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Article

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Stakeholder engagement and participation in Uganda Oil and Gas Industry: A pitch

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Abstract: This paper applies (Faff, 2015, 2018) research pitching template which provides a concise and methodical approach to presenting one's research idea to a mentor/expert. Both comments and personal reflections about the pitch template has been outlined. The pitch template aids novice researcher to overcome research uncertainties and difficulties regarding their research (Wong, 2017) at same time it delivers tangible benefits (Maxwell, 2017).

Key words: Pitching Research, stakeholder management, Oil and Gas, Uganda

JEL codes: M10

1. Introduction

This paper applies the concept of pitching research template developed by (Faff, 2015, 2018) to my personal research topic in Business Management. I am currently enrolled for my PhD in Business Management at University of Queensland Business School, under Management cluster. I first encountered the concept of pitching research while I attended an information session of University of Queensland pitching competition presented by Professor Faff. During the session, eleven-minute animated video was played explaining the features of the two-page pitching template and its advantages.

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The template is such a handy tool, and this motivated me to enrol for the course, RBUS6914 Research Process in Business. More so, being in my initial stages of my PhD, this was an opportunity to shape my research and have an engaged conversation with my supervisor about it. I did complete a handwritten pitch about my topic after the first session and this gave me confidence on how to tackle a research topic. During the first lecture, we were introduced to the pitching template and had a step by step process of filling it. we were told to find any funny fictitious topic we could pitch on. Within our group of four, we agreed on the topic “The social life of a scholar: Is having a PhD a blessing or a curse?”. It was such a funny but interesting topic to write about. This process aides any novice researcher to understand more about the basic philosophy about pitching research template (Faff *et al.*, 2017)

The template is simple, methodical and engaging and very helpful to the novice researcher have his/her work kick-started. In this paper, I attach the pitch for my preliminary PhD research idea “Stakeholder Engagement and Participation in Oil and Gas in Uganda”. This paper provides an overview on how I have completed the pitching template. Also discussed in here is my personal reflection on the pitching template and concluding remarks.

2. Brief commentary on the pitch

Table 1 shows a summary of the Pitching template. My research question of the study is ‘How can stakeholder management be improved to enhance the propensity of achieving successful Oil and gas projects execution?’. The key paper for this topic is that of Cotton, (2015). Stakeholder Perspectives on Shale Gas Fracking: A Q-method study of Environmental Discourses published in *Environment and Planning A*, which is an A* journal. Cotton’s paper explored the challenges the United Kingdom Government is facing regarding the shale fracking process in Lancashire, Preston city by Cuadrilla resources. The local community perceive the fracking process to be a dangerous process both socially and environmentally which is a major concern for Oil and Gas sector globally (Mardani *et al.*, 2017; Patin, 1999).

My research idea originates from the nascent oil and gas discovery in Uganda. Uganda had its first commercial oil discovery in 2006 (Alstine *et al.*, 2014. With the expected oil proceeds, every concerned citizen is on the watch to see what the new industry brings to the economy, hence creating a “stakeholder dilemma”. Therefore, the motivation or puzzle is that, given the fact that there are more concerns most especially from the local community about social, economic and environmental issues associated with the industry, a proper stakeholder framework must be put in place. Moreover, the notion of the natural resource curse most especially in developing countries is well documented (e.g. see Frankel, 2010;

Montague, 2002; 2009; Sala-i-Martin & Subramanian, 2013). Having a proper stakeholder management plan is key for the success of the sector (Olander & Landin, 2005) and benefit to the citizens and the country at large. There are various stakeholders in Oil and Gas industry with some having power, legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell *et al*, 1997) stake from the industry. Hence the motivation of this research is exploring how best can both the government and oil companies strike a balance for competing stakeholder interests in the nascent sector

One of the objectives of the course was to deliver a completed personal pitch and presentation thereof. Having just enrolled into my PhD, I did face some challenges when filling the pitching template, more especially differentiating the ‘idea’, ‘what is new?’ and ‘contribution’. Based on my basic research question, it was also challenging to choose the research key paper given the fact that my question has more concepts that I wanted a paper encompassing all or at least most of them. More so, I was looking for a paper with similar work in the developing country context. But after a series of practice both in class and personal exercise I got used to the template and the different parts and their implications. With exposure to previous pitches, and more literature review, I got used to the template that it become user friendly and motivating to work with. After all the processes above, I developed my personal pitch which essentially summarised what seemed to be a complex topic to a simpler, communicative and engaging one.

3. Personal reflection

As mentioned earlier, it was quite challenging to come up with a brief concept of my proposed PhD topic summarised in a more concise way. With the valuable pitching template developed by Faff (2015, 2018), it become so practical and engaging to have my research well communicated on a two-paged template. Most especially on the three different but which seems to be similar; “Idea”, “what is new” and “contribution”. The other interesting part of the template is the ‘other considerations’, this part aided me to envisage the strengths and weakness for my proposed research. Additionally, given the nature of my topic, this section highlighted the need of collaboration with other organisations, specific for my case being the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda.

Finally, the Venn diagram depicting what is new in the mickey mouse (Fig. 1) which summaries the need of the research topic to have an intersection of the three overarching concepts. Specific to my research, these concepts are; oil and gas sector, stakeholder engagement and benefit realisation. In short, when stakeholder engagement is done well in the nascent oil and gas sector, and having all proceeds declared in a more transparent manner, and having both social and environmental issues addressed, the notion of the resource curse can be turned into resource blessing.

When I was admitted, I didn't know how to communicate my research in simple terms even to my fellow colleagues, leave alone my research supervision team. But with the research pitching template, it aids the chronological description of your research. And if pitching would be made compulsory to every new higher degree by research student, it would save a great time to have one articulate easily his or her idea, even if not perfect as one would wish, research is a process which evolves over time. More so, after attending series of confirmation seminars for my colleagues, personally I would say pitching template should be adopted or incorporated for such purpose as it has most of the parameters required for confirmation. This would compress a 40-page research proposal document to 2-page without changing the original meaning at the same time communicating the message clearly to the target audience.

Table 1. Completed 2-page pitching template on Uganda Oil and Gas Industry

Pitcher's Name	Patrick Junior	EOG category	Management	Date Completed	17 th October 2018
(A) Working Title	Stakeholder Engagement and participation in Uganda Oil and Gas Industry				
(B) Basic Research Question	How can stakeholder engagement be improved to enhance the propensity of achieving successful Oil and gas projects execution?				
(C) Key paper(s)	<p>1. Cotton, M. (2015). Stakeholder Perspectives on Shale Gas Fracking: A Q-method study of Environmental Discourses. <i>Environment and Planning A</i>, 9(47), 1944-1962.</p> <p>2. Alstine, J.V., J. Manyindo, L. Smith, J. Dixon, and I. Ananigara Rubunga. (2014). "Resource Governance Dynamics: The Challenge of 'New Oil' in Uganda." <i>Resources Policy</i>, 40:48-58.</p> <p>3. Sala-i-Martin, X., & Subramanian, A. (2013). Addressing the natural resource curse: An illustration from Nigeria. <i>Journal of African Economies</i>, 22(4), 570-615.</p>				
(D) Motivation/Puzzle	<p>With the recent commercial discovery of oil and gas in Uganda, the expectation of the proceeds from the extractive industry is high by both government and the community. There are major concerns within the community such as employment, finance transparency and environmental issues. The notion of the natural resource curse is well documented. But this can be turned into a blessing with a clear stakeholder management strategy right from exploration through development and production. Hence the motivation of this research is to explore how best can both the government and oil companies strike a balance for competing stakeholder interests in the nascent sector.</p>				
THREE	Three core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the "IDIOI" guide				
(E) Idea?	Drawing from experiences of the Africa's largest oil producing country (Nigeria) where oil discovery has been regarded as a curse other than a blessing, Uganda must ensure all stakeholders are brought on board to facilitate industry success. This study intends to investigate the current approach used for stakeholder engagement in Uganda's oil and gas industry. In order to do so, field studies will be conducted involving key stakeholders from the government ministry, oil companies, civil society organisations (CSO), and local communities in the oil region				
(F) Data?	A case study approach shall be used. Data shall be collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) of 5-7 people, in the oil region, ministry of energy and mineral development (MEMD) and Oil companies. Secondary data shall also be used most especially the ministry's and oil companies' stakeholder policies, to get more insight on the current stakeholder practices. Sample target MEMD =4, Oil companies =8, CSO=16, Community=25.				
(G) Tools?	An inductive research tool shall be used to collect and analyse data. Comprehensive ideas in interviews and focus discussion groups data shall be analysed using Nvivo software. Validity and reliability of data shall be achieved through detailed reporting and triangulation respectively.				
TWO	Two key questions				
(H) What's New?	Due to the nascent nature of oil and gas industry in Uganda, less research has been conducted in relation to stakeholder engagement and participation. This research will explore more on the oil industry, the stakeholder management approach used and success or benefit realisation				
(I) So What?	Understanding and having a clear multi-stakeholder approach does not only reduce on the risk that would otherwise hinder the project, but also enable gaining trust and leads to sustainability of the business				

ONE	One bottom line
(J) Contribution?	<p>The research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge of stakeholder theory, most especially in the nascent oil and gas sector in Uganda. The practical contrition is that this research will set a bench mark for stakeholder management by both government and oil companies</p>
(K) Other Considerations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration with Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development-Department of oil and gas 2. Target Journals; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Environment and Planning A</i> • <i>The Extractive Industries and Societies</i> • <i>Journal of sustainable development</i> • <i>Journal of business management</i> • <i>Resource Policy Journal</i> 3. Risk is medium, other research could be going on given that Oil and gas is new in Uganda 4. Ethical consideration. Will seek approval both from UQ and Ministry of Energy and Mineral development and village leaders 5. Nxyio software training

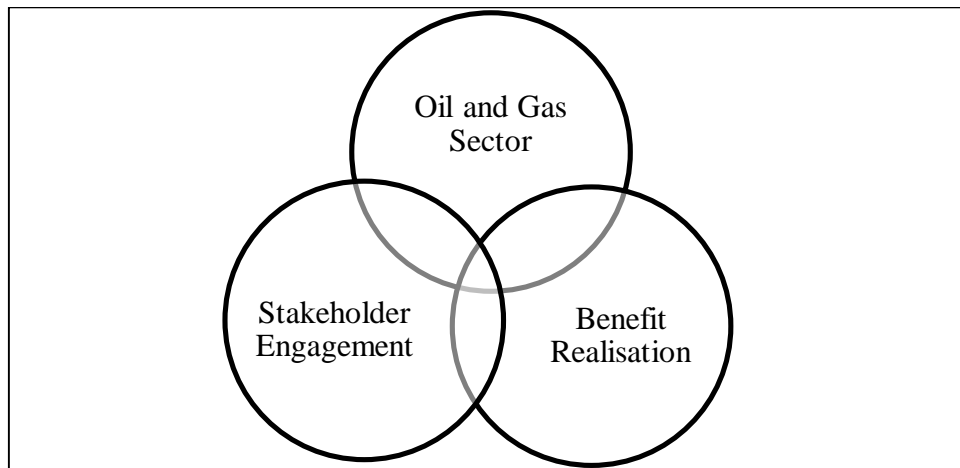


Figure 1. Mickey Mouse diagram characterizing novelty of research idea

4. Conclusion

This brief letter showcases an annotation and a self-reflection of the two-page research pitch template applied in Business Management whose main aim is to investigate the approaches used in stakeholder Engagement and Participation process in Oil and Gas in Uganda. It is of no doubt that research pitching template is a very handy tool for novice researchers to concisely present their research idea(s) to the potential audience. However, the pitch is not only meant for novice researchers, as it is also an important tool for the experienced researchers to showcase their research as well. Most importantly, Faff (2015) research pitch template is not discipline specific, it can be used across all areas (Faff, 2016) ranging from live sciences to humanities. In this regard, my personal advice is, every academic researcher should use this research pitch template irrespective of their research discipline and experience.

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