

Chapter 7

Sustainability Strategies for Software Development Firms

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ABSTRACT

Business sustainability is critical for any industry. In the software sector, this is often well practiced by organizations according to their sustainability reports. The work documented in this chapter aims to analyze the sustainability reports of software development firms from India to document the best practices in business sustainability. Ten large-scale software development firms were selected, and the themes such as efficiency enhancement, health and safety, opportunity maximization, productivity enhancement, risk management, value creation, and waste management were explored in the reports. The results are presented in this chapter that integrates the knowledge on the practical implications that software organizations in the rest of the world could adapt for better management of sustainability initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a vital concept for businesses. There has been research in the area of defining the concept of sustainability (Sambhanthan, Potdar, & Chang, 2017); (Sambhanthan & Potdar, 2017). Studies dealing with the exploration of business sustainability frameworks and the related conceptual issues are manifold in the published literature (Sambhanthan & Potdar, 2016a); (Sambhanthan & Potdar, 2015); (Sambhanthan & Potdar, 2016b). However, researches dealing with the analysis of business sustainability best practices based on the analysis of sustainability reports could be a novel and practical contribution to the sustainability literature.

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Therefore, this article explores the business sustainability concepts such as efficiency enhancement, health and safety, opportunity maximization, productivity enhancement, risk management, value creation and waste management in detail through a content analysis of business sustainability reports of software development firms.

RELATED WORK

Business sustainability has been featured as a buzzword in today's business world. Each business must consider about their sustainability in terms of long term survival and success. A recent article published in the Sloan Management Review indicates that a certain percentage of business managers are less concerned about business sustainability (Hopkins et al., 2009). Alongside, the authors suggest that the interpretations of sustainability by companies are many. Some companies limit their focus only to the environmental aspects while the others concentrating on different aspects of sustainability such as economic, social and institutional aspects. This made the understanding and grasp of business sustainability by businesses to be in infancy at the dawn of the millennium era (Veleva & Ellenbecker, 2000).

Whilst, sustainability is a critical concern for the companies, the recent economic downturn experienced by the world could have had influenced the way in which the companies were responding to sustainability problems. Arguably, the economic downturn has had the predictive capacity to decide the investment potential of larger co-operations on differing priorities. In contrast (Hopkins et al., 2009) argue that the economic downturn has accelerated the companies' focus on sustainability because of the demanding needs for focusing on other strategic priorities. Paradoxically, sustainability has been looked as a way for enhancing co-operate value and brand equity through influencing the stakeholders of the organisations in both macro and micro environmental contexts. Besides the aforementioned arguments, there is a divergence of opinion between sustainability scholars about sustainability that increases the criticality of exploring on the sustainability aspect of businesses in detail, something which is lacking in the existing body of knowledge (Hopkins et al., 2009). There are certain guidelines and policies developed by non-governmental bodies such as the World Commission of Environment and Development (WCED), that seeks to set long term vision for a whole set of industries and business clusters about achieving Sustainability.

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