM’s ability to contribute to the areas of corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability and ethics. Thomas Garavan and David McGuire (Garavan and McGuire, no date) outline a framework of activities that organizations may use to provide accountability and leadership on CSR, sustainability, and ethics keeping in mind the organization’s profitability and success. With the growing expectations from the organisations to focus on social, environmental and economic goals (in addition to profitability), they are expected to move beyond the single bottom-line philosophy to roles which include championing human rights, climate change, environmental protection, adopting

green work practices, elimination of world hunger and illiteracy, supporting education and ensuring involvement in the community (Schramm, 2007; Fenwick and Beirema, 2008; Brammer and Millington, 2009; Davies and Crane, 2010). Garavan and McGuire argue that contribution of HRM to CSR, sustainability, and ethics cannot be categorized as the 'one-size-fits-all' approach and therefore, it must take into account the size of the organization, it's sector and the institutional context. The primary task of the HRM is to polish and in-turn enhance the values, skills, and competencies of the employees to ensure their contribution to a triple-bottom-line philosophy (Rimanoczy and Pearson, 2010). The contribution of HRM to CSR, sustainability, and ethics can be explained further using two theoretical perspectives within the HRM theory – Social identity theory and Attachment theory. The Social identity theory highlights how individuals are attracted to organizations because of the company's CSR, sustainability and ethical behavior. Attachment theory explains how a difference in attachment types brings out different aspects of work behavior.

Therefore, as per the theoretical framework, the organizations that direct their focus on CSR, sustainability and ethical behavior result in stronger attachment by the employees towards the organization. There are a variety of roles performed by HRM professionals in terms of CSR, sustainability, and ethics. Ulrich (Ulrich, 1997) argued that there are four roles that can be performed by HRM professionals – strategic partner, administrative expert, change agent and employee champion. According to Ulrich, these professionals ensure the integration of socially responsive activities with all the operations of the business. On one hand, as a strategic partner, the HRM professional focuses on designing strategies for CSR, sustainability, and ethics, while on the other hand, HRM professional plays an administrative role by developing the infrastructure for smooth and effective implementation of these strategies. As a change agent – he/she ensures real cultural change through the integration of activities into strategy, culture, structure, and behavior. Lastly, as an employee champion, the professional ensures that societal strategies and employee knowledge, skill and competencies are interlinked and any issues of concern (to employees) are voiced at senior levels of the organization.

2.2.4 Sustainability indices and corporate performance

Rising complexities in the global environment direct firms to prioritize competitive advantage in the market to ensure value creation in the long term. Often these advantages are linked to the adoption of socially responsible behavior which therefore has led to the emergence and use of sustainability indexes (that are linked to financial markets). A study based on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index by Lopez, Garcia, and Rodriguez, examines the effect of adopting

CSR practices on business performance – by analyzing the relation between CSR and certain accounting indices.

Firms and investors realize that – to be able to create long term value, it is imperative for them to invest in accordance with sustainability principles (Sage, 1999; Bebbington, 2001). Based on the knowledge that – stakeholders believe that accredited practices in CSR lead to good economic-financial performance for a firm; the study empirical evidence to understand the link between adoption of sustainability practices and corporate performance. Societal demands for firms to formulate policies that cater to sustainable development has led to a shift from classical economic theory to the adoption of sustainability philosophy i.e. to develop strategies that go beyond maximizing profits and shareholders' interests. Stakeholders' satisfaction plays a fundamental role in the success of a firm (Freeman, 1984; Hardjano and Klein, 2004; Michael and Gross, 2004; Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2005). One of the ways of achieving sustainable development is through reorientation of processes and operations within a business or organization. Long term profits for shareholders are ensured by means of corporate management applying both economic and sustainable criteria (Michael and Gross, 2004, p. 34). From a theoretical standpoint, legitimation theory states that, for a company to survive, it is necessary to obtain society's approval (Guthrie and Parker, 1989; Patten, 1992; Deegan and Gordon, 1996; Deephouse, 1996; Deegan, 2000; Campbell, Craven and Shrives, 2002). Legitimacy can therefore only be achieved by harmonizing the value systems of the corporation and the society. To achieve this harmonization, management of environmental, natural, economic, social, cultural and political factors is necessary. All these factors are interdependent and thus, should not be considered separately (Sage, 1999, p. 196).

The question that now arises is that – what has led to the emergence of sustainability indexes linked to financial markets? It is the fact that sustainability indexes are considered as a criterion in the configuration of their investment portfolios. Some of these are – Dow Jones Sustainability Group Index (DJSGI), the FTSE4Good and Domini Social Index – which have been developed by organizations of immense prestige and credibility. A large number of European firms develop their sustainability reports based on methods of measurement of CSR as stated in DJSI, which is similar to those mentioned in frequently used CSR guides – Global Reporting Index, Global compact. Dow Jones Sustainability Index particularly involves evaluation of intangible assets, development of human capital, strategic plans, organizational issues, corporate governance, and investor relations. Through this study, it is established that both firms and investors strongly believe that sustainability is an important criterion for organizations to create long term value. However, this is just a starting point and further research is required to understand the effect of CSR on stakeholders' satisfaction and employer branding.

2.3 Conclusion and Research questions

While there is a growing body of literature that focuses on the concept of corporate social responsibility, ethics, sustainability, and sustainable indices, little is known about how they are put to practice. Furthermore, the link between the triple bottom line philosophy, fair-trade and employer branding is still less explored and vague. Following are the research questions that emerge and culminate into one main research question:

How can HR play a pivotal role in linking employer branding to triple bottom line approach and fair-trade?

I. ***How integral are fair-trade and triple bottom line approach to strategy and operations?***
II. ***What is the role of HR in leading and embedding fair-trade and CSR, ethics, and sustainability?***
III. ***How and to what extent is employer branding (with the focus on employee development, motivation, and performance) affected by fair-trade and triple bottom line philosophy?***

Armed with the knowledge from the various pieces of literature, this research aims to highlight the gap of limited empirical evidence of the link between fair-trade and adoption of triple bottom line approach and employer branding.

3 Methodology

This chapter will outline and present the details of the research methods applied that aided in the investigation of the aforementioned research questions. The famous and often cited 'research onion' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016) serves as a structure for this chapter, wherein it touches light upon the research philosophy, the research approach, methodological choice, data collection method and the ethical considerations that were taken into account while conducting this research.

3.1 Research philosophy

The development of a philosophical perspective of a researcher gives birth to various core assumptions about two things – the nature of society and the nature of science (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). To state the least, exploration of philosophical concepts aids in outlining and specifying overall research design and strategy (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2013).

Qualitative research primarily focuses on human action and understanding, but what constitutes an imperative part of qualitative analysis is – interpretation (Alvesson and Willmott, 2003). Hermeneutics forms the philosophical base of interpretative and constructionist research which influences the idea of social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Research conducted from this philosophical perspective focuses on the full complexity of human sense-making as situations emerge, instead of predefining dependent and independent variables. The world is complex and therefore, Interpretivism argues that definite laws cannot theorise this world but can be understood by humans in their roles as social actors (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008). "We interpret our everyday social roles in accordance with the meaning we give to these roles. In addition, we interpret the social roles of others in accordance with our own set of meanings" (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008, p. 116)– tying it back to the literature on fair-trade and triple bottom line approach , which argues that quite a few organisations consider employee engagement in CSR/Sustainability and Ethics as a strategic imperative, perhaps suggesting that it can be an integral factor impacting employer branding – makes interpretivism as one of the most appropriate philosophy for the purpose of this research. Furthermore, adoption of interpretivism would not only allow in-depth analysis of the issue, but also ensure a high level of validity because the data will be trustworthy and honest, thus, making it suitable in the field of human resource management (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008).

3.2 Research approach

Research approaches can be understood as the plans and procedures for research that provide a structure to convert broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. These approaches can be categorised into three types – Deduction or Deductive approach, Abduction or Abductive approach and Induction or Inductive approach. Deduction refers to a process of testing a hypothesis formed by previous or existing theories; Induction consists of formulating a theory based on the observations and tests i.e. building theory post the analysis of previously collected data (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008). Abduction refers to the combination of induction and deduction (Suddaby, 2006). The importance of following a research approach lies in its ability to allow the researcher to make well informed decisions regarding the research design, research strategies and handling restrictions. While some authors suggest that Inductive approach is widely used for qualitative data analysis, this may not be entirely accurate for all qualitative researches. The purpose of this study is to establish and understand the link between employer branding and triple bottom line approach/ fair-trade – and therefore, as per the inductive approach – the views and opinions of the current employees would enable the researcher to understand the impact of following triple bottom line approach on the organisation as an employer. However, at the same time, existing literature on the link between CSR and employee engagement and employee value proposition and social identity theory – bring to light the existing frameworks and theories. This opens the possibility of new themes and relations that can arise from the data. Thus, this research adopts an abductive approach – which encapsulates both inductive and deductive approach.

3.3 Methodological choice

There are broadly four different research philosophies, namely, Positivism, Realism, Interpretivism and Pragmatism (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008). As it is made clear in the earlier part of this chapter – that an interpretivist philosophy has been undertaken to conduct the research, therefore, the most obvious or rather most likely methodological choice would be the one that is qualitative in nature, which consists of an in-depth investigation of a small sample size (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008). From an axiological standpoint, a researcher's own values and beliefs, play a major role in the research process – as interpretivists recognise that the analysis of data is their interpretation of the research material and data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Essentially, qualitative data consists of non-numerical data, which is rich and deep in terms of words, elaborating a

participant's point of view to accelerate the process of understanding and deep dive into a concept by gaining a better understanding of the context. Qualitative research and analysis focus on the comprehension and interpretation of emotions and thoughts (Corbin and Strauss, 1998) and behaviours and beliefs (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

It is evident from the previous chapter that the questions are exploratory in nature which implies that they are connected to a qualitative method (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008). The aim of this research is to understand the link between the adoption of the triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade and employer branding and how HR can play a pivotal role in this process. This objective would be achieved by understanding the values, beliefs, emotions and thoughts of the employees – people who are associated with the organisation in this industry – something which resonates with the purpose of qualitative research. Hence, the adoption of qualitative research methodology. This further forms the basis of data collection techniques, determines data analysis tool and procedures that would be useful in reaching the results (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008).

3.4 Data collection method

Albert Einstein stated, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." Drawing some knowledge from this quote, researchers realised that since not all phenomenon can be quantified, a wide array of qualitative methods and approaches was adopted. In the past few years, interest in qualitative research has risen (Flick, 2009, p. 12). Cooper and Schindler (Cooper and Schindler, 2008) suggest that to gain deeper insights on a topic in exploratory studies, the most beneficial way to achieve it, is through semi-structured interviews. Often referred to as qualitative research interviews, semi-structured interviews are *'non-standardised'*. This typically means that the researcher has a few themes corresponding to which he/she prepares a list of possible questions. The use of these questions might vary from one interview to another depending on the context (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008).

This study uses a mono-method of semi-structured interviews to understand –

- The extent to which triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade are integral in an organisation i.e. the extent to which these concepts affect an organisation's functions and strategies,
- 'how' the employees perceive this (depending on their context, values, beliefs, emotions); and
- 'Why' or 'why not' is the HR linked with the part of employer branding influenced by triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade.

In this research, each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes with the use of probing to enhance the understanding of the topic (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008). While interviewing employees in the Food and Beverage sector, with the seniority level of the participants ranging from mid-senior level to country heads, semi structured interviews allow the researcher to prevent redundancy by adjusting questions and reframing them when required. The questions asked are open ended that can give rise to new themes during the process of the interview (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008). A consent form (including the information sheet) is made to sign beforehand by the interviewee **(Refer to Appendix 2)** recorded using the laptop voice recorder, manually transcribed by the interviewer **(Refer to Appendix 3)** and further notes/observations made the researcher during the interview process.

3.5 Sampling technique

It is impracticable to survey an entire population due to budget constraints and time constraints(Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008). Therefore, the most crucial aspect in selection of a sample is that it must represent a full set of cases and answer the research question in a way that is meaningful and justified (Becker, 1998). Barnett (Barnett, 2002) argues that the use of sampling leads to a higher accuracy than a census and thus, collecting data from a smaller number of cases implies that the information is more detailed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). For this study, the research questions, objectives and choice of research strategy dictate that a ***non-probability sampling technique*** be used – to explore the research questions and gain theoretical insights. In accordance with the purpose of this research, the sample consists of the population employed or associated with the organisations in the Food and Beverage Sector and the Hospitality sector. Volunteer sampling which includes ***self-selection sampling*** has been used to collect data. The researcher publicised the need for cases by advertising through the media such as spreading the word through WhatsApp and personal emails, and then interviewed those individuals who responded. This process allows members to self-identify themselves and thus be a part of the research process voluntarily (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2008).

A total of seven interviews were conducted keeping in mind the theoretical framework of the study and adhering to the suggestion of a sample size of 5 to 25 interviews (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016) in a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews. The following table lays out the details of the details of each participant – pseudonyms have been used.

Table 2: Details of the Participants

S.No.	Name	Age	Gender	Designation	Country of Work
1.	Peter	38	Male	Pillar Lead – Global Compliance	India
2.	Smith	36	Male	Internal Audit and Controls Global IT	India
3.	Ben	50	Male	Country Head - HR	India
4.	Kathy	51	Female	Country Head – Corporate Communications	India
5.	Michael	40	Male	Head of Green Committee	UK
6.	Julia	42	Female	Assistant Director of Human Resources	UK
7.	Bradd	45	Male	Head of Waste Management	UK
8.	Hector	35	Male	Director – Retail, E-commerce	UK
9.	Ruby	45	Female	HR Business Partner	UK

3.6 Data analysis method

Once collected, the qualitative data is analysed using Thematic Analysis. Referred to as the *'foundational method of qualitative analysis'*(Braun and Clarke, 2006), thematic analysis is conducted using the software – NVIVO – to organise and structure the data. It offers a systematic, flexible and accessible approach to analyse data (Braun and Clarke, 2006) leading to rich descriptions, explanations and theorising. The key is to search for themes and meanings across the data which allows the researcher to analyse patterns, highlight key themes and investigate meanings (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Cooper *et al.*, 2012; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The process of identifying themes involves coding the data by the researcher. Coding can be driven either by existing theory or by the data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Some themes arising from the literature are the importance of having a strong purpose by the organisation, role of HR in influencing employee engagement, while those that emerge from the responses of the individuals i.e. data, capture

the ways in which talent management practices, context, collaboration and communication is important as described by the employees in the various organisations (Boyatzis, 1998).
Furthermore, and most importantly direct quotations are used to understand and help in the *'clarification of links between the interpretation of findings, the subsequent conclusions drawn from the findings and the validity, reliability, credibility and audibility of the findings'* (Yarrow, 2018, p. 22).

3.7 Ethics

For any research project to be successful, one of the most critical aspects is – Ethics. Ethical issues include accessibility, data collection and behaviour towards interviewees (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). For the purpose of data collection for this research – a detailed participant information sheet outlining the key objectives of the study, voluntariness, consent form and minimal risk to participants, guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity – was provided to the participants.
As a further matter, the ethical guidelines set by the University of Edinburgh Business School are complied with, since, the researcher is a student of the University of Edinburgh Business School. Therefore, Research ethics Level 3 has been approved by the University of Edinburgh's Ethics committee to conduct the interviews.

4 Findings

This chapter will deep dive into the key findings obtained as a result of the investigation of the current knowledge, perception and experiences of the employees in the food, beverage and the hospitality industry. First of all, an overview of the employees who are a part of this sector is given. Moving onto to the research questions – which forms the second part – is understanding the factors that have led to an increased emphasis of the triple bottom line approach and fair-trade in the food and beverage and the hospitality sector. The third part touches light upon the role of HR in embedding and leading these initiatives within the organisation. Fourthly, the most dominant factors (in terms of motivation and development of employees) affecting employer branding are presented. Finally, any challenges or organisational barriers faced by the company are discussed. Tying all the parts stated above to address the main research question – "***How can HR play a pivotal role in linking employer branding with triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade?"*** – constitutes the last part of this chapter. Given below is a table that summarises the major themes that emerged as a result of the analysis.

Table 3: Research Questions and Major Themes

Sub-research questions	**Major themes**
1. What has led to an increased emphasis of triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade in the past few years?	- **Purpose of the organisation** - **Building an equitable society**
2. How do HR led initiatives aid in embedding and leading triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade in the organisation?	- **Only HR led teams** - **Dedicated CSR/Sustainability teams** - **Combination of both**
3. What factors influence employer branding and how?	- **Context** - **Talent management practices**
Main research question	
How can HR play a pivotal role in linking employer branding to triple bottom line approach and fair-trade?	- **Contextualisation** - **Collaboration** - **Communication**

4.1 Roles and backgrounds in sustainability

Table 2 gives the details of the participants – their age, designation, country of work, gender and age. The central idea of this paragraph is not to understand who these employees are but to focus more on this sector as a whole. Thereby, trying to answer as to why this sector has been specifically chosen for research purposes.

To set the tone of this section and perhaps give it some direction, let's revisit the concept of ***Social Identity Theory and Attachment Theory.*** These theories propose that there are certain factors due to which individuals are attracted to an organisation or company and the distinctness in the way an employee is attached to the organisation or the company is portrayed in the various aspects of behaviour at work.

Building on these definitions and tying it to the purpose of the research in this sector, triple bottom line and fair-trade have grown in importance and significance in the food and beverage and the hospitality industry. Investments in triple bottom line approach and fair-trade do lead to enhancement of an organisation's reputation, by building a better 'brand image' among the clients, investors, employees and various stakeholders involved, thereby, positively impacting employee retention, strengthening relationships with government agencies and other business partners.

All nine participants agreed that there has been an increased emphasis on triple bottom line and fair-trade owing to the nature of the sector – to gain 'environmental legitimacy' which directly links with the brand name and the society in which the organisation intends to thrive.

"Recognizing that business enterprises are economic organs of society and draw on societal resources, it is ABC's belief that a company's performance must be measured by its Triple Bottom Line contribution to building economic, social and environmental capital towards enhancing societal sustainability." – Ben

" ()…ABC believes that corporations like itself have a responsibility to set exemplary standards of ethical behaviour, both internally within the organisation, as well as in their external relationships. The Company believes that unethical behaviour corrupts organisational culture and undermines stakeholder value." – Kathy

"There are a lot of aspects to it but for us it is a slightly more serious affair since we come from a beverage/ alcohol industry, so what's important here is that while we

produce beer, there is greater responsibility that we have to take regarding the environment and social set up of that geography." – Peter

"()….so basically what are we hearing about our brand in the local community and also what do people think about it so it becomes easier for us to recruit – all of these things" – Ruby

One of the responses also highlighted that limiting the social values to just fair-trade or similar social movements isn't justified and therefore, credit should be given to CSR that has changed aspects such corporate profitability and employer branding – which could imply that CSR has become more tangible within the workplace and perhaps, created the possibility of new roles within the organisation to take triple bottom line approach forward.

"It is wrong to assume that the social values are only associated with Fair Trade or similar social movement groups. CSR has made it possible for them to be transformed into key facets of corporate profitability, branding and marketing." – Smith

Furthermore, according to one of the participant's it is quite visible that the focus on these aspects has risen over the years – not only on a global level but also specific to certain geographies or the local level – which suggests that this impacts not only the prospective employees but also the current employees of the organisation.

"On a global level it has fairly remained the same because the organisation has been doing a lot for CSR, I joined the company three years ago so on a global level the company was quite active already. Now on a local level, the UK business – there has been an increase in the emphasis on sustainability." – Hector

Additionally, another participant says that even though in their context / geographical location, this might not be the need of the hour but since it is the 'right thing to do' – it is reason enough to follow these initiatives.

"So for the properties in countries where resources are scarce, sustainability is of utmost importance. The reason we as a property are so keen on it is because the resources that we use aren't necessarily scarce but that's no reason to underestimate the importance of such a thing"

– Michael

This further suggests that 'brand image' or actions of the brand, play a role in shaping the mindset and perception of the employees of that brand.

4.2 What has led to an increased emphasis of triple bottom line approach and fair-trade in the past few years?

According to the interviews, two major reasons could be identified indicating an increased emphasis of triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade over the past few years – (i) Purpose of the organisation; and (ii) the idea of building an equitable society.

4.2.1 Purpose of the organisation

6 out of 9 participants i.e. more than 50% of the participants (as mentioned in the quotes below) highlighted that the increased attention to triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade is to stay true to the purpose of the organisation and live up to the meaning of that purpose.

"()…during the induction this aspect is focused more upon to stay true to the purpose of the organisation and making sure the new employees know what is the motive of the organisation because when they go into the department and see things with a fresh set of eyes, they would know the person they have to go to share their perspective."
– Michael

Interviewer: So probably it is the purpose of the organisation plays a major role in this process?
Interviewee: Yes, the company as a whole is very focused on it.
- Julia

The theme of fulfilling the purpose was underlined in other responses as well, in some cases stating how the purpose of the organisation has evolved and is inspired by keeping in mind the bigger picture.

"We propagate responsible drinking to avoid this. If you look at the slogan or the company's punch line - Bringing people together – so we want to look at beer as something that would get people together rather that people getting high over alcohol." – Peter

"Certainly there is CSR that has been happening in the organisation that I am involved in – which is important in the employee agenda and the community agenda and socially responsible trading." – Ruby

"ABC's efforts in Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility have only grown over time. The emphasis is driven from inspiration to serve a larger national purpose is at the core of ABC's vision to put Country before Corporation and the Institution before the Individual" – Kathy

4.2.2 Building an equitable society

100% of the participants considered it important to build an equitable society and maintain a balance in the community by adopting triple bottom line and fair-trade. The following quotes provide evidence for the same –

"Umm, yeah so I have been associated with the company for about a year now and I've seen an absolute increase in focus on all csr aspects including detailed training for every employee so ethical trading, human trafficking and increased awareness on these things." – Ruby

"This triple bottom line approach invokes successful businesses to focus on and positively address social and environmental challenges in creative ways while enhancing profitability. One piece of the social challenge in people, planet, and profit thinking is ensuring an equitable society."

"Our organisation is running the program Fairtrade and Cocoa Life. The objective of this program is Achieving resilient livelihoods and economic growth for cocoa farming communities. "

– Smith

"Making societal value creation the bedrock of its corporate strategy, ITC has pursued innovation in business models that synergise the building of economic, ecological and social capital as a unified strategy." – Ben

As per a response, to be able to build an equitable society, it is imperative that all the departments are aligned to the purpose and the motive equally – one of the ways (as mentioned in the quote that follows) to ensure that is by building a committee with a representative from each department.

" ()… we also have a dedicated green committee. The Green Committee obviously another part of CSR means making sure you're doing the right thing so the green committee here is made of a representative from each key department within the hotel – so there is someone from sales, someone from purchasing, someone from the kitchen, someone from the back of house areas, engineers, spa ….. We also have an HR representative who looks into the training side of things. The reason we do it in this way is that each representative we get from the department is passionate about green initiatives - they will then take information that is gathered from the green committee and also the information gathered from XYZ and make sure that it is implemented in the department." – Michael

4.3 How do HR led initiatives aid in embedding and leading triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade in organisations?

While analysing the data a new theme arose from the interviews – which can be considered as an important element while understanding the role of HR in employer branding and it's link to Triple Bottom Line and Fair-trade.

A quarter of the respondents stated that their organisations have dedicated CSR or Sustainability committees that handle the planning and implementation of these activities and strategies in the organisation.

"The CSR and Sustainability Committee of the Board reviews, monitors and provides strategic direction to the Company's CSR and sustainability practices towards fulfilling its Triple Bottom Line objectives. The Committee seeks to guide the Company in integrating its social and environmental objectives with its business strategies and assists in crafting unique models to support creation of sustainable livelihoods…..()…Human Resources is an active part of the committee and through unique talent management practices aspires to create an aligned, engaged and inspired work force. .. efforts to promote a culture of safety, wellness and sustainability" – Kathy

Interviewer: What is the role of HR in leading and embedding fair-trade and triple bottom line approach?

Interviewee: We have dedicated committee for governing and running fair trade program embedding triple bottom line approach...()… This committee is responsible for formulation and recommendation of activities that shall be used for CSR and sustainability – to the Board. Added to this, they are in charge of the expenses, monitoring the CSR policy,

reporting the CSR policy to the board, overseeing planning, coordination and implementation of the CSR activities and keeping a track of these policies.

– Smith

Approximately, 25% of the respondents owed the execution and implementation of activities or initiatives related to corporate social responsibility or sustainability or fair-trade, to the HR department. The following quotes illustrate the same –

Interviewer: ()…so what is the role of HR in embedding and leading triple bottom line within the organisation?

Interviewee: As per the mandate – 2% of the annual revenue has to be kept aside for the CSR initiatives. For example, recently in Orissa (a state in India), a lot of people were adversely affected by the floods that occurs and created havoc in the coastal state, so the employees donated their one day's salary towards the relief fund and the HR department was responsible for driving this initiative.

The HR also drives the performance appraisal system, where there is a clause on Responsible Drinking which states that the employee has not indulged into any case of drinking and driving. This clause is non-negotiable and forms an important aspect of performance evaluation and performance appraisal for the employees of the organisation.

– Peter

"The initiatives are definitely led by HR, and those initiatives come in either directly form the head office or something that we have decided to initiate ourselves." – Julia

It is quite interesting to note that in certain organisations where the structure is lean – employees have to perform more than one role to fulfil these initiatives which could also imply that there might be a need for a more structured system perhaps. Enunciating the opinion by the following answer –

*"()…so basically we are a **'lean structured'** organisation so people basically double-hat – which means they have their day jobs and then handling CSR, so the UK team – there's the HR doing that and legal counsel heads the CSR activities"*

"…instead of having a CSR team we do two things: first of all giving everyone the responsibility of doing things and being a part of CSR and secondly we do projects where we bring in interns comprising of students attending Uni and assign them CSR specific projects.." – Hector

While there are some organisations that have specific departments handling triple bottom line initiatives, in the other organisations it is taken care by the HR department. There is yet another category – which emerged upon the analysis of the data collected – where both these departments work in synchronisation and formulate and implement initiatives. The evidence to this is as stated below –

"A joint venture within our business. I would say the HR has the agenda – so kind of ensuring that the training is in place and employees have a voice as well, fulfilment in people's roles, security– all these elements would fall under HR and also taking ownership of the community agenda where all the charities/committees and handling the school."
– Ruby

4.4 What factors influence employer branding?

Keeping in mind the role of HR in leading and embedding triple bottom line approach and fair-trade initiatives within the organisation – the factors influencing employer branding will be presented. The underlying model that helped to determine the themes for this part is – the 4 P's of marketing i.e. Price, Promotion, Place and Product – the product being the people of the organisation. Breaking it down further, the main themes identified in this part of the study are – (i) Context; and (ii) Talent management practices.

4.4.1 Context

Almost 50% of the participants are based out of the United Kingdom while the remaining half are based out of India. The responses of these participants helped uncover a major factor in the process of building a brand name – context – which also ties to 'Place' from the marketing mix model. According to the data, in some instances a broad list of initiatives is sent from the head office, but it is then decided by the managers at the office as to which activities or initiatives should be implemented depending on the city, they are situated in.

"At MNO, 'Protecting the Well-being of our Planet' is part of the core strategy of our business… Being part of the MNO group of companies, the goal of MNO is not only to be the trustees of a brand legacy but to continue our journey to enhance that legacy.."
"…We aim to bring joy through measurable change - addressing the most challenging issues impacting the communities in which we operate. Combining our global focus with local needs, we aim to change the lives of those less fortunate than the ones that enjoy our products." – Smith

"For example, if you look at a country like India – drinking and driving is one of the major concerns here since it leads to a lot of accidents and deaths. We propagate responsible drinking to avoid this…..
Second thing, if you look at countries like Africa, Zimbabwe or under-developed countries, substance abuse is extremely high – people drink and are involved in domestic violence, so there, in those countries we have a lot of awareness campaigns regarding substance abuse and responsible drinking." – Peter

It was also observed that, while there is the 'purpose' of the organisation – it is the geographical location and the burning issues of that geography – which aid in determining the issues to be focused on by the organisation and thus forming plans and strategies to tackle those burning issues.

4.4.2 Talent Management Practices

Representing 'promotion' and 'price' from the marketing mix model, this theme was visible throughout the data collected – visibly structured in only some companies though. It is evident from the responses that investment in talent management practices directly proportional to employer branding since it aids in developing and 'building winning businesses'. 'developing business leaders', and 'creating value'.

"ABC's talent management strategy focuses on sustaining ABC's position as one of India's most valuable corporations, remaining customer-focused, competitively-superior, performance-driven and future-ready. …. talent development practices help create, foster and strengthen the capability of human capital to deliver critical outcomes on the vectors of strategic effectiveness, operational efficiency and capital productivity." – Ben

Propagating the importance of triple bottom line within the organisation is one side of the coin but actually showing it in actions in the society is the other important side. Some of the ways in which it is implemented in certain companies is through volunteering which not only gives an opportunity to the employees to give back to the society, but also makes the brand known amongst the consumers – thereby, creating a positive image of the brand. Following are examples of the same –

"Volunteerism helps us as an organisation build external brand awareness, affinity, and positive reputation and strengthens customer trust and loyalty in the brand." – Smith
"During induction i.e. from the Day 1 of doing business, they are explained all about ethical trading and human trafficking and these awareness drives are run across the organisation. The people are also encouraged to be a part of the employee consultative committee – where employees of every department come to talk about how they're actually feeling. There's also a breakfast club – where one indulges in meaningful conversations with seniors, so sort of breaking the ice." – Ruby

While talent management practices are rather more structured and focused in some of the organisations, there are still a few that need to realise the strength of investment in these practices to build a stronger brand. The silver lining being – these responses showed the willingness to incorporate the change which is both necessary and specific to their context and culture. Mentioned below are examples of the same –

"I suppose we are touching on it but we are not using it as a major tool but also not saying it like 'and by the way, this is what we do and so on'. So it is not something that we are doing right now but it may change, who knows." – Julia

"()….there isn't any such aspect that is included in the organisation or for the purpose of performance appraisal." – Hector

Interviewer: "()….what are some of the benefits that are formulated for the employees with CSR/sustainability/fair-trade in picture?"
Interviewee: "So regarding that, we are launching a new performance management system where we are wanting to incorporate an element which states that how somebody does something as important as what they deliver…" - Ruby

4.5 Summary of Main Findings

Coming full circle and tying up all the findings from the sub-research questions, the main research question will be addressed. Following are the ways in which HR can play an important role in employer branding –

- Design initiatives and activities that are custom made for organisations based on the geography they are located in and identify issues demanding attention in that context.
- Depending on the structure of the organisation, organise or re-organise the HR and perhaps collaborate with other teams (such as the marketing team or the corporate communications team) to enhance employee value proposition and employee engagement.
- Making employees and prospective employees aware of the purpose of the organisation and initiatives complementing this purpose.

However, the role of HR is limited when –

- The organisation is growing, and the focus therefore is on earning profits and investing money in recruiting top talent.
- Lack of motivation amongst the managers to implement the initiatives driven by HR, which further trickles down into their specific teams.
- Employees have to 'double-hat' and they perceive these added initiatives as a burden since it is not what they are paid for.

Table 4: Summary of the Main Findings

Methods	Challenges
• **Contextualize** – formulating strategies specific to local needs • **Collaborate** – with other teams in the organisation • **Communicate** – through various talent management practices	- **Growing organisations** - **Lack of motivation amongst the managers** - **Double hatting by employees**

5 Discussion

This chapter will act as a connector between the findings and the existing literature. The main purpose of this research is to understand how HR can be made more useful and important in terms of employer branding underpinning it with the triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade. The first part will summarise all the main findings and then link them to the existing literature. Secondly, the limitations of this research shall be discussed which would thereby help in understanding the scope of further research. The third part constitutes of recommendations for HR professionals including an implementation plan and costs.

5.1 Main findings and research questions

Firstly, the reasons why the triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade have gained momentum over the past few years have been identified: (i) Purpose of the organisation; and (ii) building an equitable society. These findings are supported by the existing literature on the importance of building stronger community relations (Moir, 2001). Furthermore, in the stakeholder vs shareholder theory, Freeman (Freeman, 1984) argues that social and economic activities are inter-dependent, and that the interest of all the stakeholders should be considered while formulating policies or strategies of the organisation and more importantly while conducting the business functions.

Secondly, with the literature emphasizing on the need for organisations to shift from single-bottom line philosophy (i.e. focusing only on profits) to a triple bottom line philosophy (i.e. focusing on people, profits and the planet), there definitely is a need to create roles to handle aspects such as green work practices, ensuring involvement in the community and human rights (Schramm, 2007; Fenwick and Beirema, 2008; Brammer and Millington, 2009; Davies and Crane, 2010). Moreover, factors such as size of the organisation, sector of which it is a part and the context in which the organisation exists – play a major factor in affecting the roles that employees of an organisation take up for adopting a triple bottom line approach. This is also evident from the findings of the second part – while some organisations have a dedicated CSR department that strategizes and implements policies and forms an important part in handling corporate governance within the organisation. Other organisations that are structured differently, that is when they are ‘lean structured’ – employees end up ‘double-hatting’ and in some instances delegating CSR related projects to interns.

Ulrich (Ulrich, 1997) argued about the various roles that an HR professional can take to integrate socially responsible activities with the operations of the business – change agent and employee champion – being two of them. Interestingly enough, 25% of the participants argued that HR does lead the initiatives and in most of the cases refines and selects from the various alternatives sent by the Head Office and makes it more specific to the context in which these initiatives need to be implemented – basically, tailoring them as per the needs of the context. An important aspect of the triple bottom line philosophy is – the people – employees being one of the key stakeholders in this case. Thus, considering the well-being of employees and hearing them out in the organisation i.e. employee voice – becomes an integral consideration. The same is showcased in the findings – where ethical trading and employee voice are top priorities for the HR – making their role more relevant as an employee champion. Having stated the above connections, there is still a gap that exists – both as per the literature and the findings (responses from the organisations that are smaller in structure) – which is, 'HOW' to ensure 'employee buy-in' (Jenkins, 2006). Bhattacharya et.al (Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2008) argue about the need of triple bottom line approach as a point of differentiation for the organisation which can be witnessed in different forms such as employee engagement, employee motivation, retention of employees. More talent is attracted to organisations with better reputations (Cable and Turban, 2003). Albinger and Freeman (Albinger and Freeman, 2000) also suggested that corporate social performance and employee attractiveness share a positive relationship. In contrast to this, as per the data analysis – 88% of the organisations are still not utilising this aspect in full capacity to market their brand and putting it to use during the recruitment process. Therefore, to truly establish triple bottom line and fair-trade as a 'strategic imperative', organisations need to communicate the numbers/ figures with their stakeholders. Furthermore, as mentioned in the literature, 'internal marketing' (Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2008) affects job satisfaction and thereby, retention of employees – which is something that resonates with the responses received where people, profits and the planet are the focus of the organisation to 'enhance the brand name and maintain brand legacy'.

It would be appropriate to mention that when interviewees were questioned about barriers or challenges that might act as a hindrance in employing triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade for employer branding, some new themes emerged based on the context and the organisation's culture, such as –

(i) Lack of motivation amongst some managers which seeped into their team thereby, bringing down the motivation of the employees to meet their set goals in terms of fulfilling CSR/sustainability initiatives.

(ii) Weak framework due to the structure of the organisation leading to double-hatting by employees which in turn makes these initiatives appear as an added burden

(since it is not their primary job and there is absence of a strong action plan that explains how to fulfil these goals)

Fifthly, responding to the main research question – 'How can HR play a pivotal role in linking employer branding to triple bottom line and fair-trade?'- the findings suggest that given the challenges that organisations are facing, there are certain methods through which HR can play a pivotal role. In accordance with the literature, the procedures that HR could implement are –

1. Communicate the sustainability ratings of the organisation with public to attract and retain top talent (Greening and Turban, 2000).
2. Learn from the best practices of other organisations and design and implement policies, strategies and goals that aid in enhancing corporate social performance and create an image of 'good corporate citizenship' (Albinger and Freeman, 2000).
3. Design talent management practices such as performance evaluation or performance appraisal framework or 'job-products' with one major and non-negotiable criteria linked to triple bottom line philosophy or fair-trade (Bhattacharya, Sen and Korschun, 2008).
4. Instead of blindly following a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, consider factors such as context, sector and size of the organisation to formulate strategies (Garavan and McGuire, no date).
5. With the growing emphasis on sustainably sound investments (Sage, 1999; Bebbington, 2001), numerical figures from evaluation frameworks such as Dow Jones Sustainability Index and Global Reporting Index – which (as specified in the literature) involves measurement of human capital, corporate governance and investor relations – should be shared with the HR team to improve decisions about talent and how it is organised i.e. ensuring employee 'buy-in' (Jenkins, 2006).
6. Provide investors with evidence for them to make the right investments, thereby enabling in development of a business case for triple bottom line and fair-trade (Sage, 1999; Bebbington, 2001).

5.2 Limitations and future research

The findings of this study should be considered cautiously as limitations apply which thereby impact the validity of these findings further impacting their generalisability. This paragraph aims to explore and bring to light the limitations identified during the process and scope for further research.

This study applied qualitative research methods using semi-structured interviews where 9 candidates were interviewed. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019) recommend that to be able to achieve noteworthy findings – 5 to 25 interviews are ideal. Although, the researcher managed to interview nine participants, the number is not large enough to gain generalisable findings. The sampling technique used for the purpose of this research is primarily self-selection technique, but since there were a few participants who introduced more people from their organisation to be interviewed, it can be stated that Snowball sampling technique was also present – which influences the generalisability of the findings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Furthermore, the process of reaching out to people for interviews involved obstacles such as end of year workload on the employees of these organisations – making it difficult to get a greater number of participants from the companies to contribute to the research. Moreover, this study adopts a mono-method technique wherein only qualitative i.e. non-numerical data has been used, which limits the findings by the 'method effect' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

A sneak peek into the extent to which HR can play a role in employer branding when it is underpinned by concepts such as triple bottom line and fair-trade – is presented through this study. However, further research on this topic might be beneficial. For the purpose of research in future, it can counter the above-mentioned limitations due to generalisation by ensuring a larger sample size (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Additionally, by attaching a quantitative aspect – such as self-administered questionnaires – along with a qualitative aspect can result in deeper analysis of the topic. The use of qualitative and quantitative approach in combination provides a better understanding of the research problem than either of the approach alone, as suggested by Creswell and Clark (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Lastly, this research pertains to the food and beverage and hospitality sector only which opens the possibility of analysing the other sectors as well and categorising the research in future as per the sector and context.

5.3 Practical Implications – Recommendations and Implementation Plan (Costs)

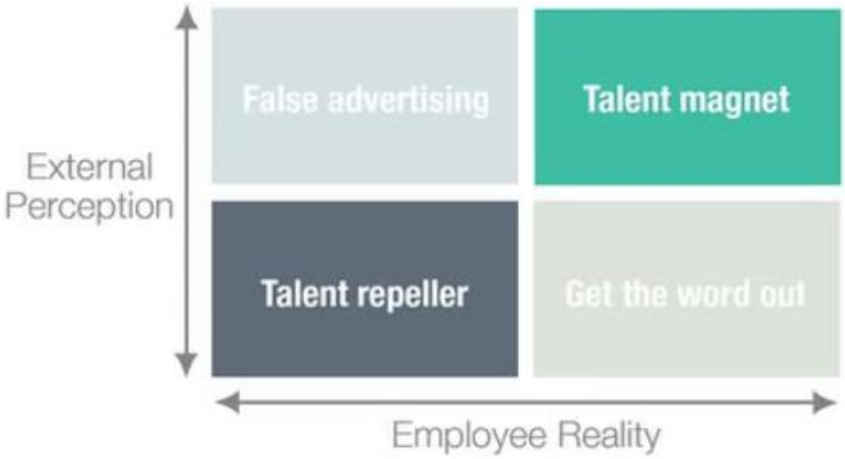
Wrapping up the findings and discussions of this research, this section presents two practical implications for HR professionals to embed and lead triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade in the organisation thereby building a strong brand as an employer.

5.3.1 Employ HR Analytics

The first and the most important recommendation based on the barriers mentioned by the interviewees is to collaborate with the best available resources to bring out maximum results. In this case it is using technology – HR analytics.

> As per CIPD (2018), a strong employer brand acts as a catalyst in the process of attraction, retention and motivation of employees. In this way, it enables organisations to differentiate themselves in the labour market. It can therefore be stated that employer branding aids businesses in competing for the best talent and establish credibility. As the Guide on employer branding in CIPD (*Employer Branding: the latest fad or future of HR?*, 2007) proposes, "People who like the job they do and the place they work become advocates of it." This makes it advantageous for any organisation to be perceived as a 'place to work' – which can be achieved through actively engaging HR. Building on the concept of emerging as the 'place to work', Matt Rodan (employee research expert at ORC International – which is now known as Engine) (*Attracting Top Talent with a Strong Employer Brand - YouTube*, 2014) suggests a framework to understand where an organisation is positioned, the data for which can be achieved through employee engagement surveys. The framework is as follows:

Figure 2: Perception of the Brand – Framework (*Attracting Top Talent with a Strong Employer Brand - YouTube*, 2014)



The ideal position to be in as per the above framework is in the Talent Magnet quadrant – where externally the organisation is perceived as an employer of choice and internally the employees are content. With data now becoming the most valuable asset, HR has evolved from 'operational HR' in the 1900s, to 'strategic HR' in the 2000s to 'data-driven HR' now. It is imperative that organisations become more driven by data and analytical savvy to overcome challenges with fundamental HR practices and put the analysis to use to build a stronger brand, which leads to the employment of HR Analytics. Heuvel and Bondarouk define it as 'the systematic identification and quantification of the people drivers of business outcomes' (Heuvel and Bondarouk, 2016). Thus, the HR should team up with services like LinkedIn Talent Solutions – that uses data to help build strategies for employer brand (Employer Brand Insights), talent pool and workforce. They offer plans and solutions for different categories –

(i) Enterprise companies
(ii) Small and medium businesses
(iii) Search and staffing agencies
(iv) Non-profits

Why LinkedIn Talent Solutions?

(i) 80% of the talent and HR managers around the world agree that a strong employer brand attracts top talent (*LinkedIn Global Recruiting Trends*, 2017).

Therefore, building a strong brand by highlighting triple bottom line approach and fair-trade could lead to the organisation to be an 'employer of choice'.

(ii) £3900 – estimated additional cost per employee hired when an employer fails to invest in its reputation (Burgess, 2016) and an Annual Plan for Talent Solutions costs approximately **£7400 per annum** (LinkedIn) with features as stated in Table 5.

Table 5: Features and Use of LinkedIn Talent Solutions

Name of the function	Use
1. SOURCING STRATEGY	- **See where the talent is** - **See where the talent is going** - **Optimise recruiting efficiency**
2. WORFORCE PLANNING	- **Understand labour market trends (skill growth, relative attrition rates, hiring demand)**
3. COMPETETIVE INTELLIGENCE	- **Compare your company to peers in the industry**
4. EMPLOYER BRANDING	- **Understand how different audiences are engaging with your brand**
5. GEO-LOCATION DECISIONS	- **Identify markets with high supplies of key talent**

Furthermore, there are instances – as shown by the case studies on the LinkedIn page, which state clearly that these organisations have benefited tremendously using the Talent solutions (*Employer Brand Insights | LinkedIn Talent Solutions*, no date) which is indicative of the fact that these services are promising and seem to offer a good return on investment.

5.3.2 Build a team to handle HR Analytics

The second recommendation, bearing in mind the need to be able to achieve the goals of the organisation, build a stronger employer brand by focusing on triple bottom line approach – is to build and prepare a team who can carry out the function (i.e. the first recommendation) of implementing HR Analytics within the organisation. As suggested by Sheraton participant – the plans can be only implemented when they are cost effective. Building on this point, this second recommendation suggests that the organisation should not hire new candidates for

this team. Instead, selecting candidates from the HR department, Corporate Communications or the Marketing department and the CSR/Sustainability Department – and form a new team whose sole purpose would be to focus on HR Analytics and tying it with triple bottom line approach. Bringing to light the costing aspect, the cost of hiring people would not be affected since these candidates for the new team would be chosen from the existing employees. Training – i.e. primarily increasing the knowledge base about this new topic – HR Analytics, and the new role, can be completed by attending any of the following free courses that are available online (*11 HR Analytics Courses Online: Learn about People Analytics*, no date). The time commitment ranges from merely 11 hours to 21 hours and all these courses are conducted in English.

Table 6: Details of HR Analytics Courses

Course name	Organisation conducting the course	Duration	Language	Cost
People Analytics	**University of Pennsylvania**	**11 hours**	**English**	**Free**
HR Analytics Leader	**AIHR Academy**	**21 hours**	**English**	**Free**

These courses will definitely contribute to the knowledge of the individuals in the team and get their basics right – which is the sole purpose of people analytics for majority of the companies. A solid data-driven foundation will allow people analytics to add its true value.

Furthermore, to keep the whole team up to date about the advances in this area of HR Analytics, it is advised that the company invests in CIPD membership which for an associate would cost a total of £203 for 12 months. The break-down of the fee is as follows:

Table 7: Cost of CIPD Membership (Breakdown)

Joining fee	**£40**
Membership fee	**£163**
Total	**£203**

Being associated with CIPD would not only raise the team's profile, but also its credibility with professional recognition.

5.4 Conclusion

Employer branding and the role of HR in building and maintaining a brand and its image – is a heavily researched topic. But with the growing focus on corporate social responsibility, sustainability, ethics and fair-trade – there is still scope for further research in the future. The central premise of this study is to understand the role of HR in linking triple bottom line approach and fair-trade to employer branding.

Qualitative data analysis of semi-structured interviews allowed to gain insights into what makes employer branding important in organisations, how HR can embed and lead these initiatives and what impact does triple bottom line approach and fair-trade have on employer branding (focus points being – employee development and employee value proposition). Finally, answering the main research question, the findings led to the emergence of three methods through which HR could play a pivotal role in linking triple bottom line and fair-trade to employer branding (given the organisational barriers and challenges faced by the companies) – namely, contextualisation, collaboration and communication. Furthermore, aligning with the methods mentioned in the existing literature such as communication of sustainability ratings and use of indexes to promote 'good corporate citizenship' – were suggested (Sage, 1999; Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Greening and Turban, 2000; Bebbington, 2001). Encapsulating the essence of these above-mentioned methods led to the recommendation to employ HR Analytics – where real time accurate talent data can be used to build a stronger employer brand and attract, retain and motivate the right people at the right time.

In conclusion, it can be stated that this research presents the perspectives of employees on how HR can contribute significantly to employer branding using triple bottom line philosophy and fair-trade. Having said that, hopefully this study may not serve as an end point but as a starting pistol for further research in this field.

6. Personal learning statement

A few months ago, while reading a book, I came across this concept of - “the Golden Circle” – which (in simple words) helps one understand the ‘why’ behind one’s actions. Building on the concept of the Golden Circle – my why of writing this dissertation is not just one, but an amalgamation of many reasons. To start of with – this is the first time ever in my life that I have written a dissertation and I shall therefore call it the essence of my entire learning journey at the University of Edinburgh Business School. During the course of the year, there were numerous assignments, essays and examinations that tested our knowledge. But this research truly allowed me to put to use all the knowledge that had been gained and mobilise all my skills to attain the desired results.

Having worked in the social welfare sector previously, the interest of stakeholders and their well-being is something that has always moved me and thus, choosing a topic that involved knowing and researching more about the aspects related to the people, profits and the planet (that is essentially triple bottom line and fair-trade), naturally seemed as a calling both from the head and the heart.

A very major learning and one of my ‘whys’ of writing this dissertation – was the support from my supervisor – Dr. Thomas Calvard. His guidance taught me the importance of having a strong and supportive mentor who not only motivates you when you start losing faith in your choices, but also challenges you and enables you to bring out the best in the toughest situations. I really appreciated that we did not have extremely strict deadlines – as not meeting those would have, perhaps, brought down my confidence. This helped me work in a balanced way.

However, the greatest challenge was (without a doubt) – interviewing people in a difficult time frame. The reason it was difficult was because it was end of the year for many companies which meant extra workload on the employees which thereby made it challenging for them to contribute to the research. My learning from this challenge was – realising and utilising the skill of ‘networking’ – an aspect which is hugely focused upon the University specially the Student development team at the University of Edinburgh Business School. It would be appropriate to mention that with the networking skills being put to use (both on my part and by the student development team), I was successfully able to interview 9 candidates in the given time frame.

Another learning from this process was – being away from home and writing this dissertation in Edinburgh. This made me deep dive into various kinds of literature, scientific reports, journals – aiding me in interpreting, analysing and writing results and recommendations in this

research. This also pushed me out of my comfort zone – taking risks when things were not straight-forward enough, sticking to plans, adapting to sudden changes and bracing myself for any kind of uncertainty – but in the end, closing all the loops and sailing through everything with faith, trust and self-confidence.

My 'why' of joining this course was to leverage my learnings and skills, test my hypothesis, gain a global perspective, gain knowledge of what's been done and discuss 'where the puck will be' in the future. I can now confidently say that this process has helped me experience this 'why' in its true sense.

In conclusion, I would like to express gratitude to University of Edinburgh Business School – for giving me an opportunity to test my knowledge and skills; and the support received from my colleagues, friends and most importantly my supervisor and family.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview questions

1. **How integral is fair-trade and triple bottom line approach to strategy and operations?**

- What do you understand by the term CSR/CS/Ethics?
- Has there been an increased emphasis on CSR over the years within the organisation? If yes, what drives this emphasis? If no, why? (Does purpose of the organisation play a major role here?)
- Are CSR related decisions considered at board level? (To analyse to what extent do they hold importance in the organisation)
- How is the evaluation of impact of CSR activities conducted? (Are there GRI (Global Reporting Index) standards that are considered to evaluate the activities?)

2. **What is the role of HR in leading and embedding fair-trade and triple bottom line approach?**

- What is HR's current contribution to CSR? Is there a separate CSR wing that handles all the activities or are all the initiatives handled by HR?
  (Shall be looking out to get answers on the following points)
  (i) Do they drive/promote CSR?
  (ii) Are they responsible for setting a CSR strategy?
  (iii) Are they responsible to implement a CSR strategy?
  (iv) Are they responsible for internal communication of CSR strategy?
- What are some of the practices you use to embed CSR in your organisation? Are there any specific talent management practices that include an element of CSR in them? Or any practices carried out by the HR for employees which are linked to CSR – can be during performance evaluation, promotion of employees, etc?

3. **How and to what extent is employer branding (with the focus on employee development, motivation and performance) – affected by the triple bottom line philosophy?**

- What employment benefits/elements are focused on, to increase motivation, development and performance of employees?
- Are sustainability and CSR promoted during the time of recruitment of new candidates to showcase a stronger brand as an employer? If yes, what are the ways in which it is done? If no, why?

4. **Practical recommendations/suggestions**

- What according to you are some of the main organisational barriers to embed CSR? (Is it just considered as a marketing stunt? Or is it lack of motivation amongst the employees to be a part of these initiatives? Or any other reason?)

Appendix 2 – Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
Business School

Interview Consent Form and Quotation Agreement

Research Project Title:

Name of Researcher:

Research Participant's name:

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as a part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken from UK institutions require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information obtained from those interviews shall be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose for your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore, please read and sign to certify that you approve of the following information points:

- The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
- You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
- The transcript of the interview will be analyzed by…… as researcher
- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to ……. and academic colleagues and researchers whom she might collaborate as part of the research process
- Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview – that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could potentially reveal your identity is not disclosed
- The actual recording will be kept
- Any variations of the conditions stated above will only occur with your further explicit approval

I also understand that my words may be quoted directly. Please tick any of the statements that you agree with (regarding being quoted):

	I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
	I agree to be quoted directly.
	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
	I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

All or part of the content of your interview may be used:

- In academic papers or policy papers
- In spoken presentations
- At feedback events
- In an archive of the project as noted above

By signing this form I agree that:

- I am voluntarily taking part in this project and I can stop the interview at any time.
- The transcribed interview or parts of it may be used – as described above.
- I have read the information points.
- I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits which I feel are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.
- I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

_____
Printed Name

_____ _____
Participant's Signature Date

_____ _____
Researcher's Signature Date

Appendix 3 – Sample Interview Transcript

Peter (India)

N -So starting with what is your understanding about CSR/Sustainability?
P- There are a lot of aspects to it but for us it is a slightly more serious affair since we come from a beverage/ alcohol industry, so what's important here is that while we produce beer, there is greater responsibility that we have to take regarding the environment and social set up of that geography. For example, if you look at a country like India – drinking and driving is one of the major concerns here since it leads to a lot of accidents and deaths. We propagate responsible drinking to avoid this. If you look at the slogan or the company's punch line - Bringing people together – so we want to look at beer as something that would get people together rather that people getting high over alcohol.
Second thing, if you look at countries like Africa, Zimbabwe or under-developed countries, substance abuse is extremely high – people drink and are involved in domestic violence, so there, in those countries we have a lot of awareness campaigns regarding substance abuse and responsible drinking.
N – so that means there has definitely been an increased emphasis in terms of CSR/sustainability and fair-trade in the organisation over the years.
P – Correct, so there are always this focus. If you look at the alcohol industry as such – there is hard liquor, beer and wine – so all of these drinks when consumed in moderate amounts will be beneficial. For example, scotch and wine if consumed in moderate amounts is good for health and it also aids in enjoyment and fun. These are the things we do in terms of CSR, branding and giving back to the society.
N – okay..
P- Now talking about sustainability, there are different goals for that. They are a little different form the CSR goals of the organisation. Sustainability is more towards the environment and how you give it back to the environment. Our company has a tie-up with United Nations sustainability goals for 2025,
N – okay..
P- so we set very high targets and surpass those targets. For example, for the production of beer, we use rice/wheat i.e. an agricultural product and the second most important ingredient is water.
The ratio is generally 1:2 i.e. to manufacture one pint of Beer, two and half or sometimes 3 litres of water is consumed. So there is a lot of stress on the consumption of water. Moreover, with the logistics and packaging, carbon footprints and use of plastic is used up in the process. Therefore, we ensure 100% support to the farmers by ensuring that they're able to make the best use of land resources that are available to them and help them procure the best quality of raw materials. So the organisation works closely with these farmers in terms of educating them about the latest agricultural developments and techniques of farming that will enable them to

increase their crop output. These activities are carried out with collaboration with organisations working at the grass-root level. To take proper measures to conserve and judiciously use water there are two things that are done to ensure this:

1. Rainwater harvesting
2. There are a lot of instances where when there has been a crisis or a natural calamity, then the cans are re-branded, and gears are shifted from production of beer to distribution of water in those cans which are meant for beer. This has happened in the US and some other countries too.

N – That's interesting to know. Moving on to the next section now, so what is the role of HR in embedding and leading triple bottom line within the organisation?
P – As per the mandate – 2% of the annual revenue has to be kept aside for the CSR initiatives. For example, recently in Orissa (a state in India), a lot of people were adversely affected by the floods that occurs and created havoc in the coastal state, so the employees donated their one day's salary towards the relief fund and the HR department was responsible for driving this initiative.
The HR also drives the performance appraisal system, where there is a clause on Responsible Drinking which states that the employee has not indulged into any case of drinking and driving. This clause is non-negotiable and forms an important aspect of performance evaluation and performance appraisal for the employees of the organisation. Nobody would thus indulge into drink and drive instances because they would instantly be fired (since it is non-negotiable).
N – that's quite a concrete example of how the HR is involved in implementing the CSR initiatives, are there any more instances or examples of this?
P – there is also this GBRD – Global Beer Responsible Day – where worldwide awareness of responsible drinking is spread and is spearheaded by the HR department which makes sure that the employees are fully involved in this awareness programme.
N – Now sliding into the last part, are there any barriers or challenges that the organisation or the HR department has to face while implementing these strategies or initiatives?
P - There are aren't any barriers per say but the only barrier, from a personal point a view, you cannot use your brand-name in the social media.