

CSR in a global context: The case of Spanish companies participating in the UN Global Compact

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Introduction

- New challenge for companies: How can they act in a socially responsible manner in a global context?
- UN Global Compact (GC) appear as the “largest and most ambitious institution” for governing CSR in an international setting
- However, little empirical evidence about the real contribution of GC to the promotion of CSR in its areas of compliance (human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption)



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Aim of the study

- Broader aim: Contribute to the understanding of the role of business in a global context
- Particular aim: Analyze reported CSR practices of Spanish companies
 - that participate in the UN Global Compact initiative
 - that have operations and/or suppliers in developing countries



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Research methods

- Review of information revealed in “Communication on Progress” (COP) reports of 60 companies (2007)
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of compliance with the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact:
 - Quantitative assessment : number of companies that comply with selected 23 selected indicators
 - Qualitative appraisal: policies and practices adopted by the companies to comply with the GC principles

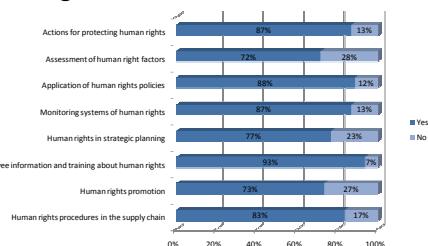


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Results (i)

- Human rights

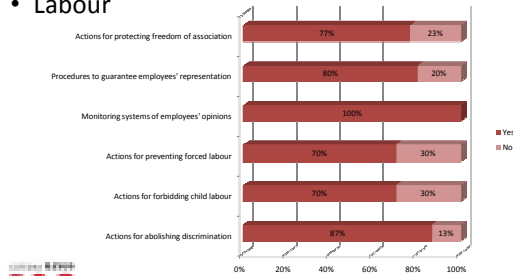


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Results (ii)

• Labour

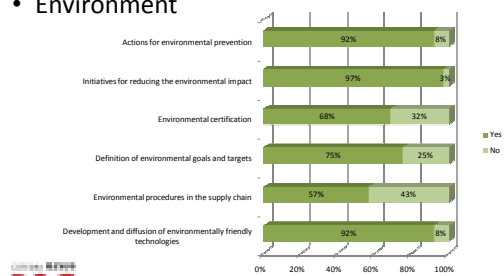


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Results (iii)

• Environment

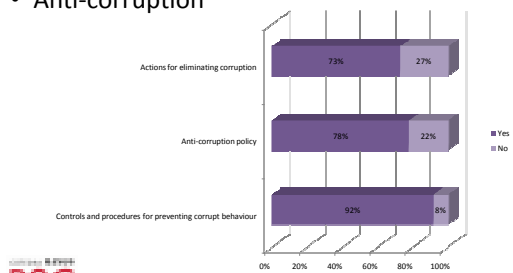


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Results (iv)

• Anti-corruption



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Results (v)

• General remarks:

- Very "positive" reporting (self selection bias, social desirability bias)
- Often only compliance with legal requirements
- Lack of information with regard to operations and/or suppliers in specific (developing) countries
- Reported compliance with indicators related to company size



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Results (vi)

• General observations:

- Internal company level: GC principles are integrated into codes of conduct (human rights, labour and anti-corruption) and management systems (environment)
- External company level: GC principles are integrated into supplier qualification systems and contract clauses



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Conclusions

- Although GC is an international initiative, Spanish CG adherents seem to focus on local context
- Spanish companies seem to integrate CG principles in their value and management systems but to a lesser extent actively promote and monitor implementation of principles



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