Between Discontent and Persistence

Emotional Tensions in the Performing Paradox of Corporate Sustainability

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Table of contents

Abstract

Corporate sustainability has been recognized as a crucial agenda item by organizations, although integrating it effectively into corporate strategies remains a significant challenge (Smith, 2003; Vilanova et al., 2009). To address this challenge, this study investigates how sustainability advocates can navigate the domain of corporate sustainability. By adopting a paradox perspective, this research offers a fresh approach to exploring how organizations can simultaneously address competing demands and navigate the complexities of corporate sustainability (Smith & Lewis, 2011). The research question guiding this study is: *How do sustainability advocates navigate the paradoxes of corporate sustainability?* To answer this research question, I conducted a qualitative, inductive, and single case study design within one of the largest facilities management companies in the Netherlands. The facility management industry has the potential to be a strategic partner in driving sustainable development, given its involvement in significant areas and its role in diverse businesses across sectors (Melissen et al., 2022). Additionally, the facility management sector provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics and paradoxical nature of corporate sustainability because both facility management and sustainability face challenges in demonstrating their value (Elmualim et al., 2010; Melissen et al., 2022; Vilanova et al., 2009). This cost-centric embeddedness creates a depth to a paradoxical situation where sustainability advocates may be undermined by higher management due to the prioritization of cost reduction. This study employs multiple data sources, with a primary focus on semi-structured interviews supported by observations and document analysis. The data reveals that sustainability advocates, also known as insider activists, actively strive to promote corporate sustainability within organizations. They exhibit a diverse range of motivations that drive their advocacy efforts. However, they often encounter significant obstacles and setbacks, which expose them to a performative paradox as they navigate conflicting goals associated with economic, social, and environmental objectives pursued simultaneously (Hahn et al., 2018). Consequently, advocates in the realm of corporate sustainability experience contrasting emotions. The profound sense of insurmountable obstacles faced by sustainability advocates evokes a range of emotions regarding corporate sustainability, such as discontent and occasional hopelessness. However, despite these feelings, sustainability advocates exhibit remarkable resilience and unwavering persistence. Through the collected data, it becomes evident that while feelings of discontent and hopelessness arise, persistence prevails resulting in an unwavering commitment to keep driving corporate sustainability.

KEY WORDS: Corporate Sustainability, Paradox Perspective, Sustainability Advocates, Issue selling, Emotionality

1. Introduction

In the past decade, continuous climatic and environmental shocks have urged our society to accelerate the transition to, ultimately, a zero-pollution, green economy through sustainable development (Baldi & Pandimiglio, 2022). Consequently, organizations have recognized corporate sustainability as a crucial agenda item; however, integrating it as a prominent element within corporate strategies remains a significant challenge (Smith, 2003; Vilanova et al., 2009). Therefore, this study aims to explore how sustainability advocates navigate the domain of corporate sustainability. These sustainability advocates, also known as insider activists, are individuals within organizations who actively work towards driving corporate sustainability (Morrison, 1991; Starik & Rands, 1995). Their endeavours play a pivotal role in mobilizing support to address sustainability contradictions and drive corporate sustainability initiatives (Goitein, 1989; Starik & Rands, 1995).

Despite this pivotal role, there is a scarcity of academic research on sustainability advocates (Fischer et al., 2018). In contrast to the conventional focus on strategic and upper management levels, this study therefore recognizes the significance of individuals occupying lower or middle tiers of the corporate hierarchy. These insider activists possess intricate knowledge about the organization's leadership, policies, practices, networks, and culture, empowering them to actively drive corporate sustainability (Linneberg et al., 2019). However, the multifaceted and complex nature of corporate sustainability entails inherent contradictions such as the dichotomy between short-term and long-term goals, the balance between economic growth and environmental impact, the management of diverse stakeholder interests, the reconciliation of innovation with resource limitations, and the contradiction of transparency and competitive advantage (Bjerregaard & Lauring, 2013). In recent years, the paradox approach has emerged as a promising opportunity to understand and evaluate these contradictions and the complexity of corporate sustainability, providing a basis for generating creative solutions (Hahn et al., 2014; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). Corporate sustainability is inherently emotional, given its association with the degradation of the environment and its potential impact on human life (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). Issue selling further involves an impassioned dynamic in which issue sellers, such as sustainability advocates, are likely to experience an array of emotions (Lauche & Erez, 2022). This research will be conducted in a setting where sustainability advocates endeavour to sell the issue of corporate sustainability, undoubtedly encountering a range of emotions throughout the process. By employing this approach, this study aims to shed light on how sustainability advocates navigate the paradoxes inherent in driving corporate sustainability within one of the largest facilities management companies in the Netherlands. Facilities management companies serve as an ideal research setting for examining the paradoxes that sustainability advocates encounter in driving corporate sustainability.

This sector offers a compelling academic setting that illuminates the contradictions and intricate dynamics at play within corporate sustainability. The vivid contradictions of this setting reside in the fact that both facility management (Elmualim et al., 2010; Jensen et al., 2012; Melissen et al., 2022) and corporate sustainability (Laverty, 1996; Vilanova et al., 2009) encounter challenges in proving their value, as both can be perceived as impacting company's margins without being its core business (Melissen et al., 2022). Facility management companies therefore usually compete based on price, their clients not seldom see these services and solutions as costs that need to be kept as low as possible (Melissen et al., 2022). Consequently, higher management tends to treat facility management as a cost centre, prioritizing direct outcomes of the organization's primary processes (Melissen et al., 2022). This cost-centric embeddedness creates a depth to a paradoxical situation where sustainability advocates may be undermined by higher management due to the prioritization of cost reduction. By examining sustainability advocates within the facilities management sector, this research will unveil the emotional tensions they encounter while navigating the paradoxical landscape of corporate sustainability.

Scientific relevance and contribution

This study makes a valuable contribution to existing corporate sustainability literature by answering calls for novel perspectives in understanding the complex concept of corporate sustainability within a business landscape (Ivory & Brooks, 2017). By adopting a paradox perspective, this research brings a relevant and fresh approach to explore how organizations can address competing demands simultaneously and thereby navigate the complexities of corporate sustainability (Smith & Lewis, 2011). According to paradox theory, sustaining long-term organizational success necessitates ongoing efforts to reconcile and address diverse and conflicting demands (Smith & Lewis, 2011). According to Ivory & Brooks (2017), the paradox theory has increasingly been utilized in academic research to examine various organizational phenomena, including change (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008), coopetition (Raza-Ullah, 2020), hybridity (Smith & Besharov, 2019), innovation and ambidexterity (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009), and leadership (Lewis et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2010). In recent years, the application of paradox theory has expanded to encompass the domain of corporate sustainability due to its ability to address the contradictions inherent to the concept (Carmine & De Marchi, 2022; Hahn et al., 2015; Hahn et al., 2018). One of the paradoxes that holds particular importance in corporate sustainability is known as the performing paradox (Luo et al., 2020). This paradox emerges from the conflict between competing goals associated with economic, social, and environmental objectives pursued simultaneously (Hahn et al., 2018). Deviating from prior academic research on paradoxes in corporate sustainability, this study uniquely examines the paradoxes through the lens of sustainability advocates, who serve as insider activists driving corporate sustainability. Through the incorporation of issue selling theory, a deeper comprehension can be gained regarding how sustainability advocates navigate the paradoxes of corporate sustainability. This integration provides a comprehensive perspective that encompasses the strategic and emotional dynamics inherent in sustainability advocacy, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the paradoxical nature of corporate sustainability. Even though emotions have garnered growing interest in management research, an essential aspect often missing from such accounts is a critical understanding of this emotionality in work settings (Fineman, 2010; Kusenbach & Loseke, 2013). By exploring how sustainability advocates navigate the paradoxes associated with driving corporate sustainability within one of the largest facilities management companies in the Netherlands, this study contributes to the paradox literature and adds to the issue selling literature in the context of corporate sustainability. Data for this qualitative, inductive single-case study was gathered using semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations. The research question guiding this study is: *How do sustainability advocates navigate the paradoxes of corporate sustainability?*

Outline of master thesis

This introductory chapter provides the problem formulation for this research through background information on the topic of this study and thereby accentuates the relevance of this topic. Chapter 2 highlights relevant literature to situate the forthcoming research within existing theoretical paradigms and to highlight areas where further scholarship is needed. Chapter 3 explains and justifies the research methodology used and explains data collection methods. Chapter 4 presents the researcher's findings obtained from the data collected. Chapter 5 discusses explanations and interpretations of the results in the context of the research question and literature review. Chapter 6 provides a concluding overview of this study.

2. Theoretical Background

Below I will discuss the theoretical background of this study to provide a solid scientific foundation. The theoretical concepts that will be discussed are; corporate sustainability and its paradoxes, sustainability advocates and issue selling.

Corporate sustainability and its paradoxes

Over the past twenty years, research on organizations and their natural environment, particularly in the context of corporate sustainability, has gained momentum (Bansal & Hoffman, 2011). Corporate sustainability is rooted in the concept of sustainable development, which emphasizes the notion that current economic progress should not jeopardize the capacity of future generations to meet their needs. (Cassen, 1987; Ivory & Brooks, 2017). Consequently, corporate sustainability entails the integration of economic, social, and environmental considerations into the strategic direction and operational practices of organizations (Ashrafi et al., 2018). Initially, the focus of corporate sustainability was predominantly on the environmental dimension, viewing it as ecological sustainability (Ivory & Brooks, 2017; Shrivastava, 1995; Starik & Rands, 1995). However, the focus of corporate sustainability has since evolved to encompass three interconnected dimensions: the environmental, social, and economic dimension (Bansal & Song, 2017; Ivory & Brooks, 2017). Each dimension represents a crucial but insufficient prerequisite; without support for all of the principles, corporate sustainability will not be feasible (Bansal, 2005; Hahn et al., 2015). Integrating the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability poses significant challenges for organizations as they navigate a complex landscape of contradictions (Berger et al., 2007). Companies engaged in corporate sustainability face various contradictions, such as the dichotomy between short-term and long-term goals, the balance between economic growth and environmental impact, the management of diverse stakeholder interests, the reconciliation of innovation with resource limitations, and the contradiction of transparency and competitive advantage (Bjerregaard & Lauring, 2013). There are urgent calls to adopt new perspectives on the practice of corporate sustainability to effectively address the intricate contradictions inherent in the business landscape (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002; Ivory & Brooks, 2017; Hahn et al., 2010; Margolis & Walsh, 2003). In response to the need for fresh perspectives, this study heeds calls by embracing the emerging paradox theory as a means to explore the contradictions of corporate sustainability (Bansal & Song, 2017). The paradox approach has emerged as a prominent method for assessing intricate corporate sustainability contradiction and fostering innovative approaches to address them (Hahn et al., 2014; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). This approach specifically indicates that organizations face various paradoxical contradictions that may be best addressed as interrelated, rather than through traditional win-win or trade-off approaches (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Attempting to resolve sustainability tensions through either win-win or trade-off approaches often leads to a process of weighing the benefits and drawbacks of each competing element and making choices (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). However, paradoxes cannot be resolved in this manner since the contradictory elements are interrelated (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015); if a choice is made, the contradiction will inevitably resurface (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Instead, adopting a paradoxical approach entails accepting the inherent contradictions between economic, environmental, and social concerns (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). This acceptance emboldens actors to embrace paradoxes and fosters more creative considerations (Beech et al., 2004; Clegg et al., 2002; Lewis, 2000). The paradox approach thereby reveals its potential as an intriguing new perspective that effectively addresses the intricate contradictions inherent in the business landscape of corporate sustainability. In this study, the theoretical framework established by Smith & Lewis (2011) will be utilized by looking at the paradoxes of belonging, learning, organizing, and performing. Although contradictions within corporate sustainability can encompass any consolidation of these four paradoxes, existing literature indicates the particular significance of the performing paradox within the domain of corporate sustainability (Luo et al., 2020). The performing paradox arises from the clash of competing goals such as the simultaneous pursuit of economic, social, and environmental objectives (Hahn et al., 2018). Examining the performing paradox, this study delves into the core of corporate sustainability and its aspiration to contribute to an array of sustainability objectives that may inherently conflict with one another (Hahn et al., 2018).

Sustainability advocates

Individual action plays a crucial role in raising awareness for environmental challenges and the urgent need for change (Stern, 1992). The literature on corporate sustainability also emphasizes the significance of individual initiative in driving corporate sustainability within organizations (Morrison, 1991; Starik & Rands, 1995). These individuals consider corporate sustainability a priority and possess relevant knowledge and skills to drive action and therefore play a vital role in driving corporate sustainability efforts (Goitein, 1989; Starik & Rands, 1995). Despite this vital role, there is a noticeable lack of academic research focusing on these individuals exploring their contributions and harnessing their full potential (Fischer et al., 2018). In contrast to the typical emphasis on strategic and upper management levels, this study therefore acknowledges the importance of individuals occupying lower or middle tiers of the corporate hierarchy. Accordingly, this study focuses on sustainability advocates who actively drive corporate sustainability within organizations. These individuals have been referred to in the literature as frontrunners (Loorbach, 2010), sustainability pioneers (Belz & Schmidt-Riediger, 2009), change agents for sustainability (Benn et al., 2014), sustainability activists (Carollo & Guerci, 2018) and sustainability advocates (Hubbert et al., 2020). By adopting the perspective of sustainability advocates, this research aligns with the concept of insider activism. Insider activism theory further displays that employees are not merely passive adopters but rather active contributors to corporate sustainability efforts, leveraging their comprehensive understanding of the organization's leadership, policies, practices, informal networks, and culture (Anderson & Bateman, 2000; Briscoe & Gupta, 2016). This study adopts a perspective that views sustainability advocates as insider activists, emphasizing their dedicated commitment to sustainability within the organizational context.

Issue selling

Sustainability advocates face the challenge of promoting corporate sustainability, which involves managing and addressing intricate contradictions inherent in the business landscape (Bjerregaard & Lauring, 2013). Issue selling provides a framework for understanding how sustainability advocates navigate this complex and paradoxical nature of driving corporate sustainability within organizations. The time and attention of top management in an organisation are critical, but limited, resources (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). The process by which top managers divide their limited time and attention among various strategic issues is crucial for comprehending organizational adaptation and change (Cowan, 1986; Dutton & Ashford, 1993). No issue is inherently strategic; an issue becomes strategic when it is perceived as relevant to organizational performance by top management (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Issue selling therefore refers to the behaviours of individuals aimed at influencing others' attention to specific issues (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Insider activists often employ issue selling as a tactic to bring attention to the issues they advocate for (Briscoe & Gupta, 2016). As a result, it is reasonable to consider the potential presence of issue selling within the context of this study**.** Additionally, issue selling enables individuals without formal power to initiate and shape organizational change (Lauche, 2019). Understanding the activities of issue sellers becomes particularly important when the issue has been granted strategic relevance but lacks buy-in from the organization, as often observed in the domain of corporate sustainability (Wickert & de Bakker, 2016). The issue of corporate sustainability is inherently emotional, given its association with the degradation of the environment and its potential impact on human life (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). Issue selling stresses the impassioned dynamic in which issue sellers, such as sustainability advocates, are likely to experience a range of emotions (Lauche & Erez, 2022). In this study, sustainability advocates are thus expected to encounter a range of emotions as they navigate the paradoxes inherent in driving corporate sustainability. Research has extensively explored emotions involved in issue selling (Lauche & Erez, 2022) and emotions related to corporate sustainability (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; Wright & Nyberg, 2012). Nevertheless, even though emotions have garnered growing interest in management research, an essential aspect often missing from such accounts is a critical understanding of this emotionality in work settings specifically (Fineman, 2010; Kusenbach & Loseke, 2013). This research is conducted in a work setting where sustainability advocates endeavour to sell the issue of corporate sustainability, undoubtedly encountering a range of emotions throughout the process. The integration of issue selling literature provides a comprehensive perspective that encompasses the strategic and emotional dynamics inherent in sustainability advocacy, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the paradoxical nature intrinsic to corporate sustainability.

3. Methodology

To address the central research question of this study I conduct a qualitative, inductive, and single case study design. Qualitative research offers the advantage of understanding processes in rich detail, allowing for an in-depth understanding of phenomena in real-life contexts (Langley & Abdallah, 2011). This research delves into the complex concept of corporate sustainability within the business landscape, with a specific focus on gaining an in-depth understanding of how sustainability advocates navigate the paradoxical nature of this concept. Inductive research is often chosen when there is little literature on the research topic (Goldthorpe, 2000). In this study, the application of paradox theory to corporate sustainability represents a novel perspective, particularly when combined with the existing literature on issue selling by sustainability advocates. Although some scholars argue that inductive approaches may not meet the standards of scientific progress (Bryman, 2003; Goldthorpe, 2000; Popper, 2005), the Gioia methodology employed in this study addresses these concerns by providing a systematic framework for applying conceptual and analytical rigor. This approach ensures credible interpretations of data and enables the derivation of plausible and defensible conclusions (Gioia et al., 2013).

Research setting

The facility management industry holds significant potential as a key partner in driving sustainable development, as it encompasses crucial areas such as energy, food and drinks, building materials, maintenance, waste and water management (Melissen et al., 2022). As the facility management industry provides services to a wide variety of businesses and organizations across all sectors of our economy and society (Melissen et al., 2022), it also has the potential to serve as a crucial partner for accelerating sustainable development among all these parties. Furthermore, the facility management sector provides an intriguing academic setting, shedding light on the intricate dynamics and paradoxical nature of corporate sustainability. Both facility management (Elmualim et al., 2010; Jensen et al., 2012; Melissen et al., 2022) and corporate sustainability (Laverty, 1996; Vilanova et al., 2009) face challenges in demonstrating their value, often being viewed as peripheral to a company's core business and potentially impacting its financial performance (Melissen et al., 2022). Consequently, facility management is frequently treated as a cost centre (Melissen et al., 2022). This cost-centric focus contributes to a paradoxical situation where sustainability advocates may be undermined by higher management due to the prioritization of cost reduction. During exploratory conversations with the company under study, it became evident that there were distinct examples of sustainability advocates within the organization. The mere mention of corporate sustainability as a topic prompted a significant segment of the company to readily identify individuals who they considered to embody corporate sustainability efforts within the organisation. The individuals they identified represented diverse organizational backgrounds, often encompassing individuals in lower or middle tiers of the corporate hierarchy. This highlights the importance of portraying employees of facility management companies as active agents driving initiatives for corporate sustainability and underscores the concept of sustainability advocates as insider activists in the realm of corporate sustainability.

Data collection

This study employs multiple data sources, with a central focus on semi-structured interviews to capture both retrospective and real-time accounts from individuals who have first-hand experience with the phenomenon of interest (Gioia et al., 2013). A series of nine interviews, ranging from approximately thirty minutes to an hour in duration, were conducted with individuals who hold prominent roles in advocating for corporate sustainability. All interviews are recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. In organizations with over seven hundred employees, delineating the scope of respondents can be challenging. Therefore, this study specifically targets individuals who demonstrate a high level of visible and dedicated commitment to ensure a focused examination. The selection of participants is thus based on specific criteria, including being recognized by others as actively engaged in corporate sustainability, actively committing to the topic by joining the internal professional groups, or being part of the management responsible for corporate sustainability efforts. An overlap can be seen among individuals who meet the first two conditions, indicating a consistent emergence of certain individuals as key contributors to corporate sustainability. By targeting individuals who meet these criteria, the study aims to capture a comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences within the dedicated sustainability advocate target group. During the process of conducting the semi-structured interviews, I paid extra attention to the interview protocol to ensure its alignment with the research question. I designed the protocol to be comprehensive and to avoid leading-the-witness questions, maintaining the integrity of the interview process (Gioia et al., 2013). Prior to, during, and after the interviews, I conducted numerous informal conversations with employees about the study. These conversations with employees from various levels of the organization were conducted to identify which employees are perceived as "sustainability advocates" by others. In addition to the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews, observational research is employed to observe participants and phenomena in their natural environment, providing a deeper understanding of the research context (Boyko, 2013). I will conduct observations during meetings of internal professional groups that specifically focus on corporate sustainability. This approach enables me to observe how individuals make choices and react to situations within their natural environment, possibly revealing non-verbal cues and subtle nuances that may not be captured in structured or controlled settings like interviews (Boyko, 2013). Therefore, this approach allows me as a researcher to complement and validate the findings from interviews, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how sustainability advocates navigate the paradoxes of corporate sustainability. Furthermore, I will also analyse company documents such as internal documents, memos, meeting minutes and internal presentations to acquire an even more profound comprehension of the nature of corporate sustainability and the internal dialogue that revolves around it. The document analysis involves documents with a communicative function around corporate sustainability. By utilizing a combination of semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis, this study aims to generate a comprehensive and nuanced understanding to answer the research question.

Data analysis procedure

The methods employed in this study draw inspiration from Gioia et al. (2013) in utilizing theoretical concepts instead of predefined constructs. By using broader and less specific terms, I tend to not impose pre-existing constructs or theories on the respondent as a predetermined explanations for understanding or interpreting their experiences. To maintain accessibility and prevent leading responses that align with preconceived theoretical concepts, I deliberately avoid employing theoretical terms in the interviews. With this, I make a conscious effort to keep the interviews open and unbiased. As many qualitative researchers have pointed out, it is somewhat artificial to separate the interviewing and the analyses because they usually go hand in hand (Langley, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997). Accordingly, it is crucial to remain adaptable and flexible while doing research, revising the protocol if necessary to accommodate the twists, turns, and complexities inherent in this type of study (Glaser et al., 1968). This may even involve modifying the original research question if deemed appropriate. Throughout this study, the research question underwent minor modifications at a detail level, while maintaining the essence of the original research question largely unchanged. The analysis of the data collection follows a three-step approach to build the data structure. In the first-order analysis, I adopt the terms used by the informants and avoid prematurely distilling categories. Moving to the second-order analysis, the focus shifts to the theoretical domain, seeking concepts that can effectively describe and explain the observed phenomena (Gioia et al., 2013). Once a set of workable concepts emerges, I explore the possibility of further refining the second-order themes into aggregate dimensions. This way of structuring data not only allows for meaningful visualization but also demonstrates the progression from raw data to concepts and dimensions during the analysis—an essential aspect of ensuring rigor in qualitative research (Pratt, 2008; Tracy, 2010). For illustrative purposes, Appendix 1 provides a partial representation of the data structure obtained from the semi-structured interviews. Including the entire Excel-document in the appendix would result in a lengthy and scattered presentation. Instead, I have provided a partial visual representation that avoids overwhelming the reader with unnecessary details. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the complete data structure, readers can request the detailed Excel-document encompassing all the necessary information. My intention in offering this option is to ensure that readers can access the specific information they need while providing a condensed visual representation in the appendix for quick reference and general comprehension. In Appendix 2, one can find the document analysis that employs the same concepts and dimensions as the analysis conducted on the semi-structured interviews. By aligning the concepts and dimensions used in the document analysis with those used in the interview analysis, I establish a cohesive framework for understanding the data as a whole. This allows for a more holistic interpretation and enables connections and comparisons between the insights derived from semi-structured interviews and the information extracted from the documents. Since the interviews and documents were conducted in Dutch, the analysis was also carried out in Dutch. However, when utilizing the data for broader comprehension, it was translated into English. This translation process did not present any additional challenges.

Ethical considerations

Initially, all potential respondents are contacted via email encompassing an overview of the study's purpose and emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation. In this email I make it clear that they have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time, and in such cases, any information obtained from their interviews will not be used in the study. During the study, there were no instances of respondents withdrawing. However, in one instance, a spontaneous observation occurred where it was not feasible to send a prior email to the participants, providing them with an overview of the study's purpose. To address this, I took a moment at the beginning of the observation to personally explain the research objective to the participants, placing strong emphasis on the voluntary nature of their involvement. In order to ensure their comfort and understanding, I reassured them that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the freedom to withdraw from the observation at any time without facing any consequences or judgment. During data collection, I actively listen and try to be open-minded, recognizing that my own beliefs should not cloud the data collection process. By being aware of my biases, I can minimize any potential impact they may have on the participants' responses or the overall research findings. I requested the members of the collaborative team working on the master's thesis to adopt an outsider's perspective and critically evaluate interpretations that may appear overly simplistic. The ethical dilemma of potential harm is apparent in this research. As sustainability advocates discuss various challenges related to corporate sustainability, some of these issues can be sensitive for the organization or could implicate specific individuals within it. To minimize the potential harm, I ensure the data collected remains confidential and treated with utmost care refraining from using names of respondents. By maintaining confidentiality, I aim to create a safe and trusted environment where sustainability advocates feel comfortable sharing their experiences and opinions openly. It is important that they can express their perspectives without fear of reprisal or adverse effects on their professional relationships within the organization. Respecting the ethical principle of confidentiality allows for a more open and honest exploration of the challenges and paradoxes faced by sustainability advocates in navigating corporate sustainability. Upon concluding the research and analysing the results, I will organize a customized presentation to effectively communicate the findings to the respondents. For those who express interest, I will also offer written reports that provide a comprehensive overview of the research process and key findings. This approach ensures that the respondents have access to both oral and written explanations of the study's outcomes.

Perspective of the researcher

This study adopts an interpretive position that aligns with the nature of sustainability, recognizing that it is not a singular concept with universally agreed-upon solutions, but rather a multifaceted and context-dependent phenomenon. An interpretive stance recognizes the importance of interpreting and making sense of the different perspectives, beliefs, and actions of various sustainability advocates involved in corporate sustainability efforts. With this I also assume that researchers possess substantial knowledge, enabling them to identify patterns within the data, uncovering concepts and connections that might go unnoticed by the participants, and articulate these concepts using theoretically relevant terminology (Gioia et al., 2013). Interpretivist researchers also believe multiple, equally valid realities are discoverable through academic inquiry and two apparently similar acts can have quite different meanings depending on their contexts (Hansen, 2004). This study implies that there are various sustainability advocates involved in corporate sustainability initiatives, each with their own (organisational) backgrounds, beliefs, goals, perspectives and interpretations of what it means to navigate the paradoxes inherent in their corporate sustainability efforts. An interpretivist view emphasizes the importance of subjective interpretation in understanding social phenomena and emphasize the importance of understanding the meaning that individuals attach to social phenomena (Wahyuni, 2012). This requires the researcher to engage in a process of interpretation, rather than simply observing and describing social phenomena (Wahyuni, 2012).

Limitations

Regardless of the thoroughness of a research project, it is important to acknowledge potential limitations. A possible limitation is the occurrence of a social desirability bias during interviews, where respondents may adjust their answers to conform to socially desirable expectations (Bleijenbergh, 2013). Respondents may strive to present themselves as rational individuals who adhere to societal norms, even though this might conflict with reality (Bleijenbergh, 2013). I focus on utilizing open-ended questions that allow respondents to express their perspectives and experiences in their own words. By avoiding leading or suggestive questions, I aim to create a space for participants to provide honest and genuine responses. Throughout the interview process, I remain attentive to any signs of social desirability by actively listening to participants' responses, observing for any indications that their answers might be influenced by the desire to present themselves in a favourable light. In this study, a potential risk is the phenomenon known as "going native," where the researcher becomes too closely aligned with the informants' perspectives, potentially compromising the higher-level perspective required for informed theory building (Gioia et al., 2013). This risk is particularly salient as I have been partially employed within the organization being studied, making the inclination to "go native" more apparent. However, this insider view also offers several advantages, including a faster and deeper understanding of the organization, easier access and trust with employees and potentially better information availability (Gioia et al., 2013). To address the limitations associated with "going native”, I have sought the involvement of the collaborative team on the master's thesis to adopt an outsider's perspective. Their role is to critically evaluate interpretations that may appear overly accepting or uncritical, acting as a devil's advocate. This approach allows for maximizing the benefits of "going native” while minimizing its limitations.

4. Research Findings

Through the analysis of data derived from semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis, I explored the dynamic relationship between the endeavours of sustainability advocates, the obstacles they face, and how they try to overcome these obstacles. The findings highlight a wide array of motivations that drive sustainability advocates. Harnessing these diverse sources of motivation, these sustainability advocates pursue actions aimed at advancing corporate sustainability. However, despite their dedication, they frequently encounter significant obstacles on their path. The data indicates that sustainability advocates face distinct types of obstacles and setbacks that impede their progress. Consequently, a sense of discontent and even hopelessness can be observed among sustainability advocates when their efforts to promote corporate sustainability do not yield the desired outcomes. Nonetheless, this wave of discontent and hopelessness does not extinguish the spirit of sustainability advocates entirely. The data reveals a remarkable persistence among these individuals, as they refuse to surrender in the face of adversity.

Sources of motivation

The interviews conducted with sustainability advocates unveil profound insights into their dedication to corporate sustainability, driven by a diverse array of motivators. Intrinsic motivation appears as a prerequisite for becoming a sustainability advocate, originating from personal values that emphasizes the importance of sustainability. This intrinsic motivation serves as the driving force behind their commitment to corporate sustainability. One facility manager (respondent 1) articulates this intrinsic motivation, stating: "*I think it is very important that we do that well and that's actually more from my personal values that I believe we have to do good for the world we live in*". Additionally, sustainability advocates shed light on additional sources of motivation that underscore the significance of corporate sustainability within a commercial landscape. Among these motivators, market position plays a pivotal role, as respondents acknowledge the necessity of remaining relevant and competitive in both the competitive- and labour market:

> *"If you're not engaged in corporate sustainability, then you as an organization, maybe lose your commercial value or something. I don't quite know how to put this, but if you don't make yourself sustainable and you have an audit and you score badly, then the consequence may be that customers no longer want to work with you, tenants no longer want to rent your premises, other parties no longer want to work with you. So, then your business stops. So, it's important for the survival, I think, of all organizations" (respondent 5).*

Sustainability advocates also demonstrate a keen awareness of the imminent Corporate Social Responsibility and Disclosure (CSRD) legislation. According to the respondents, this legislative pressure intensifies the urgency for commercial companies to actively address corporate sustainability concerns and adapt their practices accordingly. Nearly all respondents mention this legislation as a pressing motivator: "*Ultimately, this legislation is coming. So, you're going to be faced with it soon and if we don't start doing anything with that now, I'm afraid we're going to fall behind and we're going to miss the boat" (respondent 4).* However, the most remarkable and impactful commercial motivation stems from customer demand. Sustainability advocates acknowledge that genuine urgency within the organization often only arises when customers vocalize their demands for corporate sustainability. This customer-driven demand then serves as a powerful catalyst, compelling the company to meet these demands through corporate sustainability efforts. In this setting, corporate sustainability efforts are predominantly driven by a reactive response to customer demands:

> *"We are driven by customer demand. We are traditionally a company and still are, which is very happy and good at customer service, but also very good at solving or answering a question. So pretty reactive, so if we need to do something for a customer in terms of sustainability, then we're going to run for that and we're going to think about it, we're going to do it, but we don't translate that into some kind of concept" (respondent 7).*

In conclusion, sustainability advocates are fuelled by a convergence of intrinsic motivation, market demand, legislative pressures, and customer demands. The interplay of these diverse motivational factors forms the bedrock of sustainability advocacy, propelling individuals to drive the cause of corporate sustainability. Drawing strength from this multifaceted motivation, advocates exhibit a resolute impulse to take action and transform their aspirations into tangible results. However, despite their intentions, sustainability advocates often face several obstacles along their journey. These obstacles manifest in various forms impeding sustainability advocates in their progress and leading to feelings of discontent and sometimes even hopelessness.

Obstacles faced by sustainability advocates

When discussing their endeavours for corporate sustainability, sustainability advocates passionately highlight the numerous obstacles that impede their progress, determined to shed light on the underlying factors hindering their mission. These obstacles coalesce into obstacles encompassing the facility management setting, internal organizational obstacles and obstacles concerned with the essence of sustainability. Within the facility setting, the reliance on suppliers and customers emerges as a significant obstacle. Sustainability advocates frequently perceive that progress is hindered due to insufficient commitment from suppliers or customers, impeding the overall progress:

> *"Our work is always supportive though. So, we can give advice, but ultimately the client's management has to decide how they will go green, and that is part of their primary process.*

So, they then have to indicate to us where they want to go so, we can contribute and facilitate that, so the responsibility and investment does remain with all clients. And if they don't want to, we can't make that choice" (respondent 5).

Moreover, sustainability advocates continuously underscore their reliance on suppliers and customers to drive progress, highlighting the insufficiency of making significant advancements solely through their own efforts. One of the facility managers (respondent 1) echoes this sentiment: *"But I'm not the one making that choice",* while the contract manager (respondent 6) underscores the same: "*Yes, we make no, we make few choices that have real impact"*. The reliance on suppliers and customers is also evident from the observations. During the brainstorming session focused on achieving CO2-neutrality in buildings by 2030, participants acknowledged that the challenge of this topic lies in the organization's ability to manage the buildings while still being dependent on customer preferences and demands (l. 32-34) [Observation Report: Brainstorming Carbon Neutral by 2030 - Buildings].

Furthermore, sustainability advocates identify several internal organizational obstacles that hinder the translation of their motivation into noteworthy progress. These obstacles encompass a lack of clarity and structure, insufficient commitment and policy from the board of directors and a dearth of ownership. Respondents experience a sense of disorganization and find themselves reinventing the wheel due to the lack of clarity and structure in the given setting: *"Very often we have to reinvent the wheel while, we have already done so much. Only it's never brought together at one central point and that's a real shame" (respondent 6).* Additionally, sustainability advocates frequently highlight the board of directors as a layer of management that lacks the necessary commitment and action. This emerges, among others, in the document analysis of an internal memo, in which the following is mentioned: *"As indicated, I will demand attention for this with the board of directors in May and determine with them how we are going to realize our ambitions and where we will place our emphasis" (p. 1) [Internal memo - Management review check!].* The sentiment that attention must be demanded also emerges in the interviews. The HR consultant (respondent 2) highlights this obstacle by recounting a project manager's experience:

"You notice that it doesn't quite stick, with the board of directors. They don't act on it. Our project manager has also sat down with the board of directors before, saying, "Guys, this is something we have to take up, think about it". Then you notice that it kind of lingers there. So, it does take a lot of time and attention to make sure that they really do something with it at that particular layer. I think they all understand the importance of it, but to actually do something with it; we still have to take that step."

Within the organization, there is a noticeable lack of someone who takes ownership of the corporate sustainability topic and is dedicated to propelling it forward: "S*omeone has to start laying that foundation. It has to be the captain of the boat, because we're all rowing now, it's becoming a lot of metaphor now, but we don't know what direction we're rowing in" (respondent 6).* Lastly, the concept of sustainability itself also presents numerous obstacles, such as a lack of uniformity in comprehending and addressing sustainability challenges, the absence of a concrete vision of a sustainable future, financial constraints, and the relegation of sustainability as a secondary theme. A lack of clarity in comprehending and addressing sustainability challenges and the absence of a concrete vision of a sustainable future is summarized by the project manager (respondent 5) in the interview conducted:

> *"Nobody actually knows. Also calculating your CO2 footprint, it's just unclear: one year this has to be added, the next year it has to be taken off, then you have to take that into account again, then that weighs more. So, it's also kind of fluid or something because nobody really just knows. And I think the biggest problem is there is no one who can paint a picture of what the world will be like when we have achieved everything that has been imposed from the EU now. If you don't have a picture of what you're working toward, there will be no intrinsic motivation."*

The financial limitations associated with corporate sustainability consistently surface in the data collection. During the brainstorming session centred on achieving CO_2 neutrality in buildings by 2030, a participant highlighted the challenge of budget constraints and stresses that this financial barrier can be an obstacle for companies operating within limited budgets (l. 71-74) [Observation Report: Brainstorming Carbon Neutral by 2030 - Buildings]. The issue of financial constraints also frequently arises in conjunction with supplier and customer resilience, raising the question of who should bear the responsibility for investing in corporate sustainability. The Business Solutions
Director (respondent 8) sheds light on his personal experience with this matter:

> *"We have to start embracing this. Only it doesn't always mean that the customer is willing to pay? Then what does that business case look like? II think that's still a tension; what's in it for us? As a commercial organisation we cannot afford to invest without knowing what's in it for us."*

Finally, there remains a prevailing perception that sustainability is considered a secondary concern. Customer satisfaction takes priority, while sustainability is only given attention if there is adequate time and budget allocated for it. One of the facility managers (respondent 1) articulates the secondary nature of corporate sustainability as follows: "*You have many balls that you have to hold in the air as a company and sustainability is one of those balls. That's actually not even a ball, its more one of those little weights that hangs on every ball"*. The secondary nature of corporate sustainability within the organization is also acknowledged by another facility manager (respondent 4):

> *"I also always kind of read it from the presentations you see or the moments when this topic is talked about. What you see when you have lists of KPIs then sustainability is always at the bottom. When sustainability is talked about it is often at the end of a meeting and never at the beginning. If someone presents something, first it's about the numbers, are we in control, then it's about returns, sales, new customers, and only then one talks about impact and sustainability. Whereas I think that should be at the very beginning because I think that is what we stand for. How about that? Just start with that and then show the numbers, you know fine, also very important."*

Thus, in the pursuit of corporate sustainability, sustainability advocates encounter a web of obstacles that encompass the facility setting, internal organizational obstacles and obstacles concerned with the essence of sustainability. Sustainability advocates feel the need to bring attention to these obstacles, unveiling the factors that impede their progress.

Feelings of discontent and hopelessness

The profound sense of insurmountable obstacles faced by sustainability advocates creates a poignant expression of feelings within the organization regarding corporate sustainability such as a profound sense of discontent and, at times, even hopelessness. One of the facility managers (respondent 1) candidly shares his discontent during an interview:

> *"I must say that, if I'm very honest, I haven't achieved that much yet (...) I also don't know how things will evolve and I'm a bit worried about that because are we going to be carbon neutral? I never like to be part of projects where little comes out of."*

The contract manager (respondent 6) echoes similar sentiments: *"Yes, I do feel bad because I know we can do it very well and we don't".* The most poignant expression of this discontent, coupled with a sense of hopelessness, emanates from the expression of the performance manager (respondent 3): *"The only question is: are we still in time? I think that's the biggest question from an ecological point of view: are we in time, before all of the Netherlands is flooded? Yes, we're going to see. I wonder".* During the observation of the team meeting on environmental matters, a sense of discontent arises when one of the participants expresses concerns and reservations regarding the sustainability and feasibility of electric driving. This participant highlights that electric driving is not as sustainable as it is often portrayed, emphasizing a lack of nuance and facing resistance in presenting electric driving as an absolute sustainable solution (l. 70-73) [Observation Report: Team Meeting Environment]. These expressions of discontent and hopelessness, borne out of the obstacles faced by sustainability advocates in their pursuit, have two significant consequences. Firstly, they intensify the sustainability advocates' observation of others, hoping someone will break through these obstacles: *"Everybody's looking at each other, everybody's waiting on each other, everybody's always talking about that too" (respondent 4).*

Secondly, this prevailing discontent and hopelessness fosters a culture of organisational compliance, where the organization adheres to mandatory requirements but falls short of the sustainability advocates' aspirations: *"We don't have that dot on the horizon and once you don't know what you're working toward, then people don't get moving except at points where they have to, because otherwise they're going to be the ones hurting" (respondent 5).* Thus, in the face of obstacles, sustainability advocates find themselves grappling with a profound sense of discontent and occasional hopelessness. This often leads to an organisational sole focus on compliance, relying on others to pave the way.

Feelings of persistence

Despite the prevailing feelings of discontent and hopelessness, sustainability advocates demonstrate a remarkable and resolute sense of persistence that keeps sustainability advocates engaged in driving corporate sustainability. For instance, during a lengthy interview that lasted well over three quarters of an hour getting into the obstacles the respondent encounters, respondent 1 expresses his persistence: *"I am still very keen to be involved in sustainability. There is going to be an expert group on sustainability, and I would like to be part of that as well".* This persistence is exemplified by taking actions, no matter how small, by their expression of possibilities for improvement, fostering awareness among peers and expressing and determination to keep moving forward. Even in the face of obstacles, the HR consultant (respondent 2) exemplifies her sense of persistence by outlining the actions she undertakes to foster awareness among peers: "*At one point we just organized a session with executives to introduce one of our HR partners, who have people in their work pool with a distance to the labour market. That's how we try to get people engaged."* Meanwhile, one of the facility managers (respondent 4) encapsulates the determination to keep moving forward:

> *"If the client doesn't want to, then nothing happens. No, that's true, of course, but if the client doesn't know about it, he can never find out about the possibilities. So, I think that we should have the courage to talk much more with the client about sensitive issues, those Friday afternoon themes, that our role should lie much more there, yes, we can really add some value there."*

The determination to keep moving forward in order to enhance corporate sustainability, is consistently evident in both observations, with the objective of identifying actions and recommendations for achieving a more sustainable corporate future. Additionally, this unwavering determination to keep moving forward and the expression of possibilities for improvement is also apparent in the analysis of an internal documents, further underscoring the persistence of sustainability advocates:

> *"Looking at our strategy and mission, the intention is there. However, to actually make strides, more is necessary. Objectives are good to work towards, but more important is the intrinsic motivation to look beyond our own blinkers. Dare to remove barriers together in*

order to pave the way for equal opportunities for all." (p. 18) [Internal document - Human Rights - research plan].

The project manager (respondent 5) further embraces the determination to keep moving forward, understanding their potential within the setting of the facility management industry: *"It is particularly important for facility management, (...) as a facilities partner, you have quite a large share because you are in the entire secondary process or organisations. We could get more out of that than we do now".* Thus, within the realm of corporate sustainability, advocates often find themselves battling contrasting emotions. On one hand, they experience a deep sense of discontent and hopelessness when faced with numerous obstacles. On the other hand, they exhibit an unwavering persistence. The question that arises is which of these emotions ultimately prevails. Through the data collected, the feeling of persistence seems to overshadow the feelings of discontent or hopelessness. A compelling illustration of this persistence, which appears to overshadow feelings of discontent or hopelessness, is evident in the conversation with the performance manager (respondent 1):

> *"I'm afraid that next year, again, project EcoVadis, I'm going to be scraping all this data together and I don't feel like it. It was really dramatic. If I'm very honest, I assume that we will have made strides by then because the way we did it really doesn't work. But you know what the worst part is? I'm not willing to lose the EcoVadis certification so if I had to, I would secretly just be willing to do it again."*

The Director of Customer and Development (respondent 7) undergoes a similar emotional dichotomy, grappling with discontent over the progress made while steadfastly refusing to give up: *"I just really believe in it and I've called that, but unfortunately that hasn't led to action. But I believe in the power of repetition, so I'll keep shouting until somewhere someone is going to listen*". Thus, despite the obstacles and discontent faced by sustainability advocates, their unwavering persistence remains a driving force in the pursuit of corporate sustainability. The observations, interviews, and analysis of internal documents consistently highlight their commitment to push forward, even in the face of obstacles. While feelings of discontent and hopelessness may arise, the prevailing sense of persistence ultimately shines through.

5. Discussion

By heeding calls for novel perspectives in understanding the nature of corporate sustainability, this study makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature on corporate sustainability and the paradox literature, delving into the complex realm of corporate sustainability within the business landscape through a paradox perspective. Deviating from previous academic research on paradoxes in corporate sustainability, this study takes a unique approach by exploring these paradoxes through the lens of sustainability advocates, who function as insider activists driving corporate sustainability. The research further adds value to the existing literature on issue selling and the paradox literature by revealing the emotional tensions inherent in the performative paradox of corporate sustainability. The integration of issue selling into this study provides a comprehensive perspective that encompasses the strategic and emotional dynamics inherent in sustainability advocacy, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the paradoxical nature intrinsic to corporate sustainability.

Through data collection, numerous parallels with existing literature can be identified. The data reveals that sustainability advocates actively strive to promote corporate sustainability. However, despite their endeavours, this study suggests that their efforts to sell the issue of corporate sustainability may not be sufficient to fully integrate corporate sustainability into the organization's strategy. Sustainability advocates encounter various obstacles that hinder the achievement of their desired outcomes. These obstacles highlight the significant challenges organizations face in integrating the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability (Berger et al., 2007). One of the most prominent challenges emerging from the data collection, is the contradiction between economic growth and environmental impact. Respondents cite financial constraints abundantly as the reason behind the lag in corporate sustainability development. This reveals that sustainability advocates engage in a performative paradox stemming from conflicting goals associated with economic, social, and environmental objectives pursued simultaneously (Hahn et al., 2018). By exploring how sustainability advocates navigate the performing paradox associated with trying to sell the issue of corporate sustainability, this study exposes the emotional tensions inherent in navigating that performing paradox. Corporate sustainability, given its link to environmental degradation and potential impact on human life, is inherently laden with emotions (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). The profound sense of insurmountable obstacles faced by sustainability advocates indeed evokes a poignant expression of emotions within the organization regarding corporate sustainability. The data reveals an emotional dichotomy characterized by a sense of discontent and hopelessness due to unsuccessful attempts to try to sell the issue of corporate sustainability juxtaposed with a powerful sense of persistence to continue to drive corporate sustainability. The revelation of these emotional tensions intrinsic to the performative paradox of corporate sustainability addresses a vital aspect often overlooked in existing academic literature on issue selling and the underlying emotional dynamics involved in this process: a critical understanding of the emotional dynamics within work settings (Fineman, 2010; Kusenbach & Loseke, 2013).

Practical contribution

This research highlights the importance of sustainability advocates and thereby emphasizes that any employee can become a sustainability advocate. Consequently, it becomes imperative for managers to foster an environment that encourages and channels the passion and interests of these individuals, while taking into account the emotional tensions arising from the obstacles sustainability advocates encounter. By harnessing the intrinsic motivation of employees who demonstrate a dedication to corporate sustainability, managers have the opportunity to fully unlock the potential for impactful corporate sustainability efforts within the organization. The research emphasizes the importance of understanding the emotional tensions inherent in the performative paradox of corporate sustainability. It sheds light on the emotional dynamics within work settings and their profound influence on the promotion and integration of corporate sustainability. This understanding is of excellent value to organizations aiming to effectively engage sustainability advocates and cultivate an environment that fully supports their efforts. By acknowledging and addressing the obstacles and the emotional tensions encountered by sustainability advocates, organizations can provide the necessary support for corporate sustainability initiatives and work towards a more sustainable future. This research thus offers valuable insights into the obstacles and emotional tensions of navigating the performing paradox encountered by sustainability advocates within the realm of corporate sustainability.

Limitations

This study embraced an inductive approach, allowing the theoretical understanding to evolve alongside the research process. The dynamic nature of the investigation did make it challenging to predict specific trajectories or elements to focus on in advance. The exploration of emotionality within the paradoxes of corporate sustainability was a significant finding that emerged during the analysis of the interviews. Although I did not initially include this focus as a predetermined aspect of the study, it aligned with the existing literature and this aspect was supported by the data collected. By acknowledging the role of emotionality in navigating this complex landscape, the study unveiled a critical dimension that was not initially included. Within the context of this study, there was a recognized risk of "going native," wherein I could become overly aligned with the perspectives of the informants. This alignment had the potential to compromise the higher-level perspective necessary for informed theory building (Gioia et al., 2013). To address this limitation, I took proactive measures to optimize the benefits of "going native" while minimizing potential drawbacks. During interviews with the respondents, I consciously and clearly expressed and defined my role as a researcher rather than taking on the position of a colleague or participant. This intentional boundary creation allowed me to maintain a necessary level of detachment and objectivity. By adopting an insider view, I also gained advantages, such as a deeper and more rapid understanding of the organization under study, as well as easier access and trust from the employees. The paradox approach taken in this study seeks to address the challenge of balancing economic goals with social and environmental considerations (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). While this approach holds theoretical merit, its practical application can be challenging due to the fiduciary and commercial responsibility of organisations. The paradox approach, which embraces uncertainty and ambiguity, may be less appealing to profit-oriented firms (Carmine & De Marchi, 2022). Researchers adopting a paradox perspective must therefore make their recommendations relevant for managers who face constant short-term pressures. I therefore will organize a customized presentation to effectively communicate the findings to the respondents. For those who express interest, I will also offer written reports that provide a comprehensive overview of the research process and key findings.

Future research

Future research in the field of corporate sustainability can build upon the recognition of emotionality within the paradoxes of corporate sustainability as an initial focus. By delving deeper into this realm, researchers can explore how the emotions experienced by individuals engaged in corporate sustainability initiatives shape decision-making, action-taking and overall management of the paradoxes of corporate sustainability. To broaden the scope and applicability of these findings, it is relevant to conduct additional comparative studies across diverse organizations. Such studies will enable the identification of common patterns and practices in effectively managing the paradoxes of corporate sustainability and the inherent emotions intertwined with them. By examining how organizations with different contexts and dynamics navigate these paradoxes, researchers can unveil strategies and approaches that have proven successful. These insights can then be adapted and applied across various settings, enhancing corporate sustainability. In addition, longitudinal studies hold significant potential for deepening our understanding of the evolving nature of the emotionality within the paradoxes of corporate sustainability. By closely monitoring organizations over an extended period, researchers can gain insights into the evolving nature of emotionality within corporate sustainability integration, the paradoxes inherent in this process, the obstacles encountered along the way, and the strategies employed to overcome these obstacles. Such longitudinal analysis will shed light on the emotional nuances that influence decision-making and action-taking, providing a richer understanding of the dynamics at play.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the navigation of sustainability advocates through the paradoxes of corporate sustainability. Through a comprehensive analysis of semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis, the findings illuminate the intricate relationship between the endeavours of sustainability advocates, the obstacles they encounter, and their strategies for overcoming these obstacles. The data uncovers that sustainability advocates, also known as insider activists, actively strive to promote corporate sustainability within organizations highlighting a diverse range of motivations that drive these sustainability advocates. Nevertheless, their dedicated pursuits are frequently met with significant obstacles and setbacks. Sustainability advocates encounter distinct types of obstacles emphasizing the complexities organizations face in integrating the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability. One prominent challenge that emerges from the data collection is the contradiction between economic growth and environmental impact. This exposes sustainability advocates to a performative paradox, as they navigate conflicting goals associated with economic, social, and environmental objectives pursued simultaneously (Hahn et al., 2018). The profound sense of insurmountable obstacles faced by sustainability advocates evokes a range of emotions regarding corporate sustainability, such as discontent and occasional hopelessness. This often leads to a narrow focus on compliance, relying on others to lead the way. However, despite these prevailing feelings, sustainability advocates exhibit remarkable resilience and unwavering persistence in driving corporate sustainability forward. Consequently, advocates in the realm of corporate sustainability frequently find themselves grappling with contrasting emotions. The question arises as to which of these emotions ultimately prevails. Through the collected data, it becomes evident that while feelings of discontent and hopelessness may arise, the prevailing sense of persistence shines through. The revelation of these emotional tensions intrinsic to the performative paradox of corporate sustainability addresses a crucial aspect often overlooked in existing academic literature on issue selling and the underlying emotional dynamics involved in this process: a critical understanding of the emotional dynamics within work settings (Fineman, 2010; Kusenbach & Loseke, 2013). In the ever-evolving landscape of corporate sustainability, the recognition and understanding of these emotional tensions within the performing paradox of corporate sustainability can empower organizations to provide the necessary support for corporate sustainability initiatives and work towards a more sustainable future.

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Appendix 1:
Representation of Data Structure Interviews

1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Aggregate Dimensions
Ik doe het omdat ik het wel belangrijk vind, maar ik denk als organisatie, als we, als ik, denk ik dat we als organisatie doen, omdat die richtlijnen eraan komen en je daaraan moet daar. Zo zit die voor de organisatie.		
Nou ja van hem wist ik dat ie dat zelf een heel belangrijk onderwerp vond, uh want dat was toen bij de, hoe heet het, in de ECI was daar een werkgroep over, daar zat ie bij. Hij heeft daarna die werkgroep, uh CO2-neutraal uh bij elkaar geroepen. Hij had al gesprekken gehad met die uh organisatie die daarin uh ondersteunt; de Climate Neutral Group uh dus ja, hij stopte daar zelf gewoon tijd in, omdat hij het belangrijk vond.		
Uh, we moeten we nog langer mee op deze planeet, dus uh het is denk ik voor iedere organisatie belangrijk		
Uh, en ik denk, ik denk dat het gewoon goed is		
ik vind het gewoon heel erg belangrijk dat we dat goed doen en dat is eigenlijk meer vanuit mijn waarde van: je moet goed doen voor de wereld waarop we leven.		
Ik denk dat dat waar wij het, daar zit ook nog een verschil, wanneer wij het doen bij de klant, wanneer wij er bewust mee bezig zijn, bij de klant, denk ik dat het vooral komt vanuit de persoonlijke motivatie van medewerkers zelf en vanuit de managers zelf		
Maar ik denk dat de grootste dingen die wij bereiken zijn doordat er bij ons veel mensen, dat denk ik, hè, dat er bij ons veel mensen werken die graag vanuit eigen motivatie bewuste keuzes en duurzame keuzes maken.		
Ja, ik denk, ik denk dat dat ook wel mooi is om te laten zien van kijk ons, we hebben heel veel mensen, zorgzame mensen binnen (NAAM ORGANISATIE) he, die echt vanuit een eigen motivatie en goede beleving en waardes naar duurzaamheid kijken, maar die er ook vaak moeite mee hebben om dit soort dingen goed inzichtelijk te maken en omdat uh dit soort dingetjes echt concrete, concrete dingen op te leveren.	Intrinsieke motivatie	
Ik denk dat we daar ook, dat er heel veel mensen binnen ons werkveld ook heel erg bewust duurzaam bezig zijn en zelf graag duurzame keuzes willen maken.		
Ik ben, het is superleuk, hè absoluut, en ik ben er super graag betrokken bij het stukje duurzaamheid. Ik heb mezelf uh ook als uh, ik weet niet of je die expertgroep die ze nu aan het oprichten zijn, daar heb ik ook een voorstel gedaan van: Hé komt er ook een expertgroep op gebied van duurzaamheid die daar uh binnen de organisatie moet gaan doen wat daar wel graag deel van uitmaken.		
Uh, ja, je praat met een ambassadeur		
Nee, ik denk dat we verder moeten zijn, uh puur vanuit menselijkheid dat je weet dat de wereld uh er niet beter op wordt en dat je dus qua duurzaamheid en dat je daar iets voor moet doen, uh dus echt die intrinsieke motivatie, maar ook commercieel. Ik bedoel in iedere top-drie van ieder bedrijf wat wil uitbesteden of of als we aan onze klanten vragen van wat wat speelt op jullie?		
Ja, en dan heb je mensen, die willen er iets mee, zoals een (NAAM FACILITY MANAGER) of een of een (NAAM PROJECTMANAGER) die vanuit intrinsiek iets doen.		
Ja, ja, want als je kijkt bijvoorbeeld, we hebben (NAAM KLANT). Die hebben dus gewoon gezegd van: ja, volgens mij, je moet een PSO-trede twee of drie hebben, anders uh gaan we niet verder. Volgens mij, uh de (NAAM KLANT) heeft ook een eis gesteld van: nou, je moet EcoVadis hebben. Inderdaad, daar zit natuurlijk ook dat hele gebeuren van die mensen met beperkingen en inclusief zitten daar ook in. Dus er zijn wel klanten die wel degelijk eisen gaan stellen. Zo zullen we het toch aan moeten voldoen.		
We doen nu vooral als de klant erom vraagt en we willen dus naartoe dat wij degene zijn het aandragen bij klanten, maar dat is wel een hele omslag die we nog moeten maken. Zover zijn we nog niet.		
ik denk dat het in veel gevallen alsnog wel gewoon iets is wat opgelegd wordt door klanten of wetgeving en en dat denk ik wel, zeker in het begin zal dat zo zijn.		
Uh, nou, het wordt veel gevraagd natuurlijk, zeker in aanbestedingen en uh uitvragen. Uh, ik merk nu, omdat je, omdat die uh CSRD zeg maar daar aankomt en dat geldt natuurlijk voor al die grote organisaties, dat de vraag wel toeneemt maar nog niet gigantisch is ofzo.		
Dus daar, dus dus dus, ik zie dat het veel push is nog in uh in dit verhaal op basis van wat partijen vragen en dat komt natuurlijk ook bij mij terecht		
Binnen mijn werkveld als ik kijk naar mijn eigen account, dan uh ben ik niet echt bezig met duurzaamheid op dit gebied, uh niet in ieder geval niet niet bewust. Als ik kijk naar mijn werkzaamheden bij het account, is het voornamelijk gericht op het naleven van afspraken die we maken met de bank.		
En wat ik wel nog zie daarin is dat wij als organisatie nog niet zover zijn en dat wij dit op uh een beetje, eigenlijk op uh ad hoc basis, projectbasis, de dingen die we hebben afgesproken proberen binnen te halen.		
We zitten soms ook bij ook bedrijven die dat heel erg graag willen, van ons,		
als de klant het vraagt, dat dat wel helpt. Daar ben ik ook wel van overtuigd, want dan hebben dan hebben we iets wat we verplicht moeten en dat helpt ook altijd hè.		
als de klant dat vraagt en dan gaan wij dat regelen, dat weet ik zeker, absoluut, want als die klant zegt uh: ik wil duurzaam, ik wil dat jullie duurzaam zijn, ja, mag ook gerust wat meer kosten, dan doen wij dat ook.		
Maar zodra zodra een klant iets wil, dan doen wij gewoon wat die klant wil.		
In zoverre krijgen wij een contract toegeschoven van: Goh, dit is verkocht en ga dat maar uitvoeren. En dan staat, SROI staat vaak wel als KPI genoteerd of uh duurzame innovaties hè, je moet mensen één keer per jaar een duurzame innovatie aandragen die uh in de dienstverlening. En dat zijn wat ik dan noemde, die vrijdagmiddagthema's. Uh, opdrachtgevers die vinden dat, of klanten die vinden dat belangrijk. Maar als ik er niet aan voldoe, is het nooit een breekpunt. Waar klanttevredenheid uh hè uh of uh financiën dat wel kunnen zijn, uh is SROI heb ik nog nergens gehoord dat men zegt van: Uh goh, jullie voldoen niet aan de 5 procent-regel dus we gaan het contract met jullie beëindigen		
Nou ja, als jij een een vinkje wil zetten, om dan, om achter PSO drie, dan doe je dat omdat het, dan doe je dat niet omdat je dat zelf wil, dan doe je dat omdat dat goed uh staat op je, op je uh offertes want uh anders interesseert jou die PSO-ladder niet, dan ga je veel meer. Als het je echt intrinsiek motiveert dan ga je veel meer in het beleid zitten, dan ga je veel meer in uh de borging ervan zitten en dan komt die PSO-ladder vanzelf.		
Hé, zoals dat EcoVadis uh certificering, dat hebben we nodig voor klanten. Ja, dan gaan we in een keer heel erg rennen met z'n allen, dan wordt er weer een werkgroep opgetrommeld van 20 man. Iedereen doet wat om daar te komen en zodra daar uh de officiële berichtgeving uh berichtgeving vanuit is. Dan laten we het weer even vieren tot het volgende mijlpaal of of of actie nodig is, maar het is niet een vast item op de agenda. Dat is wel zonde		
En dan is iedereen een beetje naar elkaar aan het kijken en door de waan van de dag ben je heel veel bezig met dingen die de klant raken. Direct en dan kom je erachter van oh we zijn weer een half jaar verder en in principe nog geen stappen opgeschoten alleen de hoognodige dingen doen we.		

Ja, ik denk echt gewoon dat de MVO-manager daar gewoon op het gegeven moment mee aan de slag moet en die moet zorgen dat dat omhooggaat op die agenda, want nu volgens mij is het één van de bouwstenen of een van de directieleden is daar al mee bezig. Alleen, ja, we zijn, we zijn dus wij zijn, we zijn zo een klant gedreven organisatie. Echt, ja, dat is, alleen maar customer intimacy bij ons, uh waardoor je die, echt gewoon voor 99 procent focus op die klant hebt. En je uh vergeet nog wel eens eventjes wat je als organisatie misschien nodig hebt. En door die, door die pure klantfocus kijk je ook niet altijd naar de markt, wat die nodig heeft, dus echt naar de klant, die naar de markt. Uh, dus je moet daar gewoon tijd voor reserveren. Tijd, geld, middelen, mensen, dan, dan kom je er wel. Ja	Motivatie vanuit klantvraag	
Alleen, wij, wij zijn ook een beetje een piep-organisatie. Uh, we beginnen pas echt te rennen wanneer, misschien ook reactief hè, dat hebben ook teruggereden in die Hospitality Group onderzoeken en zo. We zijn af en toe reactief, uh als een klant begint te piepen of er worden vragen gesteld, dan gaan we heel erg rennen, dan gaan we alles doen.		
Uh, ik denk vrij laag, dat klinkt negatief, maar ik denk, we zitten vrij in die basis. We worden gedreven door de vraag van de klant. Wij zijn van oudsher een bedrijf en nog steeds, wat heel graag en goed bij klanten dienstverlening doet, maar ook heel goed zijn in oplossen of of een een vraag beantwoorden. Dus vrij reactief uh dus als wij voor een klant iets op duurzaamheid moeten doen, dan gaan we daarvoor rennen en gaan we bedenken, gaan we doen, maar dat vertalen we niet naar een soort concept voor (NAAM ORGANISATIE) van nou, dit is ons nieuwe product op duurzaamheid, dus je ziet dat wij vrij vaak het wiel uitvinden bij specifieke, in specifieke klantomgevingen waar we echt hele mooie dingen doen, maar specifiek voor een klant. En er is niet een soort one way of working duurzaamheid (NAAM ORGANISATIE) wat ik ook niet per se weet of dat erg is. Maar uh ik denk dat wij nog wel in de basis staan van waar je kan zijn. We voldoen, zeg maar aan wat er moet gebeuren. Dat is het meer.		
Nee, ik denk dat we verder moeten zijn, uh puur vanuit menselijkheid dat je weet dat de wereld uh er niet beter op wordt en dat je dus qua duurzaamheid en dat je daar iets voor moet doen, uh dus echt die intrinsieke motivatie, maar ook commercieel. Ik bedoel in iedere top-drie van ieder bedrijf wat wil uitbesteden of of als we aan onze klanten vragen van wat wat speelt op jullie?		
Nee, ik vind dat wij uh een visie moeten hebben, wat duurzaamheid in ons werkveld voor ons is, zodat het ook herkenbaar voor een klant is waarom ze voor ons moeten kiezen.		
Ja, dat doet iets met je organisatie, dus je merkt wel dat die focus constant ligt bij die klant, wat goed is, want die betalen onze facturen. Maar daardoor blijft sommige ontwikkeling wel achter. Uh, en dan hebben we, die arbeidsmarkt speelt dan ook mee, weet je. Dus als je dan een vacature ook intern hebt voor iemand voor duurzaamheid, ja, dat duurt dan ook weer acht maanden. Uh, dus ik denk dat, uh het het eerlijke antwoord is: we maken er geen prioriteit van. We moeten daar meer prioriteit van maken. En dan "we", zeg ik vooral directie en management.		
Uh, tot nu toe worden onze prioriteiten redelijk gestuurd door wat wij horen van onze klanten, uh maar ik denk dat wij gewoon als directie een besluit moeten nemen. Zeggen: Jongens, het is voor ons belangrijk, we willen daar meters in maken, dus we gaan daar ook uh iemand voor vrij spelen. Het heeft te maken met de focus.		
Ook EcoVadis, uh dus het zit meer in die in die normering en die voorwaarden die bedrijven stellen. Dus (NAAM ORGANISATIE) heeft gezegd: we moeten als bedrijf EcoVadis hebben. Wij hebben het gelukkig al omdat een klant het als eis stelde om door te kunnen gaan.		
Dat hé, een klant eist van ons, waardoor wij er zelf beter van worden.		
Als er bij klant X niet een enorme focus op duurzaamheid is, ja, dan gaan zij dat ook niet aandragen en ik denk dat leveranciers.		
Uh, nou heel erg, die klantvraag. Dus onze mensen worden heel erg gestuurd door die klantvraag. Het is niet dat wij als directie tegen onze klantmanager zeggen: Joh duurzaam dat moet op de agenda staan bij het team. Uh, omdat dat vaak een soort extra is, terwijl de klantvraag. Uh, we hebben veertig uur, maar de klantvraag is al zestig uur in de week. Ja, daar gaan we niet nog eens een keer iets doen wat ze niet vragen.		
ou, uh daar wordt al wel gevoerd, want daar zijn natuurlijk ook klanten die het gewoon vragen, (NAAM KLANT) bijvoorbeeld. Die vraagt dan van: Ja, help me daarmee, met CO2-reductie bijvoorbeeld.		
Op het moment dat zo'n leverancier of een klant zegt van ja, weet je, dit vind ik een heel belangrijk aandachtspunt nou, dan kan je zeggen van ja, weet je, dan gaan we daarop focussen maar er zijn vanuit contractmanagement best wel uh een aantal innovaties waarvan je zou ik zeggen: Ja, dit moeten we gaan omarmen. Alleen het wil niet altijd zeggen dat uh, is die klant bereid om te betalen? Hoe ziet dan die businesscase eruit? Dat, denk ik dat dat nog altijd een spanningsveld is. Ja, wat gaat het ons opleveren?		Bronnen van motivatie
Nou kijk, uh er zijn natuurlijk veel uh opdrachtgevers die zeggen: Ja, ik zoek een partij die nadrukkelijk ook zijn dienstverlening heeft verduurzaamd, dus het is ook een. Ja, het kan ook een Unique Selling Point zijn wat wij nu zeggen met dat stuk verduurzaming op hard en soft services, dus propositie. En ik denk dat hoe langer je daarmee bezig bent. Ik denk, hoe langer je daarmee wacht, hoe minder het natuurlijk een Unique Selling Point gaat zijn. Omdat, ja, dit zijn thema's waar iedereen mee aan de slag gaat en als je nu voorop kan lopen, kun je dat nu nog, zeg maar uniek in de markt zetten.		
Ik denk dat het ook belangrijk wordt, enerzijds omdat de maatschappij er meer om vraagt, maar anderzijds ook omdat je natuurlijk simpelweg als je kijkt naar de krapte op de arbeidsmarkt, je het nu ook in andere, uh op andere manieren moet zoeken om toch die vacatures uh in te vullen. Dus dat speelt nu ook wel een belangrijke rol.		
Uh, ja, ik denk dat het heel belangrijk wordt, enerzijds omdat het wettelijk verplicht is in het kader van CSRD en aan de andere kant uh juist daardoor zeg maar, als je bezig bent met duurzaam ondernemen, dan verlies je als organisatie, uh ja, misschien wel je commerciële waarde of zo. Ik weet niet goed hoe dat ik dat moet zeggen, maar het is meer als je niet verduurzaamd zeg maar, en je hebt straks een audit en je scoort slecht, dan kan de consequentie daarvan zijn dat uh klanten niet meer met je willen werken, huurders niet meer je panden willen huren, andere partijen niet meer met je samen willen werken. Dus dan houdt uh ja, dan uh houd je business op. Dus het is belangrijk voor het voortbestaan, denk ik, van alle organisaties.		
Ik las ook dat voor de uh generatie-Z uh en en ik hoorde, ik hoorde het van een en dat hoorde ik van een arbeidsmarktdeskundige en die zegt dat tegenwoordig, als je kijkt naar engagement, dat uit uh onderzoeken die in Europa zijn uitgevoerd, dat generatie-Z, zeg maar aanhaakt uh of bij bedrijven, het liefst bij bedrijven werken of weggaan bij bedrijven, als ze niet genoeg doen, zeg maar aan duurzaamheid. Dus als je kijkt naar deze arbeidsmarkt, dan is het wel één van de elementen.		
Uh, nou, ik denk dat die steeds belangrijker wordt, omdat alle bedrijven straks met elkaar vergeleken worden en hoe ze scoren. Dus als je uh niet meegaat nou, dan ben je straks niet meer relevant is, dan heb je geen business meer.		
Hoe groter we zijn hoe beter we dat kunnen doen en natuurlijk een stukje groei is een doel, een stukje, dat is ook impact. Daarnaast moeten we ook gewoon een gezond bedrijf blijven.		
En alleen uh nu komt er dus ook de wetgeving aan vanuit Europa, in 2025, en uh proberen we nu vanuit (NAAM ORGANISATIE) ook veel meer eropin te zetten dat het nu nog een USP is, als we dit doen, dat we ons nu nog kunnen onderscheiden in de markt en dat we nu nog uh anders kunnen zijn dan de rest. En straks is uh dit gewoon eenheid en zie je het overal terug.		
Alleen iemand moet in staat zijn om echt, die, die, die die basis dan te gaan leggen. Het moet de kapitein op het schip worden, want we zitten allemaal te roeien, maar uh, het wordt wel heel veel beeldspraak nu, maar we weten, we weten niet welk in welke richting uitgaan. Je hebt echt iemand nodig die daar en die ook de directie kan meenemen. Je zegt van luister, directie, dit past bij ons, dit past bij (NAAM ORGANISATIE), dit is wat de markt vraagt. Hier moeten we naartoe.	Motivatie vanuit marktpositie	
Ja, ik denk echt gewoon dat de MVO-manager daar gewoon op het gegeven moment mee aan de slag moet en die moet zorgen dat dat omhooggaat op die agenda, want nu volgens mij is het één van de bouwstenen of een van de directieleden is daar al mee bezig. Alleen, ja, we zijn, we zijn dus wij zijn, we zijn zo een klant gedreven organisatie. Echt, ja, dat is, alleen maar customer intimacy bij ons, uh waardoor je die, echt gewoon voor 99 procent focus op die klant hebt. En je uh vergeet nog wel eens eventjes wat je als organisatie misschien nodig hebt. En door die, door die pure klantfocus kijk je ook niet altijd naar de markt, wat die nodig heeft, dus echt naar de klant, die naar de markt. Uh, dus je moet daar gewoon tijd voor reserveren. Tijd, geld, middelen, mensen, dan, dan kom je er wel. Ja		
En de tweede is duurzaamheid en ja eerlijkheid gebied, denk ik, ja, misschien net voor Corona dacht ik: nou, Duurzaamheid is een commodity en uh je moet het hebben, maar uh niet meer dan dat, uh want iedereen moet het hebben. Maar aan de andere kant denk ik dat het nu veel meer intrinsiek kaan het worden is dus dat de maatschappij gewoon ook, ja er eigenlijk mee bezig is om te denken van: Ja, wij moeten heel erg uh zorgvuldig omgaan met deze aarde en we moeten er iets, ja, we moeten het alleen niet alleen maar de grondstoffen en dergelijken eruit trekken, we moeten het ook weer verrijken.		

Nou kijk, uh er zijn natuurlijk veel uh opdrachtgevers die zeggen: Ja, ik zoek een partij die nadrukkelijk ook zijn dienstverlening heeft verduurzaamd, dus het is ook een. Ja, het kan ook een Unique Selling Point zijn wat wij nu zeggen met dat stuk verduurzaming op hard en soft services, dus propositie. En ik denk dat hoe langer je daarmee bezig bent. Ik denk, hoe langer je daarmee wacht, hoe minder het natuurlijk een Unique Selling Point gaat zijn. Omdat, ja, dit zijn thema's waar iedereen mee aan de slag gaat en als je nu voorop kan lopen, kun je dat nu nog, zeg maar uniek in de markt zetten.		
Wij moeten eigenlijk het het belang een beetje bij hun naar voren brengen en en dan dan gebeurt er wel wat, maar het is niet zo dat ze uit zichzelf uh daar heel erg mee komen, zeg maar. Nee, dus het is echt andersom maar ja, als organisatie ontkom je er ook niet aan. Volgens mij vanaf 2024 of 2025. Dan moet je ook als, aan zoveel punten rapporteren, die hier ook allemaal mee te maken hebben, dus dan moet je wel. Ik ben even aan het opzoeken hoe die dingen ook alweer precies heten maar, hoe heet dat nou, het zijn de Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive-richtlijnen, hier vanaf 2024 dus het wordt wel echt een uh belangrijk deel.		
Ik doe het omdat ik het wel belangrijk vind, maar ik denk als organisatie, als we, als ik, denk ik dat we als organisatie doen, omdat die richtlijnen eraan komen en je daaraan moet daar. Zo zit die voor de organisatie.		
ik denk dat het in veel gevallen alsnog wel gewoon iets is wat opgelegd wordt door klanten of wetgeving en en dat denk ik wel, zeker in het begin zal dat zo zijn.		
Uh, kijk dat het een big issue gaat zijn, dat, dat weten we door die door die Europese richtlijnen op dat gebied. Ik denk dat heel veel organisaties nu nog helemaal niet doorhebben maar ja, dat is net als met de met de AVG eigenlijk.		
Uh, ja, ik denk dat het heel belangrijk wordt, enerzijds omdat het wettelijk verplicht is in het kader van CSRD en aan de andere kant uh juist daardoor zeg maar, als je niet ermee bezig bent, dan verlies je als organisatie, uh ja, misschien wel je commerciële waarde of zo. Ik weet niet goed hoe dat ik dat moet zeggen, maar het is meer als je niet verduurzaamd zeg maar, en je hebt straks in die CSRD, dus in die accountantscontrole op die non financial dus duurzame KPI's zeg maar scoor je het slecht, dan kan de consequentie daarvan zijn dat uh huurders niet meer je panden willen huren, andere partijen niet meer met je samen willen werken. Dus dan houdt uh ja, dan uh houd je business op. Dus het is belangrijk voor het voortbestaan, denk ik, van alle organisaties.		
Uh, nou, het wordt veel gevraagd natuurlijk, zeker in aanbestedingen en uh uitvragen. Uh, ik merk nu, omdat je, omdat die uh CSRD zeg maar daar aankomt en dat geldt natuurlijk voor al die grote organisaties, dat de vraag wel toeneemt maar nog niet gigantisch is ofzo.		
Of uh nou zo, en uh de vraag is er wel om te verduurzamen maar ik zie nog niet heel veel effecten, weet je, het komt niet verder dan zonnepanelen of uh sprintsessies om te kijken hoe dat je nou, de sub regeling komt er natuurlijk aan. Dus weet je, het is wel allemaal, uh hoe heet het? Uh, gedreven door compliancy eigenlijk.		
Uh, ja, maar niemand weet eigenlijk, weet je, ook het berekenen van je CO2-footprint en zo. Het is gewoon onduidelijk: wat moet erbij, het ene jaar moet dat erbij, het ander jaar moet dat er weer af, dan moet je daar weer rekening mee houden, dan weegt dat zwaarder. Dus het is ook een soort van fluïde of zo, omdat niemand het eigenlijk gewoon uh weet. En het grootste probleem vind ik nog. Er is niemand die een beeld kan schetsen hoe de wereld eruitziet als we alles bereikt hebben wat er vanuit de EU zeg maar ons nu is opgelegd. En als je niet weet, als je geen geen plaatje hebt, zeg maar waar je naartoe werkt, ja, dan komt er ook geen intrinsieke motivatie.		
Daarom hebben ze volgens mij ook gekozen vanuit uh, is dat Europese Unie, om uh die nieuwe wetgeving, waarin je ook om een stukje duurzaamheid moet gaan rapporteren in een jaarverslag	Motivatie vanuit wetgeving	
Uh, maar als we weer kijken naar de Europese wetgeving die eraan komt, dan moet straks de FM'er ook weer uh gaan, de klant gaan bevragen van: Goh, hoe zit het bij jullie en leveranciers gaan bevragen van: Goh, wat doen jullie aan duurzaamheid? En wat zie ik daarvan terug in de keten? Naar mij toe? Uh, dus je merkt en Sales die moet wel betrokken worden omdat zij het goed moeten verkopen. Recruitment, die moeten juiste mensen aan ons koppelen. Dus door de hele organisatie-breed. Moet daar uh meer dekking voor zijn, niet alleen bij uh (NAAM PROJECTMANAGER), in dit geval. Je moet echt breed uit in de organisatie liggen.		
Dit is nog zo'n thema, wat uh waar je nog wel verschil kan maken en uh het het het uh en waar we ook iets mee moeten. Want uiteindelijk komt de wetgeving eraan. Dus je wordt er straks mee geconfronteerd, allemaal. Uh, en als we daar nu niks mee gaan doen, ben ik bang dat we achter de feiten aan gaan lopen en dat we de trein missen.		
En alleen uh nu komt er dus ook de wetgeving aan vanuit Europa, in 2025, en uh proberen we nu vanuit (NAAM ORGANISATIE) ook veel meer eropin te zetten dat het nu nog een USP is, als we dit doen, dat we ons nu nog kunnen onderscheiden in de markt en dat we nu nog uh anders kunnen zijn dan de rest. En straks is uh dit gewoon eenheid en zie je het overal terug.		
En denk ik, nou ja, dan moeten we dat ook doen. Maar dat is natuurlijk door wetgeving ingegeven en het gevaar is dat wij natuurlijk met z'n allen 35x het wiel gaan uitvinden bij onze klanten en nu kan je één keer centraal zeggen: Joh, we halen alles bij elkaar.		
Waarvan ik eigenlijk vind, ja, hier moet je gewoon een programma opzetten daar zijn we dan niet altijd goed in. Dan duurt het even wat lang voordat het links en rechts land alvorens we zeggen we gaan met de klant proactief dat gesprek in om te zeggen: Joh, dit komt op ons af, die wetgeving verandert en wat betekent dat nou voor jou? En zullen wij dat voor jou gaan regelen?		
Nou, dat ook met de energieprijzen weer natuurlijk de afgelopen twee jaar. Ja, dan zie je nou dat dat nog nadrukkelijk ook weer op die agenda komt, ook vanuit wetgeving overigens, met energielabel, label C, maar dat is een nadrukkelijk gebied, het hele vastgoed stuk, wat wij ook in onze propositie hebben zitten, als zijnde hier kunnen we klanten bij helpen, dat zijn energiescans of een scan op het gebied van biodiversiteit bijvoorbeeld in zo'n gebouwde omgeving.		
Ja, door er capaciteit op te zetten en en we maken dat nu wel vrij, hoor, maar dan nog, ja, het kost gewoon veel, kost gewoon veel, ook vanuit de vraag die (NAAM ORGANISATIE) heeft, ook met het hele CSRD-verhaal, ja, ik weet even niet uh, maar ik geloof dat dat ook aardig, ons aardig veel tijd gaat kosten. Ja, dat zijn wel uh de elementen die uh veel, ja uh veel tijd vergt.		
We zijn, we hebben natuurlijk het manifest ondertekend, als (NAAM ORGANISATIE), het het MVI-manifest, het Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Inkopen manifest. Als je dan vraagt even bij (NAAM ORGANISATIE) van ja, inkoop van: Joh en wat betekent dat nou voor die leverancier, is dat best nog moeilijk uit te leggen.		
Ja, dat denk ik wel, ja, ja, en en ook dat daar de noodzaak vaak ook vanuit wetgeving, ja, iets meer gedwongen is of de hoge energieprijs. Ja vanuit dat, moet, moet je wat. Nou (NAAM KLANT) die zet natuurlijk nadrukkelijk in, op ja, die willen gewoon een groene (NAAM KLANT) zijn		

Appendix 2: Document Analysis

Document	1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Aggregate Dimensions
Interne memo; *"Management review check!"* (21-03-2022)	*"Zoals aangegeven zal ik in mei in het DT hier ook aandacht voor opeisen en met het DT bepalen hoe we onze ambities verder waar gaan maken en waar we nadruk op leggen (en waarop vooral ook nog even niet). "*	Gemis toewijding en beleid DT	Obstakels sustainability advocates
PPT; "Beleid en aandacht inclusiviteit - Strategische aandachtspunten (NAAM ORGANISATIE)" (29-03-2022)	*"Wij hebben geconstateerd dat er op het gebied van diversiteit grote verschillen bestaan tussen onze medewerkers en het management. Tot op heden hebben we hier niet bewust aandacht aan besteed. Daar willen we verandering in brengen, want we willen dat iedereen zich thuis voelt bij (NAAM ORGANISATIE) en we geloven dat meer diversiteit ons als collectief sterker maakt. "*	Blijven uitspreken van verbetermogelijkheden	Gevoel van volhardendheid
	"Ons eerste doel is om deze verschillen in de hele organisatie te reduceren. Zo zetten we de eerste stap naar een meer inclusieve cultuur, waar iedereen kan en mag werken. Daarbij richten we ons op het vergroten van verschillende diversiteitsaspecten(geslacht, LHBTIQ+, leeftijd en etnische achtergrond) op ons	Acties ondernemen	Gevoel van volhardendheid
Document - 220110 Human Rights - onderzoeksplan (12-01-2022)	*"De klant vraagt een andere rol van (NAAM ORGANISATIE) dan (NAAM ORGANISATIE) nu neemt. Meer adviserend, innovatief en pro-actiever. Dit blijkt onder andere uit de open antwoorden, het thema Innovatie van de facilitaire organisatie dat niet hoog scoort en uit het feit dat het aspect Pro-activiteit twee jaar achter elkaar het laagst wordt beoordeeld. Belangrijk dat (NAAM ORGANISATIE) daarmee aan de slag gaat. "*	Motivatie vanuit klantvraag	Bronnen van motivatie
	"Zoals valt op te maken hebben we Human Rights goed ingebed in onze strategie, missie en zelfs doelstellingen. Doelstellingen die we met een beetje goede wil ook gaan halen. Maar ben je er dan?"	Blijven uitspreken van verbetermogelijkheden	Gevoel van volhardendheid
	"(NAAM ORGANISATIE) heeft een goed verhaal. Een verhaal gericht op kennis, ervaring, flexibiliteit. Een verhaal waar de klant waarde aan hecht en om die reden met ons in zee gaat. SROI wordt vaak als onderwerp aangesneden in overeenkomsten met de klant, maar zelden wordt deze doelstelling door de klant ook geëist. Vaak zie je dat kwaliteit boven SROI komt. SROI is belangrijk, als het de kwaliteit van dienstverlening maar niet raakt. Deze opstelling maakt dat de FM'er selectief is in zijn aannamebeleid. Zij zoeken perfectie boven diversiteit. De FM'er wordt door de klant of Yask beoordeeld op rendement, kwaliteit dienstverlening, continuïteit. SROI wordt net als innovatie vaak als minder urgent bestempeld. "	Duurzaamheid als secundair thema	Obstakels sustainability advocates
	"Het issue zit niet alleen in ons verhaal. Zoals hierboven ook al duidelijk maakt schieten ook onze beslissers te kort. Onder het mom van "onbekend maakt onbemind" durven beslissers niet af te wijken van de standaard. Er is onbekend welke mogelijkheden er zijn voor ondersteuning en subsidie. Bij welk loket ze zich moeten melden, welke formulieren ze moeten invullen en hoe begeleiding er uit ziet.	Gemis overzicht en structuur - Uiting van ontevredenheid/hopeloosheid	Obstakels sustainability advocates - Gevoel van ontevredenheid en hopeloosheid
	"Daarnaast mist het incentive bij de beslisser. Deze hebben diverse targets waar ze op moeten sturen. Denk aan rendement, duurzame inzetbaarheid, continuïteit, kwaliteit. SROI is vaak een sluitpost. Als dit belangrijk is bij de klant wordt vaak verwezen naar onze leveranciers die we inzetten. Maar vaak wordt er ook door de klant beperkt op gestuurd.	Duurzaamheid als secundair thema - Leverancier- en klantafhankelijkheid - Motivatie vanuit klantvraag	Obstakels sustainability advocates - Gevoel van ontevredenheid en hopeloosheid
	"De selectie blijkt ook sterk gestoeld op gevoel. De beslissing wordt dus genomen op de plek waar al (onbewust) sprake is van vooroordelen. Kunnen we meer kijken naar iemand zijn talenten, drive, competenties, lukt het ons ook om oplossingen te vinden voor de beperkingen. "	Blijven uitspreken van verbetermogelijkheden	Gevoel van volhardendheid - Bronnen van motivatie
	"Kijkende naar onze strategie en missie is de intentie er. Om daadwerkelijk stappen te maken is meer nodig. Doelstellingen zijn goed om naar toe te werken, maar belangrijker is dat de intrinsieke motivatie aanwezig is om voorbij onze eigen oogkleppen te kijken. Drempels met elkaar durven weg te nemen om zo de weg vrij te maken voor gelijke kansen voor iedereen. "	Blijven uitspreken van verbetermogelijkheden - Uiting van ontevredenheid/hopeloosheid	Gevoel van volhardendheid - Gevoel van ontevredenheid en hopeloosheid
	"Onderwijs de beslissers. Geef ze de kennis om een goede afweging te maken per situatie en per klant. Informeer ze over regelingen en hoe ze kwetsbare groepen moeten begeleiden.	Creëren bewustzijn bij anderen	Gevoel van volhardendheid
	"Centraal kennis; er zijn vele instanties betrokken bij deze doelgroepen. Deze instanties verschillen per regio. Zorg dat de contacten en kennis centraal in de organisatie zijn belegd, zodat niet iedere beslisser zelf het wiel	Gemis overzicht en structuur	Obstakels sustainability advocates
Interne memo - *210319 Memo CO2 Neutraliteit* (NAAM ORGANISATIE) (21-03-2019)	*"In 2025 wil (NAAM ORGANISATIE) bekend staan als een bedrijf dat positieve impact heeft op onze medewerkers, onze klanten en de maatschappij. Een onderdeel van het maken van positieve impact, is dat we op duurzame wijze omgaan met het milieu. Daarom neemt (NAAM ORGANISATIE) haar verantwoordelijkheid om klimaatverandering en de gevolgen daarvan tegen te gaan. Dat willen we niet alleen zelf, maar ook onze klanten verwachten van ons dat we bijdragen aan hun klimaatambities. Hoewel we nu al op verschillende manieren inspanning leveren om onze CO2-uitstoot te reduceren, gaven we daar tot op heden nog niet concreet en structureel invulling aan. Daar gaat verandering in komen. We hebben onszelf ten doel gesteld om uiterlijk in 2030 CO-neutraal te werken, binnen al onze activiteiten. "*	Blijven uitspreken van verbetermogelijkheden - Gemis overzicht en structuur - Motivatie vanuit klantvraag	Bronnen van motivatie - Gevoel van volhardendheid - Obstakels sustainability advocates
Document - *210420 - (NAAM ORGANISATIE) goes green intro* (21-04-2020)	*"Dát is de reden dat we als (NAAM ORGANISATIE) onze verantwoordelijkheid nemen en zorgen dat we een positieve impact maken; op 10 miljoen mensen per dag én op het milieu. Bovendien willen we dit niet alleen zelf, onze klanten verwachten van ons een duurzame dienstverlening én een bijdrage aan hun klimaatambities. "*	Motivatie vanuit klantvraag	Bronnen van motivatie
	"Duurzame dienstverlening is niet iets dat in handen kán liggen van een projectgroep alleen. Het is iets dat we allemaal in ons denken en handelen tot uiting moeten laten komen. Dat betekent dat dus ook jouw acties in het teken moeten komen te staan van duurzaam handelen, want jij behoort tot de (NAAM ORGANISATIE) Familie. "	Creëren bewustzijn bij anderen	Gevoel van volhardendheid
	"En deze ambassadeurs zijn op zoek naar aanjagers! Collega's die mee willen denken over manieren om de huidige ambities te implementeren, nieuwe ambities te formuleren en mede actie te ondernemen om samen naar een meer en meer duurzamere dienstverlening toe te werken. En onze ambitie is vooral om duurzaamheid leuk te maken! Geen saaie en taaie stukken dus maar actief en vol energie van (NAAM ORGANISATIE) de meest duurzame facilitaire speler in de markt maken!"	Blijven uitspreken van verbetermogelijkheden - Creëren bewustzijn bij anderen - Motivatie vanuit marktpositie	Bronnen van motivatie - Gevoel van volhardendheid
Document - *01092021 - Verslag (NAAM ORGANISATIE) goes green monthly standup WT* (01-09-2021)	*"Meer sturing is nodig vanuit DT en leidinggevende naar de organisatie omtrent onze ambitie en doelstellingen en inspanning die van de organisatie wordt verwacht. "*	Gemis toewijding en beleid DT	Obstakels sustainability advocates