Sustainable Development Performance

The Impact of Corporate Sustainability Practice on Quality-of-life

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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This research has been carried out by me, Kari Solomon. My own contributions, fully and explicitly indicated in the thesis, have been a comprehensive review and compilation of literature, statement of research rationale and problem statement, and scoping and collection of primary and secondary data to present a conversation about an area of research which receives little attention from the academic and practitioner communities.

It is gratefully acknowledged the access to University research resources and the graciousness of the supervision team to complete this research in a meaningful fashion.

I was inspired by my late father, late pet Ludo, my late mother, and most importantly my late Great-Uncle Dr. J.D. Solomon, to pursue this project. Dr. Solomon and his wife, Dr. Effie O'Ellis-Solomon, made great contributions to the scientific and medical communities starting in pre-Civil Rights era USA. My father's passion for the fine and performance arts, quality management and engineering in conjunction with my mother's guidance on ethics and environmental stewardship shaped my personal and professional aspirations. Their collective character and accomplishments have left an ever-lasting impression on me and how I set my life ambitions. My resilience, persistence, and gentle tolerance of ignorance is all thanks to them.

The intended audience of this thesis is a mix between industry professionals seeking to innovate their corporate sustainability practices and performance, and those in the academic fields developing valuable research on understanding the outcomes of effective corporate sustainability management practices.

"I want to thank me for believing in me. I want to thank me for doing all this hard work. I want to thank me for having no days off. I want to thank me for never quitting. I want to thank me for always being a giver and trying to give more than I receive. I want to thank me for trying to do more right than wrong. I want to thank me for just being me at all times." –Snoop Dog, 2019

"…Ease is a greater threat to progress than hardship. So keep moving, keep growing, keep learning." – Denzel Washington, 2022

"Many things there are that mankind must not know – not until the human race stands ready to accept that which is, but can never be seen." – Dr. Stephen V. Strange, Marvel Comics, 1972

Abstract

As multinational corporations strive to meet market demands from shareholders, investors, consumers, and society for transparency and traceable social impact, accurately assessing companies' sustainability performance requires a systematic method for measuring impacts against sustainable development objectives. This study examined the relationship between corporate sustainability performance measures and globally aggregated quality-of-life indicators to enhance understanding of the social impact of multinational corporations (MNCs). The research was framed by stakeholder and paradox tension theories, providing a foundation for understanding how MNCs use these tools to assess their social impact, and how the results relate to sustainable development progress at national and global levels relevant to quality-of-life.

This study used a mixed methods approach with qualitative and quantitative data analysed in a staged content analysis and comparative case studies completed using a modified social impact evaluation approach. The Cases were organised by countries (boundary) and industries (scope). The boundary consisted of the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea). The scope consisted of MNCs across Health Care Providers & Services (Health Care), Interactive Media & Home Entertainment Services (Interactive Media Services), Published Media & Entertainment (Media & Entertainment), Restaurants, Leisure & Entertainment (Restaurants & Entertainment), and Hotels, Cruise Lines & Resorts (Hospitality). The Case evaluation was conducted using a new evaluation framework, Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence (RISE), on 130 companies, 470 corporate reports and documents, and 211 survey responses.

The findings reveal that the corporate sustainability strategies and performance measures used by multinational corporations have a peripheral relationship with quality-of-life indicators. Additional findings highlight how these entities implement a range of sustainability management tools, how such tools relate to quality-of-life indicators, and the factors facilitating or hindering the realisation of sustainability objectives as they relate to societal impact. My research contributes to gaps in the academic literature and professional practice concerning the identification and evaluation of the societal impacts of corporate sustainability initiatives. Additionally, it presents an evaluation framework that highlights the need for reliable accountability systems in corporate sustainability performance.

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List of Acronyms

BEM – Business Excellence Model

BoD – Board of Directors

C&S – Carrots and Sticks [Database]

CDP – Carbon Disclosure Project

CO_2 – Carbon Dioxide (in reference to emissions)

CS – Corporate Sustainability

CSA – Corporate Sustainability Assessment

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

DEI – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DJSI – Dow Jones Sustainability Index

DJSWI – Dow Jones Sustainability World Index

EFQM – European Foundation for Quality Management

ESG – Environmental, Social & Governance

ESPMS – Enterprise Sustainability Performance Measurement System

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation

GHG – Green House Gas

GICS – Global Industry Classification System

GPI – Genuine Progress Indicator

GRI – Global Reporting Initiative

HDI – Human Development Index

ISO – Organisation for International Standardisation (English translation)

KPIs – Key Performance Indicator(s)

MBNQA – Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MNCs – Multinational Corporations

NDA – Non-Disclosure Agreement

OECD – Organisation for Economic and Co-operative Development

QOL – Quality-of-life

RISE – Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence

S&P – Standard & Poor

SASB – Sustainability Accounting Standards Board

SEC – Securities Exchange Commission

SEE – Sustainable Enterprise Excellence

SEE AbP – Sustainable Enterprise Excellence Attribute-based Protocol

SMT – Sustainability Management Tools

SOX – Sarbanes Oxley

SWI – Sustainable Well-being Index

TBL – Triple Bottom Line

TCFD – Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosure

UN DP – United Nations Development Programme

UN EP – United Nations Environment Programme

UN SDGs – United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Preface

Kari Solomon’s research seeks to understand the links between corporate sustainability practice and impacts on society, measured by sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators. She brings a practitioner and academic perspective to the topic, having earned a Bachelor’s from Hiram College, Majoring in Management & Minoring in Fine Art, a Master of Business Administration in Sustainability from Baldwin Wallace University, and gained over 13 years of work experience in the public transportation industry.

Kari’s work experience includes analytical and decision-making accountabilities for financial management, strategic planning, performance excellence, and sustainability strategy & reporting in transportation for government and private sectors. Her government sector experience was based in the United States (Northeast Ohio), and her private sector experience was with a French-based multinational corporation operating as a private contractor to public transportation agencies in metropolitan cities around the world. Her scope of work was focused on the United States and Canada. From her professional experiences, Kari has gained insight and expertise on the theories and practices of effective sustainability management and leadership. Her interest in performance excellence initiatives and sustainable development spurred her to wonder: How do we know this work makes a difference in peoples’ lives?

Kari M. Solomon, University of Leeds, February 2021 through September 2025

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Corporate sustainability management is increasingly important to organisations as they recognise the weight of their responsibilities toward environmental, social, and economic stewardship. While multinational corporations have increasingly adopted sustainability reporting standards as a key adaptation tool, there remains a need for a more comprehensive approach to align corporate sustainability performance with broader societal impacts, especially in terms of quality-of-life (Beare et al., 2014; Searcy, 2016; Ejarque and Campos, 2020). To better understand the relationships between sustainable development and quality-of-life, one needs to understand the facets linking these two pillars. My research proposes that corporate sustainability practices of multinational corporations are the conceptual nexus linking the measurement scales for sustainability performance and quality-of-life, which investigates the relationship as having an implication on progress of global sustainable development initiatives.

The Brundtland Report offers the most used definition for sustainable development, where needs of the present can be met without compromising those of the future (World Commission on Environment & Development, 1987). This concept is based in understanding the relationships between society and nature, where equitable balances are made feasible between human and natural systems (Kemp and Martens, 2007). It is finding and maintaining this systems balance which links to understanding impacts on quality-of-life at different scales. Knowing the impact at varying scales of maturity and quality supports the need for systematically assessing progress made toward sustainable development (GRI, 2021; Economic and Social Council, 2022). Large companies provide valuable insights into this progress through the way they develop and present their sustainability performance and impact.

Conceptually, quality-of-life is a multifaceted framework that is adapted at two scales: individual and societal (Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008). The subjective concept of personal or societal well-being, explored in fields like corporate social responsibility, business ethics, and sustainability accounting, is often referred to as 'quality-of-life'. To understand the

connection between Malkina-Pykh and Pykh's quality-of-life framework and Kemp and Martens' (2007) foundation of human and natural systems in relation to corporate sustainability, it is important to recognise that both frameworks emphasise the interconnectedness of human and natural systems. The intersection of these scales creates what Malkina-Pykh and Pykh identify as domains which consist of objective and subjective factors like physical well-being, mental fortitude, or social inclusion (2008).

These domains categorise aspects used to measure levels and trends in quality-of-life indicators for individuals, organisations, and communities. Two key concepts in this convergence are the selection and use of sustainability management tools by multinational corporations, as well as the application and rationale behind using systems for demonstrating sustainability performance impact on communities (externally) and organisational performance (internally). Talbot et al. (2021) argue that sustainability management tools, such as environmental management systems and sustainability reporting, are influenced by stakeholder engagement and external pressures. These management tools can contribute to improved sustainability performance by fostering awareness, facilitating communication, and driving continuous improvement within organisations.

Investigation of multinational corporations in the context of sustainability performance and impact is relevant because of their considerable influence on the global economy, environment, and society. As large and influential players in the global landscape, multinational corporations hold immense power and responsibility when it comes to driving sustainable development and improving quality-of-life indicators for communities and stakeholders worldwide (Hahn et al., 2015; Estoque et al., 2019). When linking corporate sustainability to quality-of-life, it is critical to consider how corporations' sustainability management practices affect the well-being of individuals, communities, and society. While multinational corporations include social and societal issues within their corporate sustainability strategies, often identified through a materiality assessment, they frequently lack a systematic approach to align the outcomes of these strategies more clearly with quality-of-life aspects (Azapagic, 2003; Cöster et al., 2020). To comprehensively assess the impacts, corporations should simultaneously consider the perspectives of both stakeholders and strategic business priorities to identify key opportunities and priorities (Baumgartner and Ebner, 2010; Oertwig et al., 2017; Cöster et al., 2020).

This connection requires multinational corporations to use sustainability management tools and demonstrate their impact on sustainability performance and society. Using the framework developed by Malkina-Pykh and Pykh (2008) to categorise the domains that influence quality-of-life indicators, corporations can gain insights into the specific areas where their sustainability practices have the potential to make a positive impact. This not only allows for a more thorough examination of the links between corporate sustainability and quality-of-life, but it also lays the groundwork for designing and implementing sustainable development initiatives that prioritise the well-being of individuals and communities, which make up their stakeholders.

1.2 Background

The challenges of sustainable development are wide-ranging and interconnected, encompassing environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Multinational corporations (MNCs), as influential players in the global economy, have a key role to play in addressing these challenges and transitioning towards more sustainable practices (Epstein and Roy, 2001; Oertwig et al., 2017; Adamek, 2018; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). For many years, the emphasis of organisations' sustainability strategies was environmentally oriented. Addressing environmental challenges such as climates change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion requires corporations to rethink business operations, models, and supply chains (Fiksel, 2001; Nunhes et al., 2020).

Given their scale and public visibility, multinational corporations face increased reporting obligations and widely disseminate information about their sustainability initiatives. This makes their practices a key area of study to understand implications for global progress. One significant aspect of MNC influence stems from their capacity and motivation to invest in economic development, both domestically and internationally (van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018). As regulations and standards evolve, MNCs' responses indicate their influence, often leading them to move from voluntary, symbolic actions to more integrated and strategic sustainability approaches (Oluwatosin Yetunde Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Multinational corporations frequently integrate sustainability into their core business strategies by using their substantial resources and extensive global networks to foster innovation and disseminate best practices across diverse sectors and geographical regions (Hristov et al., 2022; Oluwatosin Yetunde Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). The discussion of MNCs' role in sustainable

development offers a clear framework for understanding their importance, effectively summarizing three key points: their high visibility, which necessitates reporting; their capacity, enabling investment and innovation; and their strategic evolution beyond symbolic gestures.

The shift from voluntary actions to integrated strategies represents a maturation of operationalising sustainable development concepts in business settings. This shift shows a growing understanding that sustainability must be part of core business strategies, not just an add-on or a matter of following rules (Oluwatosin Yetunde Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). At odds with this are the conflicts in creating jobs to alleviate poverty, while enabling a gap in wealth inequality (Farias et al., 2020). This paradox, where economic development simultaneously creates opportunities and exacerbates disparities, highlights the complex challenges MNCs face in achieving genuinely sustainable outcomes that benefit all stakeholders. While the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) aim for a more equitable and sustainable future, MNCs face challenges in achieving them due to the inherent conflict between maximizing profits and ensuring societal well-being (van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018; van Zanten and van Tulder, 2021). While research has examined the relevance and integration of the SDGs within MNCs and their progress, a gap exists in understanding how MNCs can more effectively and meaningfully measure their societal impact through the lens of quality-of-life.

However, multinational corporations must address social challenges, including those related to human rights, fair labour and compensation, and social or community impacts while ensuring their economic viability and competitiveness (Fiksel, 2001; van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018). The global community, through initiatives and frameworks like the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has called for a collective effort from public, private, and third sector to make measurable, impactful contributions to sustainable development progress. Similarly, the shift of MNCs from symbolic to strategic sustainability warrants further scrutiny: is it a true commitment to the common good, or a sophisticated form of greenwashing aimed at attracting environmentally conscious investors and consumers? To explore this aspect, my research background and context are based in three, interlinked key concepts of Drivers of Sustainable Development, Emergence of Sustainability Management Tools, and the Path Toward Performance and Impact on Quality-of-Life.

1.2.1 Drivers of Sustainable Development: Public Policy and Corporate Disclosure

The public sector, through policies, regulations, and incentives, plays a significant role in shaping corporate behaviour and driving sustainability initiatives. Historically, sustainable development practice was influenced by public policy and measured by ability to attain policy objectives serving regional planning and urban design initiatives (Berke, 2002). Governments can implement policies which mandate or encourage corporations to adopt sustainable practices, such as corporate governance, emissions reductions, or producer responsibility schemes in supply chains. At a national level, public policy has been a method of bringing about change for long-term development (Ye et al., 2020). Sustainable development can provide a solid platform for public sector efforts aimed at improving the quality-of-life in a community (Berke, 2002). Public-private partnerships and collaborative initiatives can leverage the resources and expertise of multiple sectors to tackle complex sustainable development challenges (Tommasetti et al., 2020; Shayan et al., 2022). Corporations play a key role by enhancing transparency and accountability, in turn ensuring that they operate in an ethical, responsible, and sustainable manner in conformance of public policies (Kim, 2021).

Multinational corporations have a range of responses to public policy pressures on sustainable development and corporate sustainability. Some corporations adopt an initiative-taking approach, going beyond compliance and voluntary initiatives to strategically integrate sustainability into their business operations as a competitive advantage (Fiksel, 2001; van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018). Other corporations take a reactive approach, focusing on risk mitigation and regulatory compliance (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Nunhes et al., 2020). The diversity of corporate responses highlights the need for a balanced, systematic approach where public policy provides clear, long-term incentives and resources to enable the widespread adoption of sustainable practices. Cross-sector partnerships are a critical mechanism leveraging stakeholder engagement to enable multinational corporations to more effectively contribute to sustainable development challenges (van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018). This approach allows corporations the flexibility to innovate and find cost-effective, economically, and socially beneficial solutions.

The concept of sustainable development governance offers many approaches to managing sustainable development performance through

sustainability-focused policy and practice (Jordan, 2008). Heavily influenced by regulating bodies and other stakeholder groups, corporations strive to support the broader initiatives of sustainable development. In doing so, often a combination of business management and sustainability management tools are used to establish strategy, engage stakeholders, and assess progress and environmental impacts of their sustainability practices (Pérez-López et al., 2015; Nawaz and Koç, 2018). Corporations can use a range of sustainability management tools to define, measure, and improve their sustainability performance. These tools include life cycle assessments, environmental management systems, business excellence models, sustainability reporting standards, and financial investment indicators dedicated to sustainability issues (Fiksel, 2001; Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017). A challenge arises in how corporations integrate tools and concepts into their business operations to effectively measure change from sustainability performance.

The integration of sustainability into corporate strategy and value creation has become increasingly critical for multinational corporations to remain competitive and resilient in the face of complex, global sustainable development challenges (Oertwig et al., 2017). A proactive response from the private sector is to align objectives with public policy tools aimed at driving sustainability progress. Integrations at a systemic level prove challenging due to the complexity of balancing economic, environmental, and social objectives where the difficulty of measuring and evaluating sustainability performance requires effective stakeholder engagement (Oertwig et al., 2017). Factors of integration, such as industry designation, company size, or stakeholder engagement, also impact a corporation’s ability to adopt reliable disclosure practices, which serve as a means for measuring and demonstrating performance and impact transparently.

Reporting or disclosure is a crucial component of integrating sustainability into business operations. The overlap of factors comes in the considerations for understanding stakeholder demands, industry context and competitive pressures, and linking reporting and initiatives to financial performance (Hahn and Kühnen, 2013; Oertwig et al., 2017). Understanding these factors aids in promoting reliably reporting information and encouraging more comprehensive sustainability practice integrations. The next section summarises key concepts on sustainability management tools.

1.2.2 Emergence and Use of Sustainability Management Tools

Sustainability management tools are the strategic use of any collection of reporting standards, frameworks, rating systems, or indices to define corporate sustainability strategy and measure sustainability performance (Siew, 2015; Cöster et al., 2020; Shayan et al., 2022). This definition is based on academic discussions about sustainability reporting standards, the evaluation of maturity and effectiveness of reporting standards, and the impact of corporations on society through aligning corporate social responsibility to the UN SDGs. As a response to the growing diversity in public policies, multinational corporations continue to increase their use of sustainability management tools, which establishes a link between corporate sustainability performance and disclosure practices (Beare et al., 2014).

Sustainability management tools have emerged as a response to the growing demand from shareholders for companies to measure and report on their sustainability performance. Some research highlights that corporate sustainability performance depends on the degree of integration with corporate strategy and business operations (Hahn and Kühnen, 2013; Oertwig et al., 2017; Saulick et al., 2023). Early sustainability management tools focused on sustainability reporting, which aimed to demonstrate a corporation's legitimacy and respond to stakeholder demands for transparency (Hummel and Schlick, 2016). A key challenge lies in linking corporate sustainability disclosed information with operational performance indicators. Measuring and reporting sustainability performance is difficult, highlighting the need for better frameworks and guidelines to improve transparency and accountability (Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018; Cöster et al., 2020a; Pazienza et al., 2023). Depending on how and why corporations use these resources, sustainability management tools serve as a means of accountability, transparency, and improvement in sustainability practices.

Literature suggests that integrating sustainability into broader management systems can enhance the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives and lead to better organisational outcomes (Nunhes et al., 2020; Kim, 2021; Friske et al., 2023). Integrated management systems represent the strategic integration of sustainability within the overall business management framework, going beyond siloed approaches to sustainability projects and initiatives (Oertwig et al., 2017; Nunhes et al., 2020). An outcome of effective integration could be creation of social value. The pressure to demonstrate the value of impact from sustainability initiatives has led to the development of more sophisticated performance measurement approaches. Research

indicates that companies are growing more focused on quantifying business and societal value created through sustainability initiatives, moving beyond compliance and reputation management metrics (Hummel and Schlick, 2016; Grewal and Serafeim, 2020). This aligns with the need to move beyond reporting sustainability information and instead focus on how performance data informs decision-making and drives measurable change.

These tools help companies identify, track, and report on their sustainability efforts and impacts across environmental, economic, and social aspects (Nawaz and Koç, 2019). There are several reasons why sustainability management tools may not always be effective in driving sustainable development. First, tools alone cannot guarantee the improvement of environmental and social performance (Johnson, 2015). Secondly, the adoption and adaptation of sustainability management tools varies based on sector, size, and geo-political influences which impacts quality of outputs-typically a sustainability-related report (Talbot et al., 2021). Additionally, sustainability management tools may vary in their intended coverage, leading to inconsistent or incomplete measurement of sustainability performance.

This is evident in the variation of how tools are defined and scaled as being a framework, standard, certification, or index (GRI, 2022). Collectively, sustainability management tools serve as a framework or guide, but their performance is dependent on an organisation’s commitment and activities, as well as the context of time and culture when implemented. One way to assess this effectiveness as suggested by Talbot et al. (2021) is in studying the initiatives and performance measures presented across corporate sustainability reporting. The next section presents an overview of sustainability performance and social impact.

1.2.3 The Path toward Performance and Impact on Quality-of-life

Various areas of sustainability research have developed an understanding of sustainability performance through exploring frameworks, approaches, and models of evaluating effective use of sustainability management tools and sustainability performance management. Talbot et al. (2021) explored awareness of sustainability issues, the implications of external pressure from governing bodies, and the value of stakeholder engagement as key components for effective implementation of sustainability management tools. Khaled et al. (2021) propose a framework for correlating the UN SDGs with corporate sustainability performance metrics through environmental, social and governance (ESG) scoring factors. The Sustainable Enterprise

Excellence (SEE) Model, developed by Edgeman & Eskildsen (2014), offers a maturity-oriented self-assessment approach grounded in principles of business excellence and sustainable development. This model emphasises the value of a balanced approach in managing stakeholder interests, designing the organisation for innovation, and leveraging continuous improvement to realise sustainability performance impacts.

Other studies highlight the linkages between sustainability performance and organisational performance through strategic use of various sustainability management tools. This involves prioritising a comprehensive strategy that considers the social, environmental, and financial impacts of the organisation's operations rather than solely focusing on environmental performance (Isaksson, 2021). Corporations can maintain their prosperity and social legitimacy by addressing stakeholder concerns and exhibiting responsible behaviours as a form of performance management. The direction of this research looks inward, exploring the internalised implications to a corporation when sustainability is made a strategic priority (Cöster et al., 2020). However, there is limited academic research that examines the externalised relationship between corporate sustainability practices and their impact on quality-of-life indicators at a society-wide level (Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Sanchez-Planelles et al., 2021; Friske et al., 2023).

Current business excellence models (BEMs) and sustainability frameworks are inadequate, as traditional excellence models frequently disregard social and environmental performance, while numerous sustainability approaches fail to consider economic viability (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017; N. Hussain, Rigoni and Orij, 2018). In evolving the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence Model from a theoretical to an operational tool, Hussain et al (2018) focused the operationalisation for a protocol that remains centred on organisational resilience, internal impacts, and progress evaluation oriented toward the viability of the business strategy and operations. By integrating the concepts of knowledge management, transformational leadership, and organisational culture, organisations can create a more holistic and effective approach to achieving sustainable performance (Sapta et al., 2021). The current literature highlights the need for a more integrated, balanced approach to assessing and managing sustainability performance that considers the interdependencies between economic, environmental, and social impacts. There is still a lack of insight into the wider societal impacts of corporate sustainability practices.

The relationship between sustainable development performance and societal impact is researched through the public policy lens. While focused on the financial implications of sustainability performance management, Xiao et al. (2018) explores the connections between national policy and corporate sustainability performance, with implications for society. In 2018, the Organisation for Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD) published a collection of papers exploring the challenge of understanding business impact on quality-of-life. Since then, the work to explore the impact of businesses on societal well-being or quality-of-life has been integrated into statistical analysis of quality-of-life factors in the form of the OECD Well-being Framework and the Better Life Index and interactive Database. The OECD Well-being Framework is valuable, but there is limited to no evidence of its adoption in the business community for effectively defining and measuring a corporation's impact on society at large, measured through changes in quality-of-life indicators.

Quality-of-life is a multi-dimensional concept that extends beyond traditional economic measures. As a complex construct, quality-of-life encompasses social, environmental, and psychological dimensions, in addition to economic well-being (Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008; Uysal and Sirgy, 2019; Sobol, 2019). While quality-of-life indicators may aim to be objective, the nature of their evaluation often remains subjective, relying on varying, individual perceptions and definitions of well-being. The value in subjective measures ensures the range of individual perceptions and personal values provide context for objectively assessing levels of performance and impact as a key component to determining good or poor levels of well-being (Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008; Sobol, 2019). Integrating quality-of-life indicators into sustainability management practice can enable a more comprehensive evaluation of a corporation's overall sustainability performance and the social impact it has on the broader contexts in which it operates. Such extents of integration may establish a pathway towards understanding the relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life for society at large. This forms the basis of research rationale, aims, and objectives presented in the next section.

1.3 Research Rationale & Problem Statement

Traditional approaches to measuring sustainability performance have often focused narrowly on environmental and social metrics, without adequately considering the broader impact on quality-of-life (Sobol, 2019; Gatto, 2020;

Fet and Knudson, 2021). Past performance models often overemphasize financial aspects, overlooking the connections between a corporation's sustainability practices and the well-being of the communities they affect. By failing to integrate quality-of-life indicators, such as measures of health, education, social cohesion, and subjective well-being, these approaches provide an incomplete picture of a corporation's sustainability performance and its relevance to the quality-of-life for all. This limitation hinders the ability of corporations to fully understand, account for, and maximize the positive societal impact of their sustainability initiatives (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Pazienza et al., 2023).

Corporate sustainability strategies and performance must be evaluated not just in terms of environmental and economic factors, but also for their contributions to enhancing the overall quality-of-life for stakeholders, including employees, customers, and the broader reaches of society. These tools serve to guide companies in structuring and improving their environmental and social responsibilities, irrespective of the scale of their operations (Saulick et al., 2023). My research focuses on multinational corporations with access to, availability of, and consumption of environmental, human, and financial resources required for sustainable operation. A higher number of multinational corporations have published sustainability-related reports in the last decade compared to other business sizes (Johnson and Schaltegger, 2016; Mcgrath and Ross, 2021; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024).

National policies focus on corporate governance, environmental management, and sustainability reporting, targeting multinational corporations across various industries (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Nunhes et al., 2020; Kim, 2021). These policies regularly examine how companies in finance, energy, and retail sectors are responding to various sustainable development challenges when using different sustainability management tools (Wynn and Jones, 2022). The implementation scale of various sustainability management tools is dynamic, just like the scale of businesses using them to address sustainable development challenges strategically.

Quality-of-life is the focal point of sustainable development, as it represents the ultimate aim of improving human and environmental well-being (Sobol, 2019). However, sustainability management practices reflect a continued prioritisation of environmental and economic initiatives, with little emphasis on social dimensions (Rodrigues and Franco, 2019). Multinational corporations maintain a reactive approach to sustainable development-

oriented national policies by using sustainability management tools to comply with various regulations, rather than proactively integrating public policy objectives into their corporate sustainability strategies to measure broader societal contributions (van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018). There is currently little to no evidence of research exploring the potential scale or maturity of relationship between sustainable development, corporate sustainability practice and performance, and traceable impacts on quality-of-life indicators.

1.4 Research Aims & Objectives

The aim of my research is to identify and understand the relationships between corporate sustainability performance measures and quality-of-life indicators. It aims to develop a set of criteria by exploring the connections between sustainability performance metrics and quality-of-life indicators. The resulting evaluation framework assesses the effectiveness of sustainability management tools used by large multinational corporations in evaluating their societal impact. My research connects these findings to stakeholder theory and paradox tension theory from the position of critical realism, contributing to advancements in measuring and achieving sustainable development progress through systematic evaluation. This is reflected in the following Research Objectives.

1.4.1 Research Objectives

Research Objective 1:

To evaluate the type and extent of relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life frameworks and indicators.

- How can quality-of-life frameworks and indicators be integrated into corporate sustainability management practice and performance measurement?

Research Objective 2:

To examine the application of sustainability management tools by multinational corporations.

- What are the key challenges and opportunities for multinational corporations in operationalising sustainability management tools and realising performance?

Research Objective 3:

To analyse the relationship between national public policy and corporate sustainability initiatives.

- How do national public policies influence the adoption and implementation of sustainability management tools as used by multinational corporations?

1.5 Structure of Thesis

The Research Aims and Objectives with Research Questions are presented in Chapter 1, supported by a problem statement and rationale for addressing research gaps. Chapter 2 presents the Literature Review with discussion of key concepts relevant to theoretical frameworks. Theoretical Frameworks are presented at the end of Chapter 2. Chapter 3 outlines the research philosophy, design of research, and the methodologies used to address the Research Objectives.

Chapter 4 outlines the methods and outcome of an evolved evaluation framework, as well as how the outcome was applied to produce the Case studies.

Chapter 5 presents findings with additional secondary and primary data collection. Findings are presented by each industry as a Case Study, summarising categorical scoring using the findings of research analysis.

Chapter 6 offers discussion of findings in the context of the research objectives.

Chapter 7 presents conclusions, contributions, and directions of future research.

Appendices attached include the following:

1. Appendix A: Primary & Secondary Data Reference Indices
2. Appendix B: RISE Evaluation Framework
3. Appendix C: Empirical Data Collection - Survey

Chapter 2
Review of Literature & Theoretical Frameworks

The following literature review examines the existing and growing body of knowledge on sustainable development as a governance mechanism, corporate sustainability management and performance practices, and quality-of-life frameworks. This exploration investigates the links between corporate sustainability practices and their influences on quality-of-life indicators, as well as the role of sustainability management tools in contributing to sustainable development challenges as multinational corporations use them. This review is structured around four key themes framing the progression of sustainable development as an accountable goal from public policy to business strategy. These topics are presented as:

- Sustainable Development Governance
- Sustainability Management Tools & Practices
- Sustainability Performance Excellence
- Measuring Impact of Corporate Sustainability on Quality-of-life

2.1 Sustainable Development Governance & Performance

Public policy plays a critical role as a public sector tool in guiding sustainable development efforts at various levels of government, including municipal, regional, and national levels. The public sector is one of many key actors in the landscape to ensure meaningful progress towards global sustainable development goals (Hahn and Kühnen, 2013; Ejarque and Campos, 2020; Wynn and Jones, 2022). Public policy is a tool used by the public sector to drive change. The public sector has leveraged policies, regulations and incentives to influence business behaviour over decades with varying degrees of success and failure (Tommasetti et al., 2020). Recent changes in public policy and regulation have significantly shifted the landscape for businesses to enable more proactive engagement with sustainable development challenges (Hahn and Kühnen, 2013; Wynn and Jones, 2022; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Public policy drivers, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, established in 2015 by the United Nations (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; United Nations Development Programme, 2021), legal requirements around corporate sustainability reporting, and increasing public awareness of environmental and social issues, have placed increased pressure on corporations to

elevate sustainability as a core component of their business strategy (Klettner et al., 2014; Oertwig et al., 2017; Mio et al., 2020).

Sustainable development is a widely acknowledged concept across public, private, and third-sector entities. Sustainable development as a strategic initiative can provide a solid platform for public efforts aimed at improving the quality-of-life in a community (Berke, 2002; Oertwig et al., 2017; Wynn and Jones, 2021). This also serves as a mechanism for driving long-term sustainable development initiatives, thereby emphasising the importance of aligning corporate sustainability practices with global societal and environmental goals. Such an alignment requires collaboration between sectors. However, there is a mismatch between incremental progress at the individual company level and the continued deterioration at the global scale which reveals a significant disconnect between corporate activities and the overall state of the environment and society (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002; Schendler, 2021). While there may be various factors contributing to this disconnect, as corporations are not the sole relevant actors in the global sustainability landscape, well-intentioned efforts of organisations from any sector have not translated into meaningful and substantial improvements in sustainability at the global level (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002; Ahlström et al., 2020; Farias et al., 2020; Khaled et al., 2021).

The concept of sustainable development has evolved from its origins in environmental conservation to include economic and social factors. One critical example of this in the development and sustained implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) as a key driver in sustainable business practice. Previous research argues that the 17 Sustainable Development Goals outlined by the United Nations represent an ambitious step towards operationalising the concept of sustainable development, integrating facets of environment, society, and the economy (Allen et al., 2018; Mio et al., 2020; Pizzi et al., 2020). However, the implementation of these goals was met with challenges, such as measuring progress, establishing accountability frameworks, and aligning priorities across stakeholder groups (Ikram et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2020). This direction of research suggests the need for deeper investigation of integrated approaches that consider the interrelated nature of environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability at multiple scales for multiple stakeholder types. The mechanisms by which corporate sustainability impacts societal well-being remains unclear due to a lack of strong frameworks for measuring progress and ensuring accountability for

outcomes. A clearer understanding is needed to link corporate sustainability with societal benefits, going beyond typically discussed financial implications (Nikolaou and Tsalis, 2013; Pazienza et al., 2023). This understanding can inform policies and practices that support human well-being.

National governments (i.e. public sector) use public policy as a tool to address sustainable development. Seeking understanding of the relationship between public policy and sustainable development, there are three interconnected viewpoints to consider: theoretical, normative, and empirical (Jordan, 2008; Costanza et al., 2016; Bexell and Jönsson, 2019). The theoretical perspective views governance as a team effort, the normative perspective highlights the importance of adapting to achieve goals, and the empirical perspective supports the previous perspectives by measuring the results of governance practices (Jordan, 2008; Costanza et al., 2016; Bexell and Jönsson, 2019; Pinto, 2019; Nunhes et al., 2020). Sustainable development governance then offers the structure, principles, and methods to guide corporations and ensure they are responsible for their sustainability efforts. It involves incorporating sustainability into choices, addressing stakeholder needs, and managing the tensions in balancing economic, social, and environmental goals.

Reporting functions as a mechanism for policy translation, facilitating the incorporation of global objectives into national policy frameworks (Jordan, 2008; Bexell and Jönsson, 2019). In the context of sustainable development, governance links sustainable well-being with the UN SDGs, underscoring the necessity for systemic transformation to foster a sustainable future. Although governance is not the focus, institutional and governance factors are key to achieving the UN SDGs (Costanza et al., 2016; Bexell and Jönsson, 2019). Reporting is often used to show accountability, but its effectiveness depends on the clarity and comparability of the data as reported. A lack of consistent and standardized measures in corporate sustainability reporting remains an obstacle.

Public policy can have an influence on the quality and validity of how various organisations use any range of sustainability management tools to drive performance towards sustainable development challenges and opportunities. Public sector entities have a civic responsibility to effectively manage public goods, resources and/or facilities in a way that supports sustainable development objectives and promotes the public interest (Dumay et al., 2010). However, the influence extends beyond mere obligation. While following regulations is essential, public policy also

encourages voluntary and performance-based sustainability efforts (Băndoi et al., 2021; Saulick et al., 2023). Governance is undergoing a significant shift, with multi-stakeholder engagement and collaborative relationships becoming central to decision-making, signalling a move towards more inclusive and participatory models.

Public policy plays a pivotal role in shaping how multinational corporations approach sustainability, directly influencing their selection and application of sustainability management tools. As highlighted by Maia et al. (2022), government regulations significantly impact corporate decisions and actions, which in turn are embedded within corporate policies and governance frameworks. This top-down influence means that public policy often influences the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of corporate sustainability efforts, including the types of sustainability management tools adopted. However, the relationship is not unidirectional (Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Talbot et al., 2021). Corporate actions and sustainability reporting in the context of an outside-in perspective can also inform and shape public policy, creating a type of feedback loop between business action and public sector policy objectives in parallel evolution (Beare et al., 2014; Talbot et al., 2021), This is made apparent in how corporations use sustainability management tools to clarify and close the gaps in public policy to address sustainable development challenges.

There is a compelling earlier argument, supported by Alsayegh et al. (2020) and Hristov et al. (2022), that corporations strategically employ sustainability management tools to address gaps and shortcomings in public policy, thereby attempting to influence behavioural change within their own operations and potentially across their industry. This suggests a dynamic relationship where corporations, driven by stakeholder encouragement to integrate environmental, social and governance factors (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Mcgrath and Ross, 2021), not only react to but also proactively engage with the policy landscape through their sustainability initiatives. This proactive engagement often includes actions like informal lobbying or setting a strong example with responsible practices. This provides policymakers with valuable information and shapes future regulations (Beare et al., 2013; McGrath and Ross, 2021).

Multinational corporations often see sustainable development not just as something they have to do to meet rules, but to get ahead, improve their image, and build lasting value after meeting the basic requirements. Public sector support mechanisms, such as incentives for green innovation, public-

private partnerships, and the promotion of voluntary sustainability standards, further encourage this shift (Ye et al., 2020; Kim, 2021). Multinational corporations initially comply with public policy to improve corporate sustainability performance, but they often transition to performance-oriented approaches with public sector support. However, some argue that this focus on voluntary action and market incentives can lead to 'greenwashing,' where companies exaggerate their sustainability efforts for public relations purposes without making substantial changes (Siew, 2015; Nunhes et al., 2020; Schendler, 2021).

Third party organisations revert to a normative position in the development of management frameworks and tools to address good practice contributing to sustainable development progress. Private sector entities are left to bridge the gap between using the third-party tools and complying with unclear public policy objectives and regulation (Beare et al., 2014; Siew, 2015; Wynn and Jones, 2022). Multinational corporations are increasingly concentrating on sustainability management tools and non-financial metrics, strategically positioning themselves to better evaluate their social impact and align their sustainability priorities with core business objectives (Siew, 2015; Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Mcgrath and Ross, 2021). This represents a shift from anecdotal narratives about social stewardship and ethical compliance to strategic management and performance improvement for measuring corporate sustainability impacts. Despite the growing emphasis on external assessments and reporting, organisations often encounter challenges in establishing robust sustainability reporting processes due to confusion surrounding various guidelines and a lack of clear connections between business strategy and sustainability issues (Maas et al., 2016; Băndoi et al., 2021).

The value of policy integration across sectors contributes to improving linkages between corporate sustainability efforts and broader public policy objectives for sustainable development (Tommasetti et al., 2020; Cardillo and Longo, 2020). The degree to which sustainable development principles are integrated into public policy frameworks and decision-making processes is crucial in shaping organisational behaviour and performance (Khaled et al., 2021). Effective policy integration allows for the alignment of corporate sustainability priorities with broader societal and environmental goals under the hierarchical structures of corporate governance (Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Hristov et al., 2022). The public sector must lead by example to influence and improve the performance and strategic actions of private

and third sector organisations through a collaborative approach. Some research indicates that transparency and accountability in public sector sustainability reporting can serve as a model for other organisations and enhance the credibility of sustainability claims across sectors (Tommasetti et al., 2020; Stefanescu, 2021).

While the public sector is not the only actor accountable for sustainable development progress, it plays a vital role in creating the enabling environment and incentives for private and third sector entities to contribute meaningfully. Involving relevant stakeholders in creating and conducting public policies for sustainable development is crucial to make them meaningful, legitimate, and accountable. Stakeholder theory, from the position of corporate social responsibility and stakeholder engagement (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Castelo et al., 2007), provides a lens through which to understand the complex network of relationships and linkages which exist between public, private, and civil society actors in the sustainability domain.

Paradox tension theory, discussed more fully in Section .5.2, based from the perspective of ethical business practices and surpassing an instrumental view of sustainability as a business case (Hahn et al., 2015; Ozanne et al., 2016), further elucidates on the challenges in balancing competing economic, environmental, and social priorities organisations face when trying to implement sustainable development strategies in alignment with public policy. Organisations from all sectors are increasingly expected to demonstrate their social and environmental performance and impact through comprehensive non-financial reporting. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) has evolved into one of the most widely adopted sustainability reporting standards as a sustainability management tool, providing guidelines for organisations to communicate their sustainability performance across stakeholder groups (Siew, 2015; Ejarque and Campos, 2020; Stefanescu, 2021).

Corporations are inconsistently involved in the development of tools and frameworks nor the measurement of their contribution to public policy goals and global sustainable development (Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018; Khaled et al., 2021; Maia et al., 2022). Neither do these public policies outline how to value outputs against quality-of-life indicators. The use of sustainability reporting tools like the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and others hinders implementation at the regional, national, and global levels by prioritising compliance with a

standard over genuine change and impact (Beare et al., 2014). More research is needed to understand the effect of public and corporate policies for effective sustainability actions and behaviours, as these factors have a significant impact on quality-of-life outcomes. Due to a lack of integration with quality-of-life factors, public policy and sustainability reporting are distanced from sustainable development objectives.

Examining how and why companies use sustainability management tools enhances the understanding of sustainable development-oriented public policies' impact and effectiveness in fostering principles of sustainable development and enhancing societal quality-of-life. Investigation of processes and resources used by corporations to implement and leverage sustainability management tools provides additional context of the practical outcomes and influence of sustainable development-focused policies and initiatives on multinational corporations (Searcy, 2016; Fet and Knudson, 2021; Băndoi et al., 2021). My research explores the relationships and potential alignment between corporate sustainability practices, public policies, and societal well-being (Research Objective Three), informing more effective and impactful approaches to sustainable development. In the next section, I will examine the existing research on sustainability management tools and discuss the different management approaches that guide their use.

2.2 Sustainability Management Tools & Practices

The integration of various sustainability-related concepts like corporate social responsibility, corporate social performance, and environmental management has contributed to what is now called "corporate sustainability management" (Bergman et al., 2017; Alsayegh et al., 2020; ElAlfy et al., 2020; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Based on these sources, corporate sustainability management highlights the value of integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations into corporate strategies, practices, and performance. Based in Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concepts (Elkington, 1994), evidence that companies actively managing ESG sustainability reap the benefits of superior shared value for both the business and society (Alsayegh et al., 2020). Where firms incorporate a corporate social responsibility perspective within their strategic planning process, organisations include actions related to core operations, incorporating a stakeholder perspective, and shifting from short-term to medium- to long-term management of resources and relations with key stakeholders (ElAlfy et al., 2020).

The true impact of sustainability management tools may be weakened by a public policy environment that values appearances over real change. This affects how companies use these tools to plan and manage their sustainability efforts and results. The way companies use sustainability management tools (sustainability practices) depends on the scope and application of the tools, as well as what motivates them to use the tools (Fet and Knudson, 2021). Various institutions have built frameworks and approaches to measuring a company's corporate sustainability performance, working to understand links to financial performance, stakeholder relationships, and independent rating and scoring factors(Antolín-López et al., 2016; N. Hussain, Rigoni and Cavezzali, 2018; Saulick et al., 2023). Despite ongoing efforts, there is limited evidence connecting corporate sustainability performance to quality-of-life indicators.

Sustainability management in the context of multinational corporations encompasses a broad range of practices and strategies aimed at reducing environmental footprints, promoting social responsibility, and ensuring economic sustainability (Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Organisations of any size and from any sector adapt sustainability management tools in response to national policy requirements to address sustainable development challenges (Talbot et al., 2021). This practice represents establishing competitive advantage, providing companies with more mechanisms for improving risk management and driving relevant changes in internal aspects, such as culture and structure (Bergman et al., 2017). Corporate sustainability management involves using various tools and practices to implement and manage the outcomes of sustainability strategies.

Sustainability management tools are used to translate sustainable development principles into practice. Research on sustainability management tools encompasses environmental and social audits, eco-efficiency analyses, life cycle assessments, environmental and social management systems, and sustainability reporting standards and practices (Johnson and Schaltegger, 2016; Fet and Knudson, 2021; Talbot et al., 2021). As the most used type of sustainability management tool, reporting standards inform companies on which content they should disclose about their sustainability strategies, goals, and performance (Nunhes et al., 2020; Talbot et al., 2021). Sustainability disclosure serves as a platform to demonstrate contributions to sustainable development solutions (van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018; van Zanten and van Tulder, 2021), though concerns

remain about the credibility and comprehensiveness of these disclosures (Slater and Gilbert, 2004; Hummel and Schlick, 2016).

In Siew's (2015) review of sustainability reporting tools, he categories them into frameworks, standards, and ratings and indices. Siew suggests that sustainability reporting tools are part of the broader context of sustainability management, even though he does not explicitly define their relationship. Tourais and Videira (2016) explore the influence on strategic management and performance from sustainability reporting and strategic management practice. Outcomes from this research emphasise reporting tools as the impetus to track and disclose sustainability-related information, with the aim of building credibility and stakeholder trust. Sustainability reporting and disclosure acts as an accountability mechanism for corporations to communicate their environmental and social impacts and contributions to sustainable development (Del Mar Alonso-Almeida et al., 2014; Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018; Sehgal et al., 2023). While corporations are still dedicated to reporting and standard disclosures, it is unclear if the way performance indicators and outcomes are formed truly reflects the extent of impact. This raises critical questions about the efficacy of current sustainability management tools and the genuine impact of corporate sustainability practices on measurable improvements in quality-of-life (Johnson, 2015).

However, sustainability reporting and associated standards alone has limitations in driving real change and does not necessarily improve sustainability performance. Talbot et al.'s (2021) research indicates that stakeholder engagement, external pressures, and internal awareness levels for sustainability indirectly influences how organisations of any size or sector adopt and use sustainability management tools. Sustainability management tools play a pivotal role in shaping the definition and evaluation of sustainability performance measures, as well as the management of corresponding organisational impacts (Johnson, 2015; Nunhes et al., 2020). Sustainability management tools in the context of my research are then defined as voluntary management approaches, metrics, and use of tools that aim to integrate and valuate sustainability considerations into business strategy and operations.

While corporate sustainability reporting practices have value, not enough companies are contributing to the necessary solutions to significantly advance the sustainability management agenda (Farias et al., 2020; Schendler, 2021; Maia et al., 2022). Corporations' value and performance are not measured formally or systematically, weakening potential impact of

accountability systems. Many corporations remain limited in their sustainability efforts, focusing primarily on reporting and compliance rather than proactively developing and implementing impactful sustainability initiatives (Farias et al., 2020). To truly advance the sustainability management agenda, more corporations need to move beyond superficial measures and make substantive, long-term commitments to sustainable practices that create traceable change for society and the environment.

Sustainability reporting provides a context for defining performance measures of sustainability, but there is still a need for a standardised approach to help businesses improve evaluating their sustainability impacts (Hahn and Kühnen, 2013; Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018). The overall result of adopting sustainability management tools is twofold: financial viability and stability, and a published report as proof of commitment to mitigating sustainable development challenges (Hahn and Kühnen, 2013; Friske et al., 2023). Reporting standards, a core component of sustainability management tools, are essential for businesses defining sustainability performance. The next step is to develop a consistent way to manage sustainability efforts and goals, allowing for easier comparison of their effects on quality-of-life.

One approach is the implementation of a materiality assessment, which is closely related to producing a transparent corporate sustainability report. The materiality assessment is a process that helps companies determine the sustainability issues that are most relevant and significant to both the business and its stakeholders (Eccles et al., 2012; Calabrese et al., 2019; Torelli et al., 2020). The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards are a strong example of how sustainability management tools provide foundation and guidance for definitions and criteria of materiality and its value in the strategic planning and implementation process of corporate sustainability initiatives (Calabrese et al., 2019; Torelli et al., 2020; Aureli et al., 2020; Hamad et al., 2020). As a result, how companies identify, prioritise, align, and measure material sustainability issues is an important outcome of a well-implemented materiality assessment, which is frequently presented in corporate reports as a map or matrix (Calabrese et al., 2019; Torelli et al., 2020). This tool helps companies improve their sustainability practices by regularly engaging with stakeholders. Stakeholder input is a key source of feedback that informs the company's sustainability goals and performance measures (Torelli et al., 2020; Talbot et al., 2021).

Sustainability management tools are a key resource to understanding and measuring a corporation’s contributions to sustainable development. The

emphasis on sustainability reporting, whether mandatory or voluntary, is that corporations must communicate performance of relevant activities to prove an understanding of their impact (Aureli et al., 2020; Pazienza et al., 2023). The sustainability performance measurement process is not clearly defined or standardised, yet corporations leverage the implementation of various sustainability management tools to define and disclose a variety of sustainability performance measures. When corporate sustainability is fully integrated not only through reporting practices, but also throughout a company's culture and decision-making, companies can move beyond the focus on profitability and address broader sustainability issues (Hahn et al., 2018; Talbot et al., 2021).

As one of the key pillars in Nunhes et al.'s (2020) study, measurement and reporting enable visibility of a company's sustainability performance and progress. A standardised approach to sustainability reporting, comparable to financial reporting, would allow for more robust analysis of a company's impacts and contributions to sustainable development. Processes to define measures, collect relevant data, and disclose sustainability performance transparently to stakeholders is essential for driving accountability and transparency (Meza-Ruiz et al., 2017; Nunhes et al., 2020). The use of sustainability management tools, and the quality of their implementation, has significant implications for corporations' abilities to enhance their environmental, social, and economic sustainability performance.

It is unclear how companies producing corporate sustainability reports trace or quantify the impacts of their efforts on quality-of-life for society at large. According to Betti et al, "The SDGs are about 'impact', and in these measures the unit of analysis is not the company, but something outside of the company whose operations affect it…" (2018, p.2). Aligning performance outcomes to quality-of-life indicators can help companies better illustrate the economic, environmental, and social impacts of their corporate sustainability practices. This lack of robust public policy and corporate policy for sustainability performance has weakened efforts to address sustainable development challenges in the wake of sustainability management tool saturation (Nicolăescu et al., 2015; Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Fet and Knudson, 2021). By framing the discussion on the links between practice and performance using the concepts of sustainability performance and business excellence, a clearer understanding of these impacts can emerge.

2.3 Sustainability Performance & Business Excellence

The rapid increase in sustainability management tools has created an illusion of progress, overshadowing the lack of substantial policy action needed to translate these tools into meaningful, system-wide changes that address the root causes of environmental and social challenges. Policy lacks strong enforcement mechanisms and fails to adequately drive ideal behaviours or measure outcomes particularly regarding sustainable development (Allen et al., 2018). Corporations create sustainability policies with objectives informing the selection and prioritisation of metrics for sustainable development, and in turn those metrics measure effectiveness of corporate policy outcomes (López et al., 2007). Corporate policies and metrics are often outputs of an implemented materiality assessment process, inclusive of stakeholder feedback (Torelli et al., 2020). A systematic process to define strategic direction of corporate sustainability and develop impact measures related to national and global challenges is the foundation of an informative performance management approach.

While this public policy influence can certainly drive corporations to prioritize environmental protection, social well-being, and good governance alongside shareholder value creation (Maia et al., 2022), it also presents both benefits and pitfalls for sustainable development. A key benefit is the increased corporate accountability and transparency that well-designed public policies can foster, pushing multinational corporations to measure and report on their sustainability performance (Kim, 2021; Pazienza et al., 2023). However, a significant pitfall arises when public policy becomes hyper-focused on the act of reporting rather than the substantive quality and impact of the reported content (i.e. Corporate sustainability performance). This can lead to a 'tick-box' mentality, where companies dedicate resources to meeting reporting requirements without genuinely integrating sustainability into their core operations or making meaningful progress towards sustainable development goals.

Transparently and consistently reporting sustainability performance alongside or integrated with overall performance is a key driver for leveraging reporting practices (Antolín-López et al., 2016). Studies suggest that simply disclosing sustainability efforts might not significantly improve a company's financial performance (Alshehhi et al., 2018; N. Hussain, Rigoni and Orij, 2018; Sehgal et al., 2023; Friske et al., 2023). Other studies suggest a connection between a company's organisational performance, financial performance, and sustainability reports (Rodrigues and Franco,

2019; Oprean-Stan et al., 2020; Fok et al., 2021). Corporate reputation is key, as sustainability reporting has a bigger impact on a company's image when it is already doing well. A real commitment to sustainable development goals, demonstrated through both financial investment and company culture, is necessary.

Internal organisational factors, especially corporate culture, are particularly important for effective sustainability performance. Companies characterised by a culture that embraces change management and prioritizes performance excellence are inherently better equipped to define, manage, and improve their sustainability performance and impacts (Oertwig et al., 2017; Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017; Jankalová and Jankal, 2020). Business excellence models facilitate this alignment by standardising optimal strategies and performance management practices for organisations pursuing world-class performance (Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017). Business excellence models emphasise a systems-thinking approach to performance measurement, considering financial and non-financial factors. Consequently, organizations with a mature culture of business and performance excellence are more likely to effectively integrate sustainability management tools into their core business culture (Tickle et al., 2016), reflecting a deeper commitment beyond mere compliance or disclosure.

Companies with performance excellence cultures make more effective use of sustainability management tools for more traceable impacts on society. The original intent of most sustainability assessment frameworks is to measure the impacts on the human systems relying on natural and social resources (Smetana et al., 2015). Sala et al. (2015) explore the differences between integrated assessment and sustainability assessment to establish a systemic framework for evaluating sustainability performance. They contextualise that integrated assessments provide consistency in establishing boundaries, considerations for scenario analysis, and rigorous analysis to inform decision-making. Benchmarking is crucial in corporate sustainability performance management, offering organisations a structured method to gauge their performance against industry standards and pinpoint areas needing enhancement (Maas et al., 2016; Maia et al., 2022). More than simply comparing metrics, it involves embracing leading practices and forward-thinking strategies to propel a company toward greater sustainability achievements.

Sustainability assessment focuses on why a future state is needed. It includes different stakeholder perspectives and ensures relevance to

societal needs by creating a well-rounded understanding of the system and its sustainability challenges (Sala et al., 2015; Saulick et al., 2023). While integrated assessments provide more technical processes for performance measurement, sustainability assessments situate the contextual rationale and multi-stakeholder participation to drive transformative change.

In the proposed assessment framework, Sala et al (2015, pp.317–318) present a set of eight principles to guide the design and application of sustainability assessments. These include:

- a guiding vision
- systemic considerations
- a longitudinal and operational scope
- reliable data sources yielding meaningful performance indicators,
- transparency in prioritisation of issues, clear and plain language to build trust through communication, and
- performance management through continual monitoring
- support of diverse participation and engagement to build legitimacy

The authors argue this approach can help organisations link indicators, identify causal relationships and feedback loops, and provide a line of sight between sustainability goals, interventions, and their impacts (Sala et al., 2015). The intention is to guide the practitioner performing the assessment in ensuring that what is performed is not an arbitrary assessment but an effective sustainability assessment informing strategic decisions. As with other assessment frameworks and evaluation models, the specific application design is situational and contextual. Sala et al (2015) present a concept framework, and considerations are inhibited for complexity of feedback quality, sourcing of reliable data, repeatability, and standardised valuation criteria.

Within the broader landscape of business excellence models (BEMs) and performance management strategies, benchmarking is a core component. It is crucial for building reliable accountability systems through objective evaluation. As a component of business excellence and performance management, benchmarking plays a pivotal role in corporate sustainability performance management (Saeed and Kersten, 2020; Liu et al., 2023), providing organisations with a structured approach to assess their performance against industry peers and identify areas for improvement (Talbot et al., 2021; Saulick et al., 2023). Through this comparative lens, benchmarking significantly enhances strategic planning, fosters innovation,

and deepens stakeholder engagement as companies expand their sustainability efforts.

This management practice enables organisations to identify and adopt best practices, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and driving progress towards sustainability goals (Saeed and Kersten, 2020). Despite the potential benefits explored, there are also limitations to consider when using benchmarks as part of a corporate sustainability management approach. Benchmarking, while offering a structured method to gauge performance against industry standards, may overemphasise comparison against peers at the expense of considering the unique contextual and strategic factors vital to an organisation's sustainability objectives (T. Hussain et al., 2018; Pazienza et al., 2023). This highlights the need for a nuanced application of benchmarking, ensuring it supports, rather than dictates, a company's tailored path to sustainable development performance and impact management.

Having explored the overarching frameworks of business excellence and the critical role of performance management, we now turn to specific theoretical and practical models for assessing corporate sustainability performance. One notable approach involves adapting the Balanced Scorecard and integrating it with Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. The work by Hansen and Schaltegger (2016) emphasises the adaptation of the balanced scorecard management system to corporate social responsibility practices. Incorporating sustainability-focused modifications to this established management framework elevates the salience of sustainability issues pertinent to organisations' existing strategic objectives and performance. The scorecard approach is limited by its internal focus on organisational and financial implications, disregarding stakeholder needs and the external impact of sustainability performance (Nguyen et al., 2018; Cöster et al., 2020a).

Tasleem et al. (2017) propose a six-step framework for implementing a sustainability assessment approach within organisations. The authors outline practical measures to integrate sustainability considerations across an organisation's existing processes and capabilities. This framework seeks to establish sustainability goals, identify relevant metrics, collect and analyse data, select appropriate tools, communicate findings, and drive continuous improvement. While practical in its design, Tasleem et al.’s (2017) framework may oversimplify the complexities involved in implementing sustainability assessments and performance management practices.

Corporations face challenges in aligning sustainability goals with existing processes and capabilities, as well as securing reliable data and selecting appropriate measurement tools (Ikram et al., 2020; Khaled et al., 2021). While this framework offers a guide for integrating sustainability assessments, its use struggles with the complexities of data management and analysis needed for creating solid strategies and clear reporting.

“It has been recommended to investigate the possibility and implications of coherence of these TQM/BE frameworks in viewpoint of sustainable practices, as the area has not been thoroughly explored” (Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017, p.25). A Sustainable Enterprise Excellence (SEE) Model for measuring impacts of sustainability practices can provide indicators measurable against reporting standards and quality-of-life indicators because it systematises sustainability performance expectations of companies. This is like BEMs and assessment frameworks developed and deployed at national levels, such as Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) and European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). It aims to effectively engage all types of stakeholders, regardless of their level of influence on the company, and enhance sustainability performance using principles from the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach. Based on comprehensive business success, the TBL presents three key concepts: people, planet, and profit, where businesses should focus their efforts in corporate sustainability (Elkington, 1994).

Edgeman and Eskildsen (2014) proposed a framework called the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence (SEE) Model, where sustainable development concepts and management frameworks are integrated with Total Quality Management and business excellence practices. This model is based in BEMs structure, integrating sustainable development concepts and sustainability management tools like the TBL, ISO 14001 Environmental Management System requirements, ISO 26000 Social Responsibility Guidelines, and evaluation criterion from various sustainability indices (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014). The SEE Model is a framework designed to be adaptable to different company sizes and capabilities. An iteration of this Model is the SEE Attribute-based Protocol from Hussain et al. (2018), which introduces maturity measurement scales reflective of the integrated management concepts from the original model. It is designed as a self-assessment guide or tool to align organisational performance with sustainability performance through TBL concepts. The SEE Attribute-based Protocol helps assess how well an organisation is performing and identifies

areas where it can improve or maintain its performance based on specific criteria.

Isaksson (2021) discusses leveraging BEMs and Total Quality Management (TQM) principles with the UN SDGs and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards for companies to strategically address people and planet facets related to the TBL framework. To manage sustainability, businesses must comprehend global stakeholders and their needs, not in limitation to customers or shareholders, to indicate business performance levels (Isaksson, 2021). This indicates that a company with comprehensive and successful stakeholder engagement procedures will use a materiality assessment process to identify, prioritise, and quantify the impact of corporate sustainability actions relevant to the larger sustainable development concerns. Isaksson also proposes the integration of Planetary Boundaries to corporate sustainability practices to make a strong link to quality-of-life, using business excellence as foundational principles (2021).

Isaksson's (2021) research highlights how business excellence can help address significant social challenges. His work demonstrates that a collaborative approach, involving both internal business functions and external entities, can effectively use BEMs and principles. This integration fosters the development of robust, comprehensive systems of accountability, extending corporate responsibility beyond economic performance to encompass a verifiable commitment to global sustainable development concerns. Isaksson's (2021) findings offer a crucial avenue for corporations to not only improve their own operations but also to play key roles in achieving broader sustainability goals.

Firm level sustainability performance is a heavily researched concept, yielding a variety of frameworks and tools for practitioners. Measuring sustainability performance through proposition of an enterprise sustainability performance measurement system (ESPMS), Searcy (2012) defined seven focus areas with five requirements per area to evaluate all aspects of enterprise sustainability. Across the research are linkages between supply chain management and connections to strategic planning and contributions to attaining visionary objectives. To manage sustainability, businesses must comprehend global stakeholders and their needs, not in limitation to customers or shareholders, to indicate business performance levels (Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Isaksson, 2021). The direction of this exploratory research seeks to expand concepts for tracing the impacts of

sustainability action beyond financial implications, an internal impact consideration.

In developing a comprehensive indexing tool, Costanza et al (2016) identified a variety of methods and tools used in earlier attempts to measure the outcomes of sustainability management practices. identified a variety of methods and tools used in earlier attempts to measure the outcomes of sustainability management practices. However, there remains a noticeable gap in the assessment of the intricate relationships between these practices and the application of a systems thinking approach essential for the effective delivery of sustainable development initiatives (Allen et al., 2018; Rodrigues and Franco, 2019; Fet and Knudson, 2021). Regardless of the sustainability management tools in use, a company must make a clear commitment to social aspects in the indicators they choose to disclose. This commitment ensures that sustainability efforts translate into tangible benefits for society, aligning corporate actions with broader sustainable development goals (Nikolaou and Tsalis, 2013; Nunhes et al., 2020). Integrating an external, societal perspective on the impacts of corporate sustainability efforts is essential for corporations to effectively contribute to societal well-being and sustainable development.

The study of how business and economic activity impacts local context outcomes through a human system involves looking at variables like well-being, quality-of-life, and happiness using composite indicator methods (Gatto, 2020, p.1526). A gap remains in the lack of comprehensive quality-of-life integration, conceptually and practically, and building an externalised impact facet to corporate sustainability performance management. For example, composite indicator methods in tools like the Human Development Index (HDI) or the Sustainable Well-being Index (SWI) reflect some level of depth for such variables (Costanza et al., 2016; Berik, 2018; Uysal and Sirgy, 2019; Al-Qawasmi, 2021). However, these tools often lack the granularity to capture the nuanced impacts of corporate sustainability practices on local communities' quality-of-life. To understand the implications of corporations’ sustainability practices, they must consistently and measure their sustainability performance. Using established business excellence tools can enhance corporate sustainability practices by exploring sustainability performance and its impact on quality-of-life (Adamek, 2018; Nunhes et al., 2020; Pazienza et al., 2023).

The increasing emphasis on measuring and evaluating the broader impacts of corporate sustainability is shown by the introduction of enterprise

sustainability performance measurement systems and the creation of comprehensive indexing tools. The absence of this integration creates a critical research gap in the field of corporate sustainability contributions toward sustainable development (Băndoi et al., 2021). This gap highlights the need for frameworks that can effectively translate corporate sustainability efforts into tangible improvements in societal well-being and quality-of-life. Current measurement systems often fail to connect firm-level measures to the broader external context (Searcy, 2014; Gatto, 2020). This makes it difficult to understand how corporate sustainability affects society's well-being.

My research emphasises the need for a comprehensive and cohesive framework that connects sustainability indicators in business operations to quality-of-life indicators at national and global scales. With a critical understanding of corporate sustainability performance established, our focus now shifts to its broader societal implications. This requires a detailed look at existing quality-of-life ideas, structures, and measurement methods, and how they relate to what companies achieve in sustainability. The next section reviews quality-of-life, looking at both objective and subjective ways to measure it.

2.4 Measuring Impact of Corporate Sustainability Performance on Quality-of-life

Quality-of-life concepts naturally connect with sustainable development, especially since quality-of-life indicators can function as sustainability performance indicators (Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008; Uysal and Sirgy, 2019). Despite this connection, quality-of-life is not consistently linked to sustainable development in policy and measurement systems. Traditionally, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has served as the primary measure and driver for economic policy and national prosperity (Fioramonti et al., 2019; Gatto, 2020). However, as business practices become increasingly globalized and the integration of sustainability strategies expands, there is a compelling need to assess the impact of sustainability performance beyond the singular focus of GDP (Berik, 2018; Pais et al., 2019; Kalimeris et al., 2020). The following exploration of literature looks at quality-of-life frameworks in the context of sustainable development performance. Recognizing that 'development overgrowth' is key for both quality-of-life and sustainable development, there is growing support for measuring societal progress more broadly than just economic stability.

In the transition from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Quality-of-life (QOL) frameworks are one area of research mapped to the SDGs outcomes in improving QOL levels (Porio, 2015). The core objective of sustainable development transcends traditional economic metrics like GDP, prioritizing the maintenance and enhancement of quality-of-life and societal well-being (Fioramonti et al., 2019). This expanded view is reflected in the SDGs, which integrate the TBL framework and emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement (Wynn and Jones, 2022). Ejarque and Campos (2020) further supports this perspective by demonstrating the ability of SMEs to integrate the SDGs into their business models through Economy for the Common Good measurement theory. Integration of TBL in the sustainability performance concept is a bridge-building step to assessing linkages between sustainability performance and impact on quality-of-life indicators.

While engagement of multinational corporations and enterprises continues its growth with addressing sustainable development challenges, there remains limitations in measuring the contributions to progress (van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018; Van Tulder et al., 2021). This specifically occurs through public sector leveraging the UN SDGs as an engagement tool, where progress continues to be reported as slow-going based on goals and assessments completed by the United Nations (Khaled et al., 2021; Economic and Social Council, 2022). In the discussion of need for collaboration, van Tulder et al (2021) highlight the need for multinational enterprises to innovate their business models to contribute effectively to the Sustainable Development Goals by rethinking value chains, supply chains, and product offerings to create sustainable and inclusive solutions. Taking this step then presents the opportunity to expand the role of multinational corporations, included in Van Tulder et al.'s (2021) definition for multinational enterprises. Such an expansion could lead to drawing clearer links between corporate sustainability performance and impact on quality-of-life indicators for society at large.

Public policy effectiveness does not measure impact on quality-of-life, rather the effectiveness of the policy as designed and implemented. Many academic sources have shed light on the limitations of fiscally tied production and consumption policies as indicators of well-being and quality-of-life, urging a shift to alternative, more comprehensive indicators (Fioramonti et al., 2019; Ejarque and Campos, 2020; Kalimeris et al., 2020). Reporting companies do not consistently associate the outcomes of their

sustainability practices with measurable social impacts on human systems. Some companies are working to report social impact using environmental, social, and governance metrics to better align with outside factors. However, this type of measurement is new and not as well-defined as environmental reporting. Fioramonti et al (2019, p.209) highlights “the recent convergence of scientific research, policy reforms, and economic shifts” as the foundation for establishing comprehensive wellbeing indicators beyond GDP. While social policies are crucial for enhancing subjective well-being, relying solely on objective or aggregate indicators is inadequate (Berik, 2018; Gatto, 2020; Roshchina et al., 2020; Kalimeris et al., 2020).

While the preceding discussion highlights critical shortcomings in how public policy and corporate reporting currently address quality-of-life, it is also important to acknowledge emerging efforts aimed at bridging these gaps. International bodies and governments are increasingly developing and adopting more comprehensive well-being indicator frameworks, as seen in the work by the OECD's 'Better Life Initiative' and the global push for the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to move beyond solely economic measures of progress (Shinwell et al., 2018; OECD, 2020). Within corporate sustainability, there is a nascent but growing movement towards more robust social impact measurement, albeit with challenges in standardization and widespread adoption (Khaled et al., 2021; Fleacă et al., 2023). The challenge ahead lies in developing an approach that understands the relationship between objective and subjective indicators, facilitating their interpretation in a way that enhances overall understanding of quality-of-life. These indicators must incorporate not only economic factors but also social and environmental considerations (Gatto, 2020).

Amidst the growth in presenting social performance, corporations’ current scopes of impact remained limited to an internal focus on financial and operational performance. The conceptual framing of the TBL by Elkington (1994), with its distinct environmental, economic, and social pillars, has demonstrably paralleled the evolution of sustainability management and performance, facilitating economic transitions towards sustainable development. Corporations have indeed leveraged this framework to align their sustainability contributions with broader economic shifts and quality-of-life considerations (Roshchina et al., 2020). However, even though companies present their sustainability efforts as aligned with the TBL, they tend to focus more on environmental impacts than on social and economic development (Ejarque and Campos, 2020; Isaksson, 2021; Nicolò et al.,

2023). This is especially true for how corporations demonstrate effects on financial and operational success, and implications usually stay within the company itself (Nikolaou and Tsalis, 2013; Ozanne et al., 2016; Farias et al., 2020).

This practical change, while helpful, does not fully use the TBL's potential, as seen in studies of how corporations use the UN SDGs. Integrated reporting can help refine how we measure corporations' contributions to UN SDGs, especially for those using the TBL (Nicolo et al., 2023). Adopting the TBL more fully means managing in a more complete way. This involves using better measures that truly combine environmental, social, and economic and governance effects, both inside and outside the company (Elkington, 1994; Fet and Knudson, 2021). This would involve robust metrics for assessing externalities, a deeper engagement with stakeholder well-being beyond employees, and a commitment to systemic change that transcends mere compliance or incremental operational improvements (Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos, 2014; Isaksson, 2021). Only through such integration can corporations truly show their impact on, and contribution to, quality-of-life and accelerate the move to sustainable development.

While national policy is focused on economic growth, which is driven by various actors such as corporations generating economic prosperity, a long-term focus on sustainable development and quality-of-life may improve societal well-being at all scales of human and natural systems (Sobol, 2019; Farias et al., 2020). Although specific indicators or metrics are not defined, Van Tulder et al. (2021) and Montiel et al. (2021) recommend categorically assessing types of impact for corporate sustainability performance. This includes social impact through job creation, community support, and social equity. It also encompasses environmental impacts, such as reduced environmental harm leading to healthier living and longer life expectancy, as well as ethics and governance impacts, like building trust in institutions through ethical engagements, supplier management, and ethics policies (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Mcgrath and Ross, 2021).

Beyond economic wealth, measuring impacts and prosperity in the context of sustainable development performance is necessary. The nature of innovation and new business models influences consumption and production behaviours in an economy, but the economic constructs used to define and measure prosperity and value are out of date and do not account for the new aspects of productivity (Skevington and Epton, 2018). According to Porio's (2015) assessment, there are missing aspects of alignment across

frameworks for sustainable development and quality-of-life indicators, such as involving various stakeholders or actors who contribute to measuring progress toward these goals. This direction means that evidence of stakeholder engagement is important to building a relationship between corporate sustainability performance and impacts on quality-of-life. Ejarque and Campos (2020) suggest a measurement model and theory, Economy for the Common Good (ECG), supporting companies with integrating SDGs into their business practices as management frameworks. This then facilitates the ability to monitor a company's impact on social and environmental concerns but leaves a gap in aligning organisational performance.

The Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) presents an alternative to GDP as a more comprehensive measure of societal wellbeing (Talberth et al., 2007; Talberth and Weisdorf, 2017). It considers factors such as environmental degradation, income inequality, and the value of household and volunteer work. By incorporating these elements, the GPI aims to provide a more holistic assessment of a country's progress beyond just economic growth (Talberth et al., 2007; Talberth and Weisdorf, 2017). While the GPI was proposed as a valuable tool for corporate sustainability reporting and tracking progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals, there are limitations in its widespread adoption (Bagstad and Shammin, 2012). The complexity of the GPI calculations and the subjective nature of some of its components can make it challenging to implement systematically across operational scales and geo-political contexts.

Despite the GPI's potential as a comprehensive measure of societal well-being, its widespread use in corporate sustainability is limited by a lack of standardized sustainability management tools. Bagstad & Shammin (2012) suggest using the GPI in conjunction with other measurement frameworks and qualitative data to provide a more nuanced understanding of sustainability performance and impacts on quality-of-life. This adaptation would bridge the gap between how the public sector uses policy to influence sustainable development and its impact on quality-of-life (Pais et al., 2019). By incorporating social and environmental factors, the CGPI aligns with the SDGs' emphasis on broader measures of well-being beyond just economic output. This aligns with the sentiment that a shift is required to move beyond traditional economic metrics like GDP, and incorporate broader measures of societal well-being (Fioramonti et al., 2019). To bridge the gap between theory and practice in assessing societal well-being, a stronger framework is

needed to move beyond the known limitations of the Genuine Progress Indicator by clearly including the measurable effects that major corporations have on quality-of-life (Bagstad and Shammin, 2011; Pais et al., 2019; Berik, 2019). Developing a formalised way to measure such impacts enables understanding of how corporate actions directly affect people's lives.

In an examination of models and frameworks evaluating quality-of-life indicators through a systems perspective, Malkina-Pykh and Pykh (2008) presents concepts on various quality-of-life indicator structures but lacks direction for how these frameworks are adaptable to corporate sustainability performance and impact evaluation. Understanding how sustainability practices affect people's quality-of-life necessitates a long-term timeline of decision-making, action, reflection, and outcome measurement. Prioritising the evaluation of impact requires awareness of both objective and subjective indicators used to discern, valuate, and systematically discuss various segments of quality-of-life (Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008). Consequently, the development of a robust evaluative framework to assess and ensure accountability for the direct and indirect quality-of-life impacts stemming from multinational corporations' sustainability efforts is not merely beneficial but essential (Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Alsayegh et al., 2020; Shayan et al., 2022). Such a framework would enable the systematic measurement of sustainable development progress by connecting corporate action to tangible societal well-being outcomes, facilitating long-term evaluation for meaningful advancement.

A range of challenges and complexities in measuring quality-of-life highlight the critical need for reliable objective and subjective indicators in assessing trends and implications of quality-of-life, underscoring the importance of aligning sustainability practices with societal well-being (Porio, 2015; Skevington and Epton, 2018; Roshchina et al., 2020). Connecting sustainability performance to quality-of-life is pivotal in navigating such complexities, especially in seeking measures beyond economic growth such as GDP (Pais et al., 2019). This alignment requires a comprehensive framework that reflects the socio-economic realities of various groups, especially those marginalized, to ensure macro indicators do not overshadow individual lived experiences (Costanza et al., 2016; Pais et al., 2019). Prioritizing long-term quality-of-life necessitates strategic management and governance tools within such a framework (Sobol, 2019). These frameworks should also consider multinational corporations' contributions to sustainable development and quality-of-life.

Current assessments often concentrate on progress and implications for public policy at the national scale, rather than understanding the considerations of all stakeholder groups. Sapena et al (2021) discusses use of Local Climate Zones to link environmental and social components to quality-of-life factors, then to the Sustainable Development Goals, which is used to better inform national policy meeting objectives. Effective urban planning and design promote large-scale sustainable development by creating policies that improve quality-of-life factors like education, housing, and transportation (Uysal and Sirgy, 2019; Al-Qawasmi, 2021). Physical development impacts economic development, which influences performance trends of quality-of-life indicators from any framework, where the larger the population, the easier it is to project the trend of indicator performance (Sapena et al., 2021). However, in both constructs, the role of companies as contributors to sustainable development change is minimised or missing. The absence of corporations in these models is a critical oversight, considering their substantial influence, direct and indirect as it may be, on both sustainable development and quality-of-life (Pazienza et al., 2023).

Lack of standard metrics for quality-of-life makes identifying a transferable assessment framework difficult. Al-Qawasmi (2021) briefly inventories various tools used to define and assess quality-of-life which are indicator or multi-criteria-based assessment tools. Subjectivity of criteria and basis of quality-of-life indicator definitions inhibits the reliability of such assessment frameworks. There is incremental improvement as such frameworks are continually put into practice and research continues from a political and academic perspective (Nikolaou and Tsalis, 2013; Jankalová and Jankal, 2018; Fet and Knudson, 2021). This is evident in the evolution of indicator categories presented in the OECD’s Well-being Framework from 2015 to 2021. It was found that the explored QOL assessment tool could not be repeatedly implemented with different countries or regions because of the volume of variations affected by socio-cultural nuances (Al-Qawasmi, 2021).

Multinational corporations, and large companies in general, are key actors in contributing to measurable change in sustainable development progress due to a global scale of reach and considerable social and economic influence (Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos, 2014; van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018; Van Tulder et al., 2021; Montiel et al., 2021). A primary reason for the slow development and limited ability to assess these contributions is the inhibited business practices and overly complex approaches to adopting framework principles that should guide strategic action for sustainable development.

Montiel et al (2021) pinpoint a critical intersection in the outcome of corporate sustainability activities and the impacts on quality-of-life variables for individuals and communities. Therefore, it is necessary to further investigate the type and extent of the relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators to better understand how corporate sustainability performance affects quality-of-life.

The existing body of scholarly work extensively documents a diverse array of models, frameworks, approaches, and tools available to corporations for formulating sustainability strategies and prioritising effective communication through reporting and disclosure practice. However, a significant research gap persists concerning the rigorous assessment of corporate sustainability performance, both as a robust theoretical construct and as a demonstrable best business practice. A recurring theme underscores the lack of systematic assessment of companies' contributions to sustainable development and their impact on quality-of-life. This represents a critical opportunity to explore the complex interrelations between corporate sustainability actions and quality-of-life for society at large.

To address this gap, combining frameworks like the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence Model and OECD Well-Being Framework with principles from social impact assessment could help bridge the gap between researchers and practitioners. Such an endeavour necessitates a deeper engagement with established theoretical lenses. Stakeholder Theory becomes indispensable here, as it provides a robust conceptualisation of the diverse groups whose quality-of-life is directly or indirectly impacted by corporate operations and sustainability initiatives (Freeman, 1984; Hörisch et al., 2014; Sanchez-Planelles et al., 2021). Corporate sustainability involves complexities and competing demands, such as balancing economic needs with social and environmental responsibilities. This requires an understanding of Paradox Tension Theory, a theoretical perspective exploring how organisations manage conflicting yet interrelated tensions, providing insight into the underlying dynamics that shape corporate decisions and their ultimate impact on quality-of-life (Ozanne et al., 2016; Hahn et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2020).

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks & Research Philosophy

My research is applied through stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and paradox perspective (Hahn et al., 2017) and tension theory (Hahn et al., 2018) from the position of critical realism (Lawani, 2020; Mukumbang, 2023).

Positioned in Critical Realism, and methods guided by critical systems thinking, my research aims to find the causes that create ongoing tensions. It also seeks to understand how managing these tensions affects how well corporations perform in corporate sustainability and how it impacts quality-of-life. This integrated perspective allows a deep understanding of how corporate sustainability performance affects quality-of-life, providing insights that go beyond basic observations to inform potential solutions. In support of my research objectives, my research explores the complex connections between corporate sustainability practices, the sustainability management tools used to implement those practices, and their potential relationship with or impact on quality-of-life factors.

Stakeholder Theory provides a foundation for understanding the multiple stakeholders involved in corporate sustainability and their diverse interests and expectations (Freeman, 2001; Hörisch et al., 2014; Sanchez-Planelles et al., 2021). Paradox Tension Theory, on the other hand, helps to explore the inherent tensions and contradictions that arise when companies strategically pursue sustainability when working to address stakeholder concerns (Hahn, 2017; Ivory & brooks, 2018). Stakeholder requirements drive these connections, leading to inherent tensions as organisations balance multiple stakeholder needs and expectations. This conflict is especially considered in the areas of corporate social responsibility management practice and research (Luo et al., 2020). By investigating these conflicts and challenges, my research aims to understand how corporate sustainability management and performance can influence society's quality-of-life.

2.5.1 Stakeholder Theory

Departing from the conventional focus on maximizing shareholder profits, Stakeholder Theory posits that businesses have a responsibility to generate value for all parties who have a stake in the company's success, including employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and the environment (Freeman, 1984). Over forty years, stakeholder theory has evolved as a lynchpin of corporate sustainability management research and practice. Stakeholder theory is a research framework widely used in sustainability management and corporate sustainability research (Hörisch et al., 2014, p.238). It is important to frame the sustainability management research to stakeholder theory because the relationships between various actors can inform how to evaluate outcomes of corporate sustainability performance. Using stakeholder theory in my research supports an understanding of the

impacts of corporate sustainability practices on various stakeholder groups based on how those groups are prioritised by businesses (Hörisch et al., 2014).

Applying an integrative, stakeholder relationship management approach to sustainability management allows for corporations to better understand the influences and impacts on and by all stakeholders relevant to the core of their business (Hörisch et al., 2014). Corporations choose sustainability strategies that align with their strategic goals and the expectations of the stakeholder groups they identify as influential. The stakeholder theory defines a framework which makes evident the links between those sustainability practices adopted by an organisation and how results of implemented practices impact stakeholders (Sanchez-Planelles et al., 2021). The corporations managing these implications could then be referred to as the practice of stakeholder relationship management.

Stakeholder relationship management includes the practice of stakeholder engagement. This involvement actively incorporates stakeholders in decision-making processes, considering their interests and perspectives, and maintains continuing communication and collaboration to ensure the accomplishment of sustainability goals (Sala et al., 2015; Searcy, 2016; Torelli et al., 2020). This is evidenced in practice by the implementation of materiality assessment process in conjunction with using a range of sustainability management tools. Many corporations commonly incorporate stakeholder participation into the materiality assessment process when formulating sustainability practices and performance benchmarks (Torelli et al., 2020). This practice is often presented in sustainability reports, which include stakeholder definitions and matrices, as well as a narrative on stakeholder involvement in the management and prioritisation of a sustainability issues, as a materiality map or matrix.

To identify the relationships between a corporation and its stakeholders, a key aspect includes how those relationships are taken into consideration when measuring sustainability performance. A company’s deployment of sustainability management tools, performance reporting practices, and performance management culture inform the priority and value of stakeholder relationships (Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Fok et al., 2021; Saulick et al., 2023). Sanchez-Planelles et al. (2021) discuss the theory building processes for corporate sustainability, which supports professionals and managers in making key decisions that impact stakeholder relationships. The use of sustainability performance metrics, often a key

component of reports and disclosure, is essential in understanding the impact of corporate sustainability practices and related performance outcomes (Saeed and Kersten, 2020; Băndoi et al., 2021).

Under stakeholder theory, establishing aligned goals with diverse interests across stakeholders is one of the key challenges in sustainability management (Hörisch et al., 2014). Companies that have clear, strong relationships with their stakeholders are using sustainability management tools to refine decision making processes (Hörisch et al., 2014; Talbot et al., 2021). This ensures that, by integrating sustainability practices effectively, stakeholder needs, and strategic objectives are concurrently met. Corporations' effectiveness in using sustainability management tools or achieving broader sustainability performance and impact is often not comprehensively evaluated, with the assessment typically limited to financial performance and viability (Pazienza et al., 2023; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Thus, the need to develop assessment morels and practices that integrate business excellence principles to trace internal and external impacts.

It is unclear how social impact on society at large, or various stakeholder groups, is assessed from a corporation’s sustainability performance. “Stakeholder theory enlarges the scope to a broader societal embeddedness of organizations and its interdependencies with the societal environment” (Hörisch et al., 2014, p.331). This posits that there is a link to be made between comprehensive sustainability performance of a corporation and the quality-of-life levels in the context of expanded stakeholder group definitions. The stakeholder theory provides a framework for research into identifying a corporation's values and goals, defining stakeholders in sustainability management systems, and aligning values between a corporation and its stakeholders to inform sustainability management decisions (Hörisch et al., 2014; Ruiz et al., 2021; Talbot et al., 2021).

In my study, stakeholder theory contextualises how businesses perceive their relationships with stakeholders through the measurable effects of corporate sustainability strategy and performance. The application of stakeholder theory in corporate sustainability research places a focus on stakeholder engagement as an influential factor in defining corporate sustainability strategy (Ruiz et al., 2021; Hristov et al., 2022; Nicolò et al., 2023). Stakeholder engagement practices, as informed by stakeholder theory, are linked to paradox tension theory, allowing the application of stakeholder engagement and sustainability management techniques to result in academic knowledge of sustainability performance practices

(Ozanne et al., 2016; Ruiz et al., 2021). By understanding how corporations perceive and manage stakeholder relationships, the effectiveness of sustainability strategies in addressing both business goals and stakeholder requirements can be reliably evaluated, thereby providing a basis for assessing the broader impacts of corporate sustainability performance on quality-of-life.

2.5.2 Paradox Perspective and Paradox Tension Theory

Paradox tension theory offers a framework to study the conflicts and challenges companies face when working towards sustainability (Ozanne et al., 2016; Hahn et al., 2018; Ivory and Brooks, 2018). By recognizing and understanding the difficult and opposing forces at play within sustainability management, paradox theory presents a path to solving complex problems (Ozanne et al., 2016). A paradox perspective on corporate sustainability recognises tensions between conflicting sustainability objectives while allowing decision makers to achieve competing sustainability goals and meet business and stakeholder needs (Hahn et al., 2017). The paradox tension framework highlights the process by which companies prioritise strategic business objectives and stakeholder demands as they determine their priorities for sustainability performance (Ivory and Brooks, 2018).

In paradox tension perspective, corporations look to manage corporate sustainability initiatives through a paradoxical lens in which conflicting factors are managed at the same time (Ivory and Brooks, 2018). Corporations must balance stakeholder expectations and needs with their strategic objectives. This is especially complex with broader sustainable development initiatives, as the definitions vary by organisation, stakeholder, and standard (Ivory and Brooks, 2018). The framework of paradox tension theory acknowledges the inherent conflicts and trade-offs that companies encounter when pursuing sustainability goals (Walker et al., 2020).

Using the paradox tension theory in concert with the stakeholder theory informs how corporations define a strategic process to identify and prioritise sustainability practices and their measurable outcomes (i.e. materiality) (Torelli et al., 2020; Talbot et al., 2021). These measurable outcomes can be classified as sustainability performance, which can be aligned to sustainability management tools and quality-of-life frameworks. “A paradox perspective on corporate sustainability accommodates interrelated yet conflicting economic, environmental, and social concerns with the objective of achieving superior business contributions to sustainable development” (Hahn et al., 2017, p.237). By recognising competing priorities, companies

can balance stakeholder needs and business objectives to achieve comprehensive sustainability performance.

Corporations leveraging the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) principles as a framework highlights the evolution of identifying environmental, social, economic, and governance areas of work related to sustainability issues (Adamek, 2018; Nunhes et al., 2020). However, this prioritisation also reveals that the original objectives of the TBL, as initially introduced by Elkington (1994), have not been fully met in practice. Where objectives are interrelated, performance should be synchronised across those objectives to achieve sustainable development goals (Walker et al., 2020). There is little value in managing one category at a time, where the impacts and performance must be managed contiguously to contribute to progress in sustainable development challenges. This necessitates a systemic approach to corporate sustainability performance management, ensuring that improvements in one aspect do not inadvertently detract from the other aspects (Ozanne et al., 2016).

By adopting a paradoxical lens in practice, corporations can simultaneously address the tensions between economic, environmental, and social concerns in their sustainability management activities (Hahn et al., 2017). Ivory and Brooks (2018) explore the links between paradox tension theory, corporate sustainability, and strategic agility, identifying a focal point of paradoxical resolution through resource fluidity and collective stakeholder commitment. Meaning, more value is gained when collaboration between a corporation and its stakeholders, or between corporations in an industry, is actualised through paradoxical resolutions and guided by stakeholder relationship management. This equilibrium enables companies to better manage the inherent conflicts of sustainability, leading to more effective strategies in operationalising corporate sustainability (Ahlström et al., 2020; Farias et al., 2020).

While the core framework of corporate sustainability is derived from the TBL, management action cannot be exclusively divided across these three pillars; rather, the three focus areas are interrelated (Hahn et al., 2018). Because of this interconnected relationship, it can be inferred that performance must be defined, measured, and managed across all three concepts concurrently-not limited to one or none (Walker et al., 2020). While corporations may prioritise issues related to TBL concepts differently, the best approach is to understand the interrelationships and coordinate categorical issues contiguously (Farias et al., 2020; Fet and Knudson, 2021). Employing

paradox tension theory in research and practice allows a clearer understanding of what the legitimate, valuable issues are beyond the standard business case for meaningful sustainability performance. The paradox tension perspective supports more dynamic decision-making processes to balance tensions between a company and its stakeholders across corporate sustainability issues (Hahn et al., 2018).

Paradox tension theory highlights how corporations seek to understand the complexities and requirements of their stakeholders while achieving core business strategy and objectives. The materiality assessment process facilitates this paradoxical frame for decision-making when corporations define their corporate sustainability priorities (Nunhes et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2020). A materiality analysis or assessment process is relevant here, as it refers to "…a systematic and rigorous process, contributing to the identification of significant, stakeholder-oriented metrics…" (Calabrese et al., 2019, p.1019). This process can inform the identification and prioritisation of sustainability practices, and their measurable outcomes made relevant by stakeholder demands. This understanding of how stakeholder relationships and paradox tensions are managed through processes like materiality assessment shapes corporate sustainability priorities and stakeholder engagement outcomes. It provides the theoretical basis for the research design and analytical methods presented in the next chapter.

Drawing on Stakeholder Theory and Paradox Tension Theory, my research examines how corporations navigate the inherent conflicts between economic, social, and environmental objectives to achieve sustainable development performance and improve quality-of-life. This integrated theoretical lens enables a nuanced examination of how corporate sustainability initiatives, viewed through the complex interplay of paradoxes and stakeholder demands, contribute to broader societal well-being (Ozanne et al., 2016). This approach helps in better understanding how corporate actions lead to societal implications, especially when dealing with consistent, often opposing, demands from various stakeholder groups (Hahn et al., 2015; Hahn et al., 2018). The next chapter presents the research philosophy and methods, encompassing the epistemological and ontological assumptions guiding the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques employed to address the research objectives.

Chapter 3 Research & Analysis Methods

My research is fundamentally grounded in a Critical Realism as articulated by Lawani (2020) and Mukumbang (2023). This perspective is important for understanding how corporate sustainability and quality-of-life relate, because there are basic, unseen causes that influence what we see happening. To investigate the underlying causes beyond observation, my study uses critical systems thinking as a basis for analysis. Systems thinking moves the focus from isolated 'problems' to the complexity of systems implications. It seeks to understand the interdependencies and root causes of challenges and identify 'points of failure' within and across systems, as Senge emphasized (1994). This systemic understanding evolved by Jackson's (2009) historical exploration to include the range of approaches for systems thinking, which not only seeks to unravel systemic structures but also actively challenges and aims to transform existing assumptions, power dynamics, and inequalities embedded within these systems.

This dual focus—understanding systemic causality and critically evaluating its implications—makes critical systems thinking a powerful complement to Critical Realism as a philosophical paradigm (Lawani, 2020; Ahlström et al., 2020). It enables my research to probe beyond surface-level corporate sustainability practices, uncovering their deeper and often hidden impacts on quality-of-life. Using a Critical Realist view helps my investigation go beyond describing systems and enables understanding potential pathways to change them by looking at power, fairness, and doing what is right under the context of sustainable development (Skevington and Epton, 2018; Roshchina et al., 2020).

To comprehensively unravel these complexities and ensure meaningful insights, this research adopts a Critical Realism philosophy, consistent with Lawani's (2020) conceptualisation in management and business research. This method goes beyond simple observations to explore the basic causes behind how corporate sustainability affects quality-of-life. By acknowledging the stratified nature of reality—distinguishing between empirical observations, actual events, and the deeper, often unobservable 'real' structures shaping these outcomes—Critical Realism offers a philosophical foundation for building a comprehensive evaluative framework (Lawani, 2020; Mukumbang, 2023). This framework can effectively connect corporate sustainability performance to tangible, multifaceted quality-of-life outcomes. The following section describes the research philosophy and theories that underpin my research design.

My research was guided by the philosophical perspective of critical realism, which was supported by the theoretical frameworks of stakeholder theory and paradox tension theory. These frameworks were applied to analyse the mixed methods findings through a critical systems thinking approach. The critical realism perspective acknowledges the existence of an objective reality while recognizing the inherent limitations of human perception and comprehension (Lawani, 2020).

By conceptualizing reality as stratified, encompassing the empirical, the actual, and the real (Mukumbang, 2023), critical realism offers a nuanced perspective for examining the multi-layered relationships and interdependencies that shape organizational sustainability performance and its impacts on diverse stakeholders (Lawani, 2020). By adopting a critical realist perspective complemented with a systems thinking analysis approach, I examined the complex relationships between corporate sustainability activities, quality-of-life, and sustainable development, recognizing the inherent interconnections and intricacies within and across these domains.

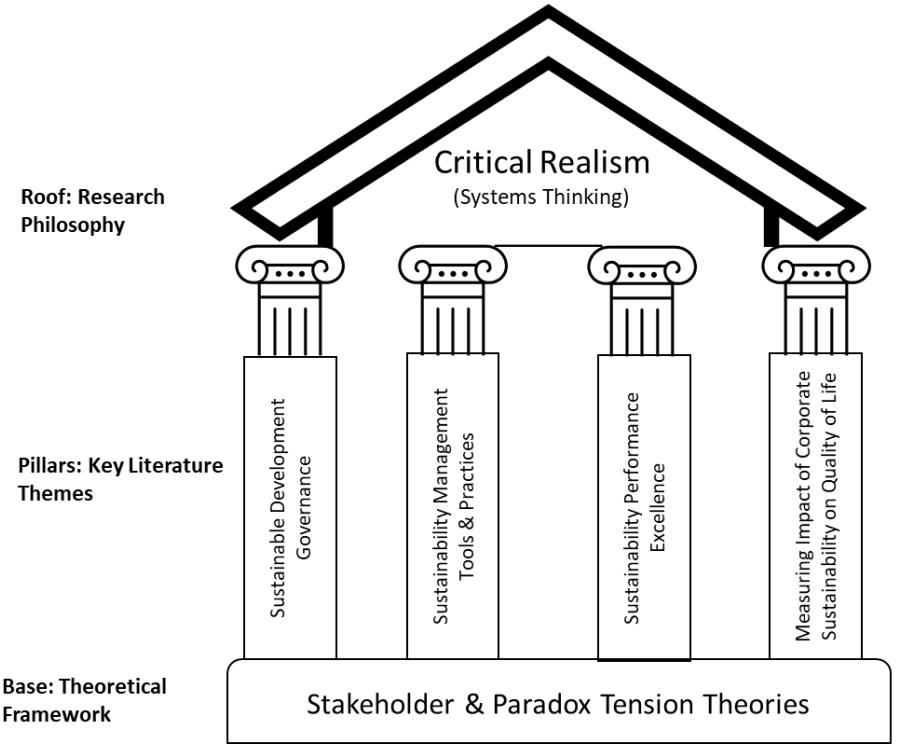

Figure 1. Research Design - Philosophy, Theoretical Frameworks, and Key Concepts

Figure 1 illustrates the architecture of my research. The Critical Realist inquiry is underpinned by Stakeholder and Paradox Tension Theories and structured around four key literature themes. This design shows the main

ideas and theories that guide how I studied the interrogative for corporate sustainability affects quality-of-life, and how I present reliable conclusions. At its base, the diagram identifies the Theoretical Framework, specifically highlighting Stakeholder & Paradox Tension Theories. The foundation supports key concepts explored in the core themes from the Literature Review (Chapter 2), serving as pillars supporting the roof. This means these theories and key literature are the main ideas used to understand and study my research aims and objectives.

The remainder of Chapter 3 details the research methodology, including data collection and analysis techniques used to investigate the relationship between corporate sustainability performance measures and quality-of-life indicators. The research involved a three-stage content analysis and a comparative case study of industries, using both primary and secondary data to conduct a social impact assessment. The social impact assessment as a method was the core catalyst to integrating the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence Attribute-based Protocol (T. Hussain et al., 2018) as the base of my evaluation framework, which is detailed in Chapter 4. The chapter also includes the ethical considerations and research integrity.

3.1 Research Methods & Data Management Approach

The comprehensive objective of my research explored the connections between sustainability management tools, practices, and quality-of-life, drawing on stakeholder theory and paradox tension theory from a perspective of critical realism. A mixed-methods research approach was employed for this study, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. This integrated approach used different research methods to get a more complete and detailed understanding of what the research was trying to achieve, as well as using a mix of sources to better understand what was seen in the real world (Mukumbang, 2023). The qualitative component involved the analysis of secondary data sources such as national sustainability policies, human development indices, and company sustainability reports. The quantitative component included the collection of primary data through surveys and interviews with individuals responsible for sustainability management within companies. Figure 2

illustrates the sequence of research methods used to gather and analyse this data.

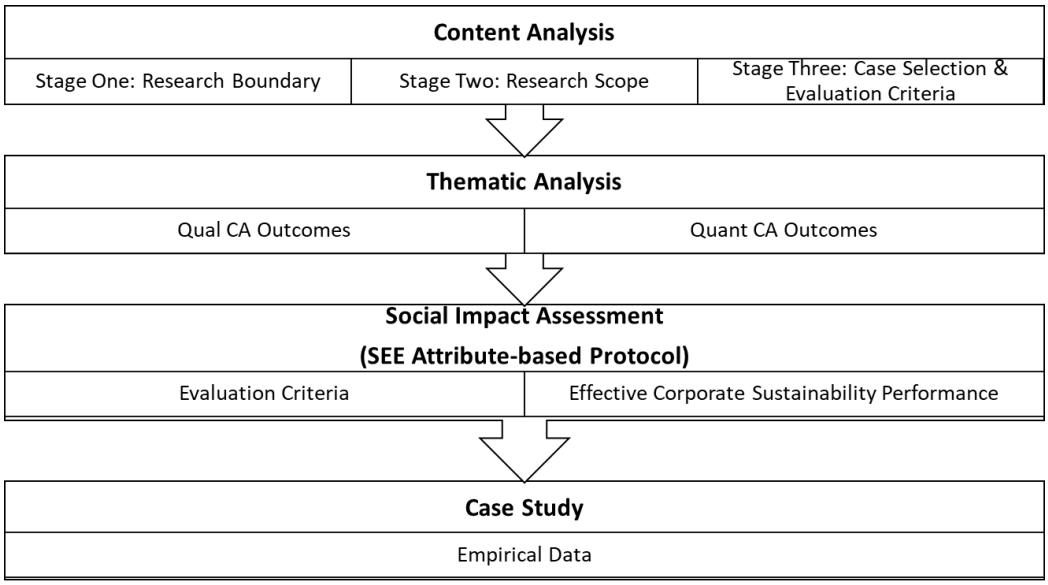

Figure 2. Sequentially Implemented Research Methods

To delve deeper, my research design included comparative case studies of five industries using theoretical sampling to understand the complexities and challenges of managing corporate sustainability. By combining qualitative and quantitative research, I examined how multinational corporations use sustainability management tools and practices, and how these practices relate to both sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators. The analysis revealed connections between a company's sustainability performance and the quality-of-life in the countries where they are headquartered, summarised to an industry level of analysis. My research considered factors like national and international sustainability policies and levels of human development to understand and contextualise discovered relationships.

The overarching goal of mixed methods research was to broaden and strengthen the study's conclusions and contribute to the published literature and practice (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). This approach strengthens research by filling gaps in knowledge and offering insights that might be missed by using only one type of data. Mixed methods research is valuable because it combines different types of data, like surveys and interviews, to provide a more complete understanding of complex topics (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). For my research, a mixed methods approach is used to investigate how different groups of stakeholders

influence a corporation’s sustainability management practices and how the performance of those practices impacts the quality-of-life for society at large.

The following sections outline three key research methods and how they were used to generate and analyse outputs as findings. The research relied on a phased and iterative approach involving content analysis, comparative case studies, and a critical systems analysis to develop an evaluation framework evolved from Sustainable Enterprise Excellence Attribute-based Protocol (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; T. Hussain et al., 2018). The sections are organised as Content Analysis, Thematic Analysis, and Case Study. The evolved evaluation framework is presented in Chapter 4: Realising Impact for Sustainable Excellence (RISE) Evaluation Framework.

3.1.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a systematic method used to identify patterns in communication, which can be used to make inferences about the communicator, audience, or context of communication. This method is a systematic process, requiring an objective system for discerning what may or may not be included in the dataset or analysis purview (Allen, 2017). Allen's approach allowed for quantifying qualitative data into patterns and themes that lead to informed inferences about communicators—such as companies—and their various stakeholder groups comprising society at large. Content analyses are a good method for collecting & analysing data as it can be used in systematically reviewing a variety of information sources and types (Maier and Allen, 2018).

The content analysis method was chosen for this research project because it enabled the establishment of relevant context through systematic analysis of themes related to the research objectives. The information acquired through content analysis processes tends to be more informative, as it contains language and messaging in more detail than obtainable from surveys (Maier and Allen, 2018). Pairing content analysis with case study research methods enabled a deeper understanding of the overall context of research and helped to extract meaningful insights from various data sources. This blended approach balanced the advantages and disadvantages of the content analysis method, as I interpreted from Allen (2017)’s discussion and outlined in Table 1. Ensuring scientific rigor and integrity, the content analysis followed the systematic approach established by Allen (2017).

Table 1. Advantages & Disadvantages of Content Analysis Method in Social Sciences Research[1]

Content Analysis Method: Disadvantages and Advantages	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
• Objectivity of findings • Reliability of process • Thematic generalisation	• Subjective nature of sources • Scope limitations • Time/Temporal Resources
Case Study Method: Mitigations in Blended Use	
Supports	**Mitigates**
• Contextual insights of data • Adaptability to research objectives • Application of concepts across generalised themes	• Reduces subjectivity of language and sources • Identifies contextual-driven relationships of content • Enhances validity of findings

Content analysis supported and addressed the research objectives by providing a systematic method to analyse and interpret narrative data to identify patterns and themes (Allen, 2017; Maier and Allen, 2018). This method allowed for the exploration of communication messages and their contexts, which was crucial in understanding Research Objectives 2 and 3. Content analysis identified the trends and patterns of corporate sustainability management practices and various sustainability performance measures, but was not sufficient to define causal relationships between effective management of corporate sustainability and performance impact of sustainability metrics beyond a company's operational boundaries.

Content analysis alone could not be used to directly measure the effectiveness of sustainability management tools, nor solely used to identify the underlying facets of the relationship between multi-national corporation's sustainability performance metrics and quality-of-life indicators (Allen, 2017; Maier and Allen, 2018). To supplement this disadvantage, thematic analysis and case study methods were also employed in this research. The content analysis method was applied in three stages to establish the boundary, scope, and evaluation structure of the identified industry cases. Figure 3 presents the staged structure of content analysis used in my research study.

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[1] *Source: Author's own interpretation and work drawing on discussion from Allen, 2017 and Maier and Allen, 2018.*

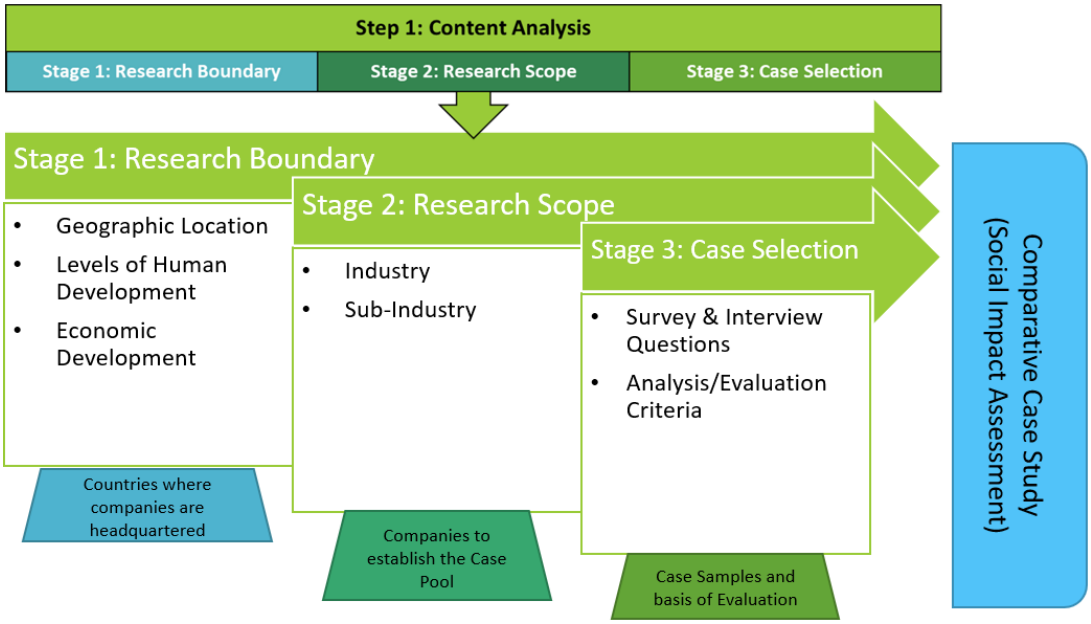

Figure 3. Detail of Content Analysis and Stages Deployed

Stage one used quantitative data from the UNDP's Historical HDI Ratings and qualitative data on the international and national policies related to sustainability management and reporting from the Carrots & Sticks Database to establish the geographic and economic boundary of the case study and contextual boundary for data sampling. Stage two used a mix of quantitative and qualitative data from Scopus, Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSWI), and the DJSWI Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA) Invited Universe company listing to identify industries and themes to analyse relevant to the research objectives.

Stage three used the outputs from stages one and two in conjunction with the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence (SEE) Model (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014) and subsequent SEE Attribute-based Protocol (T. Hussain et al., 2018) to set case selection criteria and structure the evaluation criteria for analysis of the industry case studies. The outputs from each stage of the content analysis are described in the following sections and were used to inform the basis of the social impact assessment as a research method, used to refine and further develop deeper criterion for the evaluation framework presented in Chapter 4.

3.1.1.1 Content Analysis Stage One: Research Boundary

Stage One of content analysis was a process to identify the geographic and economic boundary for case study sampling and selection. The main objective of this stage of content analysis was to identify countries where

multinational corporations were headquartered relevant to the types of national sustainable development policies in place. The first stage focused on analysis of national ratings for human development based on the Human Development Index (HDI) from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP HDI was selected over other indices, such as the Sustainable Well-being Index or Environmental Performance Index, because it presents the most comprehensive composite rating process for objectively evaluating and comparing a much wider range of subjective levels of well-being and quality-of-life at regional, national, and global scales.

Historical ratings in the composite index of the HDI Ratings by Country were collected into Microsoft Excel, then a five-year average (2015 to 2019 of available ratings) of the overall rating was used to rank the listed countries. A RANK formula was used on the five-year average in Microsoft Excel to auto-calculate the rankings. Based on the auto-calculated rankings, a RANDBETWEEN formula was used on the ranked five-year averages to randomly select ranked countries across the list. This resulted in thirteen countries initially identified based on random sampling of the Microsoft Excel RANDBETWEEN formula applied to the averages and rankings.

These 13 countries were then made into a list, organised by human development classification as defined by the UNDP. Countries rated as 0.550 or less were classified as low human development, countries rated between 0.550 and 0.699 were classified as medium human development, countries rated between 0.700 and 0.799 were classified as high human development, and countries rated 0.800 or higher were classified as very high human development (UNDP, 2020). The countries were searched in the Carrots & Sticks database to establish an inventory of national sustainability reporting policies, organised by characteristics of Reporting Type, Issuer Type, and Industry Application. The inventory of policies was reviewed against the themes discussed in the Literature Review. This provided a level of validation with levels of human development from the UNDP HDI ratings and the range of policies by topic from the C&S database.

From the list of thirteen, countries with ten or more policies identified in the Carrots & Sticks database narrowed the research boundary. The goal of this segmentation was to establish objectivity and support theoretical selection for the geographic and economic limits of the research. Various characteristics of the policies were also used to filter and refine the boundary. These characteristics are presented in Table 2. Four countries were selected as the geographic boundary of research to use in the Stage

Two Research Scope criterion. The final research boundary included Japan, Republic of South Korea (or South Korea), the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Appendix A.2 Presents a summary of national and international policy instruments sampled and assessed for content analysis. From a dynamic listing of 273 policies across four countries, fifty-six policies were downloaded, analysed, and coded in NVivo. Characteristics for all 273 policies were collected, including:

- Country
- Reporting Instrument
- Instrument Description
- Year (published or enacted)
- Issuer Type
- Policy Type
- Geographic Scope
- Status
- Targeted Industries
- Restrictiveness
- Relevant Sustainable Development Goals

By country, the key characteristics of the fifty-six sampled policies were summarised for analysis of patterns using pivot tables in Excel. These characteristics include:

- Policy Category
- Policy Types
- Policy Issuers
- Policy Restrictiveness
- Targeted Industries

The characteristics are based on definitions presented in the Carrots & Sticks reporting (Van de Wijs and Van der Lugt, 2020; Chalmers et al., 2023; Chalmers et al., 2024). The Policy Category describes the policy's compliance range as Mandatory or Voluntary. The Policy Type describes orientation of the policy as a requirement or resource of disclosure practice. Policy Issuers describes the entity governing the policy. Policy Restrictiveness describes the level of policy enforcement as very low, low, moderate, high, and very high. Targeted Industries describe applicability of policies to various business industries and sectors listed with the policy in the database (typically two or more). A random sample of International

policies (30 of 560) were also included as a baseline, all of which are classified as Voluntary.

Table 2. Research Boundary: Key Characteristics of National and International Policy Instruments

Policy Instrument Characteristic	Japan	South Korea	United Kingdom	United States	International
Policy Category	16 Mandatory 27 Voluntary	3 Mandatory 14 Voluntary	30 Mandatory 74 Voluntary	34 Mandatory 42 Voluntary	0 Mandatory 30 Voluntary
Policy Types	• Not Stated • Disclosure • Other Sustainability Policy	• Not Stated • Disclosure • Other Sustainability Policy	• Not Stated • Disclosure • Other Sustainability Policy	• Not Stated • Disclosure • Other Sustainability Policy	• Disclosure • Other Sustainability Policy
Policy Issuers	• Financial Regulator • Government • Industry • Research • Stock Exchange	• Government • Industry • Research • Stock Exchange	• Financial Regulator • Government • Industry • Research • Stock Exchange • Non-Governmental Organisation	• Financial Regulator • Government • Industry • Research • Stock Exchange	• Non-Governmental Organisation • Inter-governmental Organisations
Policy Restrictiveness	• 23% V Lo • 12% Low • 19% Mod • 23% High • 23% V Hi	• 16% V Lo • 37% Low • 5% Mod • 16% High • 5% V Hi	• 20% V Lo • 25% Low • 20% Mod • 20% High • 14% V Hi	• 18% V Lo • 18% Low • 16% Mod • 26% High • 20% V Hi	• 13% V Lo • 27% Low • 20% Mod • 20% High • 20% V Hi
Targeted Industries	14 different Industries	12 different Industries; 1 Policy Targets All Industries	13 different Industries	14 different Industries	12 different Industries

Table 2 summarises the content analysis results of reviewing and analysing national and international policies relevant to sustainable development. This content analysis informed a structured framework for the thematic analysis of policy characteristics across different regions. Specifically, this structure helped identify important concepts and themes related to sustainable development governance and how sustainability management tools are adapted, giving real-world examples that support my study's results.

3.1.1.2 Content Analysis Stage Two: Research Scope

To organise the company data and clarify the research trends search in Scopus, the Global Industry Classification Standards (GICS) were used to

refine the level of case study selection. Based on listed principal business activities, the GICS groups companies in a hierarchical structure by four levels to inform investment decisions (S&P Global Inc, 2023). The four levels, with current segmentation count, are:

- 11 Sectors
- 25 Industry Groups
- 74 Industries
- 163 Sub-Industries

S&P Global also owns and maintains the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and the Down Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSWI), which organises companies by the GICS for evaluation and rating of sustainability and investment performance. Additionally, DJSWI is further supplemented by conducting a Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA), organising companies into an Invited Universe list organised by Country, Industry, and Eligibility Groups.

The CSA was a survey conducted by RobecoSAM, a sustainable investment consultancy, soliciting over 300 companies per year. When acquired by S&P Global in 2019, the survey base expanded to over 3,000 companies, and as high as 9,000 in 2021 (S&P Dow Jones Indices, 2022; S&P Global Inc, 2023). The CSA survey consists of a range of in-depth questions for companies to demonstrate commitment and levels of performance of their environmental, social, economic, and governance strategies and reporting (S&P Global Inc, 2023). Categories of questions include climate strategy, human rights, and crisis management, accounting for 40% of the assessment questionnaire (S&P Global, 2021; S&P Global Inc, 2023). The CSA Invited Universe List was used in Stage 2 of the Content Analysis. The main intent of the CSA results is to rank ESG performance of corporations to inform investment decisions of interested parties.

The Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSWI) is a rigorously developed, evaluated, and valued source of business performance rankings and trends for financial and non-financial areas of focus. The DJSWI assesses the effectiveness of any company's quality management approach to sustainability (S&P Dow Jones Indices, 2022). The scoring system used to determine ratings and rankings makes use of two z-score based factors and two types of averages. The first is the Drucker Score, a z-score reviewing performance of Customer Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, Innovation, and Social Responsibility (S&P Dow Jones Indices, 2022). The

quality component is the other z-score which evaluates consistency and best practices of a company (S&P Dow Jones Indices, 2022). The scoring components based on averages consider a mean of deviation between the Drucker & Quality scores, and the Consistency Score is a straight average of the Drucker and Quality scores.

The DJSWI CSA Invited Universe List was first filtered by the country (Research Boundary). The DJSWI CSA Invited Universe segments the listing of corporations into three groups. Group A are those companies already included in the DJSI, Group B are those companies eligible for the ESG Index, and Group C are those companies of investor interest but not included or eligible by criterion for Groups A or B (S&P Global Inc, 2023). In the original analysis, corporations in Groups A and B were included in the Content Analysis and Case Study Sampling as having evidence of relevant processes, systems, and reports for corporate sustainability practices contributing to sustainable development performance. For the revision of my research study, all groups were included, allowing for more variety in random sampling of corporations and greater country representation across industries.

The filtered list was then placed in a pivot table to discern the range of industries to select for case study analysis, which included a range of corporations in industries such as airlines, pharmaceuticals, life sciences, or real estate. This established an initial basis for defining which industries would serve as a case in the comparative case studies. It was noted that a large portion of the companies in each industry were headquartered in the United States or Japan, which informed the need for an additional criterion to have a variety of locations across the research boundary.

The filter criteria were an industry that had more than 15 total corporations listed across the four countries, and of that at least 10% of the listed corporations were not headquartered in the United States to maintain a level of comparability across human development levels and national sustainability reporting policy trends. This was expanded by allowing for all Groups (A, B, and C) to be included in the sampling.

The final filter required that the corporation be invited to complete the CSA for the DSJI World scale. This filtration offered a case selection pool of 42 industries and over 1300 companies. The industry groups of research interest consisted of Consumer Services, Health Care Equipment and Services, Media and Entertainment, and Software and Services. The sub-industries highlighted in these Industry Groups included Restaurants and

Leisure Facilities, Hotels, Resorts and Cruise Lines, Health Care Providers and Services, Interactive Media, Services and Home Entertainment, Media, Movies and Entertainment, Software, and Information Technology Services. From this filtration of data, up to 646 companies were available to sample.

This filtered list from the DJSWI CSA Invited Universe was established as a Corporate Reporting Inventory for secondary data collection. Key attributes in the Corporate Reporting Inventory (Table 5) were analysed for patterns and levels to inform Case Study selection criteria and sampling, as presented in Figure 4. Findings of these corporate reporting trends and patterns are organised by Research Boundary and the industry classification, based in the GICS hierarchy used in the CSA Invited Universe listing. The selection criteria included years of reporting, range of sustainability management tools noted or used by a corporation- referred to as reporting practice, and evidence of sustainability performance indicators either in reports or on corporate websites. These characteristics are presented in Figure 4, in section 3.1.1.3.

To establish clarity of context and further narrow the Research Scope, a research trends analysis was completed using Scopus. The Scopus search criteria are outlined in Table 3. This was done to justify and prioritise those industries which were under-represented in social sciences and business management research on corporate sustainability practices and performance. This research trends review also clarified the extent to which multinational corporations were researched in the context of corporate sustainability performance and social impact. Themes and gaps were identified through keyword searches on literature themes, sub-industry monikers, and key concepts from theoretical frameworks and methods. Trends in findings provided a context and justification for the boundary and scope relevant to the research objectives.

Table 3. Scopus Search Criteria to Contextualise Research Scope

Search Within	Keywords	Filter 1	Filter 2	Filter 3	Filter 4
All Fields	Corporate Sustainability	Year	Subject Area	Document Type	Source Type
	Sustainability performance	2016 - 2022	Business Management & Accounting	Article	Journal
	Quality-of-life		Social Science		

	GICS Sub-Industry				

The outputs from the Scopus search are summarised in Table 4, summing total journal articles, articles by country of publication aligned to the Research Boundary, and how many articles were downloaded and reviewed for case-specific relevance. Overarching themes of the Scopus results were focused on environmental impacts, sustainable supply chain management, and performance measurement practices. These themes were investigated in a variety of organisational contexts, ranging from small, family-owned businesses to large, private multinational corporations.

There were few articles that specifically addressed quality-of-life, especially in the context of corporate sustainability practices or performance management. Of the published sources (i.e. 3 of 7), many focused on how hospitality and tourism in the Hospitality industry affected local resident well-being through economic development or socio-cultural support. Due to the growing volume of research in software and information technology services, these industries were scoped out of the research for feasibility purposes.

Table 4. Scopus Search Results: Research Trends Analysis Results Summary by Sub-Industry

Sub-Industry	Total Articles	Articles within Geographic Research Boundary	Articles Accessed and Reviewed
Health Care	422	130	4
Hospitality	119	39	7
Restaurants & Entertainment	37	10	4
Sub-Industry	**Total Articles**	**Articles within Geographic Research Boundary**	**Articles Accessed and Reviewed**
IT Service	5148	1322	0
Software	1608	425	1
Media & Entertainment	55	28	4
Interactive Media Services	23	9	3
Total	7412	1963	27

With the scope set to four countries and five industries, these scoping parameters were applied to the DJSWI CSA Invited Universe listing and data filters. This provided a listing of 350 corporations to conduct an evidence

review of reporting practices, which was built as a Corporate Reporting Inventory (Table 5). The inventory supported collection and analysis of secondary data characteristics on sustainability management and reporting practices. The Corporate Reporting Inventory is available in Appendix A.3 as the Secondary Data – Corporate Reporting Documents Reference Index.

This information framed the final scoping of the case study selection criteria, the case study evaluation criteria, and the scope and scale of documents to download for analysis in Stage Three. The additional data collected in this format identified where large multinational corporations operated multiple headquarter locations, especially those within the Research Boundary. Examples of this were found in the operations of McDonald's (United States and Japan) and Carnival Cruise Lines (United States & United Kingdom), where a "home office" was listed as responsible for managing reporting functions due to their size. Where this was the case, the moniker of “DUPE” for duplication was used in the Report Mechanism category to track availability of corporate reports and documents and its source.

Table 5. Corporate Reporting Inventory Attributes

Data Collected	Description
Industry (CSA Defined)	The industry description as defined for the CSA Invited Universe Listing, based on GICS structures
Company Name (CSA Recorded)	Name of company as recorded by S&P Global or as used in financial reporting descriptions. The naming conventions may differ from branding or media monikers.
Headquarter Location (CSA Reported)	Reported geographic location of company’s main headquarters. Some larger MNCs have multiple headquarters and are included in the inventory.
Reporting Period Reviewed (Collected)	In years, the range of years of reporting available.

Report Mechanism (Collected)	Types of sustainability management tools used in accessible reports.
Standards or Frameworks Referenced (Collected)	Where mentioned, the specific sustainability management tools used to produce the report. In some companies, these changed from year to year.
Core Products and Services (Collected)	Products and/or services as described by the company in the "About" landing page or in a "Company Profile" landing page.
CEO Statement (Collected)	Evidence of a CEO or other executive team member statement regarding sustainability-related activities. This was either provided in the reports, a press release, or a dedicated sustainability landing page of the corporate website.
Evidence of Metrics (Collected)	Any narrative, excerpt, visualised, or tabular data categorised as environmental, economic, social, or governance performance data. A column was established for each classification and collected as a paraphrased list using the company's terminology.
Website (Collected)	URL of corporate website where reports were accessed.
Notes (Annotations Collected)	Other observations regarding language of reports, reporting frequency if not annual, legal or structural changes to the company, and specific notes on how sustainability management tools were used for reporting

3.1.1.3 Content Analysis Stage Three: Selecting Multinational Corporations for Evaluation

In Stage Three of the content analysis, outputs from Stages One and Two were analysed to determine the case sample selection and where to improve or add evaluation criteria. To establish the Case Study Evaluation Criteria, a content analysis was conducted on the following key sources:

- **Academic Literature**: Sources discussing SEE Model and Attribute-based Protocol, sources discussing frameworks to measure quality-of-life and well-being at different scales, and sources discussing corporate sustainability performance and sustainable development goals as metrics.
- **Grey Literature**: Human Development Reports, OECD Well-being Framework and methodologies, SDG progress reports, and the OECD Compendium for Measuring Business Impact.
- **Company data**: All reporting documents from the companies in PDF or NCapture (NVivo functionality) PDF formats.

The Corporate Reporting Inventory was prioritised by industry, country of headquarter location, corporation name, reports collected and analysed, the count of files, and the volume of coding references captured for analysis from each file. The content analysis aimed to identify relevant case study selection and evaluation criteria by examining academic literature, grey literature, and secondary data. This was done using NVivo, a qualitative data analytics software. Using NVivo to review this range of qualitative data supported the development of the codebook (Table 7), which was based on thematically identified and coded concepts in the sources reviewed.

Based on the inventoried data for the Corporate Reporting Inventory created as an output of Stage 2 Content Analysis, pivot tables were used to identify themes and patterns from the pool of 350 companies across 5 industries. The scheme captured key themes identified in the Literature Review regarding sustainability management and performance excellence concepts, including reporting mechanisms, available years, sustainability reporting standards, performance indicators, and assurance statements. Data on these themes were extracted from corporate websites and reports, along with website URLs for reference. The case sample selection criteria, as shown in Figure 4, guided how to prioritise companies and select documents for download and review, which served as the foundation for comparative analysis of the case studies.

Figure 4. Case Sample Selection Criteria

These criteria informed a final sample of 130 corporations and generated 470 documents to access, download, and include for analysis. Table 6 summarises the companies chosen using the Case Selection Criteria to provide the ranges of data for the comparative industry case study evaluation. As the samples are multinational corporations, very few presented native-language only reports; two companies with eight documents were translated from Japanese and two companies with seven documents were translated from Korean using Google Translate in Microsoft Word. The fifteen documents were uploaded to NVivo, and the annotation function was used to annotate translations of sections as a basis for code referencing for the four companies. Appendix A.3 provides a full listing of all reporting or documents accessed and included for analysis. The documents were organised by and saved as PDFs in a University secured and approved OneDrive location. This step made it easier to upload the sample data to NVivo for additional thematic coding (Coding Reference in Table 7) and case study analysis.

Table 6. Case Sample Selection: Corporations & Reported Data

Research Boundary	Research Scope	Case Samples (Companies)	Case Sample Files (Company Reporting)
Japan Republic of Korea United Kingdom United States	Restaurants & Leisure Facilities (Restaurants & Entertainment)	26 Companies	102 Documents
Japan Republic of Korea United Kingdom United States	[Published] Media, Movies & Entertainment (Media & Entertainment)	26 Companies	72 Documents
Japan Republic of Korea United Kingdom United States	Hotels, Resorts & Cruise Lines (Hospitality)	26 Companies	94 Documents
Japan Republic of Korea United Kingdom United States	Health Care Providers & Services (Health Care)	27 Companies	101 Documents

Japan Republic of Korea United Kingdom United States	Interactive Media Services & Home Entertainment (Interactive Media Services)	25 Companies	101 Documents
Total	**5 Industries**	**130 Companies**	**470 Documents**

After the corporations (Case Samples) were selected, the sustainability key performance indicators were added to the Corporate Reporting Inventory and then coded in NVivo. The bulk of the data consisted of corporate reports which contained either narrative, tabular, or visualised performance data in areas of environmental, social or societal, and economic or governance focus. This data was formatted to produce a Framework Matrix by Case in NVivo, which organised narrative and quantitative evidence (coded references) from the key performance indicator data into three categories of Economic & Governance Indicators, Environmental Indicators, and Social Indicators. Where performance indicators were presented as graphics, NVivo coded these as coordinates in the document, showing as "[##-###, ##-###]" in the Matrix content.

The Framework Matrix provided structure for coding of performance indicator themes within the data and allowed for in-depth collection and analysis of coded and un-coded information which supported themes and patterns in the qualitative analysis of content and cases. These themes were also assessed by the Literature Review topics, integrated into the Deductive Codebook (Table 7). This portion of data shaped the refinement and improvement of evaluation criteria and established key themes for survey and interview questions on sustainability performance and management practices discussed in section 3.1.4.2.

The content analysis involved coding and categorizing data from various sources to identify key patterns and themes for selecting and evaluating case studies. In NVivo, recurring terminology in literature sources was initially coded to identify emerging themes (inductive codes). These themes, derived through an inductive process, were used to create a codebook of deductive codes. These deductive codes established a codebook, summarised in Table 7. This codebook then guided the systematic, deductive coding of literature to establish a coding pattern in NVivo. These deductive coding patterns were then applied to primary (survey responses)

and secondary data (policies and corporate reporting documents) to generate coded references. The content analysis outputs informed the final selection of case studies, and the criteria used to evaluate them.

In NVivo, the reporting documents were organised by industry and assigned Case Classifications and Attributes to each uploaded document for a company in that industry. This established a manageable Case Study structure to better manage queries and analyses within NVivo. Inductive coding was generated on the Corporate Data by Industry, using the auto-code feature of NVivo. This created aggregate code references for each industry based on recurring language in each of the Corporate Data sources. Each Industry was reviewed for themes within and across industries based on the similarity and difference of code reference volume and reference context. The overarching similarities were summarised in Excel and used to plan the structure and questions for the Survey and the Interview in the Case Study.

Table 7. Deductive Codebook: Thematic Research Categories & Definitions

Code Name	Code Description
Economic Indicators	Sources outlining definitions and principles for Economic Indicators
Environmental Indicators	Sources outlining definitions and principles for Environmental Indicators.
Social Indicators	Sources outlining definitions and principles for Social Indicators
Stakeholder Engagement	Evidence in theoretical literature for stakeholder management and engagement to understand values and priorities of various stakeholder groups to align CSR and corporate sustainability strategy and actions.
Corporate Governance	Evidence in theoretical literature of senior leadership, formal organisation structures, and sustainability strategy are balanced to identify business objectives to meet stakeholder requirements.
Materiality	Evidence in theoretical literature of materiality processes or systems which are used to engage stakeholders, prioritise actions in-tune with strategy, and define metrics or indicators to manage corporate sustainability processes and systems.

Sustainable Development Governance	Literature sources discussing concepts of corporate governance, sustainability management practice, and contextual relevance of integrating sustainable development principles into common business strategy through performance excellence frameworks.
Sustainability Management Tools	Literature sources which discuss the awareness, use, value, and outcomes of using various sustainability management tools and approaches. Patterns inform themes that focus on management practices and various reporting tools and processes as the key factor of managing corporate sustainability.
Sustainability Performance	Literature sources discussing concepts and outcomes of business excellence models applied to sustainability, as well as processes to determine and evaluate sustainability performance through consistent metrics relevant to assessing impacts internal and external to an organisation.
Quality-of-life	Literature sources exploring concepts of links and impact of corporate sustainability practices and performance to quality-of-life levels and specific threads of social impact.

The coding patterns generated by deductively coding Academic and Grey Literature sources were applied to the Corporate Data using an “auto-code to existing pattern” function of NVivo. This process created coding references where the deductive codes are present and relevant in the secondary data based on the patterns created in the originally, manually coded sources. A series of coding matrices created by industry confirmed the evidence of related coding references in the secondary data, finding the connections between deductively coded patterns and inductively coded themes. These informed categories for the survey and interview questions relevant to key themes in the literature and the research objectives. The same procedure established patterns for the case study evaluation criteria, with a focus on coding patterns from the OECD Well-being Framework and SEE Model and SEE Attribute-based Protocol literature sources to validate the structure and scope of case evaluation criteria for comparative review.

The content analysis of the secondary data sources and the deductive coding of the academic and grey literature sources provided a foundation for the case study method and primary data collection procedures. The content analysis confirmed the themes found in the literature review, which were consistent with the patterns found in the Corporate Reporting Index and observed in the secondary data. The case study method and primary data

collection procedures were based on this validation. The case study method was used to organise primary data collection and analyse findings.

3.1.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a crucial qualitative research method for identifying context of patterns within research data. A systematic approach to thematic analysis aids in conducting more reliable and traceable learnings, improving the trustworthiness of qualitative-based findings (Nowell et al., 2017). I thematically analysed coding references generated across sources to develop an understanding of how key concepts and relationships were evident in the findings, which informed the evaluation framework categories. Using thematic analysis on secondary, qualitative data is a common qualitative research approach. This approach established a repeatable method in identifying critical meanings or associations from qualitative and mixed data sources and patterns and develops a platform to better understand and use thematic analysis more effectively (Lochmiller, 2021). Thematic analysis also allows for a hybrid use of inductive and deductive coding analysis practice within mixed methods research, due to a specific compatibility with quantitative data and its application within critical realist or critical systems thinking frameworks (Proudfoot, 2023).

This approach enabled a nuanced, qualitative perspective that facilitates understanding of stakeholder perspectives, identification of emerging trends, and critical evaluation of corporate sustainability performance. Data familiarization established the baseline for analysis; however, when the volume of data is high, there are additional complexities to consider such as format, structure, and quality which impact the analytical scope (Nowell et al., 2017). Coding is one way to mitigate any inconsistencies in the collected data. The combination of inductive and deductive coding is beneficial when engaged with relevant literature and used for sign-posting key concepts and themes (Proudfoot, 2023). The thematic analysis aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the relevant associations and their significance in relation to the research objectives.

My thematic analysis of content analysis outputs established a foundation to develop a comprehensive logic and approach for evaluating the relationships between corporate sustainability practices and quality-of-life impacts. My approach provided a robust, qualitative-driven systems perspective to examining the complex array of factors in corporate sustainability management research and practice and elevated the influential value of stakeholder engagement and materiality analysis as key facets of such

practices. The method also allows for a hybrid use of inductive and deductive coding analysis practice within mixed methods research.

3.1.3 Social Impact Assessment

Based on insights from the thematic analysis of corporate sustainability reporting, this study uses Social Impact Assessment as a key method. Drawing on the principles of social impact assessment (Rawhouser et al., 2019; Vanclay, 2020), my research systematically evaluated the relationships between corporate sustainability practices and their multifaceted impacts on quality-of-life. This approach aligns with the aims of Shinwell and Shamir's (2018) OECD analysis of existing frameworks, which measures the impact of businesses on people's well-being and sustainability and the sustainability assessment frameworks in relation to integrating business excellence model principles (Jankalová and Jankal, 2018). Ahi et al. (2018)offers a valuable quantitative approach for assessing economic and environmental sustainability performance aspects of corporations, which provided insights to my framework's evaluation criteria.

The concept of social impact assessments is a newer outcome of social entrepreneurship research. While the definition is disparate across areas of expertise, one poignant definition supports my research study methods (Rawhouser et al., 2019, p.83):

> *Social Impact Assessment is the collection of "…beneficial outcomes resulting from prosocial behaviors that are enjoyed by the intended targets of that behavior and/or by the broader community of individuals, organizations, and/or environments."*

Integrating these assessment approaches under the social impact assessment principles thus informed my development of a comprehensive evaluation framework that translates qualitative insights from corporate sustainability disclosures into a structured assessment of societal outcomes. Sentiment analyses can be considered a type of social impact analysis where one analytical component additionally considered was defining the sentiment of the impact being either negative, neutral, or positive (Rawhouser et al., 2019). Social impact assessments as a research method consist of a broader focus on the potential effects of a research project or initiative on the resources people rely upon, as well as their mental and physical health, and beliefs, thereby influencing their cognitions, feelings, and behaviours - that is, phenomena in complex, critical systems thinking

(Kemp and Martens, 2007; Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008). The aim is to ensure the achievement of benefits and the avoidance of harm, proactive measures to avoid conflicts, and the enhancement of community well-being (Esteves et al., 2017).

Few studies demonstrate the use of social impact assessment as a research method. Some examples of adaptation include Vanclay's (2020) modern reflections and Esteves et al.'s (2017) case study on integrating industry practice of impact assessments with theoretical concepts of societal impacts of social sciences. One perspective is that social impact assessments allow for a process of understanding and responding to the social issues and concerns related to planned interventions like development projects, policy changes, or program implementations (Vanclay, 2020). From an industry-application perspective, at a project scale, Esteves et al. (2017) introduces the use of a plan-do-check-act approach for social impact assessments. These concepts were explored with the intention to address quality-of-life through understanding scale and extent of social impacts and human rights. In practitioner application, the impact assessments are traditionally set in the context of a company's environmental impact.

As a research tool, social impact assessments evaluate the types of activities taking place in an organisation, applicable across sectors and industries, but lacks application in evaluating outcomes of the activities themselves (Rawhouser et al., 2019). Four approaches to conceptualising and measuring social impact in the context of business management are discussed, categorised as four approaches to conceptualising and measuring social impact in the context of business management (Rawhouser et al., 2019). The two dimensions of the matrix were scale (activity approach vs. outcome approach) and scope (multisector approach vs. single-sector approach) (Rawhouser et al., 2019, pp.89–91). A key outcome exploring social impact assessments as a research method revealed the ways in which social impact assessments are more oriented toward environmental or economic growth implications, rather than societal impacts.

My research uses social impact assessment as a research method to expand upon an existing evaluation framework. The content analysis outputs serve as inputs for the case study findings. The social impact assessment involves identifying, measuring, and evaluating the intended and unintended societal impacts of the sustainability practices studied as phenomena (Esteves et al., 2017; Rawhouser et al., 2019; Vanclay, 2020). The social

impact assessment also considers the broader community and stakeholders affected by the corporate sustainability practices, including employees, customers, local communities, and other relevant parties. This method links academic research and practical application to stakeholder theory by defining and measuring stakeholder engagement in corporate sustainability practices through reports, disclosure, and empirical data (Shinwell et al., 2018; Vanclay, 2020).

With this method, the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence (SEE) Model (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017), SEE Attribute-based Protocol (Tasleem, Khan, Shah, et al., 2017; T. Hussain et al., 2018), and the OECD Well-being Framework (OECD, 2020) are used to structure a comprehensive social impact assessment process applicable to multinational corporations. The SEE Model establishes a categorical structure of assessment like business excellence models (BEMs), while the SEE Attribute-based Protocol provides a more detailed and quantitative approach to assessing effectiveness of corporate sustainability practices from a strategic perspective (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; T. Hussain et al., 2018). The OECD Well-being Framework categorically organises comprehensive measures for quality-of-life and well-being at national and global scales, which is then integrated into the Attribute-based Protocol by improving the questions considered in each Attribute of every Category.

Content analysis informed case study and sample selection, while thematic analysis shaped the evaluation criteria. Social impact assessment guided the structure and process for evaluating the outcomes of my research findings, with the case study method providing a detailed and comparative examination of specific cases and their sustainability practices and performance.

3.1.4 Case Study

A case study method was chosen to provide a detailed and comparative examination of specific cases and their sustainability practices and performance. Case study methodology in research allows for validation of theory and researched practice at the managerial practitioner level (Gibbert et al., 2008). A core aspect of using the case study method is the comprehensive analysis of the context, actions, and outcomes of the cases in relation to their corporate sustainability practices. Gibbert et al (2008) also discuss the importance of using a variety of data collection methods, such as

interviews, observations, and archival data, to develop a clear chain of evidence that shows how the data supports the conclusions of the study.

The extended case method could have revealed unexpected insights and deviations from existing theories, contributing to overall knowledge in the field. Such a method emerges as potentially useful for investigating the relationship between structure and action situating the organisational research setting within its broader context (Wadham and Warren, 2014). The research design of this study uses a case study approach combined with the content analysis method to comprehensively examine the sustainability practices and performance impacts of specific cases on various categories of quality-of-life indicators (Research Objective 1). Validity and reliability are critical to the foundation of a case study research method. However, an extended case study leverages the micro- and macro- linkages of the wider research context to explain findings without generalising explanation of specific outcomes (Wadham and Warren, 2014).

Comparative case studies provide a lens to understand these contextual influences and how they shape sustainability outcomes. My research benefited from content analysis and comparative case studies to clarify relationships between core themes and findings applicable across industry and country contexts, informing outcomes relevant to my research objectives. Using the staged approach for content analysis and the comparative approach for case studies allowed for a more reliable foundation of the social impact assessment. Figure 5 presents an overview of how the research was structured to explore subjective and objective themes from the combined research methods.

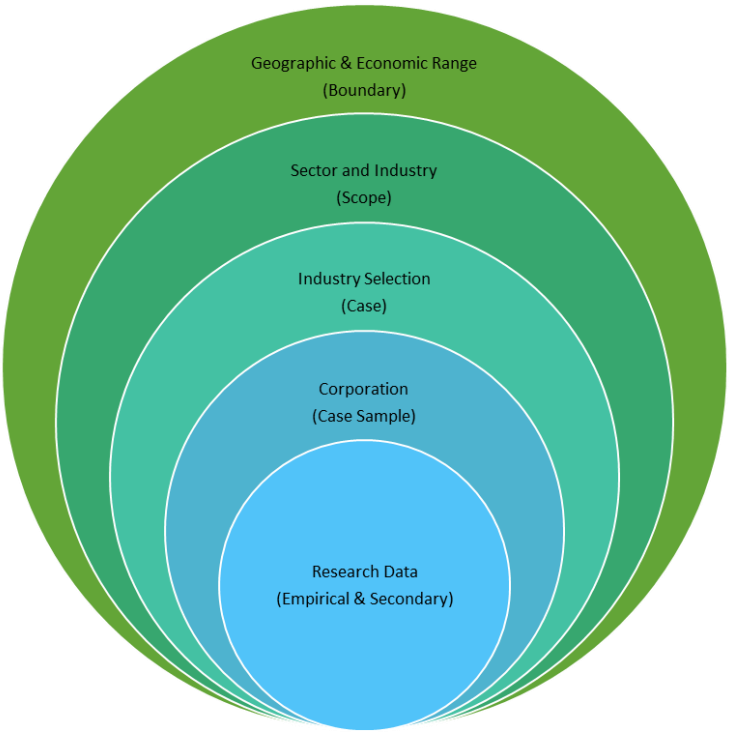

Figure 5. Structure of Research for Comparative Case Study

The Research Boundary is the geographic and economic areas of focus for the research, as informed by Stage One of Content Analysis. The Research Scope is the Industry of interest, serving as the broader pool of organisational areas to select for research. The Research Scope by Industry is the Case of study for the findings and discussions of my research. The Cases are the GICS defined industries, of which there were 5 Cases selected for analysis. Case Samples were identified from the Cases, which were corporations in the Case randomly selected to obtain Case Sample Files (secondary data sources). For the remainder of the thesis, cases shall be referred to as industries, case samples shall be referred to as corporations, and case sample data as corporate reporting documents. To collect primary data, double-blind surveys were designed and distributed to corporations in the five industries.

Originally, 66 corporations were targeted, contacting roles (contacts) from corporations where they held sustainability, strategy, business development, or investor relations accountabilities to assess their awareness and perception of the companies' sustainability efforts. This sample was increased to 130 corporations because a broader empirical base was necessary to achieve statistical significance in the analysis of corporate sustainability performance and its correlation with quality-of-life indicators. This expansion ensured a robust dataset for quantitative analysis, enabling

more conclusive insights into the mechanisms linking corporate sustainability initiatives to societal well-being.

Primary data, also referred to as empirical data, collected from the sampled companies was included in the overall research design as surveys and optional interviews. While a component of the designed empirical data collection, too few interviews were completed (3 interviews) and removed from the findings analysed and presented in Chapter 5, which focus on the survey responses as core empirical data. As the original sample size for the survey (11 responses) was deemed insufficient for intelligible findings, a third party was employed to develop and distribute the survey to 200 participants. The following sub-sections outline the processes employed for identifying and collecting contact data, as well as distribution of surveys. The final secondary data sample included 130 corporations (Case Samples) and 470 documents (Case Sample Files), and final primary data collected included 211 survey responses, with no new interviews conducted.

3.1.4.1 Case Study Contact Data

Case study data contacts were identified by two approaches. The first captured any direct or team contact information (a name or an email) provided in collected corporate reporting documents. Contacts were listed as the preparer of the report at the ‘About’ chapter or back cover page. The second approach was to obtain contact information using the same parameters of the Research Boundary and Research Scope of the case selection criteria from two sources: Apollo and BoldData. Apollo is a web-based prospecting tool which offers searchable contact information made available in compliance with GDPR requirements on a global scale. BoldData is a company which maintains data warehouses, also GDPR compliant, of professional contact information on a global scale.

Verified, GDPR-compliant contact data was purchased from BoldData to supplement available and accessible roles identified in corporate reports, corporate websites, and LinkedIn contacts. Apollo’s search features were also used to obtain verified contacts from corporations, as well as other companies in the same industry to build the contact list for the Survey Invitation. The focus was on decision-making roles with responsibilities for finance, business planning, reporting, sustainability, or investor relations. These individuals were selected from companies across the scoped industries. The survey invitation was sent using a 'cold call' approach through Apollo. A total of 470 contacts were verified for the distribution of the Survey.

The total contacts purchased from BoldData totalled 1,006, where 403 Health Care contacts were excluded due to core functions in clinical, nursing, or doctors in a medical specialty were not related to my research topic. The remaining 603 contacts were imported to Apollo, where 58 fell out of scope, either as incorrect or the contact had a change of industry classification – leaving 545 contacts - and 528 had un-verifiable or unreliable email addresses. This left a total of 17 viable contacts for the survey distribution. From Apollo search results, 450 verified contacts were identified for the survey distribution. An additional 3 contacts were identified through professional University networks. This supplied a total of 470 contacts across the Research Boundary and Scope for invitation to participate in the survey.

The survey distribution from this approach yielded very low response rates; eleven survey responses and three interviews after four distributions. Many contacts declined to participate, were unresponsive, or responded by spam-blocking the email so as not to receive any reminders. Of those who replied by declining, the main reasons were as follows:

- Corporate policy to not participate in surveys or interviews
- 'No capacity', a polite 'not interested nor have the time'
- High volume of survey requests and unable to accommodate
- Out of Office (majority on parental leave); no response from listed interims
- Referred to ESG or Investor Relations team with no further response
- Job change (left for a company in industry out of scope, or retired)

To ensure robust primary data collection, two external services, Centiment and Appinio, were engaged to procure an additional 200 survey responses. Centiment facilitated the distribution of my survey to multinational corporations, yielding 75 verified responses distributed across the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and South Korea. Appinio undertook the translation of my survey into Japanese and Korean and disseminated it via six audience panels, comprising multinational corporations that met my research's scope criteria. This effort resulted in 125 verified responses, with the United States panel contributing 31, the United Kingdom 32, Japan 32, and South Korea 30. These strategic collaborations, involving substantial financial investment, were instrumental in ensuring a comprehensive and diverse participant pool, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the collected primary data.

The third parties encountered similar challenges in collecting responses, especially for companies headquartered in Japan and South Korea, even with language translation support. Of note were new challenges in discerning quality of responses due to creative use of artificial intelligence. For example, the third parties implemented new automated Turing tests to validate that the responses were from human participants, and they also reviewed the logic of multi-selection responses, and the quality of statements provided in open-ended responses. These factors contributed to a lower-than-expected survey response rate, though the number of verified responses was sufficient to meet the statistical requirements for analysis.

3.1.4.2 Empirical Data Collection Design

The empirical data collection tools were developed based on applying content and thematic analysis outputs. This provided an output of code reference themes, which aligned to the four focus areas of the Literature Review and the deductive codes defined in Table 7. The Survey Questions are included in Appendix C.3. The Survey was used to screen those participants based on their level of awareness and understanding of corporate sustainability and performance management practices. No additional interviews were conducted because the third parties comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and charge extra for researcher interviews.

The survey comprised four primary themes, initially conceived to include 2-3 inquiries per theme, making a total of 10 open-ended questions. Following five revisions, the four main topics were unchanged, but the number of questions increased to encompass 36 diverse response types, this count excluded the 5 questions collecting demographic data. Of the 5 iterations, 4 were progressively rolled out from March 2023 to December 2023. The queries were organized and linked in Excel to track modifications of questions and align responses to related questions, ensuring coherence and trustworthiness in the evaluation of responses. Tracking modifications made to the questions related to the four survey topics allowed for easy tracing and analysis of responses, even if they were modified but relevant questions, and still provided valid evidence in this study. Third parties were given the same questionnaire to distribute the double-blind surveys and responses were mapped to the existing eleven survey responses previously collected.

The four topic areas of the survey are summarised in Table 8. The Consent Form was made as the first section of the Survey, with a required response

to proceed with answering the questions. All other sections of the survey were noted repeatedly as “Optional” for responses. The survey topics, which were derived from the content and thematic analyses, aligned with the four focus areas of the literature review. The survey focused on corporate governance, stakeholder relationships, sustainable initiatives planning and evaluation, and social impact awareness, all of which directly relate to the themes discussed in the literature review. These topics aim to assess the understanding and implementation of corporate sustainability and performance management practices, reflecting the importance of effective strategic management in corporate sustainability business practices.

Table 8. Survey Structure by Topic

Survey Topic	**Topic Description**	**Total Questions in Topic**
Demographics	Optional responses to questions about the respondent’s company profile relevant to the research.	5 questions
Corporate Governance	Denoted the level of involvement that the leadership had in corporate sustainability and sustainable development, along with any function of supervision over the integration of sustainability strategies with business strategy and performance.	6 Questions
Survey Topic	**Topic Description**	**Total Questions in Topic**
Stakeholder Relationships	Questions pertaining to relationship building and stakeholder engagement activities of the company. Where Stakeholder relationship management was used to ease or complicate a business's efforts to identify, interact with, and work with different	10 questions

	stakeholder groups in to define a sustainability strategy.	
Sustainability Performance and Management Practices	Participants were asked to think about how sustainability initiatives were planned, conducted, and evaluated, considering not only the effectiveness and scope of impacts on internal operations but also the broader implications for stakeholders and society at large.	9 questions
Social Impact Awareness	The tools their organisation used to analyse or summarise performance trends and themes, as well as how these impacts were communicated, were among the questions posed to the participants. Questions also addressed the impact of corporate sustainability performance and stakeholder engagement were measured through both formal and informal processes and practices.	6 Questions

At the end of the original Survey not distributed by third parties, participants were offered an option to volunteer for an interview, either in-person or virtually, but the three interviews accepted have been removed from the final outcomes and analysis of my study. The interviews were intended as additional primary data collection of qualitative and quantitative information to understand four key aspects concerning:

- How and why companies select and use sustainability management tools (Research Objective 3).
- Any processes behind prioritising corporate sustainability initiatives (Research Objective 3).
- How and why performance measures are established to assess performance and impact (Research Objectives 2 & 3).

- If there are any considerations for external impacts related to quality-of-life in the defined sustainability performance metrics (Research Objective 1).

The semi-structured interview consisted of 55 questions related to the four topic areas outlined in the survey, and 25 added relevant to survey response themes for a total of up to 80 questions asked of participants. One of the aspects was split into two components; Sustainability Performance & Management was split into two concepts of Sustainability Practices and Performance Management. Drilling down into two components of this topic allowed for better exploration of context to address Research Objectives 2 and 3. These questions were established using outputs from content analyses. The interview questions were semi-structured to accommodate the varying survey responses and allow for the creation of new questions based on patterns in collected responses.

A summary was created to outline the intent of the interview questions sent to research participants who agreed to an interview. This also allowed them to prepare relevant documentation before the scheduled 45-minute to one-hour interview session. The guide did not present the complete set of interview questions, but it did outline the subjects and purpose of the study that are pertinent to the types of questions that might be posed during the interview. As there were insufficient empirical data from the interviews, the reference to this data source was removed from the study.

There were no participants for interview from the third party distributed survey due to GDPR restrictions preventing the sharing of contact data. Third party sources offered additional services wherein the associates ask participants provided interview questions to remain compliant with GDPR requirements. As this was beyond the budget of my research design and resources and presented a potential issue with quality of interview-collected contextual data, I did not use this service. As noted in the Survey Invitation, 3 participants volunteered for an interview from initial fieldwork. These were conducted via Microsoft Teams. These interviewed were removed from analysis of findings.

Responses to open-end questions were imported into NVivo. This enabled further use of the existing coding patterns, as per Table 7 in the Deductive Codebook. The applied coding patterns for deeper analysis of the responses offered a means of confirming the identified patterns and themes from the Content Analysis stages, particularly in relation to the Case Evaluation Criteria established in Stage Three and applied in the subsequent Social

Impact Assessment section, which took form as evidence for the evaluation framework developed and presented in Chapter 4.

3.2 Data Sources & Management Approach

My research used a combination of primary and secondary data to understand the complex relationship between sustainability performance and quality-of-life.

- Primary data was collected via completed surveys, allowing me to gather in-depth information about people's experiences and perspectives on sustainability management.
- Secondary data from existing research, case studies, national and international policies, and corporate reports and documents provided valuable background information and facilitated comparison of findings with other relevant studies.

Primary data were collected through voluntary surveys. The survey, initially a 10-question open-response questionnaire, underwent five revisions and included 38 questions, combining qualitative and quantitative elements. The survey focused on key themes identified in the literature review and emerging from an analysis of corporate reports, covering areas like corporate governance, stakeholder relationships, sustainability performance, and social impact awareness (quality-of-life element).

The survey served as a screening tool and provided insights into the structure, practices, resources, and measures of corporate sustainability initiatives. The interviews, conducted using a semi-structured approach with up to 72 open-ended questions, delved deeper into the same themes as the survey, aligning with the literature review on Sustainable Development Governance, Sustainability Management Tools, Sustainability Performance, and Measuring Impact on Quality-of-life. The survey responses informed the development and refinement of interview questions.

Relevant national and international sustainability policies were collected to provide context for the analysis of corporate sustainability practices. Various guidance documents such as reporting standards, international sustainability frameworks, and certification and rating guidelines for corporate sustainability reporting were collected and analysed for global and industry relevance. A collection of publicly available corporate reports, covering a period of 1 to 7 years, were collected and analysed to understand information on a company's sustainability initiatives, practices, and performance. The analysis included a wide range of reports, such as environmental, social and governance, corporate social responsibility, and

environmental management reports, as well as sustainability information found within annual corporate reports, Security Exchange Commission (SEC) filings, and corporate governance documents. Primary and secondary data collection and management are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9. Data Collection & Management Summary

Management Stage	Primary	Secondary
Collection	Survey Responses (211) Interview Responses (3)	International Sustainability Policies National Sustainability Policies Sustainability Management Guidance Resources Corporate Reports
Analysis	Stage 1: Research Boundary – Geo-Economic Stage 2: Research Scope - Industry Stage 3: Case Selection & Evaluation Criteria -Impact Assessment	
Synthesis	Survey Responses, Interview Responses 470 Corporate Reports	
Disposal	Survey Responses: 6 months after Thesis Site Visit Interview Responses: 6 months SV documentations: 5 business days after interviews	Publicly available reports after 1 year

Quantitative data sources were analysed to identify patterns and trends. These patterns were then used to select cases and guide the analysis of qualitative data. Qualitative data sources were analysed to identify key themes and understand the context behind the observed quantitative patterns.

- **Quantitative Data:**
  - **UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI):**
    - Human Development Report (2019 – 2023)
    - Composite and categorical index ratings by country
  - **OECD Well-being Framework and Better Life Index:**
    - “How’s Life?” Report (2019 – 2023)
    - OECD Data Explorer- Well-being Database
  - **Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSI) CSA Invited Universe:**
    - Corporate Sustainability Assessment Invited Universe company listing

        - Eligibility Group, Headquarter Location, and Industry
- **Qualitative Data:**
    - **Carrots & Sticks Sustainability Policy Database:**
        - International and National Policies relevant to sustainability management and reporting
        - Policy type, scale of application, targeted industries, level of restrictiveness, and compliance type
    - **Sustainability Management Guidance Resources**
        - Global Reporting Initiative Standard
        - B-Impact Assessment Criteria (Guidance on Baseline Requirements for MNCs)
        - SASB Standards Application Guidance
        - Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Excellence
        - European Foundation for Quality Management Criteria
        - UN SDGs Progress Report (2020 – 2023)
        - The Greenhouse Gas Protocol: Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard
        - Sustainable Enterprise Excellence (SEE) Model
        - SEE Attribute-based Protocol

The comprehensive data collection and analysis approach used in this study provided a solid foundation to examine the relationship between corporate sustainability practices and their impact on quality-of-life indicators.

3.3 Research Analysis and Synthesis Approach

A critical realism approach was employed in this research to move beyond descriptive surface-level accounts of phenomena. Critical realism seeks to uncover the underlying mechanisms and structures that generate observable events, acknowledging the influence of social contexts and power dynamics on these mechanisms (Lawani, 2020; Mukumbang, 2023). My research was fundamentally interdisciplinary in its rigorous integration of concepts and methods from business, social sciences, and philosophical inquiry. It extends into transdisciplinary approaches due to its explicit intent to solve a real-world societal problem (the disconnect between corporate sustainability and quality-of-life), its development of a practical tool (evaluation framework), and its engagement with practitioner insights (survey data) (Ahlström et al., 2020). Analysed data included survey results, academic literature, interactive databases, statistical databases, and corporate reports and documents.

My research was not just about analysing a problem; it was about creating a practical framework to help businesses and policymakers find solutions, a hallmark of transdisciplinary research (Sala et al., 2015; Ahlström et al., 2020).The key outcome of qualitative data analysis is to define, assess and

compare various patterns and themes (Hair et al., 2019). My research bridged academic theories and real-world practices to establish a link and created a practical tool for managing human-environment systems, serving to co-produce knowledge for both theoretical and practical needs (Sala et al., 2015; Ahlström et al., 2020). A qualitative data analytics tool, NVivo, was used to define concepts, develop patterns and themes, and evaluate relationships between themes using academic literature, corporate reports and documents, and survey and interview responses.

NVivo's coding functionalities were useful in identifying patterns and themes across the various data sources, allowing for a deeper understanding of relationships between concepts or themes. The coding units were developed based on terms, sentences, and visuals in academic and grey literature sources. Use of NVivo and its query functions supported the iterative, qualitative analysis process by defining and validating themes and patterns of primary and secondary data sources (Hair et al., 2019). The stages of content analysis served as a data reduction process to simplify and optimise the coded themes and patterns defined from primary and secondary data sources of my research (Hair et al., 2019). This process informed the development of the Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence (RISE) Evaluation Framework, which was built from the social impact assessment method, the SEE Model (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014) and the SEE Attribute-based Protocol (Hussain et al., 2018).

All stages of the Content Analysis leveraged NVivo to complete analysis and review of patterns and themes from academic and grey literature sources, as well as primary data sources. A key output of this tool was the deductive codebook, which supported validation of quantitative trends and levels by providing broader context in themes by amalgamating coded references. Development and use of a codebook in qualitative data analyses establishes greater accuracy of themes and clearer definitions of concepts across data sources (Roberts et al., 2019). The analysis of patterns and themes was made possible through a process of deductive and inductive coding practices, with auto-coding functions leveraged, and consolidations of coded references into Framework Matrices and coding analyses.

Quantitative data collected various measurements, such as survey response frequencies, and statistical information to directly inform phenome as related to the research objectives (Hair et al., 2019). A data transformation approach was used in analysis of information across sources, where the data was assessed and modified into a new format to better clarify and understand the

themes and patterns coded in primary and secondary data (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Hair et al., 2019). Analysis techniques used in my research were based in building descriptive analyses, where aggregate data were organised into concepts, trends, and levels to identify associations and relationships of relevance to the research objectives (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

To inform the quantitative evaluation framework in Chapter 4, which is structured across four principles and ten attributes, Pearson Correlation Coefficients and Chi-Square tests were applied to the content analysis and survey data. Pearson's r Correlation Coefficient was calculated by case for content analysed themes to identify key relationships evidenced from how cases presented their sustainability management and performance in reporting (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Herkenhoff and Fogli, 2013). Statistically significant relationships are categorised by the Coefficient value's proximity to +/-1: poor, moderate, or strong. Relationships that are not statistically significant contributed to a lower evaluation score.

The Pearson Chi-Square test was used to analyse the survey responses, which were double-blind and may not contain the same case samples as the content analysed in corporate reports (Oladeji, 2012). The Chi-Square test assesses the level of independence (X^2) based on response frequency, comparing variation by case per country of a response selection. A statistically significant association (Asymptotic Value $p < .05$) resulted in a higher score for the relevant attribute in the evaluation framework, regardless of level of independence. Where non-significant Asymptotic Values with high independence values (X^2) occurred, the category attribute received a lower score. Response frequencies were analysed for patterns, and the content analysis evidence was reviewed to inform a scoring factor for the relevant attribute when the independence and Asymptotic values were constant.

3.4 Ethics and Integrity: Considerations & Integrity of Data

This study was reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the Business, Earth & Environment, Social Sciences (AREA FREC) Committee on 27 February 2023, ethics reference 2023-0394-406 before commencing with primary data collection. The research study was completed in line with the University of Leeds Research Participant Privacy Notice. All consideration was taken for the necessity in the confidentiality of case study participants, availability of research findings, and value of intellectual property of any resulting tools that companies can use and integrate into their sustainability

management toolbox. Interview questions and answers, analysis methods of survey results, and assessment and evaluation practices were developed as an output of research findings were reviewed to the University's Ethics Standards.

Publicly available information from reports and internet sources were presented using similar language from the source documents and sources made available. Any results of case study interviews or assessments were anonymised in the case of sharing outputs and key findings without doxing participating representatives of case companies. Access to data during the project was made available to the supervisory team of the researcher to ensure accurate and relevant framing of findings and discussion. Academic supervisors had access to any shared OneDrive folders for review purposes of synthesized data used in thesis. No other collaborators or researchers were designated, nor had access to stored files.

Consent Forms were issued and collected for the Survey, reviewed and signed, signed copies shared with participants upon their request, and stored in a designated OneDrive folder location with all other research data. The integrity of the data was maintained through rigorous record-keeping, including maintaining version control, secure storage, and restricted access in compliance with GDPR policies of the University.

Chapter 4 Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence Evaluation Framework

As discussed in Chapter 2, Sections 2.3 and 2.4, the established research area of assessing corporate sustainability performance requires further exploration. In this chapter, I present the development of a novel framework to assess both internal and external implications of corporate sustainability actions and performance. The scope and scale of research thus far has focused on the implication of sustainability reporting standards and practice on organisational performance (Nunhes et al., 2020; Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Friske et al., 2023), or the reliability of reported content and its relationship to reputation or validity of an organisation (N. Hussain, Rigoni and Cavezzali, 2018; Cöster et al., 2020a; Sehgal et al., 2023). Establishing and evaluating the relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life remains a significant research and practical gap, as identified in my Research Rationale.

There is a lack of robust accountability systems, leading to underuse of reported sustainability performance information and concerns about its credibility (Jadoon et al., 2021; Pazienza et al., 2023). My 'Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence' (RISE) Evaluation Framework assesses business impact by integrating concepts of business excellence and corporate governance with methods for assessing quality-of-life. This framework was developed to provide a pathway for systematic accountability in sustainability performance, aiming to improve measurable impacts on quality-of-life. My framework directly helps bridge the accountability gap in corporate sustainability performance research. It assumes that meaningful progress in sustainable development depends on using evaluation and assessment practice that trace real effects (Pazienza et al., 2023; Saulick et al., 2023).

My framework develops a stronger stakeholder-focused approach from the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence (SEE) Model (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014) and business excellence structure from the Attribute-based Protocol (T. Hussain et al., 2018) to evaluate the relationship between corporate sustainability performance of multinational corporations with impact on societal quality-of-life. These models provided a good conceptual base because they incorporated business excellence principles with sustainable development concepts, but they primarily focused on strategic business performance rather than external impacts. My research outcomes, discussed in Chapter 6, positions my proposed evaluation framework as a potential

solution to address the gap between conceptual and practical understanding of systems of accountability for corporate sustainability performance and impact.

The RISE Evaluation Framework contributes to this gap by clearly and categorically defining evaluation and scoring logic. This logic quantifies the extent and maturity of a corporation's sustainability performance and quality-of-life performance through the alignment of indicator definitions and benchmarking practice. The RISE Evaluation Framework demonstrates the valuable integration of objective and subjective evidence to inform its quantifiable scoring logic, thereby completing a comparative evaluation approach that is repeatable, with its robust design facilitating future validation of its reliability and scalability. The following sections explore existing assessment and evaluation models, how my framework was developed, and how I applied my evaluation framework to industry case studies.

4.1 Sustainable Performance Excellence: Existing Evaluation Models & Frameworks

Building on the content analysis findings, my research developed the RISE Evaluation Framework as a comprehensive evaluation tool for assessing the relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life. The framework uses stakeholder theory and paradox tension theory to understand how corporate sustainability practices affect society, specifically by informing the Framework's assessment principles and criteria. This integration is presented in Section 4.3. Through an extensive review and analysis of various models and frameworks for defining and assessing corporate sustainability performance, my research aimed to understand the core elements of corporate sustainability performance which correlate with and potentially impact quality-of-life.

I reviewed a collection of eight frameworks based on their theoretical alignment with stakeholder and paradox tension theory, their alignment with quality-of-life factors and frameworks, and the extent to which they consider corporate sustainability practices and performance in the context of business excellence. Assessing existing frameworks by these aspects informed the development of the Realising Impact for Sustainable Excellence (RISE) Evaluation Framework. The frameworks are presented from oldest to newest and are discussed based on how they were considered or why they were insufficient for my research objectives.

Azapagic's 2003 Corporate Sustainability Management System proposed a systems approach to corporate sustainability practices, outlining a framework to integrate economic, environmental, and social aspects into sustainability assessment and management practice. Aligning core sustainable development principles into corporate practice through integrated management systems, the framework proposes a systematic guide towards more sustainable business outcomes (Azapagic, 2003). This framework emphasised the interconnectedness of different sustainability dimensions and the need for organisations to balance multiple, often competing, priorities as reflected in paradox tension theory (Ozanne et al., 2016; Ahi et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2020). This is evident in how key elements prioritise identification and prioritisation of relevant issues, measuring performance, and communication practices of outcomes to stakeholders (Azapagic, 2003). Despite being theoretically sound, Azapagic's Corporate Sustainability Management System focused on internal operations and financial implications of performance. It had little connection to quality-of-life factors or frameworks. This constrained the validation of its practical relevance and effectiveness needed to find the correlations between corporate sustainability and quality-of-life.

Another conceptual framework developed by Sheu and Lo (2005) to evaluate integration of environmental management into corporate performance attempts to contribute to the gap of evaluating ecological efficiency at the company level. The intent of the framework is to present a practical tool for businesses, investors, and society to understand and evaluate a company’s sustainability performance through environmental impacts (Sheu and Lo, 2005). The framework's keystone is defining eco-efficiency and the impact of environmental management on a company's operational stability. This is structured by inputs and outcomes processed through operational, financial, and environmental management decisions (Sheu and Lo, 2005). This framework provides a process to assess corporate sustainability performance with a focus on how environmental considerations affect the internal workings and strategic direction of the company. While providing a robust internal assessment, the framework's process lacked transferability of its principles or evaluation factors for correlating the comprehensive impact of corporate sustainability performance on quality-of-life. This limitation stems from its primary focus on internal environmental management, which does not provide a clear

pathway for assessing broader societal outcomes or their impact on quality-of-life.

Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos' (2014) define and measure corporate sustainability examined the conceptualisation of corporate sustainability and approaches used to assess sustainability performance. Their research highlights that while there is some agreement on measuring the environmental dimension, the economic and social dimensions lack clear measurement approaches (Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos, 2014). The authors reviewed the theoretical foundations and practical applications of corporate sustainability measurement, highlighting the need for integrated, multidimensional frameworks that capture the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainability. Their research emphasised the importance of aligning sustainability measurement with organisational strategy and stakeholder expectations (Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos, 2014).

However, the framework lacked specific guidance on how organisations could effectively implement and use such measurement systems in practice. This research aims to understand diverse ways to value and measure sustainability within organisations (Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos, 2014). It examines studies that measure all three aspects of corporate sustainability at the same time, in line with my research goals. Therefore, the practical application and empirical validation of these frameworks remain limited, hindering widespread adoption by organisations. While Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos's research presents the theoretical underpinnings of core dimensions, my research seeks to operationalize these concepts through the RISE Evaluation Framework.

The Sustainability Balanced Scorecard offers a modification of the traditional Balanced Scorecard to incorporate environmental, social, and ethical considerations (Hansen and Schaltegger, 2016). The Sustainability Balanced Scorecard model is based in integrative management approaches, presenting a comprehensive view of sustainability performance (Hansen and Schaltegger, 2016). Incorporating sustainable development concepts into existing performance management practices then lends a normative outlet for corporate sustainability performance evaluation of a company (Hansen and Schaltegger, 2016). The proposed model presents as a specialized application of business excellence principles and tools, adapted to address the specific challenges and opportunities of corporate sustainability (Hansen and Schaltegger, 2016; Jankalová and Jankal, 2018). While the proposed

model presents as a specialized application of business excellence principles adapted for corporate sustainability, its inherent focus on internal organisational performance metrics means it inadequately aligns with broader quality-of-life considerations, thereby limiting its ability to fully assess corporate sustainability performance's societal impact. Its strength lies in internal management, not in direct, measurable links to external societal well-being quality-of-life.

A key challenge in creating assessment frameworks and evaluation models is how to measure and manage the social and economic effects of corporate sustainability efforts. Maas et al. (2016) proposed an integrated framework for corporate sustainability assessment that emphasises the need to align sustainability measurement with organisational strategy and stakeholder expectations. It differentiates from previous frameworks and models by adapting the measurement and reporting system based on stakeholder feedback to ensure inclusion of key issues and indicators. Their research highlighted the importance of adopting a multidimensional and inclusive approach to evaluating corporate sustainability performance, capturing the economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Maas et al., 2016). This framework shows how important strategic thinking is across a company. It measures results and uses feedback from stakeholders to connect what happens inside and outside the company.

While Maas et al.’s (Maas et al., 2016) framework aims to help companies measure and improve sustainability by integrating it into business operations for internal accountability, its practical application and testing in real-world corporate settings were limited, constraining its widespread adoption and validation. The practical application and testing of this framework in real-world corporate settings was limited, which constrained its widespread adoption and validation. The practical application and testing of this framework in real-world corporate settings was limited, due to persistent disparities in the fragmented use of assessment, accounting, control, and reporting as siloed functions (Maas et al., 2016), which constrained its widespread adoption and validation. Integrated management approaches have shown to improve stakeholder relationship management and value creation, yet disparities persist in the fragmented use of assessment, accounting, control, and reporting as siloed functions (Maas et al., 2016). While this comprehensive approach advances how organisations can define and manage sustainability performance, it lacks integration of adaptable

accountability structures and quality-of-life considerations to then understand impact on society at large.

Relevant and implicitly aligned to stakeholder theory and paradox tension theory, Tasleem et al.'s (2017) Six Steps Implementation Framework for Corporate Sustainability Performance Management offers a structured approach for companies to implement and measure corporate sustainability practices. The framework itself presents a practical guide for businesses, focusing on actionable steps rather than theoretical underpinnings (Tasleem, Khan, Shah, et al., 2017). The emphasis on a stakeholder-centric approach, anchored in continuous improvement through reliable feedback and review reflective of business excellence principles, goes just beyond theoretical space like the previously discussed models and frameworks. Tasleem et al.'s (2017) work provides a practical and actionable methodology for companies to translate sustainability concepts into tangible business practices and performance management.

The framework's first step, "Identifying stakeholders and their requirements," (Tasleem, Khan, Shah, et al., 2017, p.7) inherently acknowledges the importance of considering the needs of various stakeholders affected by the company's operations. This aligns with the principles of sustainable development, which emphasise balancing economic, social, and environmental considerations to meet the needs of present and future generations (WCED, 1987; Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Alsayegh et al., 2020). A gap remains in the empirical validation of this framework through longitudinal case studies or large-scale surveys to assess its effectiveness in driving sustainable development outcomes, as well as explicitly linking to impacts on quality-of-life for society at large.

The limited scope of theoretical or practical application of the previously discussed models constrains the clarity on how corporate sustainability performance is potentially linked to quality-of-life. These frameworks contextualise corporate activities and outcomes in terms of several types of organisational capital, such as human, financial, social, and natural (Nikolaou and Tsalis, 2013; Hristov et al., 2022). The primary focus remains on evaluating corporate performance in terms of operating efficiency, financial performance, and/or organisational performance, rather than understanding the relationship between corporate sustainability practices and their broader societal impacts (Oertwig et al., 2017; Ahi et al., 2018; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Another model and framework identified as most viable for critical improvement to transform the theoretical emphasis to a

practical resource for multinational corporations is the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence (SEE) Model (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014) and its iteration, SEE Attribute-based Protocol (T. Hussain et al., 2018).

The SEE Model aligns with core aspects of stakeholder theory and paradox tension theory through its stakeholder-centric perspective, while also incorporating concepts from paradox tension theory to address the effective management of inherent tensions arising from the pursuit of sustainability performance. The model connects economic success, social responsibility, and environmental care. It helps organizations make sustainability part of their main strategy and create lasting value for all stakeholders (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; T. Hussain et al., 2018). The SEE Model provides a strategic reference point for the aims and objectives of my research, as it offers an accessible, conceptual and practical framing for evaluating the potential relationship between corporate sustainability performance and broader societal quality-of-life.

The Sustainable Enterprise Excellence Model is a key framework for corporate sustainability. It brings together financial strategy, social responsibility, and environmental care in a company's strategy. Rooted in stakeholder and paradox theories, it offers an obvious way to understand how corporate actions affect sustainability management outcomes, helping organizations create shared value (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014). Its associated Attribute-Based Protocol (T. Hussain et al., 2018) augments this by offering a quantitative methodology that deconstructs abstract sustainability principles into discrete, measurable attributes across a range of strategic categories. This enables a self-assessment process, linking governance and strategy to sustainability actions and enabling context-specific priorities.

The SEE Model and Attribute-Based Protocol offer one way to define and measure sustainable business excellence. Its ability to offer useful insights for leaders making decisions about improving sustainable business practices is a practical step forward for how corporations can assess sustainability performance. From a practical standpoint, the models have limitations. It is unclear what evidence or information should be assessed, and there are no clear definitions of performance levels. Implementing these models fully needs a lot of resources, and the scoring logic is simplistic and arbitrary. Gaining access to and handling reliable sustainability data, along with governance and performance indicators, presents a challenge because these elements differ across various operational and economic situations

(Fet and Knudson, 2021; Liu et al., 2023; Pazienza et al., 2023). This makes it difficult to standardize and expand the Model and Protocol.

Despite these limitations, the SEE Model and Attribute-Based Protocol are valuable for assessing corporate sustainability in both theory and practice. These models are key to how my research looks at corporate sustainability assessment process and impact of outcomes. My research uses their strengths, such as their comprehensive scope and measurability, while addressing their weaknesses. My developments aim to bolster practical applicability and establish alignment with quality-of-life considerations, thereby contributing to a more robust and transferable approach for assessing the multifaceted impacts of corporate sustainability performance on society.

The discussed corporate sustainability assessment frameworks overall lack the necessary accessibility and practical applicability for direct integration with established quality-of-life concepts and measurement frameworks, such as the OECD Well-Being Framework and the Better Life Index. These frameworks constrain their focus to internal organisational processes and performance, without providing clear pathways or mechanisms to directly evaluate a relationship between corporate sustainability practices and their broader societal impacts on quality-of-life indicators at national, regional, and global levels. The limited scope and empirical validation of these models hinder their ability to serve as practical tools for businesses, investors, and stakeholders to systematically assess and understand the link between corporate sustainability and quality-of-life outcomes. Section 4.2 explains the development of the RISE Evaluation Framework, which uses the SEE Model and Attribute-based Protocol as key elements.

4.2 Systematising Sustainability Performance Assessment & Impact

The SEE Model, as designed by Edgeman and Eskildsen (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014), presents a comprehensive and systematic framework for evaluating corporate sustainability performance and its connection to stakeholder well-being outcomes. This model aligns with my research objectives by providing a viable integration strategy that bridges the gap between corporate sustainability practices and their broader societal impacts, as highlighted in the previous section. The developed RISE Evaluation Framework is presented as an iterative alternative for examining the relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-

life trends. The RISE Evaluation Framework serves as a structured methodology to guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation, facilitating a systematic examination of the connection between corporate sustainability performance and broader societal quality-of-life trends. The RISE Evaluation Framework contributes to filling the gap in the literature by providing a structured approach to assess and quantify the multidimensional impacts of corporate sustainability initiatives on various dimensions of quality-of-life, offering the ability to go beyond standards to improve the performance of companies, industries, and sectors.

The evolution of the SEE Model Is the Attribute-based Protocol (T. Hussain et al., 2018), developed into an evaluation framework to quantify levels of categorical performance. This iteration introduces an attribute-based assessment protocol, providing a more structured and detailed approach to evaluating organizational performance against the SEE Model criteria. The protocol offers a self-assessment base for the model, enabling a self-assessment of performance against the specified attributes or criteria questions. The assessment principles address governance and strategy, in addition to management processes and stakeholder relationships, emphasising the importance of leadership and strategic planning for sustainable enterprise excellence (T. Hussain et al., 2018). This indicates a shift towards increased practical application and empirical validation. It is important to re-emphasise the inherent recognition of the interconnectedness between corporate actions and multiple stakeholder groups in the SEE Model, highlighting the need for a multi-dimensional perspective on performance measurement (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; T. Hussain et al., 2018).

Performance outcomes interconnectedness is assessed through assessing six performance results-oriented domains: governance and strategy, process implementation, sustainability performance, financial performance, innovation performance, and human capital performance (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; T. Hussain et al., 2018). Across these categories are assessment principles as the basis of a proposed maturity scale ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 is not developed and 10 is mature and effective, for assessing organizational performance relative to each attribute in the category (T. Hussain et al., 2018).

Stakeholder theory serves as foundational to the SEE Model and Attribute-based Protocol by emphasizing the importance of balancing the interests of various stakeholders, including society and the environment, to achieve

long-term organisational success (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; T. Hussain et al., 2018). My research proposes a more robust evaluation framework that integrates national policies characteristics and objectives with quality-of-life indicator data to enhance the analysis of corporate sustainability performance and its potential impacts on quality-of-life outcomes, which are critically missing components. By integrating stakeholder considerations into their governance, strategy, and operations, corporations can create measurable value for themselves and society (Pinto, 2019; Fok et al., 2021). This extension was guided through use of social impact assessment as a research method, and analysis of contextual societal factors and stakeholder perspectives to develop an improved evaluation model.

Traditional corporate sustainability assessment models, while valuable for structuring internal performance, often fall short in capturing the full complexity and paradoxical nature of sustainability. These models often overemphasise internal operational metrics, failing to adequately address broader societal and policy implications. Although the Model and Protocol allow for the contextual weighting of priorities, this feature alone does not sufficiently connect corporate efforts to external societal outcomes, highlighting a critical gap in assessing true sustainability impact beyond organisational boundaries.

To address this, corporate sustainability assessment needs a fundamental shift. The strategic use of established business excellence principles enables clearer evaluation standards. This change in thinking is essential to draw explicit and demonstrable connections between corporate sustainability management, performance, and its direct impact on quality-of-life (Jankalová and Jankal, 2020; Isaksson, 2021). This requires a stronger stakeholder-focused approached, grounded in stakeholder and paradox tension theories (Pinto, 2019; Walker et al., 2020), where organisations work with policymakers and stakeholders to set sustainability goals and performance measures to track genuine progress and impact. From the business excellence perspective, integrating quality management with sustainability is key for generating useful and reliable performance data, emphasizing quality over quantity (Fok et al., 2021). This means that assessment models, even versions of the SEE model, should focus more on including and using quality management principles aligned with societal well-being.

The assessment of corporate sustainability needs better integration and consistent measures. This means looking beyond just environmental factors.

Clear inclusion of social, economic, and governance issues, as well as how company culture and quality management play a role is paramount (Isaksson, 2021; Pazienza et al., 2023). The goal is to create shared ways to measure how well corporations are doing on sustainability and why it matters that they do well, making it easier to compare reports and, most importantly, ensure that what corporations do for sustainability lines up with what society needs. This focused approach contributes to building stronger, more evident links between what companies do for sustainability, how well they perform, and measurable impact on the quality-of-life (Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Isaksson, 2021; Khaled et al., 2021).

To ensure comprehensive assessment of sustainability impacts, my research developed the Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence (RISE) Evaluation Framework by drawing upon a diverse range of foundational concepts and analytical structures. This development process systematically integrated principles from the Sustainable Enterprise Excellence (SEE) Model and its Attribute-based Protocol, established BEMs such as Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and European Foundation for Quality Management, and insights derived from content analyses of the OECD Well-being Framework, Better Life Index, and the Carrots & Sticks Database. This multi-faceted approach allowed for the creation of a novel framework tailored to assess the intricate relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life. Figure 6 presents the logic for adapting social impact assessment as a process to guide the improve upon the SEE Model and Protocol.

This process involved:

1. **Identifying foundational principles:** Leveraging Stakeholder Theory and Paradox Tension Theory to structure the framework.
2. **Integrating social impact assessment:** Incorporating principles from Esteves et al. (2017), Rawhouser et al. (2019), and Vanclay (2020) into the SEE Attribute-based Protocol. This integration established reliable assessment criteria and refined existing assessment principles to define maturity and performance levels.
3. **Enhancing quality-of-life considerations:** Incorporating indicators from the OECD Well-being Framework and Better Life Index to ensure comprehensive evaluation of societal impacts.

This step-by-step development ensures that the RISE Evaluation Framework is not merely an adaptation, but a distinct, robust evaluation tool designed to address identified gaps in existing models. The integration of the various sources yielded a unified framework to analyse the connections between an entity's sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators. quality-of-life. These insights were gained by assessing outputs from content and thematic analysis of secondary data, which were then used as inputs or evidence to categorically score each industry as a Case.

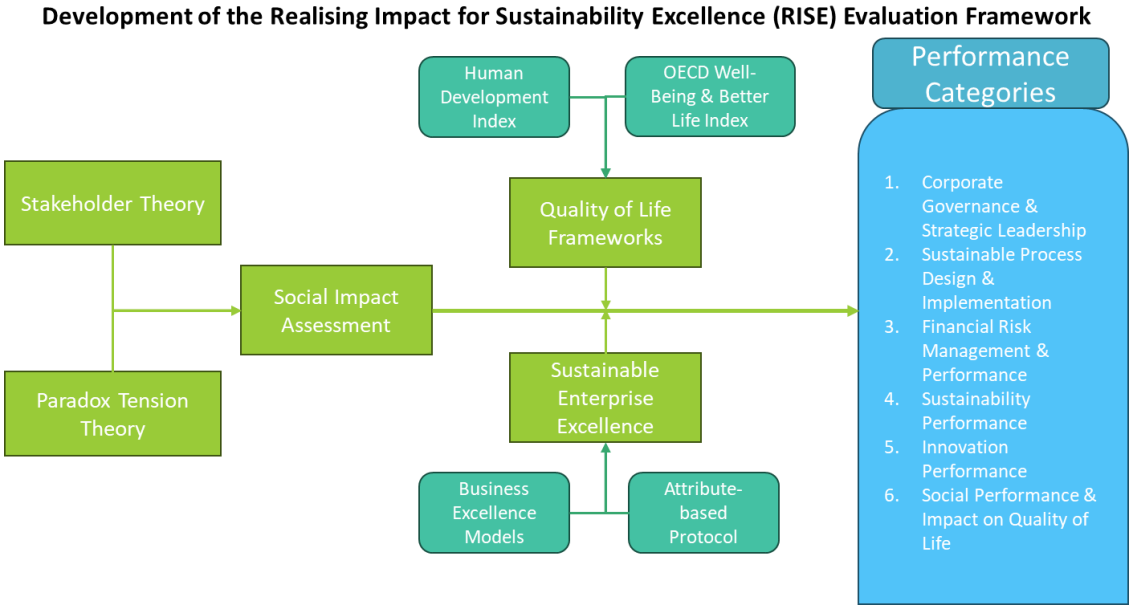

Figure 6. Developing the RISE Evaluation Framework

The principles of social impact assessments were used in conjunction with the SEE Model Assessment Principles (Table 10) to ensure that the assessment process considered both the direct and indirect effects of sustainability practices on stakeholders, including society. Based in concepts for ethics and the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) principles (Elkington, 1994), the SEE Model balances excellence considerations for Strategy, Governance, Process Implementation, Execution, Results and Refinement as the “springboard to sustainable enterprise excellence” (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014, p.178). My framework enhanced the social impact assessment principles required for a more comprehensive understanding of the societal impacts of the sustainability practices studied. The categorical descriptions for quality-of-life indicators were signposted from the OECD Well-being Framework and integrated into the Attribute-based Protocol. By incorporating the OECD Well-being Framework, the evaluation of the case studies effectively included considerations for measures relevant to quality-of-life and well-being at both national and global scales.

Table 10. RISE Evaluation Framework Assessment Principles Expanded from SEE Attribute-based Protocol Principles

Principle	Revised Assessment Definition
Sustainable	Creates and maintains comprehensive TBL value for the organisation, stakeholders, society at large, and policy makers.
Resilient	Evidence of capacity for self-renewable through innovation in response to sustainable development challenges, especially those beyond the scope of operational control.
Robust	Highly resistant to critical setbacks or challenges. Of note is the mix of internal and external scopes of control addressed through materiality practices and corporate governance structures and accountability mechanisms.
Excellent	Demonstrates strong leadership through corporate policy and diverse partnerships with an ability to sustain world-class performance and measured impact on quality-of-life factors.

The Protocol's evaluation logic was initially lacking a clear connection between the assessment principles and the actual rating and evaluation of attributes in each category. To address this gap, I integrated the principles of social impact assessment with the SEE Model's assessment principles (Table 10) to establish clearer definitions for levels of performance as poor, moderate, or excellent at the attribute, category, and summative assessment levels. Refinement of the assessment principles, along with clearer and more relevant attribute criteria, established a more comprehensive and systematic approach to assessing corporate sustainability practices. This ensures that the attributes in each of the six categories directly align with the overarching assessment principles of sustainability, resilience, robustness, and excellence, as defined in Table 10. This enhanced interconnectedness between the evaluation components facilitated a rigorous qualitative and quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of the corporate sustainability practices from a strategic perspective using qualitative and subjective source data.

My refinement and new definition of "what good could look like" provided a more comprehensive measurement instrument, with a detailed scale and repeatable scoring logic for the ten attribute-based items in each of the six

evaluation categories. These domains include governance and strategy, process implementation, sustainability performance, financial performance, innovation performance, and human capital performance (T. Hussain et al., 2018). As a result of conceptual and content analysis inputs, the RISE Evaluation Framework evolves these categories to the following nomenclatures:

1. Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership
2. Sustainable Process Design & Implementation
3. Financial Risk Management & Performance
4. Sustainability Performance
5. Innovation Performance
6. Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life

The resulting improvements allowed for a clear distinction between the internal impact and external impact of corporate sustainability practices, as reflected in the assessment categories. This distinction is evident from aligning the evaluation criteria with the principles of the SEE Model and drawing indicators from relevant quality-of-life frameworks to echo the structures of business excellence models (Ahi et al., 2018; Nunhes et al., 2020; Saeed and Kersten, 2020; Sehgal et al., 2023).

The evaluation framework was designed to clarify the types of impact by distinguishing between the internal and external effects of corporate sustainability practices through its assessment categories. This clear distinction is essential for understanding corporate accountability, as true sustainability extends beyond the organization to broader societal well-being. Internal impacts, reflected in categories one, two, and three, primarily pertain to the corporation's operational efficiency, resource management within its direct control, and the well-being of its immediate internal stakeholders (Rawhouser et al., 2019; Vanclay, 2020; Saulick et al., 2023). This aspect is closely aligned with the principles of BEMs, focusing on the corporation's strategic and operational performance within its organizational confines.

Conversely, categories four, five, and six address external, societal impacts, directly relevant to quality-of-life considerations, assessing the corporation's influence on communities, the broader environment, and external stakeholder well-being, encompassing both positive contributions and negative externalities within the wider societal context (Rawhouser et al., 2019; Saeed and Kersten, 2020). To clarify, corporate sustainability performance is categorized by its internal or external impact, where

categories one, two, and three reflect the internal impact of the evaluated entity, closely reflecting the corporation's internal focus, while categories four, five, and six reflect the external, societal focus relevant to quality-of-life considerations. This is achieved by aligning the evaluation criteria with the principles of the SEE Model, Protocol, and social impact assessment and drawing indicators from relevant quality-of-life frameworks.

Overall, my research has demonstrated the utility of the SEE Model, Protocol, and my improvements of integrating quality-of-life considerations using social impact assessment principles, enabling a more robust and multi-dimensional assessment of the linkages between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life. My impact evaluation framework applied this hybrid evaluation approach to a comparative case study analysis of the corporate sustainability performance and corresponding societal quality-of-life impacts for a sample of large multinational corporations across five industries and four geographies. The results presented in Chapter 5 demonstrate the ability of the of deeper evaluation to provide a more comprehensive and actionable assessment of the relationship between corporate sustainability practice and quality-of-life outcomes. The next section presents how my RISE Evaluation Framework was applied and tested at industry scale.

4.3 Implementing the RISE Evaluation Framework at Industry Level

A collected range of data sources were analysed to serve as evidence and inputs for the Evaluation. These included content analysis outputs from analysing patterns and themes in 470 Case Sample Files (corporate documents) from 130 Case Samples (corporations) and 211 survey responses (primary or empirical data). The RISE Evaluation Framework also referenced content analysis from an inventory of national and international policies and how they align with corporate sustainability reporting patterns to explore the differences between local, national, regional, and global sustainability frameworks in the context of sustainability performance and impact (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017; T. Hussain et al., 2018). Inventories of primary and secondary data are available in Appendix A.

Secondary data were analysed through content and thematic analysis and prepared as an input for the evaluation framework. I collected and examined an inventory of national and international policies to understand how they

align with corporate reporting patterns. I also explored the differences between local, national, regional, and global sustainability performance models and frameworks. My research incorporated the OECD's well-being statistical database as a source of quantitative data on quality-of-life metrics. Additionally, the Human Development Index, which ranks countries based on quality-of-life factors, was used to provide contextual insights for the patterns identified in the policy analysis.

This lens was deemed critical because quality-of-life is a complex, multidimensional concept that goes beyond economic growth to include factors such as health, education, environment, and social connectedness (Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008; Berik, 2018). Databases like the OECD's Well-being and Better Life Index offer objective measures that help contextualise subjective concepts such as standard of living and quality-of-life (Berik, 2018; Uysal and Sirgy, 2019), which were used to refine and elevate the attribute criterion for external categories in the evaluation framework.

While collecting survey responses, the outcomes of content and thematic analysis served as baseline inputs to assess the five industries' corporate sustainability performance and its effect on quality-of-life. I calculate correlations of the baseline inputs using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. This was guided by the data analysis process outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.3. Primary data analysed from survey responses served as an input to the evaluation for validation, where relationships and associations were informed by calculating Pearson Chi-Square Tests and Pearson Correlation Coefficient for variables within and across Cases by country. Outputs of these analyses were aggregated and used as evidence to inform score allocation against the Assessment principles of the RISE Evaluation Framework.

The scores were based on the 10-point scale for each attribute, with 10 being the highest. The scoring allocations are based on evidence and alignment to the assessment principles in Table 10 in Section 4.2, where each principle (sustainable, resilient, etc) accounted for 0 to 2.5 points representative of poor, moderate, or excellent performance levels. The highest category total is 100 points, in alignment with T. Hussain et al. (2018) iteration of the Attribute-based Protocol. The RISE Evaluation Framework formalises the categorical scoring performance levels, defined as 0 to 39.5 is Poor (red), 40 to 79.5 is Moderate (yellow), and 80 to 100 is Excellent (green).

Industry-level analysis was conducted using the resulting scores across the five industries, identifying similarities and differences in their performance and impact on quality-of-life. As survey responses were completed, aggregated, and analysed, Attributes were re-assessed based on alignment of empirical findings to baseline inputs from the analyses of secondary outcomes. The RISE Evaluation Framework provided a systematic approach for assessing the relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life. The ability to capture the intricate connections and paradoxical tensions between the two domains proved essential in deriving meaningful and actionable insights, as well as confirm evidence of a peripheral relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life measures.

The assessment structure and logic proposed by T. Hussain et al. (2018) were maintained in the RISE Evaluation Framework (Figure 7). The integration of impact assessment concepts discussed by Esteves et al. (2017) and Vanclay (2020) matured the assessment principles to include how to rate Attributes with consideration for effective stakeholder engagement, social and economic impacts, and the global effect of multinational corporations on society-at-large. This evolution is represented as organising categorical assessment factors for having either internal impacts, which pertain to the direct effects of sustainability initiatives on the corporation's operational efficiency, financial performance, and risk profile (Rawhouser et al., 2019; Vanclay, 2020; Saulick et al., 2023), or external impacts, which refer to the broader consequences emanating from the business's operations on societal well-being, environmental systems, and global sustainable development (Esteves et al., 2017; Rawhouser et al., 2019; Saeed and Kersten, 2020).

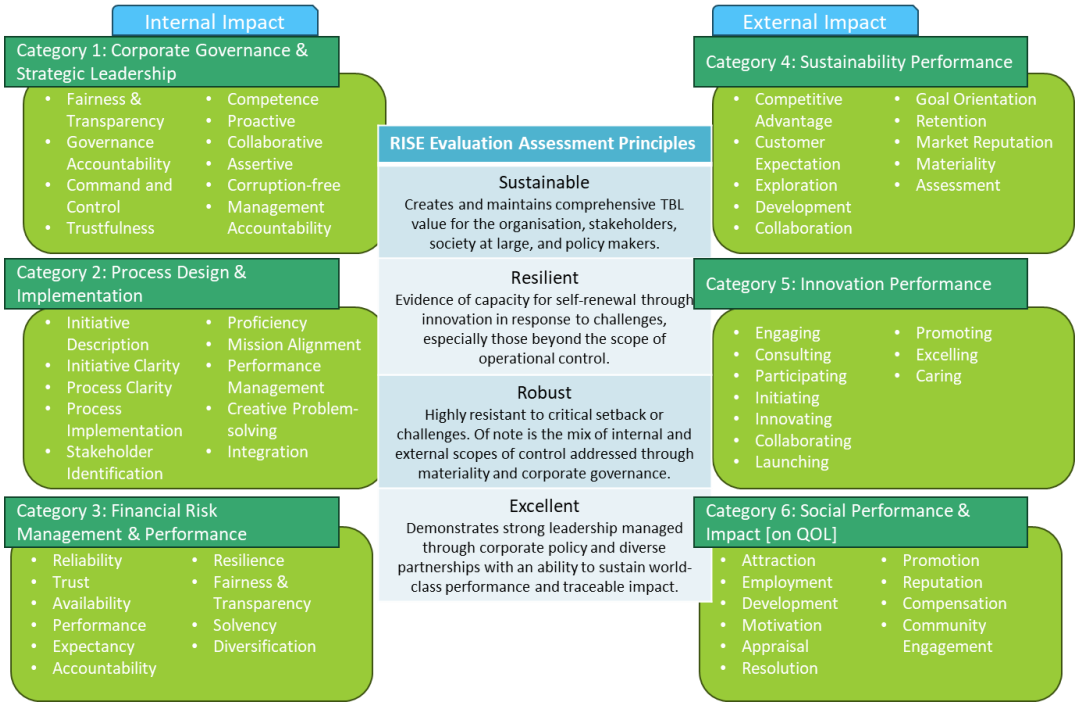

Figure 7. RISE Evaluation Framework Design

The content and thematic analyses provided valuable insights that informed the development and refinement of the Attribute questions (Criteria). These Attribute questions serve as the category criteria to inform the scoring logic on corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life impact across the different case industries using analysis and findings derived from Case Sample Files. Figure 8 presents how the scoring informs levels of performance by Assessment Principle per Category. The RISE Evaluation Framework formalised the total category scores (sum of six categories) to translate the levels of performance as Poor (0 to 249, red), Moderate (250 to 449, yellow), and Excellent (450 to 600, green).

Scoring Distribution Logic

Evaluation Scoring Logic	Sustainable	Resilient	Robust	Excellent	Category Total
Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• Excellent (80 – 100) • Moderate (40 – 79) • Poor (0 – 39)
Process Design & Implementation	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• Excellent (80 – 100) • Moderate (40 – 79) • Poor (0 – 39)
Financial Risk Management & Performance	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• Excellent (80 – 100) • Moderate (40 – 79) • Poor (0 – 39)
Sustainability Performance	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• Excellent (80 – 100) • Moderate (40 – 79) • Poor (0 – 39)
Innovation Performance	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• Excellent (80 – 100) • Moderate (40 – 79) • Poor (0 – 39)
Social Performance & Impact on Quality of Life	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• (2.5) Excellent • (1.5-2) Moderate • (0-1) Poor	• Excellent (80 – 100) • Moderate (40 – 79) • Poor (0 – 39)

Figure 8. RISE Evaluation Framework Scoring Distribution Logic

By aligning the empirical findings from the primary data with the initial Attribute Criteria, I was able to ensure the assessment criteria were well-grounded in both theoretical and practical insights. This iterative process of refinement, using multiple data sources, strengthened the Attribute Criteria to provide a more comprehensive and systematic evaluation process. The RISE Evaluation Framework provides a comprehensive, yet flexible, framework to assess the depth of concepts, strength of stakeholder engagement, and balance of economic, social, and environmental priorities from corporations against quality-of-life factors.

The purpose of developing my framework was to evaluate the relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life outcomes. The goal is to provide a practical model for evaluating the effects of managing sustainability initiatives and to identify opportunities to better integrate stakeholder concerns with long-term strategic sustainability objectives. This builds upon previous research that has identified limitations in evaluating the broader societal impact of corporate sustainability initiatives (Ahi et al., 2018; Rodrigues and Franco, 2019; Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Hristov et al., 2022). Chapter 5 presents findings from implementing a test of the RISE Evaluation Framework on five Case Industries.

Chapter 5 Findings

The key findings from applying my RISE Evaluation Framework are presented in this chapter. First, the evaluation findings for each industry are presented in order of highest to lowest total score: Restaurants & Entertainment, Media & Entertainment, Hospitality, Health Care and Interactive Media Services. This is followed by an overview of the findings organised by internal and external category groupings. Finally, a comparative summary of all the findings is presented to highlight similarities and differences within and across industries.

The RISE Evaluation Framework is a strategic lens to contextualise how businesses approach sustainability, by examining how their corporate sustainability reporting, processes, and performance measurements address sustainability across different industries. This industry-level assessment offers valuable insights into the shared challenges, opportunities, and best practices within each industry and the development of tailored strategies to drive impactful sustainability performance. The Assessment Principles in the RISE Evaluation Framework served as impact assessment criteria to measure evidence from content analyses and survey responses for a comparable rating for comparative case study analysis, presented in Section 5.2.

The findings presented in the following cases suggest that corporate sustainability performance has a peripheral relationship with quality-of-life indicators. By assessing the depth of conceptual understanding, the integration of stakeholder theory and paradox theory, and the consideration of quality-of-life indicators, this chapter demonstrates the practical application of the RISE Evaluation Framework in evaluating the societal impact of corporate sustainability initiatives and performance. The exploration of these themes enhances comprehension of the complex relationships between corporate actions and broader social well-being, offering a framework for businesses to consider the broader impacts of their operations, incorporating environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic viability (Rodrigues and Franco, 2019; Jadoon et al., 2021).

5.1 RISE Evaluation Scores: Industry Case Studies

The case studies are organised by industry, prioritising those with the most significant impact to those with the least, based on scoring results from testing the RISE Evaluation Framework. This prioritisation considers various

factors outlined in the Assessment Principles (Table 10), including the scope and depth of social impact assessment (Vanclay, 2020), the integration of sustainability performance measurements (Saulick et al., 2023), and the approaches to assessing business sustainability performance (Saeed and Kersten, 2020). The assessment also considers how corporate activities address social issues and human rights (Esteves et al., 2017; Vanclay, 2020) and how they align with the principles of social impact measurement to ensure a systematic evaluation of their effects on quality-of-life (Rawhouser et al., 2019). The findings from content analyses of international and national policies, corporate documents from Case Samples and quantitative and qualitative analysis of survey results were used as key evidence to answer the Evaluation Attribute Criteria by Assessment Principle.

Scoring is informed by statistical analysis of both content analysis and survey data. Pearson's r correlation was applied to content analysis to identify significant relationships between concepts (correlations), while Pearson's Chi-Square tests were used on survey responses to determine associations with headquarter country. The strength and statistical significance of these relationships and associations directly informed the allocation of scores, reflecting the evidence base for each attribute and category.

The logic applied using these statistical results is discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3. The case studies are presented by first summarising a Case Profile, then presentation of categorical scoring results from Case Evaluation, and finished with a summary of key themes from presented Case findings. Table 6 in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1.3 outlines the Case Samples by Industry, and the documents collected for analysis. The levels of performance per category, and overall, are defined in Chapter 4, Section 4.3. Categories are grouped by internal or external impact, as discussed in Chapter 4, Sections 4.2 and 4.3. These scoring totals are summarised in Table 11. Case Samples with a ‘(+)’ indicate additional secondary data to increase the sample size and boundary representation from original submission.

Table 11. RISE Evaluation Scoring Ranges

Scoring Level	**Poor**	**Moderate**	**Excellent**
Attribute	0 – 1	1.5 – 2	2.5

Category	0 – 39	40 – 79	80 – 100
Total	0 – 249	250 – 449	450 - 600

5.1.1 Restaurants & Entertainment

Case Profile

The first case study focuses on the restaurant and entertainment industry, analysing the sustainability performance of companies within this sector and its impact on quality-of-life. The basis of this case study consists of 92 companies initially reviewed in the Corporate Reporting Inventory, 27 companies were sampled, 103 Case Sample Files were accessed and analysed, and 38 survey responses across four countries to inform evaluation scoring. The Restaurant & Entertainment Case Samples selected in Table 12 provide a range of products or services such as franchise or independent restaurants, retail food chains, wholesale and retail food distribution, fitness centres, and amusement parks.

Table 12. Restaurants & Entertainment Case Samples

Case Sample (Corporation)	Headquarter Location	Case Sample Files Analysed
1. OLC Group	Japan	5 Files
2. Ringerhut	Japan	5 Files
3. Silver Life Co	Japan	3 Files
4. Eat& Holdings	Japan	13 Files
5. Kura Sushi	Japan	3 Files
6. Food & Life Companies (+)	Japan	1 File
7. Round One Corporation (+)	Japan	2 Files
8. Daisyo Corporation (+)	Japan	1 File
9. Tokyo Dome Corporation (+)	Japan	4 Files
10. Ananti Inc (+)	South Korea	1 File
11. Shinesegae Food Inc (+)	South Korea	1 File
12. CJ Freshway (+)	South Korea	3 Files
13. Compass Group	United Kingdom	4 Files
14. DirectWine-Laithwaites	United Kingdom	1 File
15. Greggs	United Kingdom	4 Files
16. Hollywood Bowl Group (+)	United Kingdom	5 Files
17. Marston’s PLC (+)	United Kingdom	6 Files
18. Mitchells & Butlers PLC (+)	United Kingdom	4 Files
19. McDonald's	United States	4 Files
20. Papa John's	United States	3 Files
21. Yum! Brands	United States	3 Files
22. Blue Diamond Growers	United States	2 Files
23. Six Flags	United States	5 Files
24. Cracker Barrel (+)	United States	5 Files
25. Wendy’s (+)	United States	5 Files

26. Starbucks (+)	United States	6 Files
27. Chipotle Mexican Grill (+)	United States	5 Files

Case Evaluation

Table 13 shows the scoring for three internal categories and three external categories of the RISE Evaluation Framework, demonstrating the number of Attributes scored by each Principle as a total score.

Table 13. Restaurant & Entertainment Case Evaluation Scores

Case Evaluation Category	Category Score
Internal Impact	
Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership	74.5
Sustainable Process Design & Implementation	69
Financial Risk Management & Performance	71
External Impact	
Sustainability Performance	68.5
Innovation Performance	56
Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life	68
Total Score	407

The Restaurants and Entertainment Case scored consistently across the assessment framework and achieved a total score of 407 out of 600 points. Innovation Performance emerged as the lowest performing area. This finding is attributed to a consistent lack of evidence, across both Case Samples and Survey Responses, for systematic sustainability improvement actions and processes that are clearly aligned with corporate governance objectives and sustainability performance indicators.

Category 1: Corporate Governance and Strategic Leadership

Corporate governance exhibited positive correlation with materiality ($r=0.457$, $p<0.001$) and stakeholder engagement ($r=0.411$, $p<0.001$), underscoring the critical role of corporate governance in integrating sustainability practices. The themes identified in stakeholder engagement

exhibited strong correlations with both sustainability performance management (r=0.636, *p*<0.001) and quality-of-life (r=0.311, *p*=0.001). As a reflection of the paradox tension from influence of public policy and use of sustainability management tools, the correlation between corporate governance and sustainable development governance (r=0.961, *p*<0.001) was particularly strong, implying a strategic alignment of sustainability initiatives with regional and global objectives.

Among survey respondents, "Department Head" emerged as the most frequently selected sustainability leadership position, with highest frequency from the United States. Statistical analyses revealed significant associations between headquarter country and functions related to "Policy Enforcement" (*p*=0.021) and "Decision Maker" (*p*=0.034), with highest frequencies for the United Kingdom and the United States. While "Sustainability Management" was universally selected as a responsibility among respondents, a significant association was also observed for "Legal [Affairs]" responsibility (*p*=0.015), particularly among Japanese respondents. Based on higher selection frequencies, this implies Japanese companies in the restaurant industry place a distinct emphasis on the legal or compliance aspects of sustainability compared to companies in other countries.

This evidence resulted in a moderate category score of 74.5 due to content analysis revealing moderate to weak correlations between corporate governance and strategic leadership structures and survey responses indicating inconsistent integration of sustainability principles, suggesting a misalignment between stated actions and actual corporate sustainability performance outcomes. The analysis suggests that the integration of sustainability considerations into governance structures and decision-making processes remains a key area for improvement in the Restaurants and Entertainment industry.

Category 2: Sustainable Process Design and Implementation score

Effective sustainability management relies on appropriate tools that impact both business operations and quality-of-life. Sustainability management tools showed strong correlations with sustainable development governance (r=0.829, *p* <0.001), sustainability performance (r=0.457, *p*<0.001), and quality-of-life (r=0.335, *p*=0.001). This indicates a strong connection between using these tools and successfully managing sustainability to achieve desired outcomes. Patterns in coded associated relationship further revealed a significant, albeit weaker, correlation between sustainable development governance and the effectiveness of sustainability management tools in

driving performance (r=0.199, *p*=0.044). This correlation indicates a relationship between how sustainability management tools are used and global influences from public policy at national or global scales.

Survey findings indicated observed variations in response frequencies for sustainability management approaches. While 'Environmental Management via Reporting Standard' ($\chi2(3)=4.865$, p=0.182) and 'Sustainability Reporting via Reporting Standard' ($\chi2(3)=6.620$, p=0.085) did not show statistically significant associations with headquarter country, the data revealed that companies based in the United Kingdom consistently reported these practices with the highest frequency. This observed pattern, though not statistically significant for association, aligns with themes identified in content analysis suggesting a prioritization of conformance and compliance before performance as a management practice, particularly among United Kingdom-based corporations."

This aligns with themes identified in Content Analysis, which suggests a focus on conformance and compliance before performance as a management practice, particularly among United Kingdom-based corporations. The implementation of Business Excellence Models also exhibited a variation for the "European Foundation for Quality Management" ($\chi2(3) =5.911$, p=0.049), demonstrating notable associations with the location of corporate headquarters, the United States. These models, frequently used to enhance process optimisation and overall organisational effectiveness, highlight the relevance of some strategic frameworks, like reporting standards or continuous improvement programmes, in achieving sustainability goals through design and implementation of business processes.

This evidence, drawn from both content analysis and survey responses, resulted in a moderate category score of 69, attributed to the industry's capacity to define roles and methods for corporate sustainability processes yet failing to consistently implement monitoring and control mechanisms to effectively assess performance and impact. The findings suggest that sustainability management tools and dedicated resources are available but not systematically deployed or allocated to ensure high performance and traceable impact. This inconsistency hinders the industry's ability to translate sustainability efforts into tangible outcomes.

Category 3: Financial Risk Management and Performance

Patterns in sustainability performance indicator areas such as Economic Indicators demonstrated statistically significant correlations with Corporate Governance (r=0.331, *p*=0.001) and Social Indicators (r=0.210, *p*=0.034). This infers a positive relationship between financial considerations and broader sustainability dimensions, such as corporate governance and social impact. Sustainability performance as a management approach also showed a positive correlation with quality-of-life (r=0.287, p=0.003), indicating that strong sustainability outcomes may contribute to societal well-being. In the Restaurants & Entertainment Case, the relationship between materiality and sustainability performance was positively associated with quality-of-life outcomes (r=0.258, p=0.008). These relationships indicate how financial risk management practices are linked to the development of sustainability performance management and measurements.

While "Finance and accounting" was a reported responsibility for 8 out of 38 respondents, no significant association was found with headquarter country. Conversely, despite observed higher response frequencies for 'financial incentives' in sustainability management support ($\chi 2(3) = 6.290$, p=0.098), this association was not statistically significant. Similarly, other fundamental, non-financial aspects of corporate governance and leadership accountability also demonstrated no statistically significant association with headquarter country. For instance, the responsibility for "Sustainability Management" itself is universally reported across all headquarter countries (37 out of 38 respondents), suggesting a consistent, non-financial commitment that transcends national differences. Similarly, key leadership functions like "Cross-functional" roles ($\chi 2(3) = 2.061$, p=0.560) and "Project management" ($\chi 2(3) = 3.854$, p=0.278) show no significant association with headquarter country, indicating a more standardized approach to operationalising sustainability efforts regardless of financial incentive or impact.

A moderate category score of 71 was assigned, indicating that sustainability initiatives are broadly aligned with strategic goals. Nevertheless, a critical gap exists in fully integrating sustainability into core financial risk management processes. This mirrors the weak relationship and association identified with Materiality concepts in the broader findings, suggesting that financial risk management's potential as a comprehensive sustainability strategy remains underutilized. The absence of complete integration suggests that while companies recognize the importance of aligning sustainability with financial risk management, challenges persist in operationalizing this alignment effectively. This incomplete integration may

stem from a lack of standardized methodologies for assessing and incorporating sustainability-related financial risks or from organizational silos that prevent effective collaboration between sustainability and finance departments.

Category 4: Sustainability Performance score

Sustainability performance exhibited strong positive correlations with stakeholder engagement ($r=0.636$, $p<0.001$) and sustainability management tools ($r=0.457$, $p<0.001$), underscoring the importance of external relations and structured approaches. Consistent patterns for sustainability performance are also significantly correlated with quality-of-life ($r=0.287$, $p=0.003$). Environmental indicators also showed strong correlations with quality-of-life ($r=0.367$, $p<0.001$) and social indicators ($r=0.502$, $p<0.001$), highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental and social outcomes. The similarity in the correlation between "Sustainability performance" and "Quality-of-life" ($r=0.287$, $p=0.003$) observed across the selected Category 3 and here in Category 4 present a significant linkage in evaluation themes and assessment principles. This direct overlap underscores a consistent finding regarding the ultimate impact of sustainability efforts across different categorical lenses.

Internal performance reporting (20 out of 38 respondents) and annual corporate reporting (14 out of 38 respondents) were identified as common performance management practices. The evaluation of responses regarding effective stakeholder engagement revealed a non-significant association with the location of company headquarters and the "quality or value of feedback" ($\chi2(3)=7.203$,$p=0.066$), but a significant association with "level of influence on your decision-making" ($\chi2(3)=8.455$, $p=0.037$) among respondents in the United Kingdom, United States, and Japan. Common business impact measures, such as "cost savings" and "reduced consumption," were frequently mentioned but did not exhibit significant associations with the location of company headquarters.

These findings informed a moderate category score of 68.5, reflecting moderately sustainable and resilient elements of sustainability performance as a management approach. The findings suggest a lack of strong thematic correlation between materiality and stakeholder engagement from Case Sample Files, the survey data reveals that the actual practices and metrics used to measure stakeholder engagement- related to assess materiality from stakeholder input- vary significantly by country.

Category 5: Innovation Performance

Innovation performance, while identified as the lowest performing area, showed some underlying correlations. Sustainability management tools were positively correlated with quality-of-life (r=0.335, *p*=0.001), and sustainability performance also correlated with quality-of-life (r=0.287, *p*=0.003). The observed positive correlations among sustainability management tools, overall sustainability performance, and quality-of-life indicate that, despite the potential of structured approaches in defining and achieving sustainability outcomes within this Case, challenges remain in consistently translating internal performance definitions into tangible impacts on broader societal well-being (Saulick et al., 2023). Economic indicators (r=0.210, *p*=0.034) and social indicators (r=0.502, *p*<0.001) showed significant correlations with environmental indicators, suggesting potential avenues for innovation at the intersection of these areas. Despite these positive correlations, existence of sustainability management tools may contribute to positive performance outcomes, but the findings suggest that how the tools are deployed support innovative practices in the sustainability management and performance context. If implementation processes are inconsistent or underdeveloped, even the best tools might not yield optimal results, including innovation.

A key finding aligning with the lower innovation score was the limited adoption of formal business excellence models. Further to frequencies presented for Category 2, "Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Excellence" (5 out of 38 respondents) and "European Foundation for Quality Management" (6 out of 38 respondents) showed low implementation, with the latter having a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 7.864$, p=0.049). Similarly, "Lean/Six-Sigma" adoption was low (13 out of 38 respondents) but also showed a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 9.168$, p=0.027). The "Not identified/considered" driver for external impact also showed a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 8.192$, p=0.042), with highest selections from Japanese respondents, suggesting a lack of proactive identification of external innovation drivers. These models are frameworks that guide how an organization aims for excellence. The low adoption rate of these structured guides suggests that the lack of a systematic approach to using management tools and approaches is more important than simply having certain tools.

This category scored at 59 due to limited reporting on sustainability-driven innovation and development from content analysis references. Innovation is

crucial for organisational development, as organizations that fail to adapt or revolutionize their methods risk stagnation (N. Hussain, Rigoni and Cavezzali, 2018; N. Hussain, Rigoni and Orij, 2018). The effectiveness of how sustainability management tools are used is more important for organisational excellence and innovation, contributing to sustainability performance, than merely having certain management tools available and claiming they are in use (Talbot et al., 2021; Saulick et al., 2023). This underscores the necessity of consistent and well-developed implementation processes to yield optimal results and foster genuine innovation.

Category 6: Social performance & Impact on Quality-of-life

Quality-of-life demonstrated significant positive correlations with stakeholder engagement ($r=0.311$, $p=0.001$), sustainability management tools ($r=0.335$, $p=0.001$), sustainability performance ($r=0.287$, $p=0.003$), and environmental indicators ($r=0.367$, $p<0.001$). Social indicators were also significantly correlated with corporate governance ($r=0.244$, $p=0.013$), economic indicators ($r=0.210$, $p=0.034$), and environmental indicators ($r=0.502$, $p<0.001$). This highlights the multifaceted nature of social performance and its interconnectedness with various sustainability management aspects. These findings, which also inform scores in Category 1 and Category 4, demonstrate that robust governance structures and effective stakeholder engagement processes are foundational to achieving comprehensive sustainability performance, which contributes to positive social outcomes and quality-of-life.

Analysing responses for which stakeholder groups are identified and how they are prioritised, Customer Stakeholder Group was identified ($\chi2(3)=8.844$, $p=0.031$) and prioritised ($\chi2(3)=9.855$, $p=0.020$) most frequently, showing significant associations with headquarter country of South Korea, as did the identification of "Regulators/Legislators" ($\chi2(3)=11.259$, $p=0.010$) as stakeholders in the United States. As presented in Category 4, respondents selected "level of influence on decision-making" as a measure of effective stakeholder engagement at a frequency significantly associated with headquarter countries ($\chi2(3) =8.455$, $p=0.037$) of United Kingdom, United States, and Japan. It is then inferred that, especially for South Korean respondents, customers and regulators or legislators have strong influence on decision-making for sustainability management initiatives.

When considering correlations from scopes of social impact, there is a relationship between the aspect of "Community support" and the aspects

"Civic engagement" (r=0.675, p<0.001), "Health and wellbeing" (r=0.376, p=0.020), and "Safety" (r=0.323, p=0.048). Across all four countries, the prevalence of civic engagement and community support considerations spans both internal and external dimensions. In contrast, health, well-being, and safety are more frequently prioritized within the internal scope of impact. This interdependent relationship suggests that investments in one of these areas can positively affect the others, cumulatively enhancing the potential to improve overall quality-of-life.

This category scored 68 because the findings suggest that integrating sustainability performance metrics enables stakeholders to understand the societal impact of corporate sustainability practices. Weighting factors can help prioritize quality-of-life indicators, aligning stakeholder needs with business goals. The Restaurants & Entertainment Case exhibits a significant awareness of the relationship between corporate actions and societal welfare, suggesting a strategic viewpoint where quality-of-life is positioned by corporations as intrinsically linked to sustainability efforts, despite the industry's difficulties in effectively quantifying and communicating results.

Summary of Case Evaluation for Restaurants & Entertainment

The Restaurants & Entertainment Case, achieving a moderate total score of 407 out of 600 points, demonstrates foundational efforts in integrating sustainability across its operations. One strength lies in the recognition of sustainability's importance within the industry, yet a key weakness is evident in Innovation Performance, where systematic sustainability improvement actions and alignment with corporate objectives are inconsistently demonstrated. This moderate performance signifies that while the industry is creating comprehensive value, aligning with the 'Sustainable' principle, its 'Resilience' in self-renewal through innovation remains an area for significant development.

This case highlights the Restaurants & Entertainment industry's direct impact on consumer lifestyles, emphasizing stakeholder theory through the immediate influence of operational practices on customer experiences. Findings suggest a paradox tension between acknowledging sustainability's role and fully integrating innovative, measurable actions for comprehensive impact. The moderate performance level indicates that underlying industry structures and national contexts influence the observed variations in sustainability practices (design and implementation) yet fall short of achieving 'Robust' resistance to challenges or 'Excellent' sustained, world-class performance across all dimensions of value creation.

The findings align with evaluating the current state of alignment between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators, demonstrating foundational but often implicit contributions. Research Objective Two is addressed by the presence of sustainability management tools, though their application for comprehensive innovation and systematic impact measurement remains limited. The observed inconsistencies in innovation performance across countries provide insights for Research Objective Three, suggesting that national policy and industry-specific contexts play a role in shaping the adoption and effectiveness of managing sustainability initiatives. Despite these alignments, the overall moderate score signals that the industry has not yet fully achieved the 'Excellent' principle of demonstrating sustained world-class performance and measured impact on quality-of-life factors because of its initiatives and performance.

5.1.2 Media and Entertainment

Case Profile

For the Media & Entertainment Case, of 89 companies analysed in the Corporate Reporting Inventory 26 were selected and analysed in the Case Study. The selected companies in Table 14 provide products or services such as marketing and public relations, digital or print publication of various media, and production and broadcast of radio, television, and film content.

Table 14. Media & Entertainment Case Samples

Case Sample (Corporation)	Headquarter Location	Case Sample Files Analysed
1. CyberAgent	Japan	4 Files
2. Dentsu	Japan	4 Files
3. Hakuhodo	Japan	4 Files
4. CrossMarketing	Japan	2 Files
5. ProtoG	Japan	6 Files
6. Nippon Television Holdings (+)	Japan	5 Files
7. Toei Animation Co (+)	Japan	1 File
8. Sunny Side Up Group (+)	Japan	1 File
9. Direct Marketing MiX (+)	Japan	1 Files
10. Studio Dragon	South Korea	2 Files
11. HYBE Co (+)	South Korea	2 Files
12. JYP Entertainment (+)	South Korea	2 Files
13. SM Entertainment (+)	South Korea	2 Files
14. Woongjin Thinkbig (+)	South Korea	1 File
15. YG Entertainment (+)	South Korea	1 File
16. ITV	United Kingdom	4 Files
17. Informa	United Kingdom	4 Files
18. Pearson	United Kingdom	4 Files

19. European Broadcasting Union	United Kingdom	2 Files
20. Future PLC (+)	United Kingdom	1 File
21. Cineworld Group PLC (+)	United Kingdom	3 Files
22. Interpublic	United States	4 Files
23. Omnicom	United States	3 Files
24. Walt Disney	United States	5 Files
25. NetFlix Inc (+)	United States	2 Files
26. Warner Music Group (+)	United States	3 Files

Case Evaluation

Table 15 shows the scoring for three internal categories and three external categories of the RISE Evaluation Framework, demonstrating the number of Attributes scored by each Principle as a total score.

Table 15. Media & Entertainment Case Evaluation Scores

Case Evaluation Category	Category Score
Internal Impact	
Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership	64 of 100
Sustainable Process Design & Implementation	66.5 of 100
Financial Risk Management & Performance	69.5 of 100
External Impact	
Sustainability Performance	66 of 100
Innovation Performance	50.5 of 100
Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life	51 of 100
Total Score	380 of 600

The Media and Entertainment Case scored consistently across the assessment framework and achieved a total score of 380 out of 600 points, 27 points behind Restaurants & Entertainment. The analysis indicates that Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life scored the lowest due to thematic inconsistencies between baseline and empirical data The analysis indicates that Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life scored the lowest due to thematic inconsistencies between baseline and empirical data. For example, although case samples acknowledge corporate sustainability

performance in their reporting, they lack consistent implementation of processes to manage sustainability outcomes.

Category 1: Corporate Governance and Strategic Leadership

In the Media & Entertainment industry, corporate governance positively correlates with materiality (r=0.771, p<0.001) and stakeholder engagement (r=0.697, p<0.001), suggesting a solid foundation to support sustainability initiatives. This indicates that companies with robust governance structures are more likely to prioritise ad effectively manage sustainability issues that are most relevant to their business and stakeholders (Nunhes et al., 2020; Hristov et al., 2022). Corporate governance also correlates with quality-of-life (r=0.525, p<0.001), indicating a direct relationship between governance and societal impact management. Sustainable development governance exhibits a strong correlation with sustainability management tools (r=0.776, p<0.001). Effective corporate governance often involves understanding and responding to external policy environments and stakeholder expectations, which are shaped by sustainable development challenges and policies (Ludwig and Sassen, 2022; Hristov et al., 2022).

Survey data reveals a significant association between headquarter country and the presence of a "Dedicated Sustainability Role (individuals)" ($\chi2(3) =8.967$, p=0.030), particularly in South Korea. "Decision Maker" as a leadership function also shows a strong association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =13.374$, p=0.004), driven by South Korean respondents. While "Sustainability Management" is a near-universal responsibility (41 out of 42 respondents), the "Finance and accounting" responsibility shows a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =8.257$, p=0.041) in Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom. While the data does not present a direct cross-tabulation of individuals selecting both responsibilities, the prevalence of sustainability responsibility across respondents, combined with the country-specific presence of finance and accounting roles, suggests that individuals in finance and accounting roles within the reported countries hold dual responsibilities.

This category was scored at a moderate level of 64 due to consistent evidence in patterns indicating low to moderate performance in corporate governance attributes, including sustainable development policy, stakeholder engagement, materiality assessment, and long-term strategic planning. This aligns with moderate levels of sustainable and resilient assessment principles but lower levels of robust and excellent principles. While corporate governance structures were evident in corporate reporting,

correlating with materiality, stakeholder engagement, and quality-of-life, sustainability management integration into core business strategy and operations remained inconsistent. This suggests that corporations need to better align corporate sustainability efforts with quality-of-life and societal well-being.

Category 2: Sustainable Process Design and Implementation

Sustainability management tools correlate with sustainable development governance (r=0.776, $p<0.001$) and sustainability performance (r=0.865, $p<0.001$), indicating their leading role in operationalising sustainability practices. These management tools also show a correlation with quality-of-life (r=0.728, $p<0.001$), directly underscoring their relevance to Research Objective 1 by demonstrating a tangible alignment between corporate sustainability practices (use of management tools) and relevance to quality-of-life outcomes. This correlation highlights how corporate sustainability efforts can translate into societal well-being through effectively management processes. Sustainable development governance itself is strongly correlated with sustainability performance (r=0.784, p<0.001) and quality-of-life (r=0.442, p<0.001), implying that corporate governance structures developed to conform to sustainable development-oriented policies tend to yield better sustainability outcomes and contribute positively to quality-of-life. This reflects the influence of national and international policies on shaping effective corporate governance in the context of sustainability for this industry.

"Environmental Management via Reporting Standard" demonstrates a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =14.304$, $p=0.003$), with Japanese companies showing high adoption. Despite "Training and development" for sustainability management support frequently selected, there was no significance for association by headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =5.963$, p=0.113). This indicates that while training may be widespread, its implementation or impact on the outcomes of managing sustainability practices does not consistently vary by national context. Similarly, “Appointing team roles” also showed no statistically significant association ($\chi^2 (3) =7.125$, p=0.068), suggesting that the formal assignment of sustainability-focused team roles, while present, has little discernible influence on the measured outcomes of sustainability management practices across different headquarter countries. These non-significant findings imply that, contrary to expectations, these common practices are inconsistently applied or have limited influence on the measured outcomes of sustainability

management in this industry, regardless of national public policies or the regulatory and cultural environments (Fok et al., 2021; Talbot et al., 2021).

This category scored a moderate level of 66.5 as the evidence consistently shows inconsistent implementation and performance in sustainable process design attributes such Proficiency, Mission Alignment, and Integration. Process implementation and execution are crucial, requiring well-defined roles, stakeholder understanding, strategic process management, and output monitoring to understand the impact on sustainability initiatives. The scoring aligns with moderate levels of sustainable and resilient assessment principles and lower levels of robust and excellent principles.

Category 3: Financial Risk Management and Performance

Economic Indicators present correlations with stakeholder engagement ($r=0.344$, $p=0.001$) and sustainable development governance ($r=0.371$, $p<0.001$), suggesting that financial considerations are integrated within broader sustainability strategies, focusing on conformance. Sustainability performance is also correlated with economic indicators ($r=0.315$, $p=0.003$) with Economic Indicators. While the negative correlation between Economic Indicators and Quality-of-life is not significant ($r=-0.033$, $p=0.764$), it suggests an inverse relationship where an emphasis on economic performance affects quality-of-life through environmental and social factors rather than economic or governance aspects. The negative correlation between economic indicators and quality-of-life may also indicate an overemphasis on short-term financial gains at the expense of long-term sustainability goals that would be more beneficial for quality-of-life (Ikram et al., 2020; Maia et al., 2022; Hristov et al., 2022).

The responsibility for "Finance and accounting" demonstrates an association with the location of the company's headquarters ($\chi2(3) =8.257$, $p=0.041$), with South Korean companies reporting this responsibility less frequently compared to the other three nations. The frequent reporting of "Performance policy/guidelines" as a mechanism for leadership accountability suggests a widespread approach to internal accountability practices. Using "Cost savings" as a metric for assessing business impact exhibits a significant association with the company's headquarters country ($\chi2(3) =9.408$, $p=0.024$), with Japanese and South Korean respondents indicating this outcome more often. Financial performance reflects product and service quality, the effectiveness of the organization’s business approach, collective well-being, and the ability to remain sustainable and competitive (T. Hussain et al., 2018).

This case was scored a moderate level of 69.5, as the evidence consistently demonstrates moderate performance in Attributes of Trust, Performance, and Diversification. However, it achieves higher levels in Attributes such as Reliability, Accountability, and Fairness and Transparency, indicating strengths in governance and operational integrity. This aligns with moderate levels of Sustainable and Resilient assessment principles, reflecting a capacity to endure and adapt. The industry's scoring falls short of Robust and Excellent principles, suggesting potential areas for improvement in proactive and innovative sustainability practices to inform stronger connections with impact of corporate sustainability performance.

Category 4: Sustainability Performance

Sustainability performance concepts exhibited correlations with sustainability management tools (r=0.865, p<0.001) and sustainable development governance (r=0.784, p<0.001), emphasizing the critical role of structured approaches and strategic oversight in corporate sustainability management. Sustainability performance also shows a correlation with quality-of-life (r=0.658, p<0.001), suggesting that sustainability performance outcomes align with societal impacts. Environmental indicators (r=0.329, p=0.002) and social indicators (r=0.230, p=0.034) are also correlated with sustainability performance, highlighting a comprehensive approach to defining performance measures. These correlations imply a relationship focused on environmental and social sustainability performance practices and measures to align to concepts of quality-of-life from an external impact consideration (Alsayegh et al., 2020). The significant correlations between "Sustainability Performance" and "Quality-of-life," alongside "Environmental indicators" and "Social indicators," directly supports a measurable relationship between environmental and social sustainability practices.

"Internal performance reporting" presented a high selection frequency (31 out of 42 respondents), suggesting a focus on internal implications of sustainable business practices. "Employee satisfaction" as a business impact measure is significantly associated with headquarter country ($\chi 2(3) = 9.247$, $p=0.026$), with Japanese and Korean respondents selecting it more frequently. The selection of "External assurance or auditing" (9 respondents) infers a weak or uncommon practice; however, the lack of statistical significance suggests that the observed pattern might be due to chance. This observation underscores ongoing research into the value of assurance systems, practices, and accountability structures, which influence the

demand for reliable and transparent reporting content rather than accountable performance outcomes (Boiral et al., 2019; Yan et al., 2022).

This category scores at a moderate level of 66, demonstrating satisfactory implementation and performance of Development and Goal Orientation attributes. This category aligns with a moderate level of Sustainable and Resilient assessment principles. Some attributes, such as Competitive Advantage, Collaboration, and Materiality, demonstrate moderate levels of Sustainable and Resilient principles. Other Attributes, such as Customer Expectation and Assessment, lack evidence of robust and excellent principles.

Category 5: Innovation Performance

As highlighted and relate to Category 2, Sustainability management tools show strong correlations with sustainability performance ($r=0.865$, $p<0.001$) and quality-of-life ($r=0.728$, $p<0.001$), additionally suggests that effective tool use can foster conditions conducive to innovation. Economic indicators and social indicators also show significant correlations with environmental indicators ($r=-0.045$, $p=0.682$ and $r=0.760$, $p<0.001$ respectively), indicating potential interdependencies for innovative solutions based on how sustainability performance indicators are developed and aligned with quality-of-life frameworks and indicators. While an observed negative correlation ($r=-0.045$) was present between Economic Indicators and Environmental Indicators, its lack of statistical significance ($p=0.682$) means that no reliable relationship can be concluded. For the RISE Evaluation, the absence of a statistically significant relationship, particularly one with an observed negative trend, contributes to a lower score, indicating a gap in systematic alignment or potential for unmanaged trade-offs.

The adoption of formal business excellence models shows significant associations with headquarter country. "Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Excellence" and "European Foundation for Quality Management" both have significant associations ($\chi2(3) =11.701$, $p=0.008$) with respondents in the United States and the United Kingdom. "Total Quality Management (TQM)" also has a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =10.950$, $p=0.012$), where the highest selection frequency were South Korean respondents. Awareness of global excellence models is often part of maintaining competitiveness. Corporations might benchmark against principles embedded in these models even if they pursue their own internal quality or sustainability frameworks (Jankalová and Jankal, 2020; Fok et al., 2021).

The focus is on adaptation, where companies may choose to adapt specific tools, processes, or principles from these models to fit their unique organisational culture, industry context, or national regulatory environment, rather than undertaking a complete, rigid implementation. While Baldrige and EFQM are distinct frameworks, they share foundational principles with these established methodologies, such as customer focus, leadership commitment, process management, and data-driven decision-making (Jankalová and Jankal, 2020; Saulick et al., 2023). Therefore, respondents from these countries (Japan and South Korea) are familiar with the underlying concepts, even if not the specific nomenclature or full implementation of Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Excellence or European Foundation for Quality Management.

This category scored a 60.5, indicating satisfactory implementation and adherence to the sustainability principles, but showing a necessity to further integrate and embed principles into its core business processes. This category meets moderate levels of sustainable and resilient principles. The lack of evidence from content analysis and survey responses regarding stakeholder feedback to inform development of sustainable processes or performance (Collaborating and Promoting Attributes) infers Case Samples are more focused on reporting activities, rather than embedding sustainability into innovation (Meza-Ruiz et al., 2017; Friske et al., 2023).

Category 6: Social performance & Impact on Quality-of-life

Quality-of-life is correlated with corporate governance ($r=0.525$, $p<0.001$), materiality ($r=0.504$, $p<0.001$), stakeholder engagement ($r=0.482$, $p<0.001$), sustainable development governance ($r=0.442$, $p<0.001$), and sustainability management tools ($r=0.728$, $p<0.001$). Such relationships between these concepts in Case Sample reporting suggests that strong consideration of stakeholder needs and impacts is significantly linked to an increased perception of quality-of-life and sustainability management (Robert G Eccles et al., 2012; Isaksson, 2021; Talbot et al., 2021). Social indicators are also correlated with environmental indicators ($r=0.760$, $p<0.001$), suggesting integrated management approaches affect sustainability performance measurement. In the Media & Entertainment industry, integrating governance, strategic sustainability management, and stakeholder engagement is linked to developing sustainability strategies that lead to positive social outcomes with some relation to quality-of-life aspects.

“Shareholders and investors" as an identified stakeholder group show an association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =13.383$, $p=0.004$) for South

Korean corporations. The emphasis on shareholders and investors by South Korean corporations could reflect the strong influence of financial stakeholders in their corporate structures and strategies. "Competitors" as a stakeholder also show an association ($\chi 2(3) = 7.867$, $p=0.049$) for South Korean companies. This heightened attention to competitors might drive companies to benchmark their sustainability practices against industry peers, adopt best practices, and differentiate themselves in the market.

This category, the lowest scoring of the six, was evaluated at 51 of 100. This is Justifiable by the fact this category had the most attributes and criteria to consider in each sample and was the most difficult to assess in some of the corporate reporting. This performance score implies poor levels across all four principles and implementation, based on findings from survey responses, is inconsistent and insufficient to address Attributes beyond the Sustainable assessment principle.

Summary of Case Evaluation for Media & Entertainment

The Media & Entertainment Case demonstrates a strong interconnectedness where resilient corporate governance and active stakeholder engagement significantly correlate with improved sustainability performance and alignments to quality-of-life outcomes. The lowest performing area was Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life, due to a lack of social and economic sustainability management and underdeveloped social performance indicators, hindering measurable alignments to quality-of-life aspects.

This case illustrates the Media & Entertainment industry's capacity to shape societal views via cultural platforms, consistent with stakeholder theory by highlighting engagement's crucial role in fostering impact (Kim, 2021; Mcgrath and Ross, 2021). Findings suggest a tension between recognising the importance of sustainability and the challenge of fully aligning processes for systematic impact measurement. This is particularly evident in Categories 5 and 6, attributable to a lack of social and economic sustainability management and underdeveloped social performance indicators, which hinders measurable alignments to quality-of-life aspects. Variations in sustainability practices seem to be shaped by underlying governance structures and national contexts. This analysis underscores the need for tailored evaluation frameworks that consider industry-specific contexts, regulatory landscapes, and their interplay with social values, particularly in industries that significantly influence societal perspectives (Ikram et al., 2020; Talbot et al., 2021; Pazienza et al., 2023).

The findings directly address Research Objective One by evaluating the strength of alignment between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life frameworks, revealing correlations through stakeholder engagement and sustainability management tools. Research Objective Two is supported by evidence of diverse sustainability management tool selection and use, though effectiveness varies by national context. Country-specific variations in management practices, demonstrably influenced by stakeholder prioritisation, offer valuable insights for Research Objective 3, highlighting the noteworthy influence of national public policy on corporate sustainability performance. This suggests that tailoring sustainability strategies to reflect both local regulatory landscapes and stakeholder expectations can enhance effectiveness and impact from corporate sustainability performance of the Media & Entertainment Industry.

5.1.3 Hospitality

Case Profile

For the Hospitality industry, of 33 companies analysed in the Corporate Reporting Index 25 were selected and analysed for analysis. These sampled corporations presented in Table 16 provide a range of hospitality and travel related services such as travel arrangement, cruises, hotels and resorts, and customised guided travel and experiences. There are tangential and related services between the Restaurants & Entertainment industry and the Hospitality Industry, as they share a similar value chain.

Table 16. Hospitality Case Samples

Case Sample (Corporation)	Headquarter Location	Case Sample Files
1. Greens Co	Japan	4 Files
2. H.I.S. Co, Ltd.	Japan	5 Files
3. Fujita Kanko	Japan	4 Files
4. Resorttrust (+)	Japan	7 Files
5. Open Door Inc (+)	Japan	6 Files
6. AirTrip Corp (+)	Japan	1 File
7. Agora Hospitality Group (+)	Japan	3 Files
8. Hanatour Service (+)	South Korea	3 Files
9. Lotte Tour Development (+)	South Korea	4 Files
10. Shinhan Seobu (+)	South Korea	6 Files
11. Bluestone Wales Resort & National Park	United Kingdom	10 Files
12. Exodus Travels	United Kingdom	2 Files
13. The Pig Hotel	United Kingdom	1 File
14. InterContinental Hotel Group	United Kingdom	4 Files

15. Whitbread PLC	United Kingdom	2 Files
16. Carnival PLC	United Kingdom	**Included in Carnival Corp*
17. Carnival Corp*	United States	4 Files
18. Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd	United States	5 Files
19. Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines	United States	4 Files
20. Airbnb Inc (+)	United States	3 Files
21. Booking Holdings Inc (+)	United States	3 Files
22. Hilton Worldwide (+)	United States	5 Files
23. Hyatt Hotels (+)	United States	3 Files
24. Travel + Leisure Co (+)	United States	1 File
25. Wyndham Hotels (+)	United States	4 Files

Case Evaluation

Table 17 shows the scoring for three internal categories and three external categories of the RISE Evaluation Framework, demonstrating the number of Attributes scored by each Principle as a total score.

Table 17. Hospitality Case Evaluation Scores

Case Evaluation Category	Category Score
Internal Impact	
Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership	61.5 of 100
Sustainable Process Design & Implementation	53 of 100
Financial Risk Management & Performance	63 of 100
External Impact	
Sustainability Performance	71.5 of 100
Innovation Performance	52.5 of 100
Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life	51 of 100
Total Score	352.5 of 600

The Hospitality Case scored consistently across the assessment framework and achieved a total score of 352.5 out of 600 points, which is 54.5 points behind the Restaurants & Entertainment and 27.5 points behind Media & Entertainment Cases. The analysis indicates that Social Performance &

Impact on Quality-of-life scored the lowest score, indicating that while foundational sustainability aspects exist, their complete integration for significant societal impact is not yet fully achieved.

Category 1: Corporate Governance and Strategic Leadership

Corporate governance in the Hospitality industry presented correlations with Materiality (r=0.475, *p*<0.001), Stakeholder Engagement (r=0.591, *p*<0.001), and Quality-of-life (r=0.615, p<0.001), indicating a vital role of influence from corporate policy and leadership structures. The integration of these elements highlights a commitment to sustainable practices that directly influence corporate responsibility and societal well-being through intentional strategy development with key stakeholder groups. Sustainable Development Governance is also correlated with Corporate Governance (r=0.222, *p*=0.036), which infers the influence of broader sustainable development policy influence on corporate governance structures and management outcomes. The direct relationships between corporate governance and materiality, stakeholder engagement, quality-of-life, and sustainable development governance indicate that the Case Samples integrate governance with stakeholder-centric processes reflecting broader societal and environmental considerations (i.e. Committees, partnerships, etc) (Kim, 2021).

The "Department Head" role shows a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 10.810$, *p*=0.013), with significance for United States and Japan. "Legal" responsibility also presents a significant association ($\chi2(3) = 9.330$, *p*=0.025) with headquarter country, primarily driven by Japanese respondents. These associations suggest that formalized structures are valuable for managing corporate sustainability outcomes. The inclusion of sustainability factors in individual performance evaluations of leadership roles varied in frequency of selection, but there was no significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 7.490$, p=0.058). Such inconsistency suggests an opportunity to enhance internal accountability by standardising sustainability metrics and integrating them into performance evaluations to improve organisational sustainability performance.

While the analysis revealed correlations between corporate governance structures and strategic elements like materiality, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable development governance, the moderate category score of 61.5 indicates a challenge. This suggests an underlying issue despite the confirmation of formal leadership's role in managing corporate sustainability

performance. This score infers a lack of robust and systematic practices for internal accountability and for demonstrably linking sustainability performance outcomes to their ultimate impacts on quality-of-life. Foundational sustainability elements are present for this Case, but their comprehensive integration for measurable societal impact is not yet fully realised.

Category 2: Sustainable Process Design and Implementation

Sustainability Management Tools present correlations with Sustainable Development Governance (r=0.702, p<0.001), Sustainability Performance (r=0.777, p<0.001), and Quality-of-life (r=0.365, p<0.001) suggesting alignment with national and international sustainable development policies achieved through sustainability operationalisation across management structures. Additionally, Sustainable Development Governance presents a correlation with Sustainability Performance (r=0.812, p<0.001) suggesting that integrating broader sustainable development policy objectives into corporate sustainability performance management is effective. This range of correlations, derived from content analysis of corporate reporting documents, indicates that Hospitality corporations effectively disclose their sustainability management tools as central to operationalising sustainability and related performance as impactful beyond their operations.

Survey responses for sustainability management practices revealed a key finding. "Social Impact Investment via Ad-hoc or Committee" showed an association with headquarter country ($\chi 2(3) = 13.929$, p=0.003) for the United States. It is inferred that the use of structured methods to manage environmental and social impacts from sustainability initiatives are done collaboratively within the organisation. While "Social Impact Investment via Ad-hoc or Committee" is not reported in the United Kingdom, Japan, or South Korea, project management methods for ESG management were of high frequency selection for respondents in these countries. The collective evidence from surveys and corporate reporting analysis in the Hospitality Industry indicates a reliance on structured reporting for environmental social impact assessment.

The evidence resulted in a moderate category score of 53 attributed to the industry's capacity to define roles and methods for corporate sustainability processes, yet lacking evidence for implementing monitoring and control mechanisms to effectively assess performance and impact. The hospitality industry has not fully integrated sustainability at the operational level, which is evident in the disconnect between sustainability management tools and

actual impact mitigation and measurement. This lack of integration hinders the industry's ability to demonstrate significant sustainability performance in alignment with sustainable development policies, which inhibits the potential for impactful sustainability outcomes and contributions to quality-of-life.

Category 3: Financial Risk Management and Performance

Economic Indicators show correlations with Materiality (r=0.332, p=0.001), Stakeholder Engagement (r=0.405, p<0.001), and Environmental Indicators (r=0.410, p<0.001) across Case Sample Files in the Hospitality Case. Economic Indicators also exhibit a correlation with Social Indicators (r=0.682, p<0.001). However, the lack of correlation between Economic Indicators and Quality-of-life (r=0.194, p=0.067). This disconnect implies an inconsistency in demonstrating the full societal impact of corporate sustainability performance, particularly from an economic perspective. The key to this interpretation lies in the contrast between the correlations of economic indicators with materiality, stakeholder engagement, environmental indicators, and social indicators, versus the non-significant correlation between Economic Indicators and Quality-of-life concepts. This suggests that while Hospitality corporations may integrate economic considerations with various aspects of sustainability, their economic performance is not consistently reflected for impact on broader societal well-being in their reported activities and performance measures.

Survey responses regarding performance management practices revealed two critical findings for performance and accountability. "Performance management" as a sustainability leadership support mechanism shows a significant association to headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 7.027$, p=0.071), with Japanese, Korean, and United States companies showing higher adoption. "Reduced consumption" as a business impact measure is significantly associated with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 9.451$, p=0.024), with higher reporting in Japan and Korea. The findings suggest that performance management for leadership roles is incentivized by sustainability practices that mitigate risks associated with environmental impacts, such as reducing consumption within the Hospitality industry.

The increased adoption of robust performance management by Japanese, Korean, and United States corporations, coupled with more frequent reporting of reduced consumption in Japan and Korea, suggests a strategic relationship between internal operational efficiencies and improved sustainability outcomes, which contributes to financial risk management and performance. This underscores how a proactive approach to financial risk

management, often motivated by the pursuit of cost reductions through decreased consumption, directly enhances sustainability performance (Nunhes et al., 2020; Friske et al., 2023). This, in turn, strengthens the rationale for integrating sustainability into the fundamental aspects of business operations.

These findings informed a moderate category score of 63, reflecting a foundational alignment of sustainability initiatives with broader strategic goals. However, a critical gap persists in fully integrating sustainability into core financial risk management processes. This mirrors the broader weakness observed in the relationship with Materiality concepts, indicating a missed opportunity to identify and mitigate sustainability-related financial risks. Therefore, sustainability's potential as a comprehensive financial value and risk strategy is underused in the Hospitality Case.

Category 4: Sustainability Performance

Sustainability Performance correlates with Sustainable Development Governance (r=0.812, p<0.001) and Sustainability Management Tools (r=0.777, p<0.001), emphasizing their role in driving outcomes and validating the integration of sustainability practices within organisational strategies. This correlation indicates that companies' sustainability initiatives align with broader global frameworks, as "sustainable development governance" suggests adherence to national and international sustainable development policies and reporting standards. There is also a strong correlation between sustainability performance and quality-of-life (r=0.403, p<0.001), indicating that improvements in sustainability practices are associated with a higher quality-of-life for stakeholders and communities impacted by the hospitality industry.

The consistent lack of statistical significance in sustainability performance management practices within the Hospitality industry, when analysed by headquarter country, offers key insights into how sustainability is operationalized in this sector. Although the p-value is not significant, preventing us from definitively confirming a statistical association between the practice and the headquarter country, this does not negate the relevance or variability of these practices. Instead, it points to a more complex scenario. The non-significant results for practices such as “Internal performance reporting” (p=.249), “Annual corporate reporting” (p=.257), “Standalone reporting” (p=.319), and “External assurance or auditing” (p=.363) suggest that the adoption and implementation of these specific sustainability performance management practices do not consistently vary in

a statistically discernible way across the surveyed headquarter countries. This suggests that, despite their prevalence, their application within the Hospitality industry is inconsistent, or their impact on sustainability outcomes is not strongly tied to national context.

These findings informed a moderate category score of 71.5, serving as the highest scored category for the Hospitality Case. This score indicates that sustainability initiatives align with strategic goals, thereby informing a more diverse range of sustainability performance indicators, especially for environmental and social performance. However, the absence of statistically significant associations, particularly when considered alongside potentially small sample sizes (26 survey respondents), strongly suggests a deficiency in robust and systematic practices that consistently link sustainability performance management to tangible outcomes. Their absence suggests that while these practices may exist, their implementation is fragmented, ad-hoc, or too immature to demonstrate clear country-specific patterns or exert a strong, consistent influence on overall sustainability outcomes.

Category 5: Innovation Performance

Sustainability Management Tools correlate with Sustainability Performance ($r=0.777$, $p<0.001$) and Sustainable Development Governance ($r=0.702$, $p<0.001$), indicating processes which may foster innovation. Social Indicators ($r=0.267$, $p=0.011$) and Economic Indicators ($r=0.365$, $p<0.001$) also correlate significantly with Sustainability Management Tools, suggesting areas for innovative integration focused on performance outcomes. The findings suggest that sustainable process design, while adequate, does not intentionally foster innovation for sustainability performance management and impact. The relationships between social and economic indicators and sustainability management tools suggest an opportunity for innovation in sustainability performance, especially considering findings evaluated in Category 4 implying lack of consistency in performance management practices.

These findings are particularly relevant to evaluating Innovation Performance, as the systematic frameworks provided by business excellence models are often considered foundational for fostering continuous improvement and innovation (Jankalová and Jankal, 2018; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). This consistent lack of significance for models such as Malcolm Baldrige ($p=.181$), EFQM ($p=.234$), Total Quality Management ($p=.490$), Lean/Six-Sigma ($p=.413$), and Triple Bottom Line ($p=.399$) carries important implications for understanding Innovation

Performance in this industry. This implies that the use of these models is uniformly present across the surveyed countries, or their adoption is driven by factors other than national origin. From an innovation standpoint, the systematic frameworks for innovation may not be significantly influenced by national context. Alternatively, the industry's approach to innovation might rely less on formalized models in a country-specific manner.

This category scored at 52.5 due to limited reporting on sustainability-driven innovation and development in the content analysis. These findings resonate with the earlier in Category 4 discussion regarding the non-significant associations of 'Sustainability Performance Management Practices' with headquarter country. These results suggest that the implementation of formalized management systems and excellence models in the Hospitality industry, for general or sustainability performance, is not strongly influenced by national context. This implies that innovation in this sector may stem from sources other than country-specific adoption of these frameworks. This necessitates further qualitative research into the drivers and mechanisms of sustainability management innovation within the Hospitality industry, specifically focusing on their intersection with sustainability efforts, beyond the mere adoption of excellence models.

Category 6: Social performance & Impact on Quality-of-life

Quality-of-life is correlated with Corporate Governance ($r=0.615$, $p<0.001$), Materiality ($r=0.450$, $p<0.001$), and Stakeholder Engagement ($r=0.507$, $p<0.001$), underscoring the importance of these factors in driving sustainability performance and societal well-being within the Hospitality industry. Social indicators also presented correlations with Economic indicators ($r=0.682$, $p<0.001$) and Environmental indicators ($r=0.735$, $p<0.001$), suggesting that improvements in social, environmental and economic practices are mutually reinforcing, and contribute to enhanced overall sustainability outcomes. These correlations highlight the need for comprehensive stakeholder identification to align corporate practices with societal well-being. Prioritizing stakeholder engagement is crucial for ensuring that corporate governance and materiality assessments effectively translate into improved quality-of-life outcomes (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Mcgrath and Ross, 2021).

When queried on identifying and prioritising stakeholder groups, responses for "Shareholders and investors" as a prioritized stakeholder group shows a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =8.929$, $p=0.030$), with variation for United Kingdom respondents. Survey responses show that

while shareholders and investors are a prioritized stakeholder group, especially in the United Kingdom, customer and shareholder feedback is not often considered when measuring stakeholder engagement. However, one could argue that prioritizing shareholders and investors is a strategic decision, as their satisfaction and investment are crucial for the long-term financial sustainability of the company, which indirectly contributes to other stakeholder benefits (Jadoon et al., 2021; Friske et al., 2023).

Survey responses from the Hospitality Case indicate that corporate governance and policy are leveraged to align corporate sustainability performance with quality-of-life, with a focus on civic engagement and community support, reflecting societal considerations within the scope of corporate sustainability strategy and performance outcomes. "Community support" is significantly correlated with "Civic engagement" ($r=0.471$, $p=0.015$) and "Health and wellbeing" ($r=0.430$, $p=0.028$). It is reasonable to infer that the stated initiatives and objectives from various sustainability disclosures reflect this strategic alignment. The analysis of related survey responses validates that such a focus, particularly on the convergence of civic engagement and community support, is a discernible outcome of corporate sustainability efforts.

This category scored 51 because the cases highlight that, by integrating metrics, stakeholders can gain a comprehensive understanding of the societal impact of corporate sustainability practices. The hospitality industry acknowledges the connection between its operations and societal well-being, indicating a strategic perspective that links quality-of-life with sustainability efforts, though measuring and reporting outcomes remains difficult. However, effectively measuring and reporting these outcomes remains difficult. This suggests that while the industry intends to link operations with societal well-being, demonstrating tangible improvements in quality-of-life through sustainability efforts is a challenge. Hence, Category 6 presented as the lowest rated category for the Hospitality Case.

Summary of Case Evaluation

Findings from the Hospitality Case indicates that strong corporate governance and effective sustainability management tools correlate with improved sustainability performance and quality-of-life outcomes. The application of sustainability performance indicators within the industry has garnered significant attention, with destinations increasingly focusing on understanding the impact of tourism on various stakeholders (Uysal and Sirgy, 2019). However, a key weakness lies in the inconsistent

demonstration of economic indicators' impact on quality-of-life, alongside limited proficiency in leveraging process design for intentional innovation. The explicit presentation of social impact in reporting and through certain management approaches remains fragmented, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the societal contributions made by the hospitality industry.

This case highlights hospitality's connection to sustainable development, especially through tourism, emphasizing how stakeholder engagement, a key aspect of stakeholder theory, influences performance. The case study reveals paradoxical tensions, where economic integration does not consistently improve quality-of-life, and sufficient processes do not guarantee innovation proficiency (Walker et al., 2020; Fok et al., 2021). Sustainability performance indicators serve as crucial tools for measuring and managing the environmental, social, and economic effects of tourism activities, facilitating informed decision-making and promoting sustainable practices(Uysal and Sirgy, 2019).

The findings directly address Research Objective One by demonstrating significant alignments between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life outcomes, driven by robust corporate governance and sustainability management tools. The integration of sustainability principles into hospitality operations requires a comprehensive understanding of regional contexts and organisational dynamics, to address the complex interplay between corporate sustainability practices and quality-of-life outcomes. Research Objective Two is supported through evidence of diverse sustainability management tool application and their impact on sustainability performance management practices. Research Objective Three is informed by observed country-specific variations in leadership roles, process implementation, and reporting practices, suggesting the influence of national contexts on corporate sustainability initiatives. These variations highlight the need for tailored sustainability strategies that consider regional differences and organizational structures to enhance corporate sustainability performance.

5.1.4 Health Care

Case Profile

For the Health Care industry, 99 Case Sample Files were collected and analysed for 26 Case Samples. The sampled corporations in Table 18 provide products and services such as specialised care and treatments, health and life insurance, design and manufacturing of medical technologies,

and pharmaceuticals and personal care and beauty products. The sampled companies are representative across four countries with headquarter locations in Japan, South Korea, United Kingdom, and United States.

Table 18. Health Care Case Samples

Case Sample (Corporation)	Headquarter Location	Case Sample Files
1. Uchiyama	Japan	6 Files
2. BML	Japan	5 Files
3. H.U. Group Holdings	Japan	7 Files
4. OLBA Healthcare	Japan	5 Files
5. SHIP Healthcare	Japan	3 Files
6. Medipal Holdings (+)	Japan	4 Files
7. T&D Insurance (+)	Japan	5 Files
8. Amvis Holdings (+)	Japan	3 Files
9. CHABiotech	South Korea	2 Files
10. Celltrion Healthcare (+)	South Korea	1 File
11. HLB Life Science (+)	South Korea	2 Files
12. Gowling WLG	United Kingdom	6 Files
13. Legal & General IM	United Kingdom	1 File
14. NHS Trust	United Kingdom	5 Files
15. NMC Health PLC	United Kingdom	1 File
16. Spire Healthcare (+)	United Kingdom	5 Files
17. Anthem	United States	1 File
18. Cardinal	United States	6 Files
19. CIGNA Corporation	United States	6 Files
20. DaVita Inc	United States	2 Files
21. Humana Inc	United States	3 Files
22. LabCorp of America	United States	9 Files
23. CVS Health Corp (+)	United States	5 Files
24. Guardant Health (+)	United States	2 Files
25. Centene Corp (+)	United States	3 Files
26. Quest Diagnostics (+)	United States	3 Files

In the Health Care case, the analysed companies do not show any proactive correlation or alignment between their outputs/impacts and quality-of-life indicators like perceived health, access to health care, and subjective well-being. The health care industry inherently focuses on providing services and products that improve quality-of-life through affordable care and insurance, innovative technologies, and other health solutions.

Case Evaluation

The evaluation found that the sampled corporations in the Health Care Case demonstrate a strong focus on Financial Risk Management & Performance and Sustainability Performance as presented in Table 19, based on evidence of corporate governance structures and compliance-oriented corporate policies. This is further supported by leveraging financial incentive

programmes that enable sustainability management roles to accomplish various sustainability goals.

Table 19. Health Care Case Evaluation Scores

Case Evaluation Category	Category Score
Internal Impact	
Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership	59.5 of 100
Sustainable Process Design & Implementation	56.5 of 100
Financial Risk Management & Performance	65.5 of 100
External Impact	
Sustainability Performance	60 of 100
Innovation Performance	52.5 of 100
Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life	58 of 100
Total Score	352 of 600

The Health Care Case scored at moderate levels across the assessment framework, with lower accounting to assessment principles of resilient robust, and excellent. This generated a total score of 352 out of 600 possible points. The analysis indicated that Innovation Performance was the lowest performing area. This was due to Case Samples and Survey Responses showing inconsistent relationships. The evidence suggested that sustainability management tools were more focused on operational efficiencies and financial stability, rather than organisational resilience and external impact from sustainability performance outcomes.

Category 1: Corporate Governance and Strategic Leadership

Corporate Governance in the Health Care industry presented correlations with Stakeholder Engagement ($r=0.932$, $p<0.001$), Sustainability Management Tools ($r=0.840$, $p<0.001$), and Sustainability Performance ($r=0.847$, $p<0.001$). The correlation between Corporate Governance and Social Indicators ($r=0.910$, $p<0.001$) further highlights the extent to which corporate governance structures inform corporate sustainability initiatives. While governance structures align with sustainability management and

performance in reporting, this alignment is not consistently presented as directly impacting broader quality-of-life indicators. Corporate governance and conduct intersect with conflicts of interest to a lesser degree, suggesting that corporate sustainability governance decisions depend on achieving corporate goals and stakeholder expectations (Nunhes et al., 2020; Ikram et al., 2020). Consequently, these decisions influence a company's sustainability.

No statistically significant associations were found between headquarter country and various leadership roles (Board of Directors, Department Head, Dedicated Sustainability Role - individuals or team) from survey responses. Similarly, no significant associations were found for leadership functions like Policy Enforcement, Decision Maker, or Project Management. However, "Cross-functional" leadership functions showed a significant association with headquarter country (χ^2=8.739, p=0.033), particularly for respondents from Japan and the United States. This indicates country-specific differences in integrated roles, potentially reflecting variations in organizational structures and management styles within the healthcare industry across different nations. These variations are likely influenced by regulatory and legislative requirements that necessitate cross-functional leadership roles due to the rigor and hierarchy of corporate governance structures, supporting a culture of compliance.

This category scored a moderate level of 59.5 out of 100 points, indicating a basic, but inconsistent, approach to integrating sustainability into corporate governance and strategic leadership. The low scoring across principles of sustainable, resilient, robust, and excellent, suggests that the integration of sustainability into corporate governance and strategic leadership is still in its initial stages of development. While governance structures align with sustainability management and performance in reporting, this alignment is not consistently presented as directly impacting broader quality-of-life indicators.

Category 2: Sustainable Process Design and Implementation score

The efficacy of Sustainability Management Tools in the Health Care sector is highlighted by their correlation with both Sustainability Performance (r=0.958, p<0.001) and Sustainable Development Governance (r=0.850, p<0.001), which emphasizes their crucial function in implementing sustainability throughout the industry. Economic Indicators also show a significant correlation with Sustainability Management Tools (r=0.301, p=0.002), suggesting that the application of these tools positively influences

operational performance within the Health Care industry. The significant correlation between sustainability management tools, sustainability performance, and sustainable development governance suggests that employing these tools is associated with improved sustainability performance, aligning with governance frameworks and policies (conformance). The moderate, direct relationship with economic and governance performance indicators suggests an internal focus on the operational impacts of using sustainability management tools. Concepts for Quality-of-life exhibited a non-significant correlation with sustainability management tools ($r=-0.143$, $p=0.158$). The lack of a statistically significant relationship between sustainability management tools and quality-of-life suggests that how the tools are deployed may not effectively translate into improvements in quality-of-life as a direct outcome, requiring further investigation.

Surveyed responses regarding elements of sustainable process design and implementation reflect that "ESG via Project Management" has a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =7.900$, $p=0.048$), with the highest frequencies in the United Kingdom, followed by Japan and the United States. "DEI via Ad-hoc or Committee" also has a significant association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =8.042$, $p=0.045$), suggesting varied formalisation of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across nations. The integration of sustainability management practices into performance management varies by country, as shown by the associations between "ESG via Project Management," "DEI via Ad-hoc or Committee," and "Environmental Management via Reporting Standard" and headquarter country. Content analysis indicates a correlation between these initiatives, sustainability performance, and corporate governance, suggesting that sustainability management tool use is affected by national and corporate policy, which influences management practices for establishing performance outcomes.

This category scored a moderate level of 56.5 out of 100 points, reflecting a presence of sustainable process design but with inconsistencies in implementation across different management areas and countries. Analysis of content and survey responses indicates the availability of sustainability management tools and dedicated resources. However, their selection and deployment are inconsistent, hindering optimal performance and impact traceability. This inconsistency suggests that while the tools are present,

their effective implementation and strategic deployment are lacking, which limits their ability to drive meaningful sustainability outcomes.

Category 3: Financial Risk Management and Performance

The integration of environmental and social considerations enhances resource allocation, thereby underscoring the relationship between financial performance and sustainability (T. Hussain et al., 2018). Economic Indicators present correlations with Corporate Governance (r=0.610, $p<0.001$), Stakeholder Engagement (r=0.405, $p<0.001$), and Social Indicators (r=0.638, $p<0.001$), suggesting that financial stability and operational efficiency are closely tied to corporate governance performance and stakeholder engagement value. Sustainability Performance also correlates with economic indicators (r=0.282, $p=0.005$), further solidifying the link between a corporation's commitment to sustainability and its financial health. While Economic Indicators in the Health Care industry may be thoroughly outlined and disclosed in corporate reporting, their correlation with Quality-of-life ($r = -0.090$, $p = 0.376$) was not statistically significant. This non-significant correlation suggests that, based on current data, improved economic performance may not directly lead to better societal well-being in the health care industry.

Survey responses regarding role responsibilities for "Finance and accounting" presented an association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =7.886$, $p=0.048$), of significance for Japanese and United States respondents, reflecting potential differences in how financial oversight of sustainability initiatives is structured across different national contexts. "Performance policy/guidelines" as a leadership accountability mechanism shows an association by country ($\chi2(3) =8.618$, $p=0.035$), with priority from United Kingdom and United States respondents. "Are there measurable impacts of your sustainability practices on your business operations?" shows an association ($\chi2(3) =9.436$, $p=0.024$), with United Kingdom and Japan having a higher "No" response, suggesting challenges in quantifying business impacts. The survey data indicated that a noteworthy proportion of respondents, particularly those from the United Kingdom and Japan, reported a lack of demonstrable impact from their sustainability practices on business operations. This suggests inherent difficulties in effectively quantifying the tangible business outcomes of sustainability-oriented practices.

This category scored a moderate level of 65.5 out of 100 points, indicating progress in financial risk management related to sustainability, but with

potential for clearer demonstration of financial benefits relevant to impacts on quality-of-life. The Health Care Case Samples present data on economic and social aspects of sustainability management, which are often framed within the context of internal business performance and efficiencies. As a result, the data does not explicitly demonstrate the contribution of sustainability management to the broader quality-of-life for society at large. This reinforces the focus on internal operational outcomes rather than intentional alignment with quality-of-life indicators, as also observed in Category 2.

Category 4: Sustainability Performance

For the Health Care industry across all four analysed countries, Sustainability Performance is strongly correlated with Sustainability Management Tools ($r=0.958$, $p<0.001$), Corporate Governance ($r=0.847$, $p<0.001$), and Stakeholder Engagement ($r=0.854$, $p<0.001$), suggesting that robust sustainability practices are linked to strong governance and active stakeholder engagement. Similarly, correlations were found with Environmental Indicators ($r=0.381$, $p<0.001$) and Social Indicators ($r=0.790$, $p<0.001$). However, the correlation between Sustainability Performance and Quality-of-life ($r=-0.151$, $p=0.135$) was not statistically significant, indicating that despite internal advancements, the industry's sustainability efforts do not consistently translate into measurable improvements in Quality-of-life, underscoring the need for demonstrable linkages to societal impact. In the context of sustainability performance management within the Health Care industry, 'Internal performance reporting' is widely adopted (42 out of 66 respondents), indicating a strong internal focus on measurement and process confirmation. While 'External assurance or auditing' does not exhibit a statistically significant association with headquarter country ($p=0.975$), suggesting consistent adoption across nations, this pattern affects corporate sustainability performance outcomes. The prevalent internal reporting, alongside external checks that often confirm reporting processes more than thoroughly validating data and societal impact, indicates a strong focus on confirming internal processes rather than ensuring comprehensive external proof of sustainability results (Nunhes et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2022). This implies a need for more rigorous validation of sustainability outcomes. This approach potentially limits the ability of Health Care companies to systematically link their corporate sustainability performance to its broader impacts on quality-of-life. Despite formal assurance processes, their current application may not effectively demonstrate systemic societal benefits,

highlighting a need to robustly connect sustainability efforts to human impact.

This category scored a moderate level of 60 out of 100 points, reflecting strong reported sustainability performance driven by internal processes and tools, but with less emphasis on external assurance practices influencing extent of outcomes impact. These further underscores the industry's focus on internal sustainability practices and processes rather than demonstrating the connection between sustainability performance and demonstrable societal improvements in quality-of-life.

Category 5: Innovation Performance

Innovation Performance is informed by the relationships and associations from concepts of sustainability management practices, sustainability performance outcomes, and implications on quality-of-life concepts. Within the Health Care industry, across all analysed countries, 'Sustainability Management Tools' are correlated with 'Sustainability Performance' ($r=0.958$, $p<0.001$), suggesting their foundational role in performance and innovation. These tools also demonstrated correlations with Economic Indicators ($r=0.301$, $p=0.002$) and Environmental Indicators ($r=0.377$, $p<0.001$), indicating their leverage in addressing both financial and ecological sustainability aspects. These correlations imply avenues for innovative integration in these areas.

Survey responses analysed for sustainability management and performance practices provide a basis for understanding innovation culture within the Health Care Case, particularly concerning sustainability performance and its impact on quality-of-life. The adoption of formal business excellence models shows significant associations with headquarter country. "Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Excellence" ($\chi2(3) =9.796$, $p=0.020$) and "European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)" ($\chi2(3) =10.703$, $p=0.013$) both show no adoption by Japanese or South Korean companies, and lower adoption overall, indicating a limited formalised approach to excellence and innovation. The 'Not identified/considered' driver for external impact showed an association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) =2.927$, $p=0.403$), which was not statistically significant. While higher response frequencies were observed from United Kingdom and United States-based respondents, this non-significant finding indicates no statistically reliable association between headquarter country and the identification of external innovation drivers. Therefore, any observed patterns are due to chance, rather than reflecting a systematic lack of proactive identification across these regions. This may

indicate a reactive approach to sustainability management, where corporations address issues as they arise rather than proactively seeking innovative solutions for broader societal impact and quality-of-life improvements from their efforts (Farias et al., 2020; Ikram et al., 2020).

This category scored a moderate level of 52.5 out of 100 points, the lowest scoring category, indicating that while companies implement sustainability practices, a systematic approach to innovation for sustainability is not widely adopted or intentionally enabled. While sustainability practices and processes may drive excellence and improvement, innovation for quality-of-life implications may be overlooked or not fully integrated. The analysed Case Samples and survey respondents have not fully integrated innovation for sustainability into their performance management processes to demonstrate a tangible impact on quality-of-life.

Category 6: Social performance & Impact on Quality-of-life

Social Indicators present correlations with Corporate Governance (r=0.910, p<0.001), Stakeholder Engagement (r=0.809, p<0.001), and Sustainability Performance (r=0.790, p<0.001). Correlations were also observed for Social Indicators with Economic Indicators (r=0.638, p<0.001) and Environmental Indicators (r=0.370, p<0.001) in the Health Care Case Samples. While Case Samples show how sustainability processes link to sustainability performance and influence quality-of-life, no specific correlation directly explains the disconnect between the strong integration of social indicators within sustainability aspects and their lack of a clear positive impact on quality-of-life.

Identifying the stakeholders impacted by sustainability management and performance is foundational to understanding external and societal impacts. Specifically, understanding which stakeholders are impacted allows for a more targeted and effective approach to sustainability initiatives, ensuring that efforts are aligned with the needs and expectations of those who are most affected (Torelli et al., 2020; Isaksson, 2021; Fok et al., 2021). "Industry partners" as an identified stakeholder group shows an association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 12.527$, p=0.006), with United Kingdom and United States based respondents that have higher selections. "Regulators/Legislators" also show an association ($\chi2(3) = 8.457$, p=0.037), with higher identification by United Kingdom respondents. The practice of "Not engaged with any stakeholder groups" also presented an association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 9.125$, p=0.028), with variation across Japan and South Korea. Respondents in the United Kingdom and the United

States identify with industry partners more frequently. The United Kingdom also engages more with regulators or legislators as a key stakeholder group.

This category scored a moderate level of 58 out of 100 points, indicating varied approaches to stakeholder engagement and social impact measurement across different national contexts. The national context variations reflect a recognition of social impact but with inconsistencies in demonstrating a clear, positive influence on quality-of-life. The findings reveal distinct country-specific patterns in how Health Care companies identify and engage with crucial external stakeholders, such as industry partners and regulators. This differentiated approach to external stakeholder management underscores varying national emphases on collaborative value creation and the establishment of frameworks essential for measuring sustainability outcomes beyond direct organisational performance.

Summary of Case Evaluation

The Health Care Case reveals strong internal alignments among corporate governance, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability management tools, which correlate significantly with overall sustainability performance. However, a divergence exists where consistent sustainability performance indicators show a weak relationship with quality-of-life outcomes, highlighting an area for improvement. This reflects a moderate overall performance in creating sustainability value, particularly highlighting a gap in consistently translating internal performance into demonstrable improvements in quality-of-life, which is essential for achieving true sustainability and excellence in the Health Care Industry.

This case highlights the Health Care Industry’s perceived inherent association to societal well-being but reveals a disconnect between reported sustainability performance and its measurable impact on quality-of-life. The influence of national governance and contextual factors on sustainability practices can potentially obscure the accurate measurement of their true societal impact. Stakeholder theory is crucial in this context, as stakeholder engagement patterns directly shape internal sustainability performance and, consequently, the ability to demonstrate a tangible influence on quality-of-life. This suggests that while the industry is moving towards sustainable practices, its moderate evaluation scores indicate a need for enhanced resilience and robustness to consistently bridge the gap between internal efforts and verifiable external societal impact.

Collectively, these findings, especially the non-significant associations with external assurance and the inferred focus on internal process confirmation, support the broader observation from Research Objective One. While corporate reports often mention the relevance of sustainability performance to quality-of-life concepts, survey responses from practitioners do not consistently show the strong, systematic practices needed to translate this into clear impacts. This highlights a critical gap between the stated aspirations and the demonstrable actions in linking corporate sustainability performance to tangible societal well-being within the Health Care industry. Research Objective Two is supported by the widespread application of sustainability management tools within the industry, as evidenced by both quantitative and qualitative findings. Country-specific variations in leadership functions and management practices further inform Research Objective Three, indicating the influence of national policy on corporate sustainability initiatives in the Health Care Industry. Despite alignment with these objectives, the moderate total score indicates that the industry has not consistently demonstrated sustained, impactful performance on quality-of-life factors, thus not yet achieving the 'Excellent' principle. The study highlights that enhancing stakeholder engagement, guided by both stakeholder theory and a critical realist approach, could improve the alignment of internal sustainability practices with external quality-of-life outcomes. Improving external stakeholder relations is important in promoting sustainability through collaboration, communication, and knowledge sharing, especially within the health care industry (Shayan et al., 2022).

5.1.5 Interactive Media Services

Case Profile

For the Interactive Media Services Case, of 78 companies analysed in the Corporate Reporting Index 25 were selected and analysed for the Case Study. The analysed corporations (Table 20) provide services such as digital information access and platforms, communication and social media applications, video games and interactive media, and home internet services. The following sections explore the results for this Case in the context of corporate reporting themes and the Case evaluation scores and summary.

Table 20. Interactive Media Services Case Samples

Case Sample (Corporation)	Headquarter Location	Case Sample Files
1. Capcom	Japan	5 Files
2. Nintendo	Japan	13 Files

3. Atrae Inc	Japan	7 Files
4. COLOPL Inc	Japan	4 Files
5. Koei Tecmo	Japan	5 Files
6. Square Enix Holdings (+)	Japan	4 Files
7. AfreecaTV	South Korea	2 Files
8. Kakao Corp	South Korea	5 Files
9. WeMade Co Ltd	South Korea	6 Files
10. Krafton (+)	South Korea	1 File
11. NAVER Corp (+)	South Korea	4 Files
12. PearlAbyss Corp (+)	South Korea	4 Files
13. Gravity Co (+)	South Korea	4 Files
14. NEOWIZ (+)	South Korea	2 Files
15. Nexon GT (+)	South Korea	1 File
16. Webzen Inc (+)	South Korea	1 File
17. Right Move	United Kingdom	5 Files
18. Auto Trader Group (+)	United Kingdom	1 File
19. Genius Sports Ltd (+)	United Kingdom	3 Files
20. Alphabet	United States	8 Files
21. Activision Blizzard	United States	2 Files
22. Meta Platforms (Facebook)	United States	3 Files
23. Snap Inc	United States	6 Files
24. TripAdvisor	United States	5 Files
25. Electronic Arts (+)	United States	1 File

The analysis of the Interactive Media Services Case outlines a diverse range of maturity and scale for sustainability performance indicators across the analysed corporations. The use of materiality assessment processes is aligned with themes explored in the literature review, which emphasises the importance of integrating sustainability management tools and practices with specific contexts and long-term sustainability goals (Aureli et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2023). Materiality assessments enable companies to pinpoint relevant sustainability issues and select effective tools. The sustainability performance indicators of the companies highlight a focus on economic governance activities.

Case Evaluation

Table 21 presents a summary of Evaluation scores for the Interactive Media Services Case. The evaluation found that the sampled corporations in the Interactive Media Services Case have a strong focus on compliance-oriented corporate governance structures supporting sustainability management and performance practices. This is informed by content analysis outcomes and survey response themes related to value creation through stakeholder engagement and transparent, ethical leadership, with emphasis for value of data protection and security.

Table 21. Interactive Media Case Evaluation Scores

Case Evaluation Category	Category Score
Internal Impact	
Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership	53 of 100
Sustainable Process Design & Implementation	49 of 100
Financial Risk Management & Performance	58.5 of 100
External Impact	
Sustainability Performance	55.5 of 100
Innovation Performance	42 of 100
Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life	46 of 100
Total Score	304 of 100

This analysis of the 25 Case Samples in the Interactive Media Services Case demonstrates a moderate level of sustainability performance, with strengths in certain areas and opportunities for improvement in others. Scored 304 of 600, the lowest of the five cases evaluated. The highest scoring category Financial Risk Management and the lowest Innovation Performance. There are critical facets in this Case Study regarding the industry's unique focus on data security, digital infrastructure, and user experience, which intersect strongly with concepts of corporate sustainability performance.

Category 1: Corporate Governance and Strategic Leadership

Corporate Governance in the Interactive Media Services industry presented a correlation with Sustainability Performance (r=0.259, *p*=0.013). However, the correlations of Corporate Governance with Materiality, Stakeholder Engagement, Sustainable Development Governance, and Sustainability Management Tools are not statistically significant at conventional levels. Materiality, in turn, presents a correlation with Stakeholder Engagement (r=0.353, *p*=0.001). These strategies, in turn, can inform leadership and management structures that support the use of sustainability management tools to improve performance outcomes (Ruiz et al., 2021; Friske et al.,

2023). While the Interactive Media Services industry leverages stakeholder engagement, particularly in identifying material issues, the non-significant correlations between corporate governance and key themes like stakeholder engagement, sustainable development governance, and sustainability management tools suggests a relationship which corporations have not proficiently integrated with overarching governance structures. This lack of integration hinders the industry's ability to fully enable holistic sustainability management and performance.

Survey responses querying leadership and management presence in sustainability work revealed key insights. The frequency of "Don't know" responses regarding sustainability leadership roles is significantly associated with headquarter country ($\chi 2(3) = 8.169$, $p = 0.043$), particularly among Japanese respondents. This finding suggests an unclear leadership pattern for sustainability roles within those corporations. However, "Sustainability Management" is universally a reported responsibility (37 out of 39 respondents) from respondents across all four countries in this Case. The study indicates that while sustainability responsibility is a common function across roles, how the roles are supported or enabled to accomplish sustainability work is less clear. There is no consistent link between headquarter country and functions and role types enabling sustainability management.

This category scored a moderate level of 53 out of 100 points, indicating an initial, but not consistently robust, integration of sustainability within corporate governance and strategic leadership. The analysis suggests that the integration of sustainability considerations into governance structures and decision-making processes remains a key area for improvement in the Interactive Media Services industry, where the current reliance on stakeholder engagement is not consistently associated with overarching governance structures to fully enable systematic sustainability management and performance outcomes.

Category 2: Sustainable Process Design and Implementation score

Sustainability Management Tools presented correlations with Sustainable Development Governance ($r = 0.893$, $p < 0.001$), Stakeholder Engagement ($r = 0.450$, $p < 0.001$), and Sustainability Performance ($r = 0.396$, $p < 0.001$). These findings consistently demonstrate that adhering to industry and national policies and frameworks has implications for addressing stakeholder expectations. The relationship with sustainability performance suggests that the use of sustainability management tools contributes to operational

outcomes, aligning with governance and stakeholder requirements (Hristov et al., 2022). Environmental indicators show a correlation with Sustainability Management Tools (r=0.456, *p*<0.001), but the non-significant correlation with Quality-of-life (r=0.178, p=0.090) suggests a stronger focus on managing environmental performance than on social, economic, and governance processes.

Implementation of sustainability practices presented variation by headquarter country. "DEI via Ad-hoc or Committee" presented an association by country ($\chi2(3) = 8.230$, p=0.041), suggesting varied formalization of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across nations, particularly with United Kingdom. This indicates that diversity, equity and inclusion policies and initiatives may be enforced through less structured or formalized means in some regions compared to others. The use of "DEI via Reporting Standard" shows a significant association ($\chi2(3) = 11.111$, p=0.011) with South Korea respondents, highlighting a commitment to transparency and accountability in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts through standardized reporting mechanisms (compliance-focused).

This category scored a moderate level of 49 out of 100 points, reflecting the presence of sustainable process design but with inconsistent implementation across different management areas and countries, especially in social impact-related practices. Analysis of reporting content and survey responses indicates that Interactive Media Service corporations use sustainability management tools and resources, but the intentional design of these tools to inform sustainability performance outcomes lacks a systematic approach.

Category 3: Financial Risk Management and Performance

Economic Indicators presented correlations with Sustainability Performance (r=0.362, *p*<0.001) and social indicators (r=0.816, p<0.001). However, economic indicators show a negative, non-significant correlation with Quality-of-life (r=−0.033, p=0.757). This finding warrants further study to clarify the potential relationship between economic success, as currently measured by economic and financial performance, and its impact on quality-of-life within the Interactive Media Services industry. This suggests that the presentation of Case Samples may not adequately demonstrate how economic sustainability efforts contribute to broader societal well-being or address material economic issues relevant to quality-of-life. This points to a gap in how these vital connections are understood, measured, or articulated within their sustainability performance management and reporting efforts (Jadoon et al., 2021; Wynn and Jones, 2022; Pazienza et al., 2023).

When exploring financial risk management and performance, survey respondents presented insightful patterns for how impacts are measured. "Are there measurable impacts of your sustainability practices on your business operations?" while not statistically significant, a high frequency selection across respondents (33 out of 39) indicated "Yes". Among specific measures, 'Customer satisfaction' was a frequently selected business impact measure, particularly noted in responses from Japan and South Korea. However, the statistical analysis did not reveal a significant association with headquarter country, indicating that while this measure is prominent, its comparative frequency across regions is not statistically distinct. The emphasis on "Customer satisfaction" as a business impact measure further supports concepts of sustainability practices enabled through financial stability goals, where satisfied customers often translate to increased revenue and brand loyalty (Maia et al., 2022).

This category scored a moderate level of 58.5 out of 100 points, indicating efforts in financial risk management related to sustainability, with a focus on business impacts and customer satisfaction. This score reflects moderate levels of 'Sustainable' and 'Resilient' performance, evidenced by a focus on measurable business impacts and cost efficiencies. These contribute to organisational value and support adaptation to financial-driven challenges. However, the relationships (or lack thereof) between economic indicators and quality-of-life and materiality, indicates that financial risk management practices inadequately address material sustainability issues or contribute to societal well-being, thus limiting their impact on quality-of-life factors.

Category 4: Sustainability Performance

Sustainability Performance presents correlations with Corporate Governance ($r=.259$, $p=.013$), Stakeholder Engagement ($r=0.577$, $p<0.001$), Sustainability Management Tools ($r=0.396$, $p<0.001$), and Environmental Indicators ($r=0.424$, $p<0.001$). These observed relationships suggest that corporations which actively engage with their stakeholders, use sustainability management tools, and focus comprehensively on defining indicators tend to exhibit clearer approaches for sustainability performance outcomes. Sustainability performance also presents a correlation with Quality-of-life ($r=0.451$, $p<0.001$) and Social Indicators ($r=0.403$, $p<0.001$), suggesting that Case Samples with stronger sustainability practices tend to positively influence both the well-being of society and key social metrics. Materiality, however, shows a negative, non-significant correlation with sustainability performance ($r=-0.019$, $p=0.854$). This suggests a potential disconnect

between the identification of material issues and their consistent integration into sustainability performance measurements worthy of additional investigation.

As a result of implementing sustainability management and performance practices, "Annual corporate reporting" presents an association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 8.682$, $p=0.034$) for Japan and South Korea. "Level or frequency of enquiries" as a stakeholder impact measure presents an association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 10.855$, $p=0.013$) for Japan and South Korea. In the Interactive Media Services Case, Japanese and Korean companies appear more inclined to integrate stakeholder feedback into their reporting practices to enhance sustainability performance management.

This category scored a moderate level of 55.5 out of 100 points, reflecting strong reported sustainability performance driven by internal processes and management tools, but with varying ranges of weaker evidence regarding systematic management of sustainability performance implications beyond financial stability. This observed contrast reveals valuable insights into the maturity and scope of sustainability reporting and practice within the Interactive Media Services industry.

Category 5: Innovation Performance

As an extension of process design and sustainability performance, Innovation Performance evaluates the degree to which companies systematically enable and pursue sustainability-driven impact (Jankalová and Jankal, 2020; Alsayegh et al., 2020; Nunhes et al., 2020). This is crucial for long-term resilience and creating positive societal impact, as it moves beyond incremental improvements to transformative changes. As reviewed in Category 2, Sustainability Management Tools present correlations with Sustainable Development Governance ($r=0.893$, $p<0.001$) and Sustainability Performance ($r=0.396$, $p<0.001$), such a significant direct relationship infers the effective use of these tools enhances both governance structures aimed at sustainable development and the overall sustainability performance of corporations. AS highlighted in Category 4, Quality-of-life presents a correlation with Sustainability Performance ($r=0.451$, $p<0.001$), implying a relationship between sustainability performance management practices and outcomes influential on quality-of-life.

The adoption of formal business excellence models shows significant associations with headquarter country. "Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for

Excellence" ($\chi2(3) = 10.015$, $p=0.018$) and "European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)" ($\chi2(3) = 8.147$, $p=0.043$) for United States and United Kingdom respondents. "Total Quality Management (TQM)" also presents an association ($\chi2(3) = 8.587$, $p=0.035$) with higher adoption in United Kingdom and United States. The relevance of adapting business excellence principles and models with corporate sustainability performance lies in establishing reliable processes that innovate products and services and manage the implications of their use (Jankalová and Jankal, 2020; Saulick et al., 2023). This is relevant to the Interactive Media Services case because interactive media services increasingly handle large amounts of user data and significantly impact society. Therefore, business excellence principles are crucial for managing these complex implications. These models foster systematic approaches to risk management, ethical considerations in product design, and responsible data governance, ensuring that innovation is not pursued in isolation but is integrated with a comprehensive understanding of its broader environmental and social consequences (Nicolò et al., 2023; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024).

This category scored a lower, moderate level of 42 out of 100 points, indicating that while companies may pursue some sustainability efforts, a systematic approach to sustainability-driven innovation is not widely adopted or intentionally enabled, especially in certain regions. This score indicates that corporations have a key opportunity to focus on innovation as a driver of sustainability performance by integrating business excellence principles more intentionally. Without a cohesive strategy, the translation of sustainability goals into transformative practices is hindered, limiting the potential for long-term resilience and positive societal impact.

Category 6: Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life

As highlighted in Categories 2 and 4, Quality-of-life presents a correlation with Stakeholder Engagement ($r=0.761$, $p<0.001$), Sustainability Performance ($r=0.451$, $p<0.001$), Environmental Indicators ($r=0.374$, $p<0.001$), and Economic indicators present a correlation with Social Indicators ($r=0.816$, $p<0.001$). These relationships imply a potential link between economic prosperity and societal well-being stemming from Interactive Media Services Case Samples. However, Quality-of-life shows a non-significant with Social Indicators ($r=0.108$, $p=0.308$) suggesting the direct societal impact of social sustainability initiatives is not consistently or clearly demonstrated, requiring further investigation. This suggests that low to moderate levels of 'Sustainable' and 'Resilient' principles evident in the

Case Sample Files, indicating limited comprehensive social value and adaptive capacity for external societal challenges, particularly in category Attributes of Reputation and Community Engagement, inhibit an ability to align sustainability performance outcomes with quality-of-life factors.

The limited evidence for these attributes highlights the need for effective stakeholder relationship management to better understand and measure social impact and quality-of-life (Ruiz et al., 2021; Khaled et al., 2021). "Customers" as an identified stakeholder group presents an association with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 10.437$, $p=0.015$), with United Kingdom and South Korea reporting higher identification. "Employees" as an identified stakeholder group also presented an association ($\chi2(3) = 9.495$, $p=0.023$) for South Korean respondents. These findings inform the importance of stakeholder engagement in these regions and its potential impact on sustainability initiatives which may have external implications. "Quality or value of feedback" as a measure of effective engagement is associated with headquarter country ($\chi2(3) = 8.237$, $p=0.041$), particularly South Korean respondents. "Budget allocated for stakeholder engagement activities" also presented an association ($\chi2(3) = 8.456$, $p=0.037$) for Japan and South Korea. These results indicate that stakeholder feedback and resource allocation for stakeholder engagement are crucial for developing social impact measures in sustainability management, even though linking these efforts to demonstrable improvements in quality-of-life remains challenging for the Interactive Media Services industry. These findings suggest that Japanese and South Korean corporations are more likely to prioritise feedback from customers and employees when determining aspects of corporate sustainability performance.

This category scored a moderate level of 46 out of 100 points, reflecting a recognition of social impact and active stakeholder engagement. However, inconsistencies persist in demonstrating a clear, positive influence on quality-of-life across all reporting, suggesting a gap between stated commitment and measurable outcomes. This is consistent with low to moderate levels of 'Sustainable' and 'Resilient' principles evident in the Case Sample Files, which indicates limited comprehensive social value and adaptive capacity for external societal challenges, particularly in areas like reputation and community engagement.

Summary of Case Evaluation

The Interactive Media Services Case demonstrates a strong emphasis on integrating sustainability performance through stakeholder engagement and

deploying sustainability management tools, reflecting a moderate overall performance level. The correlations in Category 4 may indicate areas with robust reporting or measurement, suggesting a mature integration of sustainability practices within specific operational domains of Interactive Media Services corporations. This implies that in areas where correlations are strong, the industry is not only tracking relevant metrics but also effectively translating these insights into actionable strategies and transparent reporting, thus demonstrating a commitment to 'Sustainable' and 'Robust' principles. Conversely, non-significant correlations may signal areas where sustainability efforts are either nascent, poorly measured, or not effectively communicated. This contrasting finding is supported by weaker links in Categories 1, 2, and 3, which suggest that the integration of sustainability management is less developed or explicitly reported in other foundational elements. A growing gap is revealed in demonstrating the impact of these efforts on Quality-of-life, coupled with limited formal adoption of established business excellence models for driving innovation. This indicates a weaker link between sustainability initiatives and explicit societal benefit or systematic innovation.

The Interactive Media Services Industry's close connection to digital infrastructure and user experience positions stakeholder engagement as a key driver in achieving sustainability goals and demonstrating tangible improvements in quality-of-life. Effective stakeholder engagement ensures that corporate sustainability initiatives are aligned with societal needs and expectations, enhancing the industry's capacity to create meaningful and measurable social impact (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Hristov et al., 2022; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). It illustrates a paradox tension where corporations recognise the importance of sustainability and its connection to quality-of-life as sought via Research Objective One, but the direct evidence of this impact remains implicitly or weakly evidenced.

Corporations might be proficient at managing and reporting on "sustainability performance" in a narrow sense (e.g., environmental metrics, certain social programs), which can show a correlation with quality-of-life facets. However, the broader integration of sustainability into their core corporate governance and financial strategies are nascent or not fully articulated in their reporting. National contexts play a substantial role in shaping governance, management practices, and innovation approaches, thereby influencing the 'Robustness' of sustainability frameworks. This case suggests that while they are 'Sustainable' in practice, their approach to 'Excellent' performance,

particularly in terms of quantifiable societal impact, remains highly underdeveloped.

The findings directly address Research Objective One by discovering consistent correlations between sustainability performance, stakeholder engagement, and quality-of-life, despite the challenge of explicit impact measurement. Research Objective Two is comprehensively supported by the varied application of sustainability management tools across different operational areas and countries. Patterns of country-specific management practices, stakeholder identification, and excellence model adaptation offer insights for Research Objective Three, highlighting the relationship between national policy, cultural contexts, corporate sustainability initiatives, and the sustainability management tools used to address public policy objectives. Despite these alignments, the moderate overall score indicates that the industry has not yet fully achieved the 'Excellent' principle of demonstrating sustained performance and measured impact on quality-of-life factors. To enhance its sustainability performance, the industry must focus on setting measurable goals related to quality-of-life, strengthening governance practices, and more deeply integrating sustainability strategies with business excellence models.

5.2 Summative Observations from Case Study Evaluations

Across all industries, there is a consistent finding of a "paradox tension" or "disconnect" where the importance of sustainability is acknowledged, but its full integration into innovative, measurable actions or systematic impact measurement remains limited. This is particularly evident in the struggle to translate internal efforts into verifiable external societal impact on quality-of-life. While there's broad adherence to corporate governance principles, sustainability performance measures, and transparent reporting, there is a notable deficiency in aligning corporate sustainability performance measures with quality-of-life indicators using business excellence models (BEMs). Every industry consistently receives a "moderate" performance level or evaluation score. This indicates that while they are moving towards sustainable practices and are "sustainable" in a narrow sense, none have fully achieved the "Excellent" principle of demonstrating sustained, world-class performance and measured impact on quality-of-life factors.

A notable similarity across industries is the challenge of establishing definitive causal links between corporate sustainability initiatives and measurable social, economic, and quality-of-life outcomes. National policy,

governance, and industry heavily influence how sustainability practices are adopted and how well they work. This influence affects innovation, leadership, and the overall "robustness" of sustainability frameworks (Fok et al., 2021; Talbot et al., 2021). While all industries work with stakeholders, the formality, depth, and how these relationships are included in strategy varies. This affects how well sustainability efforts match and improve society's well-being, or quality-of-life (Nunhes et al., 2020; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024).

Key differences across the cases involve the focus of societal impact and value creation, specific difficulties in measuring or incorporating impact, and the role and effectiveness of sustainability management tools. These differences suggest that while all industries are advancing in sustainability, their trajectories and foci are shaped by their operational environments, stakeholder expectations, and the specific sustainability challenges they face (ElAlfy et al., 2020). This requires specific strategies that consider both sustainability principles and the unique circumstances of each industry. Evaluating these nuances with the RISE Evaluation Framework ensures a balanced and relevant sustainability performance assessment that promotes excellence and innovation. Focusing on the common struggle to establish clear causal links between corporate actions and societal outcomes, the case studies reveal a gap in strategic integration and impact measurement.

Each industry focuses on different areas for societal impact and creating value. For instance, Restaurants & Entertainment have a direct impact on consumer lifestyles and immediate influence on customer experiences. Media & Entertainment possess the capacity to shape societal views via cultural platforms. Hospitality has a strong connection to sustainable development, especially through tourism. Health Care has a perceived inherent association with societal well-being, but with a disconnect in measurable impact. Interactive Media Services maintain a close connection to digital infrastructure and user experience, with stakeholder engagement driving quality-of-life related improvements. The binding thread is a focus on the customer or consumer stakeholder group. These industry-specific issues require customised strategies that consider each industry's unique operational environment, stakeholder expectations, and specific sustainability challenges.

A consistent pattern emerged across the five cases, with each industry exhibiting unique aspects in how they measure impact and incorporate learning or changes in their sustainability approach. The Restaurants & Entertainment case fell short of achieving 'Robust' resistance or 'Excellent'

sustained performance across all dimensions of value creation. The Media & Entertainment case evidenced a lack of social and economic sustainability management and underdeveloped social performance indicators, which hindered measurable alignments to quality-of-life. The Hospitality case consistently missed evidence for economic integrations with outcomes that improve quality-of-life and lacked sufficient process design to enable impactful innovation. The Health Care case presented non-significant associations with external assurance and an inferred focus on internal process confirmation, highlighting a gap between stated aspirations and demonstrable actions. The Interactive Media Services case demonstrated broader integration of sustainability into core corporate governance and financial strategies as nascent or not fully articulated in reporting, focusing instead on existing operational priorities and industry obligations.

The cases show that many sustainability management tools are used; however, how these practices are chosen, used, and combined differs from industry to industry (Rodrigues and Franco, 2019; Talbot et al., 2021). For Restaurants & Entertainment, sustainability management tools are present, but their application for comprehensive innovation and systematic impact measurement is limited. Media & Entertainment demonstrates diverse tool selection, but effectiveness varies by national context. In Hospitality, there is diverse tool application with an impact on performance management practices. Health Care shows a widespread and highly correlated application of tools within the industry. Interactive Media Services features varied application across different operational areas and countries, linked to public policy objectives. Although the firms use multiple sustainability management tools, they struggle to systematically manage and assess the economic and social effects of their activities beyond internal concerns.

The familiar challenges and unique nuances across industries reveal specific areas where each struggle or excels in embedding sustainability into their practices and culture (Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). These challenges are deeply interconnected and require nuanced strategies to address sustainable development effectively. These results are key to understanding the connection between what companies do for sustainability and how it affects our quality-of-life. They show where the current practices do not connect. Analysing how each industry uses sustainability management tools shows the difficulties and possibilities in putting these tools into action.

Finally, a consistent pattern across industries reveals that different national contexts significantly influence how companies adopt and use corporate

sustainability plans. This includes variations in the emphasis on specific types of leadership roles, the formalisation of process implementation, and the strategic alignment of sustainability efforts with national policy objectives. These three key patterns, highlighting the interplay between national context and corporate sustainability practices, will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 Discussion

The exploration of complex organisational dynamics across industries necessitates a robust analytical framework. By developing a more systematic evaluation approach, the Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence (RISE) Evaluation Framework offers a means of assessing corporate sustainability performance and its alignment with quality-of-life across various industries. My research incorporated multiple primary and secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis of how leadership and management practices affect corporate sustainability performance and its wider impact.

The findings highlight three main results in alignment with the Research Objectives stated in Chapter 1, Sub-Section 1.4.1. The first finding reveals a peripheral relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators. This relationship is characterized by specific themes, suggesting that corporate sustainability initiatives do not explicitly target or meticulously measure improvements in quality-of-life indicators; rather, enhancements materialise as an indirect or secondary consequence of these initiatives (Nunhes et al., 2020; Farias et al., 2020; Fok et al., 2021). The second finding regards how corporations use sustainability management tools widely varies and is inconsistently influenced by conformance and compliance motivators. The third finding highlights the significant impact of national public policy on corporate sustainability efforts. These findings show the complex relationship between what companies do, government rules, and how people are doing in society. To improve both corporate sustainability efforts and people's quality-of-life, an integrated approach is needed.

Despite similar influential factors, there is a lack of strong accountability for how corporations use sustainability management tools to inform their performance measures and management approaches (Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018; Saulick et al., 2023). These differing approaches were found to have a consequential impact on corporate sustainability strategy, performance and relation to quality-of-life outcomes. This matters because a misalignment can lead to inefficient resource allocation and missed opportunities for enhancing societal well-being, and alignment with national policy matters because it ensures corporate activities contribute positively to broader national goals and sustainable development agendas (van Zanten and van Tulder, 2018; Mcgrath and Ross, 2021; Shayan et al., 2022).

Drawing upon findings from the Restaurants & Entertainment, Media & Entertainment, Hospitality, Health Care, and Interactive Media Services industry case studies, this chapter interprets corporate sustainability performance and its connection to quality-of-life. The discussion is organised by my research objectives, critically examining how the collected evidence addresses them. The discussion is supported by Stakeholder Theory and Paradox Tension Theory from Critical Realism position, providing a framework for understanding complex, interrelated observed patterns and their potential implications on theoretical and practical outcomes in corporate sustainability performance research.

6.1 Research Objective 1: The Relationship

Research objective one focused on the relationship between corporate sustainability practices and quality-of-life indicators. As presented in Chapter 1, sub-section 1.4.1, Research Objective One states:

To evaluate the type and extent of relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life frameworks and indicators.

How can quality-of-life frameworks and indicators be integrated into corporate sustainability management practice and performance measurement?

The findings indicate a moderate and often implicit alignment between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life frameworks. I define this relationship as peripheral, meaning that corporate sustainability initiatives are not typically designed with the explicit intention of directly targeting or meticulously measuring improvements in quality-of-life indicators; rather, such enhancements materialise more as an indirect or secondary consequence of these initiatives. While overall sustainability performance (e.g. Category 4 evaluated Attributes in Interactive Media Services, Restaurants & Entertainment, and Health Care) often correlates with Quality-of-life, the connection becomes weaker or non-significant when examining more foundational elements like economic indicators (found in Category 3 for Interactive Media Services & Health Care) or corporate governance structures (found in Category 1 for Health Care).

This suggests that corporations are achieving internal sustainability performance but may not consistently and explicitly demonstrate its direct contribution to broader societal well-being due to a focus on certain stakeholder groups and prevalent reporting standards. Multinational

corporations typically develop and manage performance metrics related to quality-of-life; however, the impact of this performance is not consistent in formally or informally aligning to established quality-of-life indicators (Uysal and Sirgy, 2019; Cöster et al., 2020; Oluwatosin Yetunde Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). This leaves a gap in the processes available to evaluate corporate sustainability performance and its impact beyond the operating boundaries of multinational corporations. Research objective one highlights a peripheral relationship between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators, where each case in the following sections provides support in defining this relationship.

6.1.1 Case Specific Discussion of Findings

Restaurants & Entertainment

Based on the outcomes from applying the RISE Evaluation Framework to this Case, the observed correlation between "Sustainability performance" and "Quality-of-life" in both Category 3 and Category 4 indicates a notable congruence in evaluation themes and assessment principles. This overlap highlights a consistent finding regarding the ultimate impact of sustainability efforts across different perspectives, indicating that sustainability initiatives can have a widespread influence on various aspects of societal well-being. Prioritising stakeholder engagement is crucial for ensuring that corporate governance and materiality assessments effectively translate into improved quality-of-life outcomes from well-informed sustainability performance measures (Hristov et al., 2022; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024).

Across all four headquarter countries, the prevalence of civic engagement and community support considerations spans both internal and external dimensions. In contrast, health, well-being, and safety are more frequently prioritized within the internal scope of impact. This shows that when companies invest in any of these areas, it can help the others, which can influence levels of quality-of-life. The alignment of corporate sustainability performance with quality-of-life indicators, while foundational, often presents implicit contributions.

Media & Entertainment

The Media & Entertainment Case demonstrates a strong interconnectedness where resilient corporate governance and active stakeholder engagement significantly correlate with improved sustainability performance and alignments to quality-of-life outcomes. However, the lowest performing area was Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life, due to a lack of social

and economic sustainability management practices and underdeveloped social performance indicators, hindering measurable alignments to quality-of-life aspects. Survey responses further confirm this disconnect, emphasising the importance of integrating social and economic indicators into existing frameworks to enhance stakeholder value and societal well-being (Nunhes et al., 2020; Fet and Knudson, 2021).

This disconnect implies an inconsistency in demonstrating the full societal impact of corporate sustainability performance, particularly from an economic development perspective. Conversely, the findings suggest that the intangible nature of media and entertainment's impact on culture and societal values makes it challenging to quantify the direct effects on quality-of-life through traditional metrics (Sobol, 2019; Sehgal et al., 2023). My research findings consistently observed relationships between these concepts in Case Sample reporting suggests that strong consideration of stakeholder needs and impacts is significantly linked to an increased perception of quality-of-life and robust sustainability practices (Robert G Eccles et al., 2012; Uysal and Sirgy, 2019).

Hospitality

The relationships between corporate governance and materiality, stakeholder engagement, quality-of-life, and sustainable development governance show that the Hospitality Case Samples integrate governance with broader societal and environmental considerations but are not consistent or effective in translating relevance to externalities such as quality-of-life. This disconnect implies an inconsistency in demonstrating the full societal impact of corporate sustainability performance, particularly from an economic perspective (Lyon et al., 2018; Pazienza et al., 2023). This means that while things like value creation, talking to stakeholders, mitigating environmental impacts, and caring about society may be topically related, the standard of living or quality of peoples’ lives are not connected or affected.

Sustainable process design, while sufficiently evidenced in this Case, does not intentionally drive innovation in sustainability performance management and impact. The strategic alignment between internal operational efficiencies and enhanced sustainability outcomes strengthens financial risk management and overall industry or organisational performance. The range of relationships between social and economic indicators and sustainability management tools point to a clear opportunity to innovate sustainability performance management. The importance of managing social and

economic indicators related to sustainable development governance and the effect on quality-of-life shows that these concepts need to be pursued with more intention (Nunhes et al., 2020; Saulick et al., 2023).

Health Care

While governance structures align with sustainability management and performance in reporting, this alignment is not consistent across the corporations for indirect or direct impact on quality-of-life. The lack of a clear link between sustainability management and quality-of-life in the Health Care Case suggests that there may not be a strong relationship between these two things. This suggests that the sustainability management tools used may not be effectively improving quality-of-life, resulting in a lower score in the RISE Evaluation Framework. This means that while governance, stakeholder engagement, and social and economic indicators are important, they may not always lead to measurable results relevant to quality-of-life indicators. The degree to which corporate governance and conduct intersect with conflicts of interest remains a less influential factor, indicating that decisions for engaging in corporate sustainability governance hinge on achieving corporate goals, consequently influencing a company’s sustainability performance based on stakeholder expectations (Ikram et al., 2020).

This suggests that while social performance is associated with other sustainability aspects, its direct positive impact on quality-of-life is not considered. This could be due to reporting standards emphasising performance metrics over societal impact, or corporate structures isolating sustainability efforts from broader quality-of-life objectives. While the Health Care Case Samples show how sustainability processes relate to sustainability performance and affect quality-of-life, there is no clear explanation for why a strong focus on social factors does not clearly improve quality-of-life.

Interactive Media Services

The analysis of the Interactive Media Services industry's Social Performance and Impact on Quality-of-life (Category 6) suggests strong relationships between quality-of-life and considerations like working with stakeholders, managing sustainability, and caring for the environment. However, the connection between quality-of-life and social issues is not explicitly evidenced. This confirms the concept that the positive impact of social sustainability work is not always clear (Shinwell et al., 2018; Javanmardi et

al., 2020). In the Interactive Media Services Case, there are correlations between sustainability management and performance, working with stakeholders, and quality-of-life, but measuring the specific impact is missing or inconsistent. Despite a relationship between economic indicators and overall sustainability performance, their detachment from both quality-of-life considerations and materiality highlights a significant gap.

This suggests that the presentation of Interactive Media Services Case Samples may not adequately demonstrate how economic sustainability efforts contribute to broader societal well-being or address material economic development issues relevant to quality-of-life. This could stem from the unique dynamics of digital industries, where economic sustainability is intricately linked to innovation, technological advancements, and market competitiveness (Wynn and Jones, 2022). The absence of direct connections from economic indicators to broader social factors, such as the quality-of-life, suggests that reporting may focus more on business metrics than societal impacts (Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017; Pazienza et al., 2023). In response to the intricate relationships identified within the Interactive Media Services industry, it becomes imperative to refine sustainability reporting practices, ensuring a more transparent articulation of how any range of corporate sustainability initiatives translate into tangible benefits for both organisations and the broader society.

6.1.2 Cross Case Discussion of Findings

The pursuit of internal operational sustainability stands in contrast to the difficulty of translating these endeavours into demonstrable, externally measurable impacts on quality-of-life. This tension is further exemplified by the disparity between reported integration and actual granular impact, suggesting that reported integration may not accurately reflect the tangible influence. The disconnect between what is reported and what is done shows this tension, where reported integration might not truly show the real impact.

The Health Care and Interactive Media Services Cases demonstrate a significant disconnect between economic indicators and quality-of-life, and a non-significant correlation between social indicators and quality-of-life (Category 3 & 6 Content Analysis). This highlights the difficulty of showing how internal sustainability efforts improve society, even when focusing on business operations (Shinwell et al., 2018; Uysal and Sirgy, 2019). The Media & Entertainment Case explicitly shows a non-significant correlation between economic indicators and quality-of-life (Category 3 Content Analysis), supporting the interpretation as a lack of systematic social and

economic sustainability management and poorly developed social performance indicators in relation to quality-of-life. While there are positive links between sustainability and quality-of-life, the Restaurants & Entertainment Case shows that companies may not be actively using and measuring these factors or clearly stating their impact on specific quality-of-life indicators. This directly aligns with the "what's presented does not match what is done" aspect of the paradox tension.

My findings clarify known research on paradox tension and sustainability performance management (Hahn et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2020). My findings support Hahn et al.'s (2018) idea that organisations often struggle with the conflict between economic and social goals in sustainability. This is shown by how focusing on internal sustainability efforts does not always lead to clear external improvements in quality-of-life. Walker et al. (2020) also say it is important to handle conflicting ideas in sustainability work. My research shows this through the difference between what companies report doing and what they do as presented in the case studies. My argument builds upon research highlighting the conflict between financial and ethical goals in sustainability efforts. It proposes that those corporations adept at balancing profit-driven and morally guided social initiatives will achieve superior sustainability performance and better align with quality-of-life aspects.

There is a consistent theme across the cases, implying that corporations may prioritise some stakeholder requirements over others, which is the basis of leveraging materiality assessments when identifying and addressing the most important sustainable development challenges (Calabrese et al., 2019; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Across all cases and national contexts, companies prioritise the same main stakeholder groups, though the order of importance changes. Specifically, across all cases and national contexts, the shareholders/investors, employees, and customer stakeholder groups are consistently prioritised. This varied emphasis on specific social indicators and their connections to quality-of-life suggests a differential salience of stakeholders. The varying emphasis on specific social indicators and their links to quality-of-life suggests that different stakeholder groups have various levels of importance to a corporation, and collectively for an industry.

For example, the contrast in the varied focus on specific social indicators and their quality-of-Life links between the Restaurants & Entertainment and Health Care Cases when evaluated across Attributes in Category Six of the RISE Evaluation Framework illustrates differing stakeholder salience. The Restaurants & Entertainment Case shows a clearer path to quality-of-life

through social factors, focusing on community and customer experience. The Health Care Case, despite being related to well-being, shows a gap between social indicators and quality-of-life impacts, suggesting a focus on compliance or internal operations to comply with key stakeholder expectations.

As societal expectations and regulatory frameworks shift towards more stringent sustainability criteria, corporations must continuously adapt their strategies to remain compliant and meet stakeholder demands (ElAlfy et al., 2020). Stakeholder Theory suggests that leading firms prioritise understanding and responding to stakeholder needs and expectations, especially regarding social and economic impacts (Pinto, 2019; Khaled et al., 2021; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Inclusion of the stakeholder expectation and priorities is pivotal in defining strategic business objectives to fully address the weight of sustainable development challenges.

The moderate and often unclear link between what corporations do for sustainability and how outcomes of those actions affect quality-of-life happens because of how corporations report their actions. This makes the connection weaker. My research indicates that the connection between reporting standards – the most used sustainability management tool - and sustainability performance metrics may be weak because reporting standards prioritise organisational performance metrics over assessing the broader impact on society. This is due to reporting standards' inherent prioritisation of internal organisational performance metrics over the assessment of broader societal impact. Also, when companies separate sustainability work from broader quality-of-life goals, it can weaken this relationship.

Corporations often have trouble measuring how their sustainability efforts affect quality-of-life because of the complex connections between social impact metrics and quality-of-life indicators (Fet and Knudson, 2021; Pazienza et al., 2023). The moderate alignment could be attributed to the inclination of current reporting frameworks to accentuate easily quantifiable performance indicators, potentially at the expense of a more profound and holistic evaluation of their wider societal ramifications (ElAlfy et al., 2020). The loose connection between what companies do for sustainability and how it improves quality-of-life happens because of reporting that focuses on what is easy to measure, separating sustainability efforts from overall goals, and the difficulty of measuring societal impact.

6.2 Research Objective 2: Sustainability Management

Research objective two was oriented towards exploring the effectiveness of sustainability management tools as used by multinational corporations when evaluating their societal impacts. As presented in Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.4.1, Research Objective Two states:

To examine the application of sustainability management tools by multinational corporations.

What are the key challenges and opportunities for multinational corporations in operationalising sustainability management tools and realising performance?

The case studies consistently show that companies use various sustainability management tools, like reporting standards, project management methods, and aspects of business excellence models (BEMs). In Johnson's (2015) research, managerial competency in using sustainability management tools is linked to the quality of a company's sustainability reporting and stakeholder engagement. The use of sustainability management tools correlates consistently with sustainability performance. However, the skill in using these tools for intentional innovation or to improve quality-of-life varies.

Research shows that corporations can use different sustainability management tools to improve how they manage performance and report sustainability measures to stakeholders (Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017; Tasleem, Khan, Shah, et al., 2017). For instance, Interactive Media Services Category 5 (Innovation Performance) demonstrates that while tools are present (sufficiency), the adoption of formal excellence models is limited, indicating a lack of proficiency in intentionally enabling innovation for sustainability. Contemporary research has concentrated on refining reporting and disclosure methodologies, alongside enhancing content quality as an indicator of efficacy or achievement (Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018; Cöster et al., 2020a; Fleacă et al., 2023). However, there has been comparatively less emphasis on scrutinizing the definition of performance itself and the pertinence of reported sustainability performance metrics.

Across the cases, my research supports that sustainability management tools include management techniques and ways of making decisions, and are not limited to reporting standards, frameworks, or certifications. Other studies suggest that relying too much on reporting standards alone may not

be enough when assessing sustainability management effectiveness, highlighting the need for different viewpoints on the topic (Cöster et al., 2020; Talbot et al., 2021; Băndoi et al., 2021; Fleacă et al., 2023). Sustainability management tools are crucial for defining metrics, engaging stakeholders, and integrating sustainable practices.

6.2.1 Case Specific Discussion of Findings

Restaurants & Entertainment

The Restaurants & Entertainment Case findings indicates that although sustainability management tools and resources exist, they are not consistently applied to guarantee strong results and clear effects. These connections show how managing financial risks affects how sustainability performance is managed and measured using sustainability management tools and practices (N. Hussain, Rigoni and Cavezzali, 2018; Talbot et al., 2021). By embracing more comprehensive sustainability management tools and approaches, corporations in this Case can potentially improve their environmental practices, boost customer loyalty, and support community well-being. Although positive correlations exist suggesting that the presence of sustainability management tools contributes to positive performance outcomes, the findings also indicate that the deployment of these tools influences innovative practices within the sustainability management and performance context.

The presence of sustainability management tools is strong and clear in the Restaurants & Entertainment Case; however, their use for innovation and impact measurement is limited. The data suggests that there is not a strong thematic relationship between materiality and stakeholder engagement. If implementation processes are inconsistent or underdeveloped, even the best tools might not yield optimal results, including innovation. Survey results indicate that the actual methods and metrics used to measure stakeholder engagement, with relation to using stakeholder feedback in assessing materiality of sustainability issues, differ significantly across the studied countries. One strength is recognising sustainability's importance, but a key weakness is the inconsistent innovation performance and alignment with corporate sustainability goals.

Media & Entertainment

The Media & Entertainment Case actively uses sustainability management tools. There is a strong link between these tools and concepts of sustainable development governance. This suggests that these corporations' strategies

align with sustainable development principles and are strongly influenced by national and international policies. Media & Entertainment Case Samples and survey responses demonstrated adaptation of specific parts of sustainability models to fit their culture, industry, or regulations instead of using the entire model. Corporations might benchmark against principles embedded in these models even if they pursue their own internal quality or sustainability frameworks (Jankalová and Jankal, 2020; Fok et al., 2021).

A key factor in the Media & Entertainment case was how they defined and managed sustainability performance measures. The presence of economic and social indicators alongside environmental indicators reveals potential interconnectedness, opening avenues for inventive solutions centred on developing sustainability performance indicators and aligning them with quality-of-life frameworks (Uysal and Sirgy, 2019; Alsayegh et al., 2020). These correlations point to a relationship where environmental and social sustainability efforts are aligned with quality-of-life considerations, focusing on external impacts. These findings specific to the Media & Entertainment Case suggest an inverse relationship where an emphasis for effects on quality-of-life occur through environmental and social factors rather than economic or governance aspects. This indicates a potential disconnect between economic gains and broader societal well-being, highlighting the importance of considering the systemic impact of business activities on sustainable development and quality-of-life (Shinwell et al., 2018; Fioramonti et al., 2019; Alsayegh et al., 2020).

Hospitality

Although sustainability management tools and resources exist, content analysis and survey responses suggest they are not consistently applied to ensure strong results and clear effects within the Hospitality industry. There is some indication that the Hospitality Case had stronger connections to sustainability management tools but weaker connections to sustainability performance measures. This range of correlations, derived from content analysis of corporate reporting documents, indicates that Hospitality corporations effectively disclose their sustainability management tools as central to operationalising sustainability performance. Survey responses showed that sustainability leadership roles, while varied, are influential.

Survey data also revealed variations in dedicated leadership roles and accountability mechanisms for sustainability performance evaluation across different countries. These variations underscore the importance of leadership in effectively promoting sustainability management and

enhancing overall performance (Rodrigues and Franco, 2019; Thun and Zülch, 2023). However, the inconsistency of implementation methods and performance evaluation standards highlights the need for consistent and accountable practices in the Hospitality industry. Also, these differences show the need for a standard way to measure and manage sustainability performance across different national contexts.

The collective evidence from surveys and corporate reporting analysis in the Hospitality industry indicates a reliance on structured reporting for environmental management and impact assessment. This demonstrates how sustainability management tools may be used to manage risk and improve sustainability performance while also revealing shortcomings in comprehensive strategy and performance measurement. Inconsistent use of corporate reporting and external validation impacts the reliability of sustainability disclosures.

This raises concerns about how these disclosures are perceived by stakeholders, especially regarding societal contributions, and the reliability of their contents (Băndoi et al., 2021; Wynn and Jones, 2022; Sehgal et al., 2023). The presentation of social impact in reports and management is not consistent, making it hard to fully understand the Hospitality industry's societal contributions. Survey data indicates a limited use of BEMs and a tendency to overlook external drivers. Sustainable process design in the Hospitality Case, while adequate, does not actively foster innovation for sustainability performance management and impact.

Health Care

In the Health Care Case, sustainability management tools correlate with improved sustainability performance and alignment with governance frameworks and national and industry policies. The relationship with economic and governance performance indicators suggests an internal focus on the operational impacts of using sustainability management tools. The correlations between economic indicators and corporate governance, stakeholder engagement, and social indicators, contrasted with their non-significant correlation with quality-of-life, suggest a focus on internal financial stability and operational efficiencies rather than direct societal impact (Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018; Alsayegh et al., 2020). This indicates that while corporations in this industry may leverage these tools for internal sustainability gains, their impact on broader quality-of-life measures remains tangential and hard to trace. Evidence of relevant initiatives correlates strongly with sustainability performance and strategic corporate governance.

This suggests inherent difficulties in effectively quantifying the tangible business outcomes of sustainable practices (Ahi et al., 2018; Alsayegh et al., 2020).

These findings indicate a primary focus on operational and financial outcomes from using any range of sustainability management tools. This correlation suggests that while sustainability processes are effective for typical performance, sustainability processes are not optimised for innovating or demonstrating a clear impact on quality-of-life. The widespread application of sustainability management tools within the industry indicates that innovation for sustainability performance management is adequate but does not intentionally trace impact (Jankalová and Jankal, 2020; Nunhes et al., 2020; Saulick et al., 2023). Health Care Case Samples demonstrated the tendency to prioritise internal benefits and stakeholder expectations rather than strategically leveraging sustainability management tools to drive innovation and improve quality-of-life, highlighting a tension between compliance and transformative application.

Interactive Media Services

The Interactive Media Services Case revealed a varied implementation of sustainability management tools across different operational contexts and national boundaries. Stakeholder engagement helps identify key issues and ensures corporate strategies address important sustainability challenges (Fet and Knudson, 2021; Talbot et al., 2021). However, the weaker relationships between corporate governance and use of sustainability management tools indicate that management practices are not consistently supported by overarching governance frameworks. This hinders the realisation of thorough sustainability management and performance. Consequently, the limited integration of corporate governance with sustainability activities restricts the industry’s capacity to strategically adapt governance frameworks that support and advance relevant sustainability objectives (Pazienza et al., 2023; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024).

The relationship with sustainability performance suggests that the use of sustainability management tools contributes to operational outcomes, aligning with governance and stakeholder expectations. These correlations suggest that corporations which actively engage with their stakeholders, use sustainability management tools, and focus on environmental indicators tend to exhibit clearer approaches for sustainability performance. However, the adoption rate of auditing or assurance practices and services is low,

indicating a potential area for improvement in demonstrating transparency and accountability within sustainability practices (Yan et al., 2022).

The findings support the concept that stakeholder feedback and resource allocation for stakeholder engagement are vital for developing social impact measures, even amidst the Interactive Media Services industry's challenges in directly linking these efforts to demonstrable improvements in quality-of-life (Cöster et al., 2020; Fet and Knudson, 2021). This is particularly important considering the Interactive Media Services case revealed weak links between corporate governance and key sustainability drivers, hindering thorough sustainability management.

6.2.2 Cross Case Discussion of Findings

A conflict arises between the superficial implementation of sustainability management tools for regulatory compliance or internal efficiency and their deeper, more transformative application aimed at fostering comprehensive, innovation-led sustainability impacts. This conflict is particularly noticeable in areas such as social impact investment and the development of formal innovation frameworks. This pattern highlights a recurrent theme in the examined case studies, where sustainability efforts are implemented without effectively targeting improvements in overall well-being and societal value (Shinwell et al., 2018; Gatto, 2020; Fet and Knudson, 2021). However, some corporations strategically leverage sustainability management tools to drive innovation and improve quality-of-life, demonstrating a commitment to transformative application beyond mere compliance.

The application of sustainability management tools is often influenced by the demands of specific stakeholders rather than as a systematic approach addressing all affected groups' needs (Talbot et al., 2021). This selective application can lead to a narrow focus on easily measurable or immediately pressing concerns, potentially overlooking broader, long-term impacts on quality-of-life. Often, corporations grapple with balancing disclosure breadth and strategic focus, indicating a tension between meeting diverse stakeholder expectations and addressing the most material issues (Pérez-López et al., 2015). Corporations often balance profit maximisation for shareholders with ethical responsibilities (Hörisch et al., 2014). Multinational corporations use standard business practices to manage sustainability performance, but they do not integrate business excellence principles to improve performance reporting and impact assessment (Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018; Cöster et al., 2020a; Pazienza et al., 2023; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024).

The necessity to overcome trade-offs and conflicts is exactly what stakeholder theory is about in the social context of a business, that is, addressing conflicts of financial profit and ethical responsibilities by creating mutual interests among the demands of all relevant stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Hörisch et al., 2014). Sustainability management and stakeholder theory fit together as they allow for positive links between stakeholder interests. Paradox tension theory explains the challenges corporations face when trying to balance economic, environmental, and social goals, and how they can manage these conflicts to achieve positive, impactful results (Pinto, 2019; Walker et al., 2020).

National contexts and existing corporate cultures influence the choice and effectiveness of sustainability management tool application (Adamek, 2018; Cöster et al., 2020a; Nunhes et al., 2020). Observed country-specific associations suggest that national policy and regulatory environments significantly shape which sustainability management tools are adopted and how proficiently they are integrated (external influence). However, variations in sustainability practices seem to be shaped by underlying corporate governance structures and national contexts (internal influence). This influence extends to leadership roles, management practices, reporting standards, and stakeholder engagement patterns, demonstrating a pervasive relationship between national context and corporate sustainability initiatives.

6.3 Research Objective 3: The Public Policy Influence

The third research objective explores the relationship between public policy and response of multinational corporations through use of sustainability management tools. As stated in Chapter 1, sub-section 1.4.1, Research Objective Three states:

To analyse the relationship between national public policy and corporate sustainability initiatives.

How do national public policies influence the adoption and implementation of sustainability management tools as used by multinational corporations?

In alignment with Research Objective 2, the analysis of findings elucidates the use of sustainability management tools by corporations to define and assess social impacts pertinent to quality-of-life indicators, reflecting responses to stakeholder demands and organisational performance objectives. Several mechanisms drive the influence of public policy on

corporate sustainability (Beare et al., 2014). The adoption of sustainability reporting often does not create connections to sustainability priorities at the national and global level. However, my findings present a key relationship between public policy and corporate sustainability initiatives of multinational corporations because of how sustainability management tools are perceived and deployed.

Evidence supporting this relationship consists of country-specific associations found from survey results regarding leadership roles, management practices, reporting standards, and stakeholder engagement patterns. The existing regulatory environments and national sustainable development policies shape the adoption, adaptation, and integration of sustainability management tools and practices (Talbot et al., 2021; Fleacă et al., 2023). Corporate sustainability reporting often lacks explicit connections to broader public policy objectives, reflecting a gap in how corporations align their sustainability initiatives with national or global priorities (Beare et al., 2014; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024).

This includes the impact of regulatory pressures and policy incentives on corporate behaviour, particularly in highly regulated sectors such as Health Care and Hospitality (Aureli et al., 2020; Talbot et al., 2021). These pressures prompt corporations to adopt sustainability practices, thereby aligning with national sustainable development priorities. However, the evidence suggests that the relationship between corporate sustainability reporting and national public policy is still underdeveloped, needing further effort to improve understanding of such a relationship. A broader perspective is needed regarding what constitutes a sustainability management tool or approach, as the current focus remains on reporting standards disclosure practice as the core driver (Cöster et al., 2020; Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Talbot et al., 2021).

6.3.1 Case Specific Discussion of Findings

Restaurants & Entertainment

Findings from the Restaurants & Entertainment Case demonstrated that robust governance structures and effective stakeholder engagement processes are foundational to achieving comprehensive sustainability performance, potentially contributing to positive social outcomes. Survey results from this case included stakeholder identification of regulatory and legislative stakeholders, which further enhances governance and risk management. This case also showed that working closely with industry

partners makes aligning with industry standards more valuable, highlighting the importance of collaborative approaches to promote sustainable practices (Ruiz et al., 2021; Talbot et al., 2021).

Observed disparities in innovation performance among countries in this Case imply that national policy and industry-specific environments significantly influence the implementation and efficacy of sustainability initiatives. National context influences leadership, management, reporting, and stakeholder engagement, demonstrating its pervasive relationship with corporate sustainability initiatives. However, some argue that corporate sustainability initiatives are primarily driven by market forces and competitive pressures, with national policies playing a secondary role (Ioannou and Serafeim, 2011; Nunhes et al., 2020; Fok et al., 2021).

Media & Entertainment

Governance structures that prioritize sustainable practices, adhering to and complying with various mandatory and voluntary policies, are associated with enhanced sustainability performance and improvements in quality-of-life. This suggests a relationship between sustainable development governance and positive social outcomes. This finding indicates that national public policies, along with the regulatory and cultural landscapes they shape, affect how corporations implement and manage their sustainability efforts (Fok et al., 2021; Talbot et al., 2021). However, the Media & Entertainment case illustrated that some corporations are motivated to adopt sustainability practices because they genuinely want to make a positive impact on society and the environment, irrespective of regulatory requirements.

The observed country-specific differences in implementation suggest that national public policy influences how corporations collaborate on sustainable development progress. This heightened attention to competitors might drive companies to benchmark their sustainability practices against industry peers, adopt best practices, and differentiate themselves in the market (Ioannou and Serafeim, 2011; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). While this may imply a correlation between public policy and corporate sustainability for this Case, it is essential to acknowledge that other factors, such as stakeholder pressure, market demand, and competitive dynamics, also influence corporate behaviours (Beare et al., 2014; Nunhes et al., 2020).

Hospitality

Country-specific differences in governance, how sustainability management tools are used, and performance reporting show how national and

organisational systems influence corporate sustainability performance outcomes of the Hospitality Case. Integrating sustainability into hospitality operations demands understanding regional and organisational contexts to effectively link corporate practices with quality-of-life outcomes. Several studies have highlighted the limited impact of public policy and regulatory frameworks on corporate sustainability practices, particularly in developing countries where enforcement mechanisms may be weak or non-existent (Rodrigues and Franco, 2019; Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Fok et al., 2021; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). The Hospitality Case would benefit from incorporating a broader range of stakeholders to more clearly include and prioritize regulatory and legislative stakeholders at national and global scales, as well as accounting for the environmental and social implications of their operations. Such an expansion enables a stronger alignment with national sustainable development priorities (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Mcgrath and Ross, 2021).

The findings also underscore the importance of regulatory frameworks and industry standards in guiding sustainability management practices, suggesting that clear policy directives can catalyse strategic corporate action. These variations highlight the need for tailored sustainability strategies that consider regional differences and organisational structures to enhance corporate sustainability performance. Flexible guidelines and open discussions are beneficial, particularly for encouraging better sustainability reporting and management practices (T. Hussain et al., 2018; Talbot et al., 2021). The influence of national context on leadership, management, reporting, and stakeholder engagement further validates its pervasive relationship with corporate sustainability initiatives. This is also highlighted in discussion of findings in Research Objective 2.

Health Care

The findings reveal distinct country-specific patterns in how Health Care corporations identify and engage with crucial external stakeholders, such as industry partners and regulators. Different approaches to managing external stakeholders highlight how national policies influence corporate sustainability initiatives in Health Care, including value creation and sustainability measurement (Isaksson, 2021; Shayan et al., 2022; Hristov et al., 2022). The importance of regulatory frameworks and industry standards in guiding sustainability management practices suggests that more explicit public policy directives can catalyse strategic corporate action. These findings imply that

regulatory and cultural landscapes shape the methods corporations use to implement sustainability practices (Fok et al., 2021).

Survey results for the Health Care Case broadly indicate that industry partners are prioritised over regulators and legislators, and shareholders and investors are prioritised ahead of customers and employees. It is important to note that most survey respondents have headquarters based in the United Kingdom (42%). This may reflect a stronger alignment with country-specific regulations and industry norms, potentially overshadowing broader global sustainability considerations. Tailored sustainability strategies that consider regional differences and organisational structures are needed to enhance corporate sustainability performance outcomes (Fok et al., 2021; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024).

Interactive Media Services

Country-specific management practices, stakeholder identification, and business excellence model adaptation provide insights for Research Objective 3. Corporations choose and use different sustainability management tools based on industry trends and national context, as well as global policies and standard practices. This highlights the connection between national policy and cultural contexts and how these factors affect corporate sustainability performance, and the tools used to meet public policy goals (Nunhes et al., 2020; Fet and Knudson, 2021; Saulick et al., 2023). Results showed that the Interactive Media Services Case prioritises shareholders and investors, employees, and customers, which is consistent with the Health Care and Media & Entertainment Cases. Such consistency infers that priority of stakeholders may be driven more strongly by the industry and the nature of work activities, irrespective of corporate headquarter country.

In the Interactive Media Services Case, sustainability performance lacks a clear link to quality-of-life, and established BEMs are not formally adopted with the intention of sustainability innovation. This indicates a poor relationship between sustainability initiatives and societal benefit or systematic innovation (Jankalová and Jankal, 2018; Pazienza et al., 2023). The limited use of effective business strategies prevents the innovation needed to turn sustainability efforts into traceable social benefits, limiting the industry's ability to show a clear external impact (Ahlström et al., 2020; Hristov et al., 2022). The need for flexible guidelines and open discussions is particularly important to encourage better sustainability reporting and practices in this industry. This is further evidenced in Research Objective 2,

which reinforces the need for national policies and guidelines to facilitate the integration of corporate sustainability initiatives with broader societal goals, and vice versa.

6.3.2 Cross Case Discussion of Findings

The need to understand the influence of national public policy on corporate sustainability initiatives is a persistent theme across all cases, highlighting the critical role of policy frameworks in shaping corporate behaviour in sustainability performance. Pervasive national and international influence on policy frameworks exists for industries structuring their corporate sustainability management practices from an emphasis on mitigating environmental impacts. This further supports the discovery and definition of a peripheral relationship discussed Research Objective One.

National policies often create distinct stakeholder hierarchies that companies must navigate (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Policy goals can influence companies to change how they prioritise and engage with stakeholders, affecting how initiatives are carried out. This aligns with Stakeholder Theory, which emphasises the importance of satisfying a broad range of stakeholders, including not just shareholders, but also employees, customers, regulators, and the community (Castelo et al., 2007; Beare et al., 2014). These hierarchies are dynamic, causing paradoxes between what stakeholders expect and what corporations can practically deliver over any given period.

National policies can create tensions between global sustainability goals and local operational realities, creating the need for innovative solutions (Nunhes et al., 2020; Farias et al., 2020). Corporations navigate a persistent challenge of reconciling universal sustainability standards with the imperative to conform to varied national regulatory and cultural environments. This can lead to fragmented or inconsistent global approaches to sustainability management. The globalisation of sustainability standards creates challenges because it clashes with sustainable development policies at distinct levels (Maia et al., 2022; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). This makes it harder for multinational corporations to find effective solutions.

National public policy acts as a powerful generative mechanism, shaping the very nature and implementation of corporate sustainability initiatives (Lyon et al., 2018; Aureli et al., 2020). Policies at the macro level have a direct and significant effect on corporate practices at the micro level, influencing the

observable results. This explains the observed variations in my findings, where corporations adapt their approaches to comply with or leverage their specific national landscapes and industry standards.

6.4 Summative Discussion

All analysed industries acknowledge the importance of sustainability and implement basic practices. There is a consistent reliance on stakeholder engagement as a driver. A recurring paradox is the struggle to explicitly link internal sustainability performance to comprehensive quality-of-life outcomes, particularly from an economic and social perspective. The implicit alignment between corporate sustainability and quality-of-life is not accidental but structured by underlying mechanisms. This alignment, viewed through as a critical realist lens where structures influence events, relates to stakeholder theory and paradox tension theory when investigating the complex interrelations of the observed underlying mechanisms.

Such an alignment also fosters the understanding of how corporate sustainability efforts affect quality-of-life (Lawani, 2020; Mukumbang, 2023). These structural factors include embedded cultural norms, market pressures, and regulatory frameworks that indirectly push corporations towards sustainable practices. When corporations focus on their financial bottom line, sustainability becomes just another opportunity, which can undermine the core values needed to affect real change (Hahn et al., 2018).

The specific mechanisms and priorities for implementing sustainability vary by industry and country. For instance, while Health Care and Interactive Media Services show explicit disconnects with quality-of-life from economic and social indicators, Restaurants & Entertainment demonstrates a more implicit, yet significant correlation. This informs the concept of Stakeholder Theory by demonstrating that businesses need to be aware of the economic and social implications of their corporate sustainability practices and who is impacted by the consequences (N. Hussain, Rigoni and Cavezzali, 2018; Alsayegh et al., 2020; Hamad et al., 2020). Stakeholder Theory helps explain these differences by highlighting the influence of different stakeholder groups on corporate decision-making in sustainability management.

My research indicates a foundational but often implicit alignment between corporate sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators. This suggests that companies may not always recognise or articulate the explicit

connections between their sustainability activities and broader societal well-being, which could limit the potential for maximising their impact and communicating their value to stakeholders. The RISE Evaluation Framework helps clarify an understanding for how corporations manage sustainability, how well they do (performance), and what impact they have (on whom and by how much). The RISE Evaluation Framework objectively and repeatedly assesses sustainability management, performance, and impact, demonstrating its relevance to various facets of quality-of-life.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

Chapter 7 concludes this thesis by summarizing the key findings from the application of the Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence (RISE) Evaluation Framework, as discussed in Chapter 5, and integrating them with the theoretical insights from Chapter 6. This chapter aims to consolidate the research outcomes, articulate the study's significant contributions to both academic theory and practical application, and outline avenues for future research. My research makes several distinct contributions:

- **Development of the RISE Evaluation Framework:** A novel, systematic framework for assessing corporate sustainability performance and its alignment with quality-of-life indicators.
- **Defining the Peripheral Relationship:** Demonstrating that corporate sustainability initiatives often indirectly impact quality-of-life.
- **Analysis of Sustainability Management Tool Usage:** Revealing how corporations use sustainability management tools, and what that means for innovation and accountability.
- **Identification of Public Policy Influence:** Highlighting the considerable influence of national public policy on the design and execution of corporate sustainability initiatives.
- **Empirical Insights into Stakeholder Salience and Paradox Tensions:** Providing evidence for how stakeholder prioritization and the management of paradoxes influence sustainability outcomes.

My findings indicate that while multinational corporations are committed to stakeholder engagement and sustainable development, their initiatives often lack strong ways to directly influence and measure societal well-being. This research illustrates how moving beyond conventional perspectives of corporate social responsibility can enable organizations to more directly influence societal well-being and support thriving communities (Ozanne et al., 2016; Nunhes et al., 2020; Hristov et al., 2022). My research helps organisations show how their sustainability efforts influence quality-of-life factors and impact societal well-being (Ozanne et al., 2016; Nunhes et al., 2020; Hristov et al., 2022).

My research outcomes show that multinational corporations use similar sustainability management tools and methods, but they do not always use them in the same way or for the same reasons. This inherent fragmentation hinders the establishment of industry-wide or cross-industry cohesion, thereby complicating the consistent measurement of sustainability performance outcomes. Consequently, adopting and assessing against

business excellence principles presents a critical pathway to build the necessary coherence for more robust and comparable sustainability performance evaluation (Jankalová and Jankal, 2020; Pazienza et al., 2023).

My research indicates that multinational corporations could benefit from a more structured evaluation approach, such as the RISE Evaluation Framework, to better translate current corporate sustainability activities into tangible improvements and trace their effects on various aspects of quality-of-life (Saulick et al., 2023). While multinational corporations often rely on public policies and voluntary standards to shape their sustainability strategies, this approach frequently falls short due to a lack of robust accountability mechanisms (Alsayegh et al., 2020).

7.1 Contributions and Implications of Findings

The findings of this research underscore the need for multinational corporations to adopt a more structured evaluation approach, like the RISE Evaluation Framework, to effectively translate sustainability activities into measurable improvements in quality-of-life (Saulick et al., 2023). Current reliance on public policies and voluntary standards often proves insufficient due to inadequate accountability mechanisms (Alsayegh et al., 2020). These solutions aim to balance environmental, social, and economic factors while enhancing stakeholders' and communities' overall quality-of-life. My research offers significant academic contributions by elucidating the context-specific relevance of stakeholder groups through the lens of Stakeholder Theory. It clarifies the spectrum of tensions encountered by multinational corporations in the design, implementation, and management of sustainability initiatives through the lens of Paradox Tension Theory. Additionally, it explicates the mechanism by which national policy impacts corporate sustainability from a critical realism perspective. A systematic evaluation framework can help identify and measure how corporate sustainability efforts affect quality-of-life. The RISE Evaluation Framework offers a more robust process to assess how corporate sustainability performance affects communities' well-being.

7.1.1 Theoretical and Academic

Thematic analysis showed that strong stakeholder engagement and the use of multiple sustainability management tools are key in defining corporate sustainability performance metrics. This finding builds upon established stakeholder theory, which has traditionally focused on the inclusion of

specific stakeholder groups in sustainability initiatives driven by value creation (Jadoon et al., 2021; Talbot et al., 2021). My research provides novel insights by empirically demonstrating how a broadened scope of impact considerations and deepened stakeholder engagement via corporate use of the materiality assessments (Betti et al., 2018; Torelli et al., 2020; Machado et al., 2021) directly enhance the linkage between sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators. For instance, the findings in the Health Care case, despite its focus on well-being, showed a peripheral link to quality-of-life, highlighting a gap that the RISE Evaluation Framework's comprehensive approach aims to address by rigorously evaluating this connection (or lack thereof).

It does so by broadening the scope of impact considerations and deepening stakeholder engagement made relevant from the materiality assessment process (Betti et al., 2018; Torelli et al., 2020; Machado et al., 2021). This contrasts with previous research that often focused solely on internal organisational performance (Calabrese et al., 2019; Torelli et al., 2020). This enhanced engagement improves the ability to link sustainability performance metrics with tangible quality-of-life indicators. Developing and using the RISE Evaluation Framework thus contributes to academic understanding of the levers which shape corporate sustainability performance metrics and their relationships with quality-of-life indicators, offering a more comprehensive evaluative lens than previously available.

My findings contribute to Stakeholder Theory by demonstrating the nuanced and country-specific salience of different stakeholder groups. They highlight the tension between addressing a wide array of stakeholder demands versus prioritising those most salient to financial or regulatory compliance. Incorporating new impact considerations and increasing stakeholder engagement in the materiality process enhances the ability to connect sustainability performance metrics to quality-of-life indicators (Hörisch et al., 2014; Pinto, 2019; Ruiz et al., 2021). This insight is invaluable for multinational corporations operating across diverse cultural and regulatory landscapes.

My research identifies specific tensions within corporate sustainability, elaborating on Paradox Tension Theory (Pinto, 2019; Nunhes et al., 2020; Fok et al., 2021). It suggests that these tensions are not merely abstract but manifest concretely in corporate governance and leadership structures, management practices, and reported performance outcomes. My findings demonstrate that a corporation’s relationship with its stakeholders

significantly shapes how they formulate sustainability plans, define success, and communicate results (Torelli et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2020; Fok et al., 2021). This is substantiated by evidence from stakeholder identification, prioritisation, and engagement practices, along with the measures deployed in corporate sustainability management practices to assess impact on business and impact on stakeholders. The study uses critical realism to explain how underlying factors influence corporate sustainability practices and their relationships with societal outcomes (Lawani, 2020; Mukumbang, 2023). It offers evidence for differentiating between corporate sustainability's perceived and actual effects from a practical perspective (Ahlström et al., 2020; Mukumbang, 2023). As a result, my research findings highlight how corporations balance financial goals with societal well-being, especially regarding meeting stakeholder expectations through transparent sustainability reporting (Diouf and Boiral, 2017).

7.1.2 Practitioner-oriented

Comparative case studies were used to evaluate corporate sustainability practices, sustainability performance metrics, and quality-of-life indicators, providing insights into their relationships and contributions to sustainable development performance. The presence of these themes across the cases highlights the crucial role of sustainability management tools in shaping how a company defines its sustainability performance metrics. Previous sustainability management research focused on reporting mechanisms, reporting quality to satisfy stakeholders, and impact of sustainability management and reporting on organisational or financial performance (Maas et al., 2016; Diouf and Boiral, 2017; Tasleem, Khan, Hussain Shah, et al., 2017; Gnanaweera and Kunori, 2018; Cöster et al., 2020a; Friske et al., 2023).

However, my research examined how companies use sustainability management tools to manage sustainability performance and its outcomes, focusing on understanding the broader societal impacts. Findings inform the instance of where the corporate governance structures had formal means of support and leadership in place, the level of stakeholder engagement was systematic, and the sustainability performance measures were more refined and consistent. This resulted in more informative corporate sustainability measures with greater, though peripheral, relevance to quality-of-life indicators.

A key theme if my findings emphasise how corporations can improve their reputations, strengthen community relationships, and create long-term value

by using transparent sustainability practices more effectively. This also includes the observation that engaging stakeholders with the intention of developing measurable, robust sustainability management practices impacts the ability to trace direct and indirect impact. Corporations should move beyond general sustainability reporting towards more explicit and measurable demonstrations of their impact on quality-of-life. This requires investing in robust impact measurement frameworks and integrating materiality assessments more deeply into strategic planning. The focus must shift from simply adopting sustainability management tools to mastering them for transformative change through a culture of innovation (Farias et al., 2020; Fet and Knudson, 2021). By improving sustainability and environmental management, businesses of all sizes gain a competitive advantage (Fet and Knudson, 2021). Corporations could also improve their corporate sustainability policies by collaborating with governments by including and prioritising regulators and legislators as stakeholder groups.

The RISE Evaluation Framework is flexible, allowing it to be adapted to different organisational scales and needs for managing corporate sustainability. This adaptability ensures that the assessment as a process is adaptable to various organisational structures, industries, sectors and levels of sustainability maturity by leveraging business excellence principles to achieve world-class levels of corporate sustainability performance and impact. The RISE Evaluation Framework offers a clear, structured way to evaluate and improve an organisation's sustainability practices across various industries. By incorporating social science principles into the assessment principles to inform levels of performance, the Framework contributes to more informed and effective management decision by providing a more rigorous and comprehensive assessment of corporate sustainability performance outcomes.

Developing and testing the RISE Evaluation Framework clarifies the interconnections between corporate sustainability practices, performance metrics, and quality-of-life indicators. It also highlights the need to improve impact measurement and develop performance management systems to better quantify the effects of sustainability initiatives on business and stakeholder outcomes (Saeed and Kersten, 2020; Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Fet and Knudson, 2021). By measuring the performance of organisations that have adopted business excellence models (BEMs), researchers can more clearly identify the benefits and challenges associated with sustainability performance and impact. My research provides context for

best practices and guidelines in implementing business excellence-oriented frameworks. It also contributes to corporate sustainability performance management by investigating the relationships between sustainability performance measures, quality-of-life indicators, and sustainability management tools.

Based on the observed country-specific nuances in sustainability initiatives (Chapter 5 findings), public policies require consideration of these variations to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of national policy objectives. To foster greater corporate responsibility and societal benefit, regulations should promote consistent, transparent reporting on quality-of-life impacts and incentivise sustainability innovation, not just compliance. Findings suggest that focusing on compliance often yields indirect, rather than direct, improvements to quality-of-life. Collaborative efforts between industry, government, and civil society could help bridge the gap between internal performance and external societal well-being, ensuring that corporate sustainability efforts translate into tangible improvements in quality-of-life (Gatto, 2020; Jankalová and Jankal, 2020), as evidenced by the need for stronger linkages identified through applying the RISE Evaluation Framework. To ensure uniformity and comparability, regulatory bodies should establish standardised frameworks for sustainability reporting with accountability systems in place, as enhanced transparency and accountability for outcomes of sustainability practices correlates with increased company value (Băndoi et al., 2021). This suggests the need to shift from regulating disclosure to assessing the disclosed information, rewarding positive outcomes, and addressing negative ones, to ensure accountability for impact.

7.2 Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights into the relationships between corporate sustainability practices, performance metrics, and quality-of-life indicators, there are limitations. These limitations point towards fruitful areas for future investigation. The RISE Evaluation Framework relies on potentially incomplete public corporate reports. The use of secondary data sources, including dynamic databases like Carrots & Sticks (which exhibits inconsistent reporting frequency and evolving scope), introduces potential biases (Beare et al., 2014). To address this, I used a rigorous triangulation approach, integrating findings from primary survey data and detailed content analyses across multiple sources. Despite these efforts to enhance

robustness, this limitation underscores the ongoing challenge of comprehensive data capture and points to future research opportunities in developing more consistent and dynamic data collection methodologies.

The primary data for the Case Study Evaluation, while diverse across industries, was limited in volume due to time and resource constraints. Specifically, the final primary data sample included 130 corporations, 470 reporting documents, and 211 survey responses. This sample size, while sufficient for the in-depth case study approach, may affect the broader generalisability of the findings beyond the specific industries and countries examined (Mukumbang, 2023). A larger sample size could provide a more comprehensive representation of the population, thereby improving the reliability and generalisability of the contextualized findings. My research focused on multinational corporations in highly developed countries, such as Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This specific geographical and economic scope limits the generalisability of the findings to other regions, particularly developing nations, which may have distinct sustainability challenges and policy environments.

The survey data collected was cross-sectional, which inherently limits the ability to infer causality or observe longitudinal changes in corporate sustainability practices and their impacts (Lawani, 2020; Ahlström et al., 2020). Although the content analysis of corporate reports spanned multiple years, the primary survey data represents a single point in time. This distinction means that observed relationships reflect associations rather than direct causal pathways or evolutionary trends over time. Despite these limitations, my research provides an important foundation for further developing robust frameworks and tools to measure and improve corporate sustainability performance in alignment with stakeholder theory, paradox theory, and the social impact assessment process.

The RISE Evaluation Framework, a structured and effective tool, offers significant potential for further development. Future research should refine the scoring and strengthen the evidence, ensuring greater robustness and wider use. This refinement could include integrating qualitative data collection methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, to gain richer insights into the experiences of corporate managers and local community members (Lawani, 2020; Ahlström et al., 2020; Mukumbang, 2023). Such qualitative insights would provide valuable context and further validate the quantitative findings.

The implementation of the RISE Evaluation Framework was primarily conducted by one researcher, which inherently introduces the potential for bias. However, I employed rigorous mitigation strategies to enhance the findings' robustness and objectivity. These included data triangulation from multiple sources and detailed coding protocols across diverse countries and industries. While acknowledging that source data from dynamic databases like UNDP and Carrots & Sticks will evolve and influence future outputs, my study aimed to provide a comprehensive snapshot within its defined parameters. The challenges inherent in quantifying the impact of sustainability initiatives on business and stakeholder outcomes, along with the need for further development of impact measurement approaches and integrated performance management systems, represent a significant gap in research due to the limitations previously discussed.

7.3 Future Research

Future research could employ longitudinal designs to track sustainability performance and quality-of-life indicators over extended periods, providing a more dynamic understanding of their relationships and impacts. It is beneficial to further investigate sustainability practices and performance metrics within the small and medium-sized enterprise sector, as they are often overlooked in sustainability research (Khaled et al., 2021). Further investigation into this area could reveal valuable insights into how sustainability management tools can be effectively scaled from global to local applications, as well as the reciprocal, measurable impacts of such scaling efforts on quality-of-life factors.

Qualitative research is needed to explore the "how" and "why" behind the observed paradoxes and country-specific variations, particularly regarding the peripheral relationship between sustainability performance and quality-of-life. Future research that includes in-depth and on-site interviews would directly address this specific limitation and could potentially provide a stronger understanding of organisational culture, specifically regarding sustainability integration and established internal performance excellence practices. Integrating business excellence models (BEMs) and principles into strategic corporate sustainability leadership is essential for understanding the relationships between performance management and societal impact (Jankalová and Jankal, 2018; Pazienza et al., 2023). The inconsistent integration as a limitation of current corporate practice represents a research gap that warrants further exploration. Additional data gathering from a

variety of stakeholders, including staff members, clients, and local communities, may be part of such a study to evaluate participants' opinions and experiences regarding corporate sustainability performance outcomes and how they impact their perceived quality-of-life.

To broaden the applicability of the research, future studies should include a more diverse sample of entities from nations in different development categories, such as medium, low, or underdeveloped. This also includes the opportunity to investigate comparative studies across a wider range of industries and national contexts to further investigate the influence of public policy and corporate cultural factors. A broader data set from other sources beyond Carrots & Sticks and the UNDP would give more robust findings that could potentially change the ultimate outcome of the framework criteria and scoring logic.

Future studies could expand the geographical scope to include nations with more diverse levels of quality-of-life and broaden the industry scope to include sensitive industries like tobacco, adult entertainment, small arms and ammunition, and gambling and casinos. When defining the scope of my research, I noticed a significant omission in how certain industries were either included or excluded when rating or assessing their sustainability activities as high performing. Expanding the consideration to include controversial or sensitive industries allows for a more thorough examination of how ethically questionable goods and services impact quality-of-life. The diversity of industries studied enables a broader view of standardising how ‘performance’ and ‘impact’ can be assessed, as well as learning how priorities are balanced across industries and sectors (Kim, 2021; Pazienza et al., 2023).

Future research could focus on refining the RISE Evaluation Framework to incorporate more nuanced measures of social and environmental impact, as well as to develop tools for assessing the long-term sustainability of initiatives. Such research could further explore the differences in sustainability performance measures between companies that voluntarily report on sustainability practices and those mandated to do so by regulation (Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Fleacă et al., 2023). Such research could then inform the nuances of holding organisations accountable to their levels and ranges of performance.

The findings of my research validate the need for further exploration of sustainability reporting assurance practices and frameworks. More focused research is needed to explore how assurance practices and frameworks

affect reported content and organisational performance, especially considering the specifics of sustainability performance measures (Braam and Peeters, 2018; Yan et al., 2022; Sehgal et al., 2023). Outcomes of such research could reveal what truly drives corporate sustainability and separates real performance from mere greenwashing (Cöster et al., 2020; Friske et al., 2023).

7.4 Final Conclusion

My research offers significant insights into the multifaceted landscape of corporate sustainability, demonstrating its evolution from a compliance-driven activity to a more integrated strategic imperative. While multinational corporations are working to include sustainability in their business management practices, they still need to show and measure how they help improve people's lives (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Pazienza et al., 2023; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Addressing this gap requires understanding tensions, causal links, and stakeholder value across national contexts. Future research should focus on strengthening causal links between corporate sustainability practices and improvements in quality-of-life using longitudinal studies and diverse stakeholder perspectives.

Integrating sustainability into business operations and strategy is crucial for improving quality-of-life. The research objectives offered a complete view of how business sustainability practices and performance measures are related to quality-of-life indicators and performance impact levels. My findings emphasise the lack of consideration for holding organisations accountable for their direct or indirect impacts on society, despite the resources and tools available to manage corporate sustainability performance. The absence of quantification in this realm hinders effective control, leading to a preference for transparent reporting as a substitute for demonstrated impact within a systems thinking framework (Ahlström et al., 2020; Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Pazienza et al., 2023). Balancing economic, social, and environmental goals creates tensions because short-term benefits can conflict with long-term sustainability objectives. Resolving these tensions requires strategies that balance competing needs and create overall value.

The findings highlight the importance of incorporating quality-of-life indicators into the evaluation of corporate sustainability performance and impact. While there is a peripheral relationship between corporate sustainability performance measures and quality-of-life indicators, a more direct relationship can be established by integrating sustainable

development concepts with business excellence principles. This study emphasises the importance of a comprehensive approach to sustainability performance management that includes quality-of-life indicators. Despite considerable progress, standardised methods and simple tools for measuring sustainability management or performance are still lacking (Pazienza et al., 2023).

My research has further explored the range of diverse and dynamic elements in the relationship between corporate sustainability performance and impact and quality-of-life. Previous research in quality-of-life as it relates to sustainable development emphasises the relationship through economic growth and economic development (Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008; Uysal and Sirgy, 2019; Sobol, 2019). These studies explored the commonalities between sustainable development and quality-of-life as a foundation to driving economic development (Malkina-Pykh and Pykh, 2008), analysing sets of quality-of-life indicators to use for assessing key economic growth indicators such as financial security, household income, and cost of living (Uysal and Sirgy, 2019), and the need to shift focus from economic growth to social well-being to move beyond the conventional economic growth concepts for material wealth as in indicator to quality-of-life (Sobol, 2019).

A key finding of my research is the need for better ways to capture the various impacts multinational corporations have on society, especially when trying to understand the objective and subjective factors that affect quality-of-life. Economic growth is emphasized as an important aim of public policy because higher material well-being and incomes can enable lifestyles that enhance social welfare (Sobol, 2019). The relationship between corporate sustainability practices, sustainability performance metrics, and quality-of-life indicators has emerged as a key area of research and discussion (Sobol, 2019; Alsayegh et al., 2020; Grewal and Serafeim, 2020; Ikram et al., 2020; Pazienza et al., 2023).

My research observations further establish the importance of how and why multinational corporations include social issues into their corporate sustainability strategies, which reveals the importance of integrating economic and social factors into performance management and reporting practices (Nunhes et al., 2020; Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Effective sustainability performance management is essential for delivering measurable improvements in quality-of-life for all stakeholders. When exploring integration of business excellence models and sustainability management tools, there is a correlation between proficiency of using the

tools and maturity in integrating business excellence model principles in the business culture (Edgeman and Eskildsen, 2014; Tickle et al., 2016; Jankalová and Jankal, 2020).

My research revealed inconsistent integration of business excellence model principles within corporate sustainability strategies among the Cases, due to variations in the use of sustainability management tools, leading to uneven performance across different areas. To effectively measure impact, multinational corporations need to be assessed, and their performance compared. This creates a foundation for accountability, with clear outcomes for both good and substandard performance (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Saulick et al., 2023). More robust and accountable sustainability performance measures improve the ability to trace their relevance to quality-of-life indicators and create stronger accountability systems for multinational corporations and governments to address the challenges of sustainable development.

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Appendix A Primary & Secondary Data Reference Indices

A.1 Primary Data – Survey Response Summary

(Includes Additional Data Collection)

Total Survey Responses by Country per Case segmented by Gender	**Headquarter Country**				
Case Industry & Gender Split	**Japan**	**South Korea**	**United Kingdom**	**United States**	**Total by Case**
Health Care	16	8	28	14	66
Female	7	2	10	6	25
Male	9	6	18	8	41
Hospitality	7	3	8	8	26
Female	4	1	2	1	8
Male	3	2	6	7	18
Interactive Media Services	8	15	6	10	39

Female	2	4	1		7
Male	6	11	5	10	32
Media & Entertainment	10	17	7	8	42
Female	4	6	1	2	13
Male	6	11	6	6	29
Restaurant & Entertainment	9	7	10	12	38
Female	2	2	1	4	9
Male	7	5	9	8	29
Total by Country	50	50	59	52	211

A.2 Secondary Data – National and International Policies Reference Index

Thesis Reference	Data Source File Name	Policy Name
GBR01	184_101_uk_2014	Companies Partnership: The Reports on Payments to Governments regulations 2014
GBR02	184_102_uk_2021	Consultation Response: Mandatory climate-related financial disclosures by publicly quoted companies, large private companies, and LLPs
GBR03	184_104_uk_1998	Competition Act 1998 (Chapter 41)

GBR04	184_106_uk_2022	Non-binding Guidance: Mandatory climate-related financial disclosures by publicly quoted companies, large private companies, and LLPs
GBR05	184_108_uk_2023	Financial Conduct Authority: Sustainability Disclosure Requirements (SDR) and investment labels
GBR06	184_11_uk_2019	HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines: including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance
GBR07	184_13_uk_2015	Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill
GBR08	184_25_uk_2019	Supervisory Statement: Enhancing banks' and insurers' approaches to managing the financial risks from climate change
GBR09	184_30_uk_2017	A code for sports governance
GBR10	184_35_uk_2016	Audit Firm Governance Code 2016
GBR11	184_69_uk_2017	Criminal Finances Act 2017 (Chapter 22)
GBR12	184_70_uk_2010	Equality Act 2010 (Chapter 15)
GBR13	184_92_uk_2019	Co-operative Corporate Governance Code
GBR14	184_94_uk_2020	London Stock Exchange: Your Guide to ESG Reporting
GBR15	184_97_uk_2015	Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Chapter 30)
GBR16	184_98_uk_2022	Audit Firm Governance Code 2022
USA01	185_13_us_2010	SEC Guidance Regarding Disclosure Related to Climate Change; Final Rule
USA02	185_22_us_2018	Commonsense Principles 2.0
USA03	185_26_us_2020	Council of Institutional Investors: Corporate Governance Policies
USA04	185_6_us_1970	Public Law 91-604 Amendment to the Clean Air Act
USA05	185_63_us_2011	Background Paper: Calculating Job Placement Rates Under Gainful Employment Regulations

USA06	185_71_us_2014	A Guide to Conducting and Analyzing a Food Waste Assessment
USA07	185_76_us_2015	US DOI: Notice to Lessees and Operators of Federal Oil, Gas, and Sulphur Leases and Pipeline Right-of-Way Holders (Storm Effects Reports)
USA08	185_85_us_2021	ESG Disclosure Simplification Act of 2021
USA09	185_90_us_2021	H.R. 1187 Title I- ESG Disclosure Simplification
JPN01	87_15_japan_2020	Practical Handbook for ESG Disclosure
JPN02	87_17_japan_2014	Japan's Corporate Governance Code
JPN03	87_23_japan_2018	Act on the Arrangement of Related Acts to Promote Work Style Reform (Act No.71 of 2018)
JPN04	87_24_japan_2014_en	Act for Partial Revision of the Welfare Pension Insurance Act
JPN05	87_26_japan_2017	Guidance for Integrated Corporate Disclosure & Company-Investor Dialogue for Collaborative Value Creation
JPN06	87_33_japan_2013	Corporate Code of Conduct - The Third Edition
JPN07	87_39_japan_1997_en	1997 Law No. 81 Environmental Impact Assessment Act
JPN08	87_40_japan_1948	Financial Instruments and Exchange Act
JPN09	87_5_japan_2004	Law Concerning the Promotion of Business Activities with Environmental Consideration
JPN10	87_54_japan_2021	Policy Brief No. 5: Local BioDiversity Strategies and Action Plans
JPN11	87_57_japan_2021	Basic Guidelines on Climate Transition Finance
JPN12	87_8_japan_2017	The Action Plan for the Realization of Work Style Reform
KOR01	93_1_south-korea_2016_en	지속가능발전 기본겨획 (Basic Plan for Sustainable Development)

KOR02	93_14_south-korea_2022	Framework Act on Sustainable Development
KOR03	93_15_south-korea_2017	Environmental Impact Assessment Act
KOR04	93_18_south-korea_2022	Business & Human Rights Reporting Directive
KOR05	93_4_south-korea_1986	National Pension Act
KOR06	93_6_south-korea_1999	Code of Best Practice for Corporate Governance
KOR07	93_9_south-korea_2022	K-Taxonomy Guidelines (Ministry of Environment)
INTL01	304_1_cdsb_2019	CDSB Framework for reporting environmental & climate change information
INTL02	310_1_ghginitiative_2004	The Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard
INTL03	313_iirc_2021	International Integrated Reporting Framework (January 2021)
INTL04	315_1_iso_2010	ISO 26000 Guidance on social responsibility
INTL05	319_9_oecd_2001	Working party on the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises
INTL06	319_25_oecd_2023	G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance
INTL07	324_2_sbti_2020	Science-based Targets Initiative (SBTi) Criteria and Recommendations
INTL08	329_153_ungc_2020	Practical Guidance to Issue a Blue Bond
INTL09	335_3_cdp_2022	Accelerating the Rate of Change: CDP Strategy 2021 - 2025

INTL10	347_1_gggi_2019	GGGI Technical Guidance No. 6 - GGGI Strategic Outcomes Guideline
INTL11	379_3_gstc_2019	Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Criteria (Performance Indicators and SDGs)
INTL12	403_1_wttc_2017	ESG Reporting in Travel & Tourism: Reporting Guidance for Travel & Tourism Business

A.3 Secondary Data – Corporate Reporting Documents Reference Index

Case Sample Files collected for analysis, includes additional secondary data.

Thesis Reference	Data Source File Name	Case Industry	Headquarters Country	Total Coded References
Amvi21	Amvis HD - FY21 Annual Securities Report	Health Care	Japan	4
Amvi22	Amvis HD - FY22 Annual Securities Report	Health Care	Japan	2
Amvi23	Amvis HD - FY23 Annual Securities Report	Health Care	Japan	20
BML18	BML Financial-2018-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	27
BML19	BML Financial-2019-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	30
BML20	BML Financial-2020-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	29
BML21	BML Financial-2021-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	15

BML22	BML Annual-2022-27FEB23	Health Care	Japan	309
HUG16	HU Group-2016-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	66
HUG17	HU Group-2017-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	78
HUG18	HU Group Miraca-2018-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	283
HUG19	HU Group-2019-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	359
HUG20	HU Group-2020-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	353
HUG21	HU Group-2021-09AUG23	Health Care	Japan	343
HUG22	HU Group-2022-09AUG23	Health Care	Japan	393
Medi20	Medipal Holdings - 2020 - Integrated Report	Health Care	Japan	11
Medi21	Medipal Holdings - 2021 - Integrated Report	Health Care	Japan	27
Medi22	Medipal Holdings - 2022 - Integrated Report	Health Care	Japan	47
Medi23	Medipal Holdings - 2023 - Integrated Report	Health Care	Japan	33
OLBA19	OLBA Financial-2019-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	4
OLBA20	OLBA Financial-2020-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	4
OLBA21	OLBA-2021 CG-14JUL22-JPN	Health Care	Japan	2
OLBA22	OLBA- 2022 ESG Announcement -28FEB23	Health Care	Japan	51

SHIP20	SHIP Financial-2020-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	37
SHIP21	SHIP FInancial-2021-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	39
SHIP22	SHIP Financial-2022-14JUL22	Health Care	Japan	44
TD-S19	TD-Sustainabilityreport2019	Health Care	Japan	24
TD-S20	TD-Sustainabilityreport2020	Health Care	Japan	20
TD-S21	TD-Sustainabilityreport2021	Health Care	Japan	22
TD-S22	TD-Sustainabilityreport2022	Health Care	Japan	23
TD-S23	TD-Sustainabilityreport2023	Health Care	Japan	3
Uchi19	Uchiyama Financial-2019-14JUL22-ENG	Health Care	Japan	43
Uchi20	Uchiyama Financial-2020-14JUL22-ENG	Health Care	Japan	46
Uchi21	Uchiyama Financial-2021-14JUL22-ENG	Health Care	Japan	46
Uchi22	Uchiyama Financial-2022-14JUL22-JPN	Health Care	Japan	0
Agor23E	Agora Hospitalities- ESG - Environmental	Hospitality	Japan	7
Agor23G	Agora Hospitalities- ESG - Governance	Hospitality	Japan	3
Agor23S	Agora Hospitalities- ESG - Social	Hospitality	Japan	5
AirT23	AirTrip - SDGs Commitment - 2023	Hospitality	Japan	7

Fuji16	FujitaKanko-2016-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	5
Fuji17	FujitaKanko-2017-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	5
Fuji18	FujitaKanko-2018-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	5
Fuji19	Fujita Kanko-2019-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	0
Gree17	Greens Co-2017-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	4
Gree18	Greens Co-2018-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	14
Gree19	Greens Co-2019-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	7
Gree21	Greens Co- CSR Page-2021-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	4
HISG17	HISGrp-2017-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	16
HISG18	HISGrp-2018-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	0
HISG19	HISGrp-2019-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	19
HISG20	HISGrp-2020-12AUG22	Hospitality	Japan	18
HISG22	HISGrp-2022-28FEB23	Hospitality	Japan	25
Open23Com	OpenDoor Inc. Sustainability - Committee	Hospitality	Japan	1
Open23E	OpenDoor Inc. Sustainability ESG - Environmental	Hospitality	Japan	2
Open23G	OpenDoor Inc. Sustainability ESG - Governance	Hospitality	Japan	3

Open23Pol	OpenDoor Inc. Sustainability - Policy	Hospitality	Japan	1
Open23S	OpenDoor Inc. Sustainability ESG - Social	Hospitality	Japan	6
Open23SDG	OpenDoor Inc. Sustainability - SDGs Alignment	Hospitality	Japan	14
Reso20Env	Resort Trust-Environmental Activities Page-2020 ENG	Hospitality	Japan	8
Rest19	RestortTrust - sustainabilityreport-2019 JPN	Hospitality	Japan	0
Rest20	RestortTrust -Integrated Report -2020 ENG	Hospitality	Japan	42
Rest21	RestortTrust -Integrated Report -2021 ENG	Hospitality	Japan	22
Rest22	RestortTrust -Integrated Report -2022 ENG	Hospitality	Japan	1
Rest23	RestortTrust -Integrated Report -2023 ENG	Hospitality	Japan	22
Rest24	RestortTrust -Integrated Report -2024 ENG	Hospitality	Japan	35
Atra22EP	Atrae-2022 Env Policy web-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	37
Atra22ESG	Atrae-2022 ESG web-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	28
Atra22Gov	Atrae-2022 Gov web-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	0

Atra22Main	Atrae-2022 ESG Main Page web-20SEP22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	27
Atra22Pol	Atrae-2022 ESG Policy web-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	33
Atra22Soc	Atrae-2022 Social web-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	45
Atra23	Atrae-2023-TCFD_en-01NOV23	Interactive Media Services	Japan	0
Capc18	Capcom-2018-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	17
Capc19	Capcom-2019-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	15
Capc20	Capcom-2020-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	24
Capc21	Capcom-2021-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	45
COLO19	COLOPL-Annual 2019-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	0

COLO20	COLOPL-Annual 2020-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	0
COLO21	COLOPL-Integrated 2021-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	37
COLO22	COLOPL-CG 2022-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	36
Koei18	KoeiTecmo-2018-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	5
Koei19	KoeiTecmo-2019-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	15
Koei20	KoeiTecmo-2020-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	66
Koei21	KoeiTecmo-2021-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	86
Koei22	KoeiTecmo-2022 CSR web-27SEP22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	38
Nint19	Nintendo_csr2019e	Interactive Media Services	Japan	66

Nint19Ann	Nintendo-Annual 2019-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	8
Nint20	Nintendo_csr2020e	Interactive Media Services	Japan	78
Nint20Ann	Nintendo-Annual 2020-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	72
Nint21	Nintendo_csr2021e	Interactive Media Services	Japan	0
Nint21Ann	Nintendo-Annual 2022-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	41
Nint21Ann	Nintendo-Annual 2021-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	66
Nint22EE	Nintendo-EE Data web-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	0
Nint22Env	Nintendo-Enviro Data Sheet web-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	0
Nint22Gov	Nintendo- Gov Data web-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	Japan	59

Nint23EE	Nintendo Employee-Data Sheet _ CSR Information _ Nintendo Co., Ltd_	Interactive Media Services	Japan	7
Nint23Env	Nintendo Enviro-Data Sheet _ CSR Information _ Nintendo Co., Ltd_	Interactive Media Services	Japan	7
Nint23Gov	Nintendo Governance-Data Sheet _ CSR Information _ Nintendo Co., Ltd_	Interactive Media Services	Japan	35
Squa21	Square Enix- Annual Report ENG- 2021	Interactive Media Services	Japan	14
Squa22	Square Enix- Annual Report ENG- 2022	Interactive Media Services	Japan	0
Squa23	Square Enix- Annual Report ENG- 2023	Interactive Media Services	Japan	146
Squa24	Square Enix- Annual Report ENG- 2024	Interactive Media Services	Japan	139
Cros21	CrossMarketing-2021 Annual-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	1
Cros22	CrossMarketing- 2022 Annual-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	0

Cybe18	CyberAgent-2018 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	12
Cybe19	CyberAgent- 2019 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	10
Cybe20	CyberAgent-2020 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	9
Cybe21	CyberAgent- 2021 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	29
Dent19	Dentsu-2019 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	32
Dent20	Dentsu-2020 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	24
Dent21	Dentsu-2021 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	28
Dent22	Dentsu-2022 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	61
DMix23CEO	DMix-CEO Message-SUSTAINABILITY -2023	Media & Entertainment	Japan	3

DMix23Env	DMix- Environmental Management-2023	Media & Entertainment	Japan	15
DMix23Gov	DMix-Sustainability Governance-2023	Media & Entertainment	Japan	15
DMix23Mat	DMix-Material Issues-2023	Media & Entertainment	Japan	6
DMix23Soc	DMix- Social Sustainability Management-2023	Media & Entertainment	Japan	45
DMix23Syst	DMix-Conduct and Sustainability Promotion System-2023	Media & Entertainment	Japan	22
Haku18	Hakuhodo-2018 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	34
Haku19	Hakuhodo-2019 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	42
Haku20	Hakuhodo-2020 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	30
Haku21	Hakuhodo-2021 Integrated-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	39

Nipp19	Nippon Television_Corporate Report_2019-JPN	Media & Entertainment	Japan	8
Nipp20	Nippon Television_Corporate Report_2020-JPN	Media & Entertainment	Japan	2
Nipp21	Nippon Television_Corporate Report_2021-JPN	Media & Entertainment	Japan	5
Nipp22	Nippon Television_Integrated Report_2022JPN	Media & Entertainment	Japan	8
Nipp23	Nippon Television_Integrated_2023	Media & Entertainment	Japan	14
Nipp23T	Nippon Televsion_TCFD_2023web	Media & Entertainment	Japan	0
Prot16	ProtoG-2016 Annual-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	11
Prot17	ProtoG-2017 ESG-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	3
Prot18	ProtoG-2018 ESG-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	6

Prot20	ProtoG-2020 Annual-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	4
Prot21	ProtoG-2021 Annual ESG-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	Japan	3
Prot22	ProtoG-2022 Annual ESG-04MAR23	Media & Entertainment	Japan	15
Toei23CG	Toei Co-Corp Gov_20230718-JPN	Media & Entertainment	Japan	4
Toei23Env	Toei Co-Environment _ Sustainability _ web	Media & Entertainment	Japan	3
Toei23Gov	Toei Co-Governance _ Sustainability _ web	Media & Entertainment	Japan	6
Toei23Soc	Toei Co-Society _ Sustainability _ web	Media & Entertainment	Japan	8
EatA20-1	EatAnd- 2020 web P1-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA20-2	EatAnd- 2020 web P2-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0

EatA20-3	EatAnd- 2020 web P3-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA20-4	EatAnd- 2020 web P4-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA20-5	EatAnd- 2020 web P5-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA21-1	EatAnd- 2021 web P1-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA21-2	EatAnd- 2021 web P2-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA21-3	EatAnd- 2021 web P3-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA21-4	EatAnd- 2021 web P4-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA21-5	EatAnd- 2021 web P5-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA22-1	EatAnd- 2022 web P1-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0

EatA22-2	EatAnd- 2022 web P2-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
EatA22-3	EatAnd- 2022 web P3-23Aug22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
Food23	Food & Life-Sustainability Report-2023	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	31
Kura19	Kura-2019 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	88
Kura20	Kura-2020 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	119
Kura21	Kura-2021 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	114
OLC18	OLC- 2018 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	22
OLC19	OLC- 2019 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	30
OLC20	OLC- 2020 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	30

OLC21	OLC- 2021 CSR- 23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	51
OLC22	OLC-2022 CSR-04MAR23	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	52
Ring19	Ringerhut- 2019 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	4
Ring20	Ringerhut- 2020 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	3
Ring21	Ringerhut- 2021 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	2
Ring22	Ringerhut- 2022 CSR- 23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	8
Ring23CG	RingerHut-Corporate Guide ENG-04MAR23	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
Roun22	Round1-SDGs & ESG-2022	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	9
Roun22T	Round1-TCFD Recommendations-2022	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	9

Silv21	SilverLife- 2021 Corp Gov- 23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	1
Silv22	SilverLife- 2022 web ENG-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	0
Silv23	SilverLife-2023 ESG-sustainability_202307-10JAN24	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	9
Toky20	TokyoDome-2020-JPN	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	10
Toky21	TokyoDome-2021-JPN	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	2
Toky22	TokyoDome-2022-JPN	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	3
Toky23	TokyoDome-2023-ENG	Restaurants & Entertainment	Japan	7
CHAB20	CHABiotechIR-2020-14JUL22-ENG	Health Care	South Korea	24
CHAB21	CHABiotech-2021-14JUL22-ENG	Health Care	South Korea	21
HLB 22	HLB ESG Report 2022 ENG	Health Care	South Korea	48
HLB23	HLB ESG Report 2023 ENG	Health Care	South Korea	25

Hana23	HANATOUR_Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)_2023	Hospitality	South Korea	57
Lott21	Lotte 2021_lotte_report_eng	Hospitality	South Korea	61
Lott22	Lotte 2022_lotte_report_eng	Hospitality	South Korea	47
Lott23	Lotte 2023_lotte_report_eng	Hospitality	South Korea	57
SFG18	SFG-2018_shinhan seobu - report_eng	Hospitality	South Korea	73
SFG19	SFG-2019_report_eng	Hospitality	South Korea	39
SFG20	SFG_2020_ESG_Report_eng	Hospitality	South Korea	62
SFG21	SFG_2021_ESG_Report_eng	Hospitality	South Korea	79
SFG22	SFG_2022ESG_Report_ENG	Hospitality	South Korea	36
SFG23	SFG-2023-ESG Report_ENG	Hospitality	South Korea	61
Afre20	AfreecaTV-2020 ESG-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	33
Afre21	AfreecaTV-아프리카TV_ESG Report2021_Interactive-KR-29NOV23	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	20
Grav20	Gravity 2020- Annual Corporate SEC-Gravity Co	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	5

Grav21	Gravity 2021- Annual Corporate SEC-Gravity Co	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	3
Grav22	Gravity 2022 - Annual Corporate SEC- Gravity Co	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	3
Grav23	Gravity 2023- Annual Corporate SEC-Gravity Co	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	2
Kaka19CG	Kakao-CG 2019-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	19
Kaka20CG	Kakao-CG 2020-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	17
Kaka20ESG	Kakao-ESG 2020-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	23
Kaka21CG	Kakao-CG 2021-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	28
Kaka21ESG	Kakao-ESG 2021-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0
Kraf23Com	Krafton - ESG Committee Regs ENG - 2023	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	65

Kraf23ESG	Krafton - ESG ENG- 2023	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0
NAVE20	NAVER_ESG_ENG_2020	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0
NAVE21	NAVER_2021_ESG_ENG	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	3
NAVE22	NAVER_2022 IntegratedReport_ESG_ENG	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	1
NAVE23	NAVER_Integrated_Report_2023 ENG	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	64
Neow22	Neowiz 2022 - Annual Business Report - Neowiz-KOR	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	2
Neow23	Neowiz 2023 - Annual Business Report - Neowiz-KOR	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	5
Nexo24	Nexon 20240717_ESG_Disclosure_Matrix_E-Nexon	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	27
Pear21	PearlAbyss_2021 ESG Report	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0

Pear22	PearlAbyss_2022 ESG Report	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	14
Pear23	PearlAbyss_2023 ESG Report	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0
WeMa18	WeMade-2018 Annual-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0
WeMa19	WeMade-2019 Annual-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	2
WeMa20	WeMade-2020 Annual-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	19
WeMa21	WeMade-2021 Annual-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0
WeMa21ESG	WeMade-2021 ESG Disclosure-24MAR23	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0
WeMa22	WeMade-2022 ESG Policies-24MAR23	Interactive Media Services	South Korea	0
Chei21	Cheil_Sustainability_Report_2021_en	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	123

Chei22	Cheil_Sustainability_Report_2022_en	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	100
HYBE22	HYBE 2022 Sustainability Report_ENG	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	202
HYBE23	HYBE 2023 Sustainability Report_ENG	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	59
JYP21	JYP_ESG_2021REPORT_ENG	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	54
JYP22	JYP_Entertainment_Sustainability_Report_2022_(ENG)	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	50
SME21	SM Ent 2021+SM+ENTERTAINMENT+Sustainable+Management+Report	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	49
SME22	SM Ent 2022+SM+Entertainment+Sustainable+Management+Report+(EN)	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	12
Stud22	Studio Dragon- ESG web-19AUG22	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	0

Stud23	Studio Dragon- Inaugural Sustainability Report-ENG-01NOV23	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	75
Sunn24	Sunny Side up - Impact Report - 2024 JPN	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	4
YGE23	YG Entertainment_2023_Sustainability Report_ENG	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	80
YGE23Con	YG Entertainment Sustainable Concert Report_ENG_2023	Media & Entertainment	South Korea	43
CJF21	CJ Fresh Way- ESG Report - 2021 KOR	Restaurants & Entertainment	South Korea	41
CJF22	CJ Fresh Way- ESG Report - 2022 ENG	Restaurants & Entertainment	South Korea	63
CJF23	CJ Fresh Way- ESG Report - 2023 ENG	Restaurants & Entertainment	South Korea	64
Shin23	Shinsegae 2023 지역사회 상생 활동 (기부 증빙)-Shinsegae Food 2024	Restaurants & Entertainment	South Korea	0
Gowl20DEI	Gowling WLG ~ Diversity, Equality and Inclusion	Health Care	United Kingdom	6

Gowl20Env	Gowling WLG ~ Environmental commitment	Health Care	United Kingdom	1
Gowl20Res	Gowling WLG ~ Responsible Business	Health Care	United Kingdom	4
Gowl21	GowlingWLG-2021-UNGC-12JAN24	Health Care	United Kingdom	39
Gowl23CC	GowlingWLG-2023-Climate Commitment-12JAN24	Health Care	United Kingdom	0
Gowl23CR	GowlingWLG-2023-Carbon Report-12JAN24	Health Care	United Kingdom	4
LGIM22	LGIM Sustainable Investment 2022 - 13NOV23	Health Care	United Kingdom	60
NMC21	NMC Health-environmental-sustainability-plan-web	Health Care	United Kingdom	22
NNUH22	NNUH-Green-Plan-June-2022-update-Final	Health Care	United Kingdom	103
NNUH22DEI	NNUH-Diversity-Inclusion-and-Belonging-Strategy-13NOV23	Health Care	United Kingdom	23

Spir19	Spire Healthcare-2019-full-annual-report-new	Health Care	United Kingdom	11
Spir20	Spire Healthcare-2020-full-annual-report	Health Care	United Kingdom	19
Spir22	Spire Healthcare-full-annual-report-2022	Health Care	United Kingdom	26
Spir23	Spire Healthcare-full-annual-report-2021	Health Care	United Kingdom	14
Spir23	Spire Healthcare-annual-report-2023	Health Care	United Kingdom	40
Blue22A	Bluestone Wales ~ The Green Key Award ~ Sustainability	Hospitality	United Kingdom	0
Blue22B	Bluestone Wales ~ Biodiversity ~ Free Range Future	Hospitality	United Kingdom	0
Blue22BP	Bluestone Wales ~ Biodiversity Plan ~ Free Range Future	Hospitality	United Kingdom	3
Blue22C	Bluestone Wales ~ Schools and Community ~ Free Range Future	Hospitality	United Kingdom	0

Blue22E	Bluestone Wales ~ Energy Policy ~ Free Range Future	Hospitality	United Kingdom	4
Blue22M	Bluestone Wales ~ Mission Statement ~ Free Range Future	Hospitality	United Kingdom	0
Blue22S	Bluestone Wales ~ Free Range Future ~ Social Responsibility	Hospitality	United Kingdom	0
Blue22SD	Bluestone Wales ~ Sustainable Development ~ Free Range Future	Hospitality	United Kingdom	0
Blue22W	Bluestone Wales ~ Waste Management ~ Free Range Future	Hospitality	United Kingdom	4
Blue22WL	Bluestone Wales ~ Welsh Language & Heritage ~ Free Range Future	Hospitality	United Kingdom	0
Exod21	ExodusTravels-Sustainability Report 2021-11JAN24	Hospitality	United Kingdom	4
Exod22	ExodusTravels-Sustainability Report 2022-11JAN24	Hospitality	United Kingdom	30
IHG18	IHG-2018-12AUG22	Hospitality	United Kingdom	15

IHG19	IHG-2019-12AUG22	Hospitality	United Kingdom	21
IHG20	IHG-2020-12AUG22	Hospitality	United Kingdom	23
IHG21	IHG-2021-12AUG22	Hospitality	United Kingdom	30
Whit22Ann	Whitbread_Annual Report 22_15JAN24	Hospitality	United Kingdom	12
Whit22ESG	Whitbread_ESG_Report_2022-15JAN24	Hospitality	United Kingdom	41
Geni20	Genius-sports-secr-report-2020	Interactive Media Services	United Kingdom	9
Geni21	Genius-sports-secr-report-2021	Interactive Media Services	United Kingdom	38
Geni22	Genius-Sports-FY2022-SECR-Report	Interactive Media Services	United Kingdom	3
Geni22GP	Genius Sports-uk-gender-pay-gap-report-2022	Interactive Media Services	United Kingdom	0

Geni23GP	Genius SPorts-Gender-Pay-Gap-2023	Interactive Media Services	United Kingdom	1
Cine18	Cineworld-annual report-18	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	32
Cine19	Cineworld-annual report-2019	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	43
Cine20	Cineworld-annual report-2020-v1	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	82
Cine21	Cineworld-annual-report-2021	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	65
EBU20	EBU-Sustainability Fundamentals-2020-10JAN24	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	2
EBU23	EBU-News_report_2023_Climate_Journalism-10JAN24	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	25
Info18	Informa-2018-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	18
Info19	Informa-2019-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	43

Info20	Informa-2020-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	16
Info21	Informa-2021-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	44
ITV18	ITV-2018-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	2
ITV19	ITV-2019-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	9
ITV20	ITV-2020-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	9
ITV21	ITV-2021-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	20
Pear20	Pearson- Sustainability 2020-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	20
Pear20Ann	Pearson- Annual 2020-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	251
Pear21	Pearson- ESG 2021-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	24

Pear21Ann	Pearson-Annual 2021-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United Kingdom	192
CMBC18	CMBC-sustainability-report-2018-final	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	35
CMBC19	CMBC-sustainability-report-2019	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	24
CMBC20	CMBC-sustainability-update-2020	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	5
CMBC21	CMBC-sustainability-report-2021	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	16
CMBC22	CMBC-esg-report-2022	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	28
CMBC23	CMBC-esg-report-2023	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	38
Comp18	Compass- 2018 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	16
Comp19	Compass- 2019 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	81

Comp20	Compass- 2020 CSR-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	116
Comp21	Compass- 2021 CSR- 23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	114
Dire23	DirectWine-Laithwaites Sustainability 2023	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	8
Greg19Ann	Greggs- 2019 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	104
Greg20Ann	Greggs- 2020 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	108
Greg21Ann	Greggs- 2021 Annual- 23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	112
Greg21Sust	Greggs- 2021 Sustainability-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	26
Holl19	Hollywood Bowl-annual-report-2019	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	41
Holl20Ann	Hollywood_Bowl_AR20_Web	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	30

Holl21Ann	Hollywood_Bowl_Group_plc_Annual_Report_2021	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	40
Holl22Ann	Hollywood_Bowl_Group_plc_Annual_report_2022	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	48
Holl23	Hollywood Bowl 2023_Hollywood_Bowl_Group_plc_Annua	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	39
MAB19	MAB_Annual_Report_2019-2	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	54
MAB20	MAB_Annual_Report_2020-2	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	42
MAB21	MAB_Annual_Report_2021-14	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	43
MAB23	MAB_Annual_Report_2023_Accessible	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	49
Anth21	Anthem-2021-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	225
Card18	Cardinal-2018-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	160
Card19	Cardinal-2019-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	418
Card20	Cardinal-2020-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	280

Card21	Cardinal-2021-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	218
Card21	Cardinal ESG Index-2021-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	58
Card22	Cardinal-2022-10AUG23	Health Care	United States	712
Cent21	Centene_2021_ESHG_Report	Health Care	United States	40
Cent22	Centene_2022_ESHG_Report	Health Care	United States	28
Cent23	Centene-2023-Sustainability-and-DEI-Report	Health Care	United States	20
Cent23S	Centene-CNC-2023-SASB-Index	Health Care	United States	16
Cent23T	Centene-TCFD-Index-2023	Health Care	United States	6
CIGN17	CIGNA-2017-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	608
CIGN18	CIGNA-2018-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	587
CIGN19	CIGNA-2019-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	846
CIGN20	CIGNA-2020-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	913
CIGN21	CIGNA-2021-10AUG23	Health Care	United States	322
CIGN22	CIGNA-2022-15JAN24	Health Care	United States	197
CVS19	CVS- CSR Report - 2019	Health Care	United States	38
CVS20	CVS- CSR Report - 2020	Health Care	United States	35

CVS21	CVS- ESG Impact Report - 2021	Health Care	United States	26
CVS22	CVS- ESG Impact Report - 2022	Health Care	United States	4
CVS23	CVS-Healthy-2030-Impact-Report 2023	Health Care	United States	28
DaVi21C	DaVita-2021-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	146
DaVi21C	DaVita CDP-2021-14JUL22	Health Care	United States	208
DaVi22	DaVita-ESGMISC21-07_Community Care 2022-15JAN24	Health Care	United States	64
Guar23	Guardant - ESG Report - 2023	Health Care	United States	40
Guar24	Guardant - ESG Report - 2024	Health Care	United States	7
Huma21E	Humana ESG-2021-12AUG22	Health Care	United States	231
Huma21I	Humana Impact-2021-14AUG22	Health Care	United States	129
Huma22	Humana-Sustainability-2022-15JAN24	Health Care	United States	442
LabC21-1	LabCorp 2021- Page 1-12AUG22	Health Care	United States	0
LabC21-2	LabCorp 2021- Page 2-12AUG22	Health Care	United States	0
LabC21-3	LabCorp 2021- Page 3-12AUG22	Health Care	United States	0
LabC21-4	LabCorp 2021- Page 4-12AUG22	Health Care	United States	0
LabC21-5	LabCorp 2021- Page 5-12AUG22	Health Care	United States	0

LabC21-6	LabCorp 2021- Page 6-12AUG22	Health Care	United States	0
LabC21CR	LabCorp 2021- Corp Resp Report-14SEP22	Health Care	United States	291
LabC21ESG	LabCorp 2021- Updated ESG & Corporate Governance-14SEP22	Health Care	United States	0
LabC22	LabCorp 2022- Corp Resp Report-09AUG23	Health Care	United States	321
Ques21	Quest-Diagnostics-Corporate-Responsibility-Report-2021	Health Care	United States	38
Ques22	Quest-Diagnostics-Corporate-Responsibility-Report-2022-Final	Health Care	United States	40
Ques23	Quest-Diagnostics-Corporate-Responsibility-Report-2023	Health Care	United States	49
Airb21	Airbnb-ESG-Factsheet-2021	Hospitality	United States	26
Airb22	Airbnb-ESG-Factsheet-2022	Hospitality	United States	13
Airb23	Airbnb-ESG-Factsheet-2023	Hospitality	United States	47
Book21	Booking Holdings - Sustainability Overview	Hospitality	United States	3
Book22	Booking Holdings -CDP Climate Action Plan -2022	Hospitality	United States	3
Book23	Booking Holdings -Sustainability Report- 2023	Hospitality	United States	54
Carn18	Carnival-2018-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	130
Carn19	Carnival-2019-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	82

Carn20	Carnival-2020-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	77
Carn21	Carnival-2021-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	77
Hilt20	Hilton-2020-Materiality-Assessment	Hospitality	United States	7
Hilt22	Hilton- ESG Report - 2022	Hospitality	United States	34
Hilt22GP	Hilton- Gender Pay Gap Report- 2022	Hospitality	United States	2
Hilt23	Hilton- ESG Report - 2023	Hospitality	United States	11
Hilt23	Hilton - 2023-Travel-with-Purpose-Report-final	Hospitality	United States	40
Hyat22	Hyatt Hotels - World of Care highlights - 2022	Hospitality	United States	24
Hyat22DEI	Hyatt Hotels - DEI Report - 2022	Hospitality	United States	3
Hyat23	Hyatt Hotels - World of Care highlights - 2023	Hospitality	United States	21
Norw18	Norwegian-2018-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	2
Norw19	Norwegian-2019-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	0
Norw20	Norwegian-2020-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	34
Norw21	Norwegian-2021-28FEB23	Hospitality	United States	41
Norw22	Norwegian-2022-30JAN24	Hospitality	United States	31
Roya18	Royal Caribbean-2018-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	36

Roya19	Royal Caribbean-2019-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	22
Roya20	Royal Caribbean-2020-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	54
Roya21	Royal Caribbean-2021-12AUG22	Hospitality	United States	32
Trav23	Travel & Leisure - ESG Report - 2023	Hospitality	United States	66
Wynd21	Wyndham - ESG Report - 2021	Hospitality	United States	57
Wynd22	Wyndham - ESG Report - 2022	Hospitality	United States	29
Wynd23	Wyndham - ESG Report - 2023	Hospitality	United States	53
Wynd24	Wyndham - ESG Report - 2024	Hospitality	United States	52
Acti21	Activision-2021_ESG_REPORT-23JUN23	Interactive Media Services	United States	24
Acti22	Activision-2022_ESG_Report-23JUN23	Interactive Media Services	United States	18
Alph19Env	Alphabet Google-2019 Enviro-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	23
Alph19Sup	Alphabet Google-2019 Supply-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	21

Alph20Env	Alphabet Google-2020 Enviro-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	22
Alph20Sup	Alphabet Google-2020 Supply-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	0
Alph21Env	Alphabet Google-2021 Enviro-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	0
Alph21Sup	Alphabet Google-2021 Supply-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	0
Alph22Env	Alphabet Google-2022 Enviro-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	0
Alph22Sup	Alphabet Google-2022 Supply-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	0
ea-i23	ea-impact-report-23	Interactive Media Services	United States	207
FB M19	FB Meta-2019-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	19
FB M20	FB Meta-2020-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	17

FB M21	FB Meta-2021-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	16
Snap20	Snap-2020-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	50
Snap21	Snap-2021-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	15
Snap21Ghg	Snap-2021 GhG-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	0
Snap22	Snap-2022-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	11
Snap22Ghg	Snap-2022 GhG-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	13
Trip18	TripAdvisor-2018 Annual-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	162
Trip19	TripAdvisor-2019 Annual-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	163
Trip20	TripAdvisor-2020 Annual-16AUG22	Interactive Media Services	United States	2

Trip21	TripAdvisor-2021 Annual-16AUG	Interactive Media Services	United States	0
Inte18	Interpublic-2018 GRI-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	45
Inte19	Interpublic- 2019 GRI-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	46
Inte20	Interpublic-2020 GRI-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	45
Inte21	Interpublic- 2021 GRI ESG-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	56
Netf22	Netflix-ESG Report-FINAL-2022	Media & Entertainment	United States	53
Netf23	Netflix-ESG Report-2023	Media & Entertainment	United States	9
Netf23Prog	Netflix-Our Progress on Sustainability_ Two Years In - 2023	Media & Entertainment	United States	3
Omni18	Omnicom-2018 CSR-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	10

Omni19	Omnicom- 2019 CSR-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	15
Omni20	Omnicom- 2020 CSR-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	22
Walt18	Walt Disney-2018 CSR-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	11
Walt19	Walt Disney- 2019 CSR-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	20
Walt20	Walt Disney- 2020 CSR-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	42
Walt21	Walt Disney- 2021 CSR-23AUG22	Media & Entertainment	United States	35
Walt22	Walt Disney-2022 CSR-16MAR23	Media & Entertainment	United States	45
Warn21	Warner Music Group_ESG Report_2021	Media & Entertainment	United States	44
Warn22	Warner Music Group_ESG Report_2022	Media & Entertainment	United States	45

Warn23	Warner Music Group_ESG Report_2023	Media & Entertainment	United States	30
Blue22	BlueDiamondGrowers- 2022- Sustainability Report	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	5
Blue22Ann	BlueDiamondGrowers- 2022- Annual Report	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	14
Chip19	Chipotle-Sustainability Report-2019	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	25
Chip20	Chipotle-Sustainability Report-2020	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	76
Chip21	Chipotle-Sustainability Report-2021	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	25
Chip22	Chipotle-Sustainability Report-2022	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	59
Chip23	Chipotle-Sustainability Report-2023	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	39
Crac19	Cracker Barrel-CSR Report-2019	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	24

Crac21	Cracker Barrel-ESG Report_Final-2021	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	52
Crac22	Cracker Barrel-ESG Report_v2-2022	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	41
Crac23	Cracker Barrel- ESG Report- 2023	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	16
Crac24	Cracker Barrel- ESG Report- 2024	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	49
MAB22	MandB_AnnualReport_2022_Accessible	Restaurants & Entertainment	United Kingdom	49
McDs18	McDonalds-2018 ESG-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	32
McDs19	McDonalds- 2019 ESG-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	76
McDs20	McDonaldss-2020 ESG-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	55
McDs21	McDonalds-2021 ESG-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	18

Papa19	PapaJohns- 2019 -07SEP22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	29
Papa20	PapaJohns- 2020-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	7
Papa21	PapaJohns- 2021-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	41
SixF18	SixFlags- 2018 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	6
SixF19	SixFlags- 2019 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	97
SixF20	SixFlags- 2020 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	93
SixF20ESG	SixFlags- 2020 ESG Highlights-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	0
SixF21	SixFlags- 2021 Annual-23AUG22	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	76
Star18	Starbucks-Global Social Impact Report-2018	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	31

Star19	Starbucks-Global Social Impact Report-2019	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	31
Star20	Starbucks-Global Social Impact Report-2020	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	49
Star21	Starbucks-Global Social Impact Report-2021	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	52
Star22	Starbucks-Global Social Impact Report-2022	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	50
Star23	Starbucks-Global Social Impact Report-2023	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	58
Wend19	Wendys-CSR-0121-2019	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	29
Wend20	Wendys-CSR-0419_FINAL-2020	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	15
Wend21	Wendys-Corporate-Responsibility-Report-2021	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	40
Wend22	Wendys-Corporate-Responsibility-Report-2022	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	42

Wend23	Wendys-Corporate-Responsibility-Report-2023	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	50
YumB19	YumBrands-2019-Citizenship Report-10JAN24	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	7
YumB20	YumBrands-Citizenship-Report_2020-10JAN24	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	9
YumB21	YumBrands-R4G-Report-2021-10JAN24	Restaurants & Entertainment	United States	28

Appendix B
Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence Evaluation Framework

B.1 RISE Evaluation Framework

The Assessment Template for Implementing the Realising Impact for Sustainability Excellence (RISE) Evaluation Framework. First are the Assessment principles. **RISE Evaluation Framework - Assessment Principles**	
Sustainable	Creates and maintains comprehensive triple Bottom Line value for the organisation, stakeholders, society at large, and policy makers.
Resilient	Evidence of capacity for self-renewable through innovation in response to sustainable development challenges, especially those beyond the scope of operational control.
Robust	Highly resistant to critical setbacks or challenges. Of note is the mix of internal and external scopes of control addressed through materiality practices and corporate governance structures and accountability mechanisms.
Excellent	Demonstrates strong leadership through corporate policy and diverse partnerships with an ability to sustain world-class performance and measured impact on quality-of-life factors.
Hussain T, Edgeman R, et al, 2018, pp3-5; definitions expanded through research findings and literature review concepts	

Category 1. Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership		**Assessment Principles**					
Attribute	**Consideration & Measure**	Sustainable	Resilient	Robust	Excellent	**Observations**	**Attribute Totals**
Fairness and transparency	How is governance fair and transparent? What is the corporate governance structure?						**0**
Governance Accountability (Effectiveness)	How is governance accountable for the outcomes of their leadership decisions?						**0**
Command and control	How is governance of command and control effective?						**0**
Trustfulness	How do employees trust in governance capability?						**0**
Competence	How has leadership been successful in managing the organization?						**0**
Proactive (Initiating)	How is leadership proactive and responsive to challenges on strategic fronts?						**0**

Collaborative (Harmony)	How aligned are the corporate strategic objectives with sustainable development principles?						**0**
Assertive (Aggressiveness)	How is organizational strategy assertive and supportive of organisational Mission & Values?						**0**
Corruption free	How is organizational leadership free of corruption?						**0**
Management Accountability (Effectiveness)	How is leadership held accountable or commended for their decisions?						**0**
Research Concepts: *Corporate Governance, Stakeholder Engagement, Sustainable Development Governance*		0	0	0	0		0
Category 2. Sustainable Process Design & Implementation		**Assessment Principles**					
Attribute	**Consideration & Measure**	Sustainable	Resilient	Robust	Excellent	**Observations**	**Attribute Totals**
Initiative (Activity) description	What is the extent to which sustainability-related activities are defined?						**0**

Initiative (Activity) clarity	What degree of clarity is evident in which roles are accountable to which sustainability activities?						**0**
Process clarity	How does the organisation successfully identify, define, and document processes?						**0**
Process implementation	How are organisational processes implemented and followed as intended?						**0**
Stakeholder identification	How are key process stakeholders well-identified?						**0**
Proficiency (Representation)	How are process measures systematically defined, used, and assessed?						**0**
Mission Alignment	What is the extent of alignment among key organisational processes to sustainable development?						**0**
Performance Management (Monitor & control)	How effective are sustainability performance management and reporting practices?						**0**
Creative problem-solving	How are stakeholders engaged to facilitate collaborative, creative problem solving?						**0**

Integration (Acceptability)	How do employees have positive attitudes towards corporate sustainability processes?						**0**
Research Concepts: *Sustainability Management Tools, Materiality*		0	0	0	0		0
Category 3. Financial Risk Management & Performance		**Assessment Principles**					
Attribute	**Consideration & Measure**	Sustainable	Resilient	Robust	Excellent	**Observations**	**Attribute Totals**
Reliability	How are the organisation's financial reports reliable?						**0**
Trust	How is the organisation trusted by its stakeholders? (Assurance methods?)						**0**
Availability	How do insufficient financial resources hinder organisational growth?						**0**
Performance	How is current financial performance alarming?						**0**
Expectancy	How is the organisation's future perceived as financially healthy?						**0**
Accountability	How is financial accountability assured?						**0**
Resilience	How is the organisation resilient to financial shocks?						**0**

Fairness & Transparency	What is the extent of organisational fairness and transparency in financial matters?						**0**
Solvency	How does the organisation have sufficient financial resources to withstand a more prolonged economic crisis?						**0**
Diversification	How has the organisation demonstrated resilience through environmental and social impact investment?						**0**
Research Concepts: *Materiality, Corporate Governance, Economic Indicators*		0	0	0	0		0
Category 4. Sustainability Performance		**Assessment Principles**					
Attribute	**Consideration & Measure**	Sustainable	Resilient	Robust	Excellent	**Observations**	**Attribute Totals**
Competitive Advantage (Competitiveness)	To what extend does the organisation leverage sustainability business practice as a competitive advantage?						**0**
Customer Expectation	How does the organisation demonstrate its ability to satisfy customers' future needs?						**0**

Exploration	To what extend has the organisation successfully leveraged market trends?						**0**
Development (Expansion)	How has the organisation successfully upgraded processes, products, and services over time to be more proficient in the use of or become less reliant on resources?						**0**
Collaboration	How has the organisation succeeded in building strong relationships with its suppliers?						**0**
Goal orientation	How does the organisation successfully balance and align short- and long-term goals?						**0**
Retention	How had the organisation succeeded over time in retaining valuable intellectual resources?						**0**
Market Reputation	How has the organisation successfully achieved and maintained solid market standing?						**0**
Materiality (Execution)	How has the organisation systematically identified, prioritised and implemented sustainability initiatives to address both stakeholder expectations and strategic business objectives?						**0**
Assessment	How does the organisation have an effective self-assessment mechanism? (Assurance)?						**0**

Research Concepts: *Materiality, Sustainability Management Tools, Sustainability Performance, Economic Indicators, Social Indicators, Environmental Indicators*		0	0	0	0		0
Category 5. Innovation Performance		**Assessment Principles**					
Attribute	**Consideration & Measure**	Sustainable	Resilient	Robust	Excellent	**Observations**	**Attribute Totals**
Engaging	How does the organisation encourage employee suggestions of new and innovative business ideas?						**0**
Consulting	How does the organisation engage external consultants for improvements?						**0**
Participating	How does the organisation participate in relevant seminars, conferences, and other similar learning occasions?						**0**
Initiating	How does the organisation implement new ideas?						**0**
Innovating	To what extend does the organisation innovate its business approaches?						**0**

Collaborating	How does the organisation collaborate with stakeholders to develop sustainability initiatives?						**0**
Launching	How does the organisation use a systematic process to foster innovation and measure impact?						**0**
Promoting	How does the organisation want to be known as a sustainable and impactful organisation?						**0**
Excelling	How does the organisation utilise innovation as a strategic tool for gaining a competitive advantage?						**0**
Caring	How does the organisation have a mechanism to collect customer feedback?						**0**
Research Concepts: *Materiality, Sustainable Development Governance, Stakeholder Engagement, Sustainability Management Tools*		0	0	0	0		0
Category 6. Social Performance & Impact on Quality-of-life		**Assessment Principles**					
Attribute	**Consideration & Measure**	Sustainable	Resilient	Robust	Excellent	**Observations**	**Attribute Totals**

Attraction	How has the organisation succeeded in attracting talented intellectual capital?						**0**
Employment	How has the organisation succeeded in hiring valuable human capital?						**0**
Development (Retention, Capacty-building)	How does the organisation successfully retain talent and sustainable business strategy to support workforce through training & development?						**0**
Motivation	How does the organisation support high performing, high value employees?						**0**
Appraisal	How has the organisation implemented a fair, transparent, and adaptive performance appraisal system? (Compensation & Remuneration programmes?)						**0**
Resolution	How does the organisation successfully resolve job-related grievances?						**0**
Promotion	How foes the organisation provides clear and upward employee career paths?						**0**
Reputation	How has the organisation earned a positive reputation as a leading employer?						**0**
Compensation	How does the organisation provide competitive compensation?						**0**

Community Engagement	How does the company support the economic and social development of the communities in which it operates, and what metrics are used to measure the impact of these initiatives?						**0**
Research Concepts: *Stakeholder Engagement, Quality-of-life, Social Indicators*		0	0	0	0		0

Appendix C
Empirical Data Collection - Survey

C.1 Participant Information & Survey Invitation

Participant Information Sheet, Full Invitation to Survey Letter

Dear [Role Title OR “Invitee”], (OR To Whom… in case there is no clear contact)

My name is Kari Solomon, and I am a doctoral student at University of Leeds in England, UK. My current research resides within the Sustainability Research Institute’s Businesses & Organisations for Sustainable Societies (BOSS) scope of work. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled: “Sustainable Development Performance: The Impact of Corporate Sustainability Practice on Quality-of-life”.

The intention of my research is to define and understand how companies measure sustainability performance, and if those measures link directly or indirectly to quality-of-life factors. Your participation will be of great help in understanding potential links between corporate sustainability practice and impact on society.

The findings will be summarised as industry-level case studies. The study involves completing a basic awareness survey and an option to host a site visit to collect documentation, interview responses, and situational data of your company’s corporate sustainability or corporate social responsibility activities and initiatives.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is anonymous, which does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. Your responses will be collected via a survey form and stored in an MS Excel format for analysis.

If you choose to provide your contact information, it shall only be used to communicate questions and concerns or coordinate a site visit. At the completion of the research project, your contact information will be deleted. If you agree to a site visit and interviews, you will receive a confirmation letter with a separate Consent Form outlining Site Visit Interview (SVI) process, and the option to receive a summary of anonymised findings from all or select case studies.

All responses, via Survey or SVI, shall be anonymised by removing your name, job title, and organisation from the responses collected for the research data.

If you would like to participate in the study, please read the Informed Consent letter attached and remit to Kari Solomon via email (eekms@leeds.ac.uk). Once you have confirmed consent, you will be provided the link to access the Awareness Survey. Your participation in the research will be of great importance to understanding the impacts and links of corporate sustainability practice on society.

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the Business, Earth & Environment, Social Sciences (AREA FREC) Committee on 27 February 2023, ethics reference 0394.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Kari Solomon

[Attachments: UoL Informed Consent, UoL Research Privacy Notice]

Participant Invitation to Complete Survey, via email.

My name is Kari Solomon, and I am a doctoral student at University of Leeds in England, UK. My current research resides within the Sustainability Research Institute's Businesses & Organisations for Sustainable Societies (BOSS) scope of work. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled: "Sustainable Development Performance: The Impact of Corporate Sustainability Practice on Quality-of-life".

The intention of my research is to assess how companies measure their sustainability performance, and if those measures link directly or indirectly to quality-of-life factors. Your participation will be of great help in understanding potential links between corporate sustainability practice and impacts on society.

The findings will be summarised as industry-level case studies. The study involves completing an awareness survey and an option to participate in an in-person OR video-conference interview to collect supporting information on your corporate sustainability or corporate social responsibility activities and initiatives.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is anonymous. All responses shall be anonymised by removing your name, job title, and organisation from the responses collected for the research data.

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the Business, Earth & Environment, Social Sciences (AREA FREC) Committee on 27 February 2023, ethics reference 0394.

To complete the Consent Form and access the Survey click this link: [Awareness Survey Here]

Thanks again,

Kari Solomon

University of Leeds

Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS2 9JT, GB

C.2 Survey Consent Forms

Participant Survey Consent Form

Case Study Participant Consent to Take Part in: **"Sustainable Development Performance: The Impact of Corporate Sustainability Practice on Quality-of-life"**	*Please provide your initials next to each statement in agreement*
I confirm I have read and understand the invitation letter to complete the survey as sent explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time without reason and without negative consequence. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question, I am free to decline. The researcher, Kari Solomon, assures that data provided in partial or whole amounts shall be deleted upon receipt of notice for withdrawal from participation in the project.	

I understand that members of the research team may have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name shall not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. I understand that my responses shall be kept strictly confidential.	
I understand that data collected from me may be stored and used in relevant future research in an anonymised form. I understand that data collected from me for the Survey is done so via internet accessible links to a survey form provided by the researcher, Kari Solomon, upon my content and my responses are then synthesised in a MS Excel file to be used for analysis.	
I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from the University of Leeds, to include academic supervisors of the researcher, Kari Solomon, where relevant to participating in the research.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform Kari Solomon, lead researcher, should my contact details change.	

Name of Participant	
Job Title of Participant	
Participant's Signature	
Date	
Name of Researcher	Kari Solomon
Researcher Signature	
Date	

Upon completion of signatures, you will be provided a copy of the completed form to keep for your records. A copy of the signed and dated consent form shall be kept with the main research project documents in a secure location and managed per the records management policy of the University of Leeds and Research Privacy Notice protocol.

Participant Interview Consent Form

C.3 Survey Questions

Introduction

This survey contains open response and multi-selection questions to explores your company's strategies and practices for corporate sustainability. Your responses provide an understanding of how your company measures sustainability performance including both environmental and social factors.

The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete and your responses to all questions are voluntary. The questions are organised into four (4) categories: Corporate Governance, Stakeholder Relationships, Sustainability Performance, and Awareness of Impact. Demographic information is for research purposes only, and details will not be made available to the public, A reminder that all responses are anonymised for objectivity of reporting.

Before starting the survey, please complete the Consent Form in the section below. **[Researcher contact information for any issues].**

[Consent Form – Required]

Demographic Information (Optional)

1. Industry Selection (Multiple Choice, Single Selection)
    a. Health Care
    b. Hospitality
    c. Restaurants & Leisure
    d. Digital Media & Entertainment
    e. Published & Broadcast Media
    f. Other
2. Employee Ranges (Multiple Choice, Single Selection)
    a. 100-499
    b. 500-999

   c. 1,000-4,999
   d. 5,000-14,999
   e. 15,000-24,999
   f. 25,000+
3. Please briefly describe the products and/or services offered by your company (Open Response)
4. Please share the job title of the person completing this survey (Optional). (Open Response)
5. (Optional) Please provide your direct email contact if you wish to receive an Executive Summary of the survey results (Open Response)
6. Which of the following responsibility do you have in your company? (Multiple choice, max selection of 3)
   a. Sustainability policies/actions
   b. Finance and accounting
   c. Procurement
   d. Marketing/PR strategies
   e. Human resources
   f. Legal
   g. Customer Service
   h. Prefer not to answer
   i. None of the above

Corporate Governance

Corporate Governance refers to the extent to which your company's leadership engages with corporate sustainability and sustainable development, as well as oversight for integrating sustainability strategies with business strategy and performance.

Corporate Governance takes into consideration a structure for sustainability in the company, resources allocated to support various sustainability initiatives, or using various reporting tools (like Global Reporting Initiative or Sustainable development Goals) to communicate practices and performance [to stakeholders].

1. Which Senior Leadership roles in your organisation determine corporate sustainability strategy and practice? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
   a. Board of Directors
   b. Department Head
   c. Dedicated Sustainability Role (Individual)
   d. Dedicated Sustainability Role (Team)
   e. Do not know
   f. Other (please clarify)

2. For the senior leadership roles selected, pleas describe the function(s) served in developing sustainability management strategies. For example, is the role cross-functional? A decision maker? Policy enforcement? General oversight? Or Analytical review? (Open Response)
3. What are the responsibility and accountabilities of these dedicated roles? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Policy Enforcement
    b. Decision Maker
    c. Cross-functional
    d. Project management
    e. Review and analysis
    f. Other (please clarify)
4. How are dedicated sustainability roles enabled to carry out their responsibilities? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Annual, operational budget
    b. Project-based budget
    c. Organisational access (ad-hoc teams)
    d. Formal department
    e. Other (please specify)
5. How are leadership roles held accountable for performance and outcomes of corporate sustainability initiatives? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Compensation scheme
    b. Inclusion of factors in individual performance evaluation
    c. Performance policy/guidelines
    d. Other (please specify)

Managing Stakeholder Relationships

The following questions are related to stakeholder engagement and relationship management in your organisation. In stakeholder relationship management, there are various internal and external variables that support or impede a company's ability to identify, engage with, and collaborate with stakeholder groups. Consider any formal or informal practice your company may have in place for defining and engaging with stakeholder groups, and how these relationships inform your company's corporate sustainability practices.

1. What are your company's stakeholder groups? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Customers
    b. Employees
    c. Suppliers
    d. Shareholders and investors
    e. Competitors
    f. Industry partners
    g. Regulators/Legislators

    h. Civic associations/organisations
    i. Other (please specify)
2. Which of your stakeholders are most impacted by or have the most influence on your sustainability strategy and outcomes? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Customers
    b. Employees
    c. Suppliers
    d. Shareholders and investors
    e. Competitors
    f. Industry partners
    g. Regulators/Legislators
    h. Civic associations/organisations
    i. Other (please specify)
3. How does senior leadership, or your highest governance body, engage with and maintain stakeholder relationships? (Open Response)
4. Of the selected stakeholder groups, how do you communicate with each group? Is the communication a repeatable process? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Invitation to board meetings
    b. Access to annual reporting
    c. Invitation to planning sessions
    d. Surveyed for feedback
    e. We are not engaged with any stakeholder groups
    f. Other (please specify)
5. How are the identified stakeholders engaged with the company's corporate sustainability strategy and performance? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Used as weighting factors in Materiality Assessment
    b. Understanding and prioritising stakeholder requirements
    c. Developing leading performance measures
    d. Contextualising performance reporting to Decision Makers
    e. Building business cases for new projects or initiatives
    f. Other
6. Of the engagement strategies selected, which methods do you use for each stakeholder group? (Open Response)
7. Apart from the engagement tools selected, how do you collect feedback or input for sustainability initiatives from your stakeholder groups? (Open Response)
8. What are your key communication channels and processes you use with your identified stakeholders? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Direct Email or Newsletter
    b. Social Media
    c. Blog or Message Forum
    d. Call/Hotline
    e. Meetings

   f. Surveys
   g. Focus Groups
   h. Other (specify)
9. Do you have measures to assess which stakeholders are better engaged in your sustainability strategy? (Multiple Choice, Single Selection)
   a. [Conditional] If you said “Yes” to measuring stakeholder engagement, what types of metrics are you using for this process? (Open Response)
   b. [Conditional] If you said “No” to measuring stakeholder engagement, then how do you ensure stakeholders are aware of their inputs used in sustainability strategy? (Open Response)
10. What are the metrics currently used to determine the level of stakeholder engagement in your sustainability strategy? (Multiple Choice)
   a. Participation rates in events
   b. Response rates to emails, communications
   c. Diversity of participation (diversity as in type of stakeholder group)
   d. Number of engagement activities
   e. Budget allocated for stakeholder engagement activities
   f. Quality or value of feedback
   g. Stakeholder satisfaction with engagement practices
   h. Quality or tenure of stakeholder relationship
   i. Level of influence on your decision-making ~~(%)~~
   j. Other (please specify)

Sustainability Performance & Management

Many companies rely on various sustainability management tools to monitor sustainability performance and progress. Sustainability management tools are standards, frameworks, or guidelines -voluntary or compulsory- that organisations use to build, implement, and manage corporate sustainability practices and impact. Most of these tools are voluntary, but there are required standards for different nations and industries. When answering the following questions, please consider how your company gathers relevant data and information, tools used to analyse or summarise performance trends and themes, and processes your company has in place to communicate performance to various stakeholder groups.

1. What are your corporate sustainability practices and how do you implement them? (Matrix Multiple Choice, Single Selection per Option)

   Rows:

   A. Environmental Management,
   B. Environmental Social &Governance (ESG),
   C. Environmental Investment,
   D. Social Impact Investment,
   E. Sustainable Supply Chain

F. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI),
G. Non-financial Disclosure/Sustainability Reporting
H. Other

Columns:

1. Project Management Dedicated Team
2. Ad-hoc, Committee
3. Reporting Standard
4. Not Applicable

2. How are employees enabled to support implementation of sustainability practices in your company? (Open Response)
3. How do you collect information and measure performance of your sustainability practices and strategic initiatives? (Open Response)
4. How do you monitor the performance or impact of your implemented sustainability practices? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Internal performance reporting
    b. Annual corporate reporting
    c. Standalone reporting
    d. External assurance or auditing
    e. Internal auditing
    f. Other (please specify)
5. To your knowledge, has your organisation adopted or adapted a business excellence or performance management practice? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
6. How are responsibilities for sustainability performance management structured in your company? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
7. How are leadership responsibility for sustainability performance management supported in you company? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
8. Are there measurable impacts of your sustainability practices on your stakeholder relationships? (Multiple Choice, Single Selection)
    a. [Conditional] If you selected “Yes” about measurable impacts, please describe the measures you use and how they inform the quality of your stakeholder relationship in terms of managing sustainability performance. (Open Response)
9. Which of the following business excellence principles are adapted to your sustainability strategies? (Multiple Selection)
10. How has the selected business excellence principles influenced the structure and outcomes of your sustainability initiatives and performance? (Open Response)
11. How are business operations impacts measured? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
12. How are stakeholder impacts measured? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)

Awareness of Impact

As organisations embrace sustainability practices and evaluate their sustainability performance, the next crucial step is to comprehend the scope and extent of their impact both within the company and beyond its boundaries. Companies employ a range of processes and systems to assess and understand these impacts on their operations and society.

As you answer the following questions, please consider your company's approach to planning, implementing, and evaluating sustainability initiatives, considering not only the effectiveness and breadth of impacts on internal operations but also the wider implications for stakeholders and society at large. This encompasses both formal and informal processes that assess the near- and long-term economic, environmental, and social dimensions of your sustainability efforts.

1. How are social impacts factored into your corporate sustainability strategy and performance management approach? (Multiple Selection)
2. Based on your previous answer, are there key drivers for why you consider such factors for assessing impact external to your company? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Shareholder or investor request for transparency
    b. Consumer demand for transparency
    c. Establishing a competitive advantage
    d. Tracing impact on key social groups
    e. Key drivers are not identified/considered
    f. Other (please specify)
3. How are societal impacts factored into your corporate sustainability strategy and performance management approach? (Multiple Choice, Multiple Selection)
    a. Materiality assessment
    b. Business planning
    c. Reporting/disclosure standard
    d. Social impacts are not considered
    e. Other (please specify)
4. Do you associate any of the following aspect to social impacts of your sustainability strategy as having an internal or external affect? (Matrix Multiple Choice, Single Selection per Option)
    a. [Conditional] If you selected “Other” as an aspect, please describe what this aspect is and how you assess its internal and external impacts. (Open Response)
5. When thinking about external social impacts, keep in mind such factors as educational attainment, safe communities (low crime), access to affordable health care, or access to safe, green spaces. What are some challenges and opportunities in considering how your company’s sustainability performance metrics could be connected to any indicators used to assess impacts on society at large? (Open Response)

Optional Interview Opt-In

[Description provided regarding time commitment and format of interview if volunteering.]

1. Are you interested in participating in an Interview? (Multiple Choice, Single Selection)
    a. [Conditional] If Yes, scheduling question
    b. [Conditional] If No, end of survey
    c. [Conditional] If Maybe, additional information and contact question