

CPT 898 - Summative assessment 1: Pro-forma

1456124

by Philippe Demougin

FILE	FINAL_ASSESSMENT_1_-_PRO-FORMA_AUTOSAVED.PDF (520.3K)		
TIME SUBMITTED	11-NOV-2015 10:53AM	WORD COUNT	2340
SUBMISSION ID	48233094	CHARACTER COUNT	14002

CPT 898 - Summative assessment 1: Pro-forma

1456124

Assignment Cover Sheet



Student Number:	1456124		
Module Code:	CPT898	Date:	11.11.2015
Essay Title:	Summative Assignment 1 - Proforma		
Required Word Count:	1000	Actual Word Count:	995

[Feedback](#)

Del.

1. Research Question

What are the functions, workings and effects of codes of conduct¹ from employer's organisations² (EO) in the UK that address the corporate social responsibility³ (CSR) performance of their member firms?

1

1. What is the proportion of EOs in the UK that propagate CSR codes amongst their member firms?

2

2. What are the "determinants of success" of EOs' CSR codes, and the conditions under which these codes tend to be successful/unsuccessful?

Good

3. What is the proportion of codes of conduct from UK EOs that satisfy the identified conditions in order to be considered "successful" in promoting CSR?

2. Research Field

- My research questions could be positioned in numerous research fields (e.g. business ethics, organisation studies).
- I chose to locate it in CSR studies – more specifically in codes of CSR – because I am most interested in CSR codes' "effectiveness"/"successfulness". This remains a primary debate in CSR research (Theofilou and Watson 2014) – particularly as CSR codes have been condemned to remain largely symbolic (Arya and Salk 2006), and difficult to compare/standardise (Castka and Balzarova 2008).
- EOs could provide communication/learning platforms to improve the standardisation of CSR codes, and thus, contributing to this central debate in CSR research.
- CSR studies are primarily concerned with the relationship between productivity, public image, workers' rights and environmental protection.
- CSR is a rapidly growing field (Midttun et al. 2015), that remains contested through the interdisciplinary influences of business ethics, corporate governance, organisational studies and environmental management (Bondy et al. 2012). This entails that a wide range of strategies, methods and epistemologies are used in CSR research.

3

Good

Good

4

1 – Codes of Conduct can be defined as a set of rules or social norms for a group of people, organisation, nation or religion that regulate moral, ethical or religious behaviours (O'Dwyer and Madden 2006).

2 - Employers organisations can be defined as groups of employers from a particular trade or region who collaborate with one another in order to gain competitive advantages for their businesses (Barry and Wilkinson, 2011).

3 – Corporate social responsibility refers to the voluntary actions of companies to take environmental and social issues into account, whilst still achieving their economic goals of generating a profit (Midttun et al. 2015).

3. Epistemological perspective 1

Logical Positivism (LP)

Origins: LP was advocated by the Vienna and Berlin Circles in the 1920s to “purge” the sciences of unobservable, emotional or metaphysical ideas (Sarkar and Pfeifer 2006).

Although there is no universal definition, LP’s general characteristics include:

- **Reality** is objective and value-free (Hempel 2000).
- **Knowledge** about social reality is obtained – like in the natural sciences – through sensory experiences, reason and logic (May 2001).
- **Principle aim** is to discover “universal laws” and to develop generalisable theories to describe the external world accurately (Davis 2005, Grünbaum 1984 in Mackenzie 2011, p. 535).
- **Focus** is on verifiable facts, figures, statistics and causal relationships between dependent/independent variables (usually using “big data”) (Guala 2011).
- **Methods** are usually quantitative or experimental (Davis 2005).
- **Research strategy** utilises the scientific method to test hypotheses through the collection and analysis of empirical data (Hempel 2000).
- **Key figures** are Durkheim and Comte (Macionis 2012).
- **Key Critics** are Popper (1934) and Kuhn (1962) – predominantly questioning LP’s claim towards empirical verification, unfalsifiable predictions and universal laws.

Good

Improper Citation

Good

Good

Good

4. Epistemological perspective 2

Social Constructionism (SC)

Origins of SC are in Berger and Luckman’s (1966) “*The Social Constructionism*”, with its roots in phenomenology⁴ (Potter 1996, p. 13) and the critique of positivism (Baert et al. 2011).

There is no universal position in SC (Danziger 1997), however its general features include:

- **Inter-subjective realities** are created by people’s actions and interactions with each other (e.g. habits and language) (Andrews 2012).
- **Knowledge** is relative, subjective and never value-free (Flick 2009).
- **Research** aims to understand and de-/re-construct subjects, processes and actions that (co-)produce people’s perceptions of reality (Newton et al. 2011; Hacking 2000). However, the researcher always stays immersed in her/his social world(s) and must therefore remain reflexive regarding her/his values, presumptions and limitations (Burr 1995).
- **Methods** are usually qualitative with smaller samples (e.g. interviews, focus groups, and participant observation).
- **Criticisms** of SC include it to be unscientific (Woolgar and Pawluch 1985), subjectivist (Stam 1990), conventional (Hibbert 2005) and relativist (Boghossian 2006).

Improper Citation

Good

Excellent

Improper Citation

Excellent

Good

4 - Phenomenology – similar to SC and interpretivism – finds that meanings, beliefs and practices are passed on through culture. However, rather than exploring subjective interpretations, phenomenology attempts to understand direct experiences of natural phenomena (see Gregory 2000; Schutz 1970).

Good

5. How has the perspective identified in box 3, above been used in your field of research?

In CSR research, authors seldom make their epistemologies explicit. However, LP or closely related frameworks are frequently used in papers that attempt to quantify CSR's "effectiveness"/"successfulness" (which applies to my research questions 2 & 3):

1. Lacey et al. (2010) apply survey data (n=1636) to explore the roles of product knowledge and CSR towards enhanced commitment in event sponsorship.
2. Parisi (2013) examine the effects of top managements' commitment to CSR in 405 European companies on their structural and social alignment.
3. Kolk and Van Tulder (2002) quantitatively investigate the relationship between voluntary CSR codes and the execution of child labour in international corporations.
4. O'Dwyer and Madden (2006) apply survey data (n=1000) to analyse ethical codes' incidence, content, enforcement and effectiveness within Irish based companies.
5. Theofilou and Watson (2014) quantitatively explore employee perceptions of CSR strategies, focusing on its effects through word of mouth and employee relationships.

Through the rule of large numbers, these studies aim to make objective and generalisable statements about their findings (Hacking 1981).

Good

Good

Good

Improper

Question



6. How has the perspective identified in box 4, above been used in your field of research?

In the field of CSR, SC also informs a large number of studies, such as:

1. Dahlsrud's (2008) widely cited work examines 37 definitions of CSR and finds greatest importance in the socially constructed meaning of CSR in its specific contexts (see also Carcia-Rosell 2012).
2. Shamir (2005) applies ethnographic research to explore non-profit organisations' ideas of CSR and corporate citizenship.
3. Fan (2005) examines the social construction of ethical branding and its complex relationship to CSR and corporate reputation.
4. Waitzkin et al. (2012) interpret interview data to investigate how (CSR related) motivations, behaviours and interactions between government officials and corporate executives are framed/socially constructed.
5. Dhanesh (2014, p. 157) utilises a dialectic approach to analyse discourses surrounding CSR to understand "tensions, and complexities that characterize the conceptualization, enactment, and communication".

These examples show how SC is predominantly used in CSR research to interpret ambiguous meanings and analyse controversial discourses surrounding CSR.

Good

Good

Good

Good

Excellent

7. Choice and justification of epistemological framework selected for research question in box 1, above.

My research questions necessitate fundamentally different strategies and methods to be answered. Therefore, I choose to adapt my epistemological views by applying aspects of both LP and SC when desired.

Good

Table 1: Outline of PhD research.

	Strategies	Methods	Epistemology and Justification
Questions 1&3	1 Quantitative analysis	Analyse questionnaires/existing data sets	LP: Because I am targeting objective/numerical results
Question 2⁵	2 Case study	Semistructured interviews with chosen EO's representatives	SC: In order to acknowledge the context of people's opinions, statements and values in the interviews and non-participant observation (this requires me to remain reflexive of my own agency). AND in the discourse analysis in order to identify the ambiguous meanings of "success" of CSR.
	3 Ethnography	Non-participant observation within chosen EO	
	4 Discourse analysis	Analysis of EO's CSR codes	

5

Good

Through triangulation of methods I attempt to increase the reliability and validity of my results (Guion et al. 2010). Because I modify my epistemological assumptions about social reality, I am applying a pragmatist epistemology⁶.

Excellent

5 - My question 2 will most probably be further broken down during the PhD process.

6 - Pragmatism is "anti-foundational ... [and ideas] are formed contingently ... in response to particular needs" (Baker and Schaltegger 2015, p. 265). For examples of pragmatism in CSR research see Debeljak et al. 2011 and Sison 2009.

References

- Andrews, T. 2012. What is social constructionism? *Grounded Theory Review* 11(1), pp. 39-46.
- Arya, B. and Salk, J. E. 2006. Cross-sector alliance learning and effectiveness of voluntary codes of corporate social responsibility. *Business Ethics Quarterly* 16(2), pp. 211-234.
- Baert, P., Weinberg, D. and Mottier, V. 2011. Social constructionism, postmodernism and deconstructionism. In: Jarvie, I. and Zamora-Bonilla. Eds. *The sage handbook of the philosophy of social sciences*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 475-487.
- Baker, M. and Schaltegger, S. 2015. Pragmatism and new directions in social and environmental accountability research. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal* 28(1), pp. 263-294.
- Barry, M. and Wilkinson, A. 2011. Reconceptualising employer association under evolving employment relations: countervailing power revisited. *Work, employment and society* 25(1), pp. 149-162.
- Berger, P. L. and Luckman, T. 1966. *The social construction of reality*. Anchor Books. New York.
- Boghossian, P. 2006. *Fear of knowledge: against relativism and constructivism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bondy, K., Moon, J. and Matten, D. 2012. An institution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in multi-national corporations (MNCs): form and implications. *Journal of Business Ethics* 111(2), pp. 281-299.
- Burr, V. 1995. *An introduction to social constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Carcia-Rosell, J.-C. 2012. Struggles over corporate social responsibility meanings in teaching practices: The case of hybrid problem-based learning. *Management Learning* 44(5), pp. 537-555.
- Castka, P. and Balzarova, A. 2008. The impact of ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 on standardisation of social responsibility – and insider perspective. *International Journal of Production Economics* 113(1), pp. 74-87.
- Dahlsrud, A. 2008. How corporate social responsibility is defined: an analysis of 37 definitions. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 15(1), pp. 1-13.
- Danziger, K. 1997. The varieties of social construction. *Theory & Psychology* 7(3), pp. 399-416.
- Davis, S. 2005. *Handbook of research methods in experimental psychology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Debeljak, J., Krakac, I.B. and Banks, I.B. 2011. Acquiring csr practices: from deception to authenticity. *Social Responsibility Journal* 7(1), pp. 5-22.
- Dhanesh, G.S. 2014. A dialectical approach to analysing polyphonic discourse of corporate social responsibility. *Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability* 6, pp. 157-177.
- Fan, Y. 2005. Ethical branding and corporate reputation. *Corporate Communications* 10(2), pp. 341-350.

- Flick, U. 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*, London: Sage.
- Gregory, D. 2000. Phenomenology. In: Johnston, R.J., Gregory, D., Pratt, G. and Watts, P. eds. *The dictionary of human geography*. Oxford: Blackwell, 579–581.
- Grünbaum, A. 1984. *The foundations of psychoanalysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Guala, F. (2011) Experiments. In: Jarvie, I.C. and Zamora-Bonilla, J. eds. *The philosophy of social sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 577-594.
- Guion, L.A., Diehl, D.C. and McDonald, D. 2010. *Triangulation: Establishing the Validity of Qualitative Studies*. IFAS Extension, University of Florida.
- Hacking, I. 1981. *Scientific revolutions*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hacking, I. 2000. *The social construction of what?* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Hempel, C. 2000. On the logical positivists' theory of truth. In: Jeffrey, R. ed. *Selected philosophical essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 9-20. [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815157.005> [Accessed 10 November 2015].
- Hibbert, F.J. 2005. *Unfolding social constructionism*, New York: Springer.
- Kolk, A. and Van Tulder, R. 2002. The effectiveness of self-regulation: corporate codes of conduct and child labour. *European Management Journal* 20(3), pp. 260-271.
- Kuhn, T.S. 1962. *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Online]. Available at: http://projektintegracija.pravo.hr/download/repository/Kuhn_Structure_of_Scientific_Revolutions.pdf [Accessed 10 November 2015]
- Lacey, R., Close, A.G. and Finney, R.Z. 2010. The pivotal roles of product knowledge and corporate social responsibility in event sponsorship effectiveness. *Journal of Business Research* 63(11), pp. 1222-1228.
- Macionis, J. 2012. *Sociology*. Boston: Pearson.
- Mackenzie, J. 2011. Positivism and constructivism, truth and 'truth'. *Educational Philosophy* 43(5), pp. 534-546.
- May, 2011. *Social Research: issues, methods and practice*. London: McGraw Hill. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.mheducation.co.uk/openup/chapters/0335206123.pdf> [Accessed 10 November 2015].
- Midttun, A., Gjørlberg, M., Kourula, A. Sweet, S and Vallentin, S. 2015. Public policies for corporate social responsibility in four Nordic countries: harmony of goals and conflict of means, *Business & Society* 54(4), pp. 464-500.
- Newton, T., Deetz, S. and Reed, M. 2011. Responses to social constructionism and critical realism in organisational studies. *Organisational Studies* 32(1), pp. 7-26.

- O'Dwyer, B. and Madden, G. 2006. Ethical codes of conduct in Irish companies: a survey of code content and enforcement procedures. *Journal of Business Ethics* 63(3), pp. 217-236.
- Parisi, C. 2013. The impact of organisational alignment on the effectiveness of firms' sustainability strategic performance measurement systems: an empirical analysis. *Journal of Management and Governance* 17(1), pp. 71-97.
- Popper, K. 1934, *Logik der Forschung*. Vienna: Julius Springer. [Online]: The logic of scientific discovery. 2000. London: Routledge Classics. Available at: <http://www.mheducation.co.uk/openup/chapters/0335206123.pdf> [Accessed 10 November 2015].
- Potter, J. 1996. *Representing reality: discourse, rhetoric, and social constructionism*. London: Sage.
- Sarkar, S. and Pfeifer, J. 2006. *The Philosophy of science, an encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge.
- Schutz, A. 1970. *On phenomenology and social relations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stam, H.J. 1990. Re-building the ship at sea: the historical and theoretical problems of constructivist epistemologies in psychology. *Canadian Psychology* 31(3), pp. 239-253.
- Theofilou, A. and Watson, T. 2014. Sceptical employees as csr ambassadors in time of financial uncertainty, critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility. *Governance and Sustainability* 6, pp. 355-382.
- Waitzkin, H., Yager, J. and Santos, R. 2012. Advancing the business creed? The framing of decisions about public sector managed care. *Sociology of Health* 34(1), pp. 31-48.
- Woolgar, S. and Pawluch, D. 1985. Ontological gerrymandering: the anatomy of social problems explanations. *Social Problems* 32(2), pp. 214-227.

Excellent

FINAL GRADE

72/100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

A well written assessment which demonstrates that you have clearly met the learning outcomes for this part of the module. You have critically engaged with the two epistemologies and display a good awareness of their impact upon your research design. Good coverage of how the foundations have been used in your field and an interesting discussion of the field itself - although greater clarity was needed here. You final box, box seven is excellent; clearly explaining the influences upon your intended research. However, as noted in my comments for box this does demonstrate the importance of positivism for some of your research aims. Your initial research question should be phrased a little more clearly to reflect this. Your bibliography is excellent - you have clearly read widely - but ,in places, your referencing in the text is weak.

You can improve your mark by:

Noting my comments above and in the text.

Providing more clarity in your research question.

Ensuring that you reference all sources properly.

Provide more information about the field of CSR studies. A search for CSR in the title of articles on Web of Science yields almost 3000 matches but no journal contains the words CSR. If CSR studies really is a subject area or a field one might expect it to have it's own journal. How significant is the journal Business Ethics in your field? What are the key debates therein?

Feedback

See "General Comments" at end of the print-ready version of this paper for general feedback on your assessment - note that I am using a grading form which is visible if you click on the far right icon at the bottom of the window (it looks like a tiny office block)

QM

Del.

Delete

**Comment 1**

Are you implying some sort of causal relationship here? If so, this should be made much clearer

**Comment 2**

A rather immodest aim. Does this information exist already? I'm a member of two EOs and one union and all have codes of conduct. CSR is implicit in each. Is there evidence that some EOs don't have this? Or is this my naiveté, or good fortune to work in this sector?

QM

Good

Good

**Comment 3**

Say more about this field. Are there key journals for instance? What are the epistemological bases of the field?

QM

Good

Good

QM

Good

Good

**Comment 4**

Which part of this rapidly expanding field will your research occupy?

QM

Good

Good

QM

Improper Citation

Improper citation:

Improperly cited material. Please use the link below to find links to information regarding specific citation styles: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_citation_styles.html

Additional Comment Whereabouts in this 200+ page text book is this point made? You must reference more precisely.

QM

Good

Good

QM

Good

Good

QM

Good

Good

QM

Improper Citation

Improper citation:

Improperly cited material. Please use the link below to find links to information regarding specific citation styles: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_citation_styles.html

Additional Comment "Social construction of reality" is the title of the book.

QM

Good

Good

QM

Excellent

Excellent

QM

Improper Citation

Improper citation:

Improperly cited material. Please use the link below to find links to information regarding specific citation styles: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_citation_styles.html

Additional Comment As above. Whereabouts in the text?

QM

Excellent

Excellent

QM

Good

Good

QM

Good

Good

PAGE 5

QM

Good

Good

QM

Good

Good

QM

Good

Good

QM

Improper Citation

Improper citation:

Improperly cited material. Please use the link below to find links to information regarding specific citation styles: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_citation_styles.html

Additional Comment p?



Good
Good



Good
Good



Good
Good



Good
Good



Good
Good



Excellent
Excellent

PAGE 6



Good
Good



Comment 5
More importantly seeking to uncover causal relations.



Good
Good



Excellent
Excellent

PAGE 7

PAGE 8

PAGE 9



Excellent
Excellent