

Internet Appendix A76 Sustainability Practice

A76.1 Illustrative Pitch Template Example

Pitcher's Name	Elizabeth Nichols	FoR category	1503	Date Completed	14 June 2015
(A) Working Title	Understanding the Practise of Sustainability in Organisations				
(B) Basic Research Question	How do managers practise and understand sustainability given that sustainability is a complex and multifaceted concept?				
(C) Key paper(s)	Margolis, J. D. & Walsh, J. P. (2003). Misery loves companies: Rethinking social initiatives by business. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> , 48(2): 268-305. Schatzki, T. (2011). Where the Action Is (On Large Social Phenomena Such as Sociotechnical Regimes). Sustainable Practices Research Group, Working Paper 1.				
(D) Motivation/Puzzle	Sustainability is a vague, ill-defined term yet organisations are increasingly claiming their sustainability credentials. Since the World Commission on Environment and Development (World Commission of Environment and Development, 1987) first defined sustainable development, there has been on-going debates on how to conceptualise and operationalise the term. Organisations are taking on the challenge of putting sustainability into practise which has resulted in a wide range of sustainable initiatives. What appears to be happening this that people within organisations are interpreting and acting on the term differently depending on their values, perceptions, level of self-interest and context (McManus, 1996). The motivation behind this study is to identify the multiple understanding of sustainability through organisational activities.				
THREE	Three core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “ IDioTs ” guide				
(E) Idea?	<p>Core Idea: Traditionally sustainability is viewed being composed of three parts; economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity (Elkington, 1997). Although, through reading the literature and considering the debate in wide society, there appear to be multiple understandings of sustainability. Realising that there are potentially multiple understandings would explain the variety of activities organisations label as being sustainable. The intention of this research is to identify the multiple understandings of sustainability through how it is currently being practiced by organisations.</p> <p>Theoretical Idea: Theoretical modelling of sustainability is advanced, incorporating multiple issues and multi-level approaches (Starik & Rands, 1995). Strategically the variety of responses from organisations ranges from denial or non-compliance through to a proactive stance (Berry & Rondinelli, 1998; Marsden, 2000; Roome, 1992). Not surprisingly then, how organisations respond will depend on the dominant sustainability perspective within the organisation – and how much they want to question or undermine the economic and resource base of their organisation. Although the rhetoric and high ideals within the theoretical discourse explain what companies should be doing we know significantly less about current sustainable activities.</p> <p>Practical Tension: Within the debate on sustainability organisations are caught between two purposes. Firstly, being a source of economic growth (Friedman, 1970) and secondly, being part of resolving society's ills (Hawken, 1992). Tensions also occur when organisations are expected to balance the demands of a variety of stakeholders, all who have different world views of the purpose of business especially when including values-laden concepts such as sustainability.</p>				
(F) Data?	<p>Country: Australia and New Zealand. Setting: Restaurants, cafés and fast food industry. Why? The dining out industry is responsible for approx. ½ kg of food waste per meal served therefore has a high impact on the environment. This industry also has economic and social impacts. Limiting the sampling to Australia and New Zealand provides ease of access. Data: Qualitative data is required. Stage 1 involves interviewing the sustainability champion within the organisation. This was either the owner or the head chef. Stage 2 requires observations of the day-to-day practises within the kitchen. Unit of Analysis: The practice is the unit of analysis.(Nicolini, 2012) Sampling Scheme: Sample Size: 25 semi-structured interviews and 4-8 participant observations Data Sources: Stage 1 sources were a combination of industry contacts, snowballing and cold-calling techniques. Organisations selected require a clear sustainability strategy either explicitly or implicitly. Face-to-face interviews lasted 45-90 minutes. Stage 2 involves 1-3 day observations depending on the access provided by the gatekeeper. Participants were selected from those who had participated in Stage 1. Data collection is by hand written notes and photographic evidence. Secondary data from archival documents such as menus, formal policies,</p>				

Cued Template taken from Faff, Robert W., Pitching Research (January 11, 2015). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2462059> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2462059>

	<p>organisation statements, website descriptions and reviews provided opportunities for triangulation.</p> <p>Timeframe: Data collection has been protracted due to accessibility of research sites and using the snowballing technique.</p> <p>Problems with missing data/observations: It can be difficult to gain access to organisations in this industry.</p>
(G) Tools?	<p>Phenomenography is the research methodology for Stage 1. The development of an interview protocol was necessary for the semi-structured interviews. Stage 2 uses the case study method (Yin, 2003) to elaborate on the resulting categories from Stage 1.</p> <p>Nvivo will be used to code the interviews and observations.</p>
TWO	Two key questions
(H) What's New?	<p>Past sustainability research has focused on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Single case studies of exemplar organisations, and Surveys at either the organisation or industry level. The surveys pre-prescribe the answers that the research is expecting to be practiced and exclude discovery of new initiatives. <p>There are three novelty aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Empirically discovering the multiple understandings of sustainability through how it is practised. Conducting sustainability research in the restaurant, café and takeaway context. The dining-out industry is a little researched area in sustainability yet can have significant economic, environmental and social impacts. The combining of practice theory with phenomenography.
(I) So What?	<p>Sustainability is an unclear concept both conceptually and practically yet many organisations have a sustainability strategy, which if compared, highlight the ambiguity of the term. Identifying the multiple understandings prevalent in practice provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> researchers with a framework for future enquiry as sustainability cannot be treated as though there is one universal conception, policy-makers will comprehend as to why new policies can incite intense discuss and opposition as practitioners hold different understandings, educators with a platform from which to build curricula, and practitioners with an audit of current practices in the sustainability space. <p>“Organizations and the Natural Environment-related researchers have the opportunity to continue to expand their methodological approaches or research processes well beyond the mostly conceptual, single-case-study orientation employed earlier in this field’s evolution” (Starik & Marcus, 2000). This research fulfils Starik and Marcus’ (2000) call for using new methodological approaches through using phenomenography and their call to move beyond the conceptual orientations through having a qualitative enquiry.</p>
ONE	One bottom line
(J) Contribution?	<p>Academic Contribution: This research intends to provide a theoretical framework to identify the different worldviews of sustainability and how each view informs the practice of sustainability. The expectation is that the theoretical framework will have a number of different conceptions of sustainability and identify the typical actions of an organisation within each conception. Preliminary results show that there are four conceptualisations of sustainability; 1) Mindful Frugality, 2) Assured Provenance, 3) Passionate Endeavour, and 4) Global Connectivity. These preliminary results overcome the misconception that sustainability means the same thing to everyone and will explain why there are different activities when sustainability is implemented.</p> <p>Practitioner Contribution: Participants have shown interest in the research with 23 out of the 25 interviewed wanting a report on the research findings. Many have stated that they will use this report as an information source to further incorporate new sustainability initiatives into their businesses.</p>
(K) Other Considerations	<p>Ethics: Ethics approval has been provided for both stages of the data collection.</p> <p>Target Journals: Academy of Management Journal, Organisations and the Natural Environment.</p> <p>Risk Assessment: Low risk research.</p> <p>Scope of Research: The scope of the project has been deemed at appropriate for a PhD at confirmation.</p> <p>Ethical Considerations: Ethical clearance has been approved.</p> <p>Challenges: Length of time for data collection has been an issue. Also gaining access for participant observations is proving challenging.</p>