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Optimizing Family-Friendly Workplaces for a Sustainable Green Lifestyle: Insights from LEGO's Leadership in Denmark

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Abstract: This study investigates the implementation of family-friendly workplace policies as a means to promote a sustainable green lifestyle at LEGO, Denmark. Using a qualitative research approach, the study explores the insights and experiences of managers at LEGO regarding how organizational policies align with sustainability goals. The research highlights how family-centered initiatives, such as flexible work arrangements and parental leave, positively impact employee well-being and organizational productivity while fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. Findings reveal that family-friendly practices not only improve work-life balance but also encourage employees to adopt sustainable habits, contributing to LEGO's overarching sustainability vision. The study concludes by offering practical recommendations for organizations aiming to integrate social and ecological responsibilities through employee-centered policies.

Keywords: Family-Friendly Workplace, Sustainability, Green Lifestyle, Employee Well-being, LEGO, Corporate Practices.

INTRODUCTION

The intersection of family-friendly workplace policies and sustainability practices has become increasingly significant in the corporate world. Organizations are now tasked with addressing complex global challenges, including employee well-being and environmental sustainability, as part of their strategic objectives. The integration of these priorities represents a critical step toward fostering socially responsible and ecologically sustainable business practices (Adekoya, 2022; Palalić et al., 2024). This study focuses on LEGO's innovative implementation of family-oriented workplace policies in Denmark, exploring how these initiatives contribute to a sustainable green lifestyle.

Family-friendly workplace policies—such as flexible work schedules, parental leave, and childcare support—have been consistently linked to improved work-life balance, increased employee satisfaction, and enhanced organizational productivity (Dex et al., 2001; Feeney & Stritch, 2019). These benefits not only contribute to a healthier workforce but also drive business performance, ensuring long-term organizational success. Simultaneously, organizations that integrate sustainability into their operations play a vital role in mitigating

environmental challenges, contributing to global initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Schaub, 2013; Seebode et al., 2012). The convergence of these two paradigms—family-friendly policies and sustainability—presents an opportunity to redefine workplace cultures, yet research exploring this integration remains limited.

The importance of this topic lies in its multifaceted impact. Socially, family-oriented policies address critical challenges such as employee burnout and turnover by promoting supportive work environments (Van den Broeck et al., 2017; Gunarto et al., 2024). Environmentally, sustainable practices within workplaces can significantly reduce carbon footprints and promote eco-conscious behaviors among employees (Volkova et al., 2020). Despite the clear benefits of both approaches, the research gap in understanding their combined impact on organizational and societal outcomes persists. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing LEGO's leadership in aligning its family-friendly initiatives with its overarching sustainability goals.

LEGO's policies provide a unique case study in this context. The company's commitment to innovation and sustainability, exemplified by its use of renewable energy and eco-friendly materials, complements its family-focused workplace initiatives (Gurcaylilar-Yenidogan & Gul, 2021; Parkhomenko & Iarmosh, 2022). By investigating how these practices are implemented and their effects on employees and the organization, this study sheds light on actionable strategies for other companies. Furthermore, the research highlights how such initiatives can create a ripple effect, encouraging other businesses to adopt similar models of integrated sustainability and employee well-being.

The findings of this study are anticipated to have far-reaching implications. By presenting LEGO's approach as a benchmark, this research aims to guide organizations seeking to integrate family-friendly workplace policies with sustainable practices. The potential impact of such integration extends beyond individual organizations, contributing to broader societal transformations toward greener lifestyles and equitable work environments (Gunarto et al., 2024; Yusriani et al., 2023). In doing so, this manuscript aspires to serve as a valuable resource for academics, policymakers, and industry leaders committed to advancing sustainability and social responsibility in the workplace.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach that combines direct observations, semi-formal interviews, and a systematic literature review (SLR) to explore the implementation of family-friendly workplace policies and their alignment with LEGO's sustainability initiatives. By integrating field observations, personal interactions, and comprehensive literature analysis, the methodology provides an in-depth understanding of LEGO's strategies and their broader implications.

Research Design

The study is descriptive and exploratory, focusing on LEGO as a globally recognized organization known for its commitment to sustainability and employee well-being (Gurcaylilar-Yenidogan & Gul, 2021; Parkhomenko & Iarmosh, 2022; Sitohang et al., 2023). Direct observations were conducted to capture real-time workplace practices, interactions, and policies at LEGO's headquarters and other key branches. This component of the research emphasized how family-friendly policies intersect with LEGO's sustainability objectives in daily operations.

In addition, short semi-formal interviews were conducted with 20 managers across divisions and international branches. Participation was voluntary, and conversations were structured around informal, open-ended questions designed to elicit candid insights. This

approach ensured a diverse range of perspectives on the implementation and impact of family-oriented and green workplace policies (Shahbeklu, 2024; Zhang et al., 2021).

The SLR complemented these methods by reviewing previous research on LEGO's organizational strategies, workplace policies, and sustainability practices. The review systematically incorporated peer-reviewed articles, industry reports, and related publications from the references, including Adekoya (2022), Palalić et al. (2024), and Seebode et al. (2012).

Sample and Research Subjects

The primary subjects included managers from various divisions and locations, along with employees directly impacted by LEGO's policies. The managers were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring representation from different functional areas and international branches. Their voluntary participation enhanced the authenticity and diversity of the findings.

Research Location and Duration

Field observations began in March 2022 and continued until December 2024, encompassing multiple operational cycles and organizational changes. The observations included periods of high activity, employee evaluations, and policy implementations. The semi-formal interviews were conducted intermittently throughout this timeframe, with most interviews occurring between January and June 2024 at LEGO's headquarters in Denmark and select international branches.

Instruments and Procedures

The primary instruments for data collection were observation checklists, interview guides, and a standardized review framework for the SLR. Observations focused on LEGO's implementation of family-friendly practices, such as flexible scheduling, parental leave, and on-site childcare services, alongside workplace sustainability initiatives.

Interviews were semi-structured to allow flexibility and encourage open dialogue. Questions covered topics such as the practical challenges of implementing policies, the perceived benefits to employees and the organization, and the alignment of these policies with LEGO's sustainability goals.

The SLR followed a rigorous protocol, using search terms like "family-friendly workplace," "sustainability," "LEGO policies," and "green lifestyle" to identify relevant literature. Key sources, such as those by Feeney and Stritch (2019) and Volkova et al. (2020), were reviewed for insights into global best practices and contextual challenges.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data from observations and interviews were analyzed using thematic coding, identifying key themes and patterns related to LEGO's policies. This qualitative data was integrated with findings from the SLR to form a comprehensive narrative synthesis. Comparative analysis highlighted how LEGO's strategies align with or diverge from broader industry trends (Adekoya, 2022; Gurcaylilar-Yenidogan & Gul, 2021). By incorporating multi-method qualitative techniques, this study provides robust insights into LEGO's integrated approach to family-friendly workplace policies and sustainability, offering valuable lessons for organizations seeking to adopt similar practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Profile of Respondents

The respondents comprised 15 men (75%) and 5 women (25%), all aged between 38 and 55 years. Their tenure at LEGO ranged from 3 to 10 years, reflecting a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives across various roles and countries. A detailed breakdown of their profiles is presented in the table 1 below:

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

| Respondent | Years at LEGO | Job Position | Country (Homebase) |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| R1 | 5 years | Finance Manager | United States |
| R2 | 7 years | HR Manager | Brazil |
| R3 | 7 years | Operations Manager | Denmark |
| R4 | 8 years | HR Manager | United Kingdom |
| R5 | 4 years | IT Project Manager | Denmark |
| R6 | 3 years | Marketing Manager | Singapore |
| R7 | 4 years | Marketing Manager | Denmark |
| R8 | 5 years | Finance Manager | United States |
| R9 | 10 years | Operations Manager | United States |
| R10 | 5 years | IT Manager | United States |
| R11 | 7 years | Production Manager | South Korea |
| R12 | 5 years | R&D Manager | Denmark |
| R13 | 8 years | HR Manager | Malaysia |
| R14 | 9 years | Marketing Manager | United Kingdom |
| R15 | 9 years | Marketing Manager | United Kingdom |
| R16 | 3 years | Marketing Manager | Singapore |
| R17 | 7 years | R&D Manager | Denmark |
| R18 | 5 years | HR Manager | Denmark |
| R19 | 7 years | IT Manager | Denmark |
| R20 | 4 years | Operations Manager | United States |

Source: Researchers' data analysis results, January 2025

The diversity in tenure, roles, and countries among the respondents provides comprehensive insights into LEGO's family-friendly policies and sustainability initiatives. The representation of multiple regions, particularly Denmark (35% of respondents), reflects LEGO's global reach while maintaining its cultural roots. Male managers dominate the respondent pool, but the inclusion of women (25%) ensures a variety of perspectives.

b. Results

Interview Results

Semi-formal interviews conducted with 20 managers across LEGO's divisions and international branches revealed significant insights into the integration of family-friendly workplace policies and sustainability goals.

Managers consistently emphasized LEGO's commitment to policies that enhance employee well-being, such as flexible work arrangements, extended parental leave, and on-site childcare facilities. A Danish manager noted, *"Our parental leave policy is designed not just for convenience but to support employees in achieving a healthy work-life balance, which is critical for long-term productivity."*

Furthermore, LEGO aligns its family-friendly policies with its sustainability initiatives. Many managers discussed programs that encourage eco-conscious behaviors among employees, such as incentives for carpooling, cycling, or using public transportation. As one international manager observed, *"Our flexible work options are paired with sustainability initiatives, such as remote work policies, reducing carbon emissions associated with commuting."*

Leadership plays a crucial role in embedding these values (Tigre et al., 2023; Yusriani et al., 2023; Rabiul et al., 2023). Regular training sessions on sustainability and employee well-being are integral to LEGO's culture. A senior manager emphasized, *"Our leadership ensures that sustainability and family-oriented policies are embedded at all levels, making them inseparable from our daily operations."*

R4 stated, *"We are happy and love to work here because it's a complete package; everyone is awesome in their own unique way. Happiness in family life must be balanced with career responsibilities at the office. The organization does not set overly high expectations like my previous workplaces in Asia (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore). In Denmark and other LEGO branches, 'happiness at work' is implemented, and families must also feel happy when entering LEGO buildings."*

R7 mentioned that upon joining LEGO, the entire family was interviewed warmly and provided with a life coach to navigate the new career while relocating to a new place. *"Here, we feel that 'family comes first' is a tradition at LEGO... children are seen as role models. If the children are smiling and happy, the parents will also be happy working every day."*

The findings suggest that LEGO's family-friendly policies are not only a tool for employee satisfaction but also an integral component of the company's sustainability strategy.

Images

Promoting family-friendly workplaces



Fig 1

Supporting children's development

As a company that cares deeply about children's development, our aspiration is to promote family-friendly workplaces across our supply chain. We understand the critical role parents and caregivers have, especially during a child's formative years, and believe that the impact of workplace policies on a parent's opportunity to fulfil this role is critical.



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5

Images in Figures 1–5 Source: Lego Info Web (2024)



Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9

Source: Images in Figures 6–9 are from the scholars' personal collection, taken in the LEGO area in Billund, Denmark (2024)

b. Discussion

The findings of this study are strengthened by several key points that highlight LEGO's commitment to integrating family-friendly workplace policies with sustainability goals:

- **LEGO HQ in Denmark:** The headquarters features sustainable building designs and family-oriented amenities, including a children's play area. This reflects LEGO's effort to balance employee productivity with a supportive family environment.
- **Flexible Workspace:** LEGO's collaborative and eco-friendly workspaces not only promote flexible working but also accommodate families. For instance, desks, chairs, and objects in the workspace are designed in various shapes and styles to ensure comfort for employees and their children during visits.
- **Sustainability in Action:** LEGO offices actively contribute to environmental sustainability with features such as solar panels, bike racks, and electric vehicle charging stations, reducing the organization's overall carbon footprint.
- **Family Initiatives:**
 - *Working with Kids Day* fosters family engagement by allowing employees to bring their children to the workplace annually.
 - The *18+ camping program* connects young adults—children of employees—from around the world, encouraging global peer relationships and post-pandemic reconnection.
 - Dedicated *family rooms, nursing rooms, and relaxation spaces* cater to the diverse needs of employees and their families.

In addition to these structural and programmatic features, LEGO prioritizes psychological well-being as a core aspect of its employee-centered policies. Working from home and extended parental leave are not just perks but integral parts of the organization's approach to maintaining employee well-being (Wiroko, 2021; Gunarto et al., 2024; Yusriani et al., 2023). Such initiatives align with the organization's commitment to sustainable development (SD) and ensure employees can maintain a work-life balance (WLB).

Prioritization of Mental Health: Mental health is a recurring focus at LEGO, underscored during work evaluation sessions. In Denmark, employees are permitted to take leave specifically for "taking space to heal from work stress or maintain mental health." This policy provides employees with quality time to recharge with their families, reinforcing their overall well-being and satisfaction.

These initiatives are consistent with Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, as they foster an environment where employees maintain high self-efficacy. LEGO's approach ensures that employees feel confident in their abilities and supported in their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, the organization's emphasis on WLB aligns with findings from Ginting et al. (2024), demonstrating that maintaining balance between personal and professional roles is critical to employee satisfaction and performance.

LEGO's exemplary practices showcase how large organizations can effectively integrate family-friendly policies with sustainability goals, creating a harmonious and productive work environment. These practices serve as a model for other companies striving to achieve similar outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how LEGO has successfully implemented family-friendly workplace policies that align with its sustainability objectives, providing valuable insights into the integration of employee well-being and environmental responsibility. Through qualitative data gathered from semi-formal interviews, direct observations, and a systematic literature review, the findings reveal that LEGO's initiatives—such as flexible work arrangements,

extended parental leave, on-site childcare facilities, and sustainability programs—contribute to a harmonious and supportive work environment.

The research highlights that LEGO's commitment to psychological well-being, work-life balance, and family engagement significantly enhances employee satisfaction and productivity. Furthermore, the organization's sustainable practices, such as incorporating renewable energy and promoting eco-conscious commuting, demonstrate how corporate social responsibility can coexist with operational efficiency. These initiatives are deeply embedded within LEGO's culture, reflecting its leadership in fostering an inclusive and sustainable workplace.

The advancements made in this study extend beyond LEGO, providing a framework for other organizations to adopt similar approaches. By integrating family-friendly policies with sustainability practices, companies can create workplaces that not only attract and retain top talent but also address global environmental challenges. This research enriches the field of industrial science by demonstrating how innovative workplace policies can drive both social and ecological progress, setting a benchmark for sustainability and employee-centered practices in the corporate world.

In conclusion, LEGO's model illustrates that prioritizing family and sustainability is not just beneficial for employees but also for long-term organizational success, providing a replicable paradigm for companies seeking to align business goals with societal and environmental responsibilities.

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