8-9-2021

Validation of Sustainability Instrument for Developing and Maintaining Effective Information Systems Programs

Thomas Case
Georgia Southern University, tcase@georgiasouthern.edu

Manouchehr Tabatabaei
Georgia Southern University, mtabatab@georgiasouthern.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://aisel.aisnet.org/treos_amcis2021

Validation of Sustainability Instrument for Developing and Maintaining Effective Information Systems Programs

TREO Talk Paper

Thomas Case
Georgia Southern University
tcase@georgiasouthern.edu

Manouchehr Tabatabaei
Georgia Southern University
mtabatab@georgiasouthern.edu

Abstract

Program sustainability has received considerable research attention in many fields. Buck (2015) describes a general framework for program sustainability. Although initially designed to address the long-term viability of non-profits, public agencies, and foundations, the model is general enough to be applicable to a wide range of program types. A sustainable program is essentially one that has a recognized identity, and the resources and support needed to carry out its mission and serve its constituents across time. Buck asserts that programs with such characteristics can attract and retain supporters, achieve mission-related outcomes, and attract persistent funding and resources.

An alternative framework for program sustainability (the Sustainability Framework) has been proposed by Schell et al. (2013). This framework was developed to describe factors related the sustainability of public health programs. It identifies a set of organizational and contextual domains with a program's sustainability capacity - its ability to maintain programming and its benefits over time. The organizational and contextual domains identified by the Sustainability Framework include environmental support, funding stability, partnerships, organizational capacity, program evaluation, program adaptation, communications, and strategic planning.

In combination, Buck's sustainability model and Schell et al.'s sustainability framework help to delineate what program sustainability encompasses. Both provide a system-oriented perspective on programs that stress the importance of program goals, stakeholders, and resources.

Further, Luke et al. (2014) developed and validated a program sustainability assessment instrument known as PSAT (Program Sustainability Assessment Tool) to measure the eight dimensions of Schell et al.'s sustainability framework. It was designed for use by researchers, program managers, program evaluators, and staff of both large and small programs and is touted to be a ready-to-use instrument for assessing a program's capacity and potential for sustainability.

PSAT Adaptation and Research Methodology

The 40 items of PSAT have been reworded to better align with IS degree programs. It is then embedded in an online survey created and administered with Qualtrics software that IS program administrators have been solicited to complete. AIS Website and Campus Explorer were used to compile the list of U.S. universities with IS degree programs and the contact information of program administrators. A total of 412 IS administrators have been identified presently. A link to the survey is distributed in an email solicitation that includes informed consent language and a brief summary of the investigation's rationale and potential to yield insights into factors related to IS program success and viability.