

Reflective Essay

Independent project

Digital–Sustainability integration in UK Housebuilding:

A Taylor Wimpey Case Study

BA Leadership and Management

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1. Description

This reflective essay uses Gibbs' Reflective Cycle to evaluate my experience of completing the dissertation on digital–sustainability integration in UK volume housebuilding, using Taylor Wimpey as the example case (Gibbs, 1988). The project followed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology, drawing on academic literature, policy papers, and corporate sustainability reports. My aim was to understand the relationship between digital workflows, environmental performance, and regulatory pressures. The process required balancing methodological discipline with practical interpretation of secondary data, which made the research both structured and challenging.

2. Feelings

At the beginning, I felt uncertain about the scope of the topic. Digital transformation, policy frameworks, and environmental sustainability are each complex areas, and combining them created initial overwhelm. I also felt pressure to ensure that the SLR was rigorous and aligned with PRISMA principles. As I progressed, my confidence grew because my conceptual framework and organisation of themes helped me maintain clarity. However, analysing corporate sustainability documents sometimes caused frustration, particularly when distinguishing genuine outcomes from strategic corporate messaging. By the final chapters, I felt more capable and analytical, and recognised significant growth in my understanding of digitalisation, ESG reporting, and housing policy.

3. Evaluation

Many aspects of the research process worked well. Identifying the regulatory timeline (BNG, Future Homes Standard, Home Energy Model) helped create a clear structure for the findings. Using the SLR method ensured that the evidence base was credible and reduced the risk of bias. The creation of tables, graphs and clearly defined themes supported coherence and made complex information easier to interpret. However, several challenges emerged. Managing large volumes of secondary data sometimes led me to over-describe rather than critically evaluate. I also realised that sustainability metrics are not always consistently reported across years, which complicated comparisons. Time pressure became an issue during the mid-stages, as writing, analysis and formatting overlapped.

4. Analysis

The most important learning from this research was the need for critical engagement with corporate sustainability data. I learned to question the intent behind each report, compare claims with external benchmarks, and check for consistency across years. This experience improved my

information-literacy skills and made me more aware of reporting biases. I also gained insight into how digital tools—such as BIM, Common Data Environments and energy-modelling workflows—shape sustainability performance. Previously, I had seen these as separate domains. Through analysis, I understood how information management, leadership and governance influence digital–sustainability integration. Applying PRISMA, refining inclusion/exclusion criteria and coding themes strengthened my methodological discipline and deepened my analytical ability.

5. Conclusion

Overall, this research process helped me develop academic, analytical and organisational skills. I realised the importance of narrowing the focus early, maintaining discipline with data selection and linking digital transformation to measurable sustainability outcomes. I also learned to manage academic uncertainty, improving my confidence in independent research. Although the process was challenging, it strengthened my ability to think critically about real-world business practices.

6. Action Plan

For future research, I would start data collection earlier and use digital tools such as citation-management software to improve organisation. I would also incorporate primary data, such as interviews or surveys, to add depth and triangulate findings. Additionally, I would improve my skills in interpreting carbon, energy and ESG metrics to analyse technical data with greater confidence. These steps would help me produce stronger, more balanced research in future projects.

References

Gibbs, G., (1988). *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Further Educational Unit*. Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic.