

Departmental Identification Through Perceived Prestige:

Peering through different lenses

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Abstract

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This study examined the relationship between identification and perceived prestige at the department level. By shifting the focus of the image from the organization itself to that of the departments within it and focusing on identification with the department, this study distinguished three different perception foci: department colleagues, organization members outside the department, and other peers who were not part of the organization. The study was carried out at Concordia University using professors as the research population. To study the identification process, sustainability research served as a behavioral indicator of identity. Research professors were sampled from six separate departments with varying levels of interest in sustainability research to ensure that each department had a distinct identity. The research professors were asked what they thought others believed was the emphasis of sustainability research in their department. These “others” were placed into the three different groups to calculate the perceived prestige coming from each group. The three perceptions were then tested for correlations with the Departmental Identification. Results supported the hypothesis that a positive correlation existed between each of the prestige perceptions and Departmental Identification. However, the hypothesis that the correlations between perceived prestige and Departmental Identification would become stronger as social proximity increased was not supported.

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Introduction

An important construct in organizational studies is organizational identification, which has been linked to job satisfaction, job involvement, creative behaviour, increased motivation, increased social support and helping behaviour, and lower turnover intentions (Carmeli, Cohen-Meitar, & Elizur, 2007; Carmeli, Gilat, & Waldman, 2007; (Mael & Ashforth, 1995; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Organizational identification connotes how much a member of an organization includes components of an organization's identity as part of his or her own identity (Ashforth et al., 2008). While practical implications and outcomes of identification have been thoroughly investigated in organizational research, we know comparatively less about the process and cause of identification among employees.

In 1958, March and Simon proposed that individuals become attached to organizations that they believe others regard in high esteem, a claim that has been supported by a substantial amount of evidence (Fuller et al., 2006). Specifically, organizational attachment has been studied through the concept of identification, and its link to belief about esteem has been conceptualized as perceived external prestige (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Building on the existing literature on organizational identity, Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) have argued that the extent to which an organizational member believes that outsiders attribute positive images to his or her organization is experienced as perceived external prestige. These perceptions of prestige are linked to identification because the person can bask in the reflected glory of

membership in his or her organization, which is associated with enhanced self-perception and organizational loyalty.

However, attachment in organizations has also been studied at the organizational sub-group level, and research by Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, (2000) has shown that employees' identification with a sub-group within the organization, like a department, is stronger than identification with the organization. An apparent gap in the literature is therefore whether the positive effect on organizational identification found for perceived external prestige of one's organization also translates to the sub-group level: Is a person's identification with his or her department associated with the belief that others attribute positive prestige to the department? In addition, focusing on departmental identification rather than organizational identification raises questions about who these "others" are. Thus far in organizational identity research, it was implicit that these "others" were organizational outsiders because the insider group sharing the organizational identity were the members of the organization. However, if we examine identification at the department level, the distinction between the insider and outsider group becomes difficult to make in reference to the organization because other employees may belong to the same organization but be a member in another department; thus, the established definition for the "other" may no longer be applicable. Hence, while perceived external prestige may clearly refer to attributions of prestige believed to be made by others outside the organization when we study organizational identification, studying departmental identification raises the possibility that beliefs about such attributions may refer to others both within and outside the

organization. The research presented in this thesis thus compares the differential predictive validity of perceived department prestige on departmental identification by explicitly taking the perspective of different “others” into consideration.

To study the departmental identification process, following Ashforth et al (2008), this study focused on a department member’s perception about the prestige attributed by different groups to a specific behavioral manifestation of the department’s identity: Sustainability research. This behavioral identity attribute was chosen in order to explore whether identification can be predicted based on a more remote identity attribute, and it differs from the attributes studied in most previous research that tended to focus on the core of identity (i.e., categorical definition, values, and affect). The specific behavior was chosen because the thesis research was carried out in a university setting, where research work constitutes an important part of organizational and departmental identities (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). In addition, sustainability research was chosen because of its contemporary importance to society, because the university where the research was carried out had designated sustainability as one of its strategic signatures.

To summarize, the objective of the thesis was to better understand the process of departmental identification, focusing on sustainability research as a behavioral feature of an organization’s department with which department members may identify. In order to accomplish this purpose, the thesis compares the association between identification and perceptions of prestige a department member believes to be attributed to the department’s sustainability research by various others, including

others who are organizational outsiders and others who are organizational insiders, but outsiders to the member's department. The logic of this research was that the more a department is perceived to be prestigious, the more a member is likely to include the department's identity in his/her self-concept and the greater his or her identification with the department. In addition, perceptions of prestige attributed to the department's sustainability research by other insiders to the department were examined and their association with identification explored. The research was conducted using a survey methodology at Concordia University. Six departments were selected to participate in the research, based on an objective assessment of the extent to which sustainability research might be important to their departmental identities.

A regression analysis showed that prestige believed to be attributed by department insiders and university outsiders was more strongly associated with departmental identification than prestige perceived to be attributed by others outside the department but inside the organization.

Theory

Identification and identity

This study focused on identification at the department level, which will be referred to as departmental identification throughout this paper. Most previous studies have focused on identification at the organization level, which Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) defined as "when a person's self-concept contains the same attributes

as those in the perceived organizational identity” (p. 239). An organization has its own identity and each individual employee within it has a personal identity (Ashforth et al. 2008). Identification is simply the overlap between the two identities (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000). This amount of overlap is the extent to which an employee identifies with his or her organization. The importance of organizational identification has been highlighted throughout the organizational literature, with studies finding links between identification and several positive organizational outcomes. These outcomes include job satisfaction, job involvement, and job motivation, (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000) as well as job satisfaction and work adjustment (Carmeli, Gilat, & Waldman, 2007). It was also found that identification was inversely related to turnover and turnover intentions (Mael & Ashforth, 1995).

Since identification is based on the identity overlap between an individual and his/her organization, organizational identity becomes the relevant root construct. This focus is in line with Ashforth et al. (2008) advocating that the reason why identification is a subject of interest is because identity, itself, matters. Identity is a key foundational concept in the study of human cognition and behavior, since it defines the basis of who people are. In the context of an organization, organizational identity is a collective self-referential description that, according to Ashforth et al. (2008) provides the contextually appropriate answer to the question, “Who are we as an organization?” (p. 327).

Organizational identity is defined as the central, enduring and distinctive (CED) attributes of an organization which distinguish it from other organizations (Albert &

Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006). These attributes, which can entail values and categorical definitions, make up the organization's identity and make it unique. These CED attributes help members refer to the organizational identity when they act or speak on behalf of the organization as well as signal the organizational identity to help inform outsiders (Whetten, 2006).

Organizational identity has proven to be important in organizational studies with its links to the organizational life cycle and organizational culture (Albert & Whetten, 1985) as well as external recognition, especially in the use of attracting potential employees (Lievens et al., 2007). It has also shown strong linkages with organizational images and strategic decision making (Ashforth et al., 2008; Corley et al., 2006; Gioia & Thomas, 1996).

While organizational identification is defined as the overlap between the identity of the organization and that of a member, a more general conceptualization of identification is the overlap between a person and a group in which he or she believes to be a member. A person identifies with a group if he or she categorically defines him/herself as a member in that group (e.g., I am a researcher) or sees significant overlap between his or her personal values and beliefs and those of the group (e.g., knowledge is very important).

For illustrative and situational context purposes, as framework and theory are introduced throughout the paper, they will be further explained through an example using the department of Biology within Concordia University. Consider a researcher in

the Biology department who defines his or her identity as someone who cares for the preservation of endangered species. He or she may or may not research the subject but it is definitely something he or she personally value. One of the attributes of the Biology department's identity is the focus on the importance of biodiversity, which includes the preservation of endangered species. Since the group (ie. Biology department) and the member in that group (i.e. a researcher) share the importance of preserving endangered species as part of their identity, there is an overlap. This overlap suggests that the researcher identifies with the department. This may seem obvious but it could be that an individual within the department defines him/herself as more of a lecturer and not a researcher, where he or she values more the transfer of knowledge rather than the pursuit of further knowledge. If that individual believes the department's identity to solely be about advancing the knowledge of living organisms, the identification might be low and not yield the positive outcomes mentioned earlier.

In light of the fact that identification is best understood in terms of overlap between individual and organizational identity, I will now review some of its key features to be used for the purpose of focusing my investigation. In this thesis, organizational identity will be analysed through two key features: the level of identity and the content of identity.

The level of Identity

Identity in organizations focuses on CED attributes of relevant groupings. The relevant group is the group with which someone can experience some form of overlap, leading to identification. The most common level of identity explored in the literature is the organization as a holistic group (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Identification at the organization level has been found to affect both the satisfaction of the individual working within the organization and the effectiveness of the organization (Hall, Schneider, & Nguyen, 1970; Lee, 1971; Rotondo, 1975). A particularly practical notion regarding this level of identification was that employees that identify strongly with their organization would be less willing to leave it (Mael & Ashforth, 1995).

However, as van Knippenberg & van Schie (2000) suggest, it would be an oversimplification to depict an organization as a single indivisible entity without acknowledging that it consists of a network of sub-groups that may furnish additional targets of identification for employees. Albert & Whetten (1985) explicitly recognise that organizations may have multiple identities and identities of groupings at a sub-group level instead of just one identity at the all-encompassing organization level. They brought up the intricacies of departments and organizational identity through two different proposed types of multiple identities: holographic and idiographic. While holographic refers to an identity shared evenly among all subgroups of an organization, an idiographic organization exhibits subgroups with differentiated identities. If an organization is made up of multiple idiographic identities, every sub-group has a distinct

identity from one to the other which contributes to the overall identity of the organization. These different identities are still part of the organizational identity and always refer back to the organization; they have just been divided into different departments so that each department can specialize in one aspect of the organization.

This allows us to understand that different departments may find one aspect of an organization to be of greater importance than another making them distinctive from one another, and distinction is part of an identity's structure (ie. CED attributes). Albert and Whetten (2008) present universities as the ideal example to illustrate this notion, which also happens to be the empirical setting of the study in this thesis. Research may be the core work activity of a university, but each department specializes in its own type of research. This makes departments or other sub-groups a relevant lower level social unit with an identity in reference to which overlap for the member may exist in proxy for a higher level organizational social unit. If these sub-groups have their own identity, both distinct of other sub-groups and the organization, then they should also elicit feelings of identification (van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000).

To explore this theory, van Knippenberg and van Schie (2000) proposed a new angle when correlating identification and its possible outcomes within an organization. Rather than measure how an organization member identifies with the organization, they switched the focus to a group within the organization. The particular group they chose to study was the work-group and they measured which identification – organizational identification or work-group identification – showed better predictive validity in relation

to outcome variables (ie. job involvement, job satisfaction, job motivation etc). The results supported the view that work-group identification was more predictive of the outcomes usually linked to identification, such as job satisfaction, turnover intentions, job involvement and job motivation. Since this thesis focused on the department as the sub-group level, rather than the work-group, the identification construct that was used is referred to as Departmental Identification. Departmental identification is defined as a department member's identity overlap with the department's CED attributes.

Other studies corroborate Van Knippenberg and Van Schie's findings, suggesting that departmental identification, and sub-group identification in general, is more predictive of organizational outcomes than organizational identification (OI). Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, and Christ (2004) observed that schoolteachers' and bank accountants' perceptions of team climate related more strongly to identification with the subgroup. Also, Christ, Van Dick, Wagner, and Stellmacher (2003) found that schoolteachers' identification with a subgroup related to extra-efforts on behalf of the team colleagues more strongly than did OI. A longitudinal study by Ellemers et al. (1998) yielded similar findings: Identification with the subgroup related more strongly to working overtime.

As with the van Knippenberg and van Shie study, other studies have noted the existence of distinct sub-group identities, developing within an organization, which a member could identify with (Chreim 2007; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997). A critical case study exploring this notion involved nurses in a rehabilitation unit

where night shift nurses and day shift nurses differed in their views on their shift's unit (Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997). The day nurses saw their unit as having a rehabilitation identity while the night nurses saw their unit as having an acute care identity due, both in relation to the different work activities performed throughout a single day. During the daytime, there was an emphasis on recreation and therapy; while at night, patients were brought to the bathroom and, in most cases, this was the time when nurses needed to hook up tubes and intravenous medications.

The broad organizational identity might be about caring for the patients, which both groups of nurses would probably identify with from what is assumed of their career choice as nurses. However, two groups disagreeing about what their function entails means that they differ in their perception of the identity linked to their core work activity. This creates two distinctive sub-group identities for the different nursing units to identify with.

In the ongoing example using the context of our study, this suggests that a biologist, within their professional social circles, may have more in common with other biology researchers than researchers of any other field. Within Concordia University, the university where the sample was gathered, those researching Biology are thus likely to be found within the same group (i.e. the Biology department). Diving further, this may be because there is a greater overlap between what a biologist thinks should be prioritized and funded (i.e. Biology research). They may agree with the university's emphasis on funding research in general because this would include their department, hence why they would also identify with the organization. However, because the

university's funding emphasis is spread across many disciplines, which a biologist may not identify with, the amount of overlap between a Biologist's identity and that of Concordia University may not be as great as the overlap between a Biologist's identity and that of the Biology department. Hence, we can speculate that a Biologist may identify more with his or her department than with the university.

Thus far, we have seen that identification refers to the extent to which an employee's identity overlaps with an organization's identity. In bigger organizations, made up of several different departments, the organizational identity can be split among its lower level departments where each department concentrates on a specific component of the identity, which becomes the department's identity. It has been found that employees are more likely to identify with the department identity rather than the larger all-encompassing organizational identity. Now that the desired level of studying identification has been addressed, it is crucial to know which aspects, CED attributes, and core work activities make up the departmental identity that shall be studied in this thesis.

The Content of Identity

With the established notion that group identities in an organizational context can exist at different levels, we can now look into the substance of the group identity. In other words, we can now focus on which specific values or categories could become the basis of overlap for identification to occur. Certain relevant phenomena express and

signal the CED components of organizational groups. For example, the case involving nurses showed that their core work activities expressed what was central, enduring and/or distinctive of their different units. The literature shows that the relevant phenomena are not restricted to core work activities, but can also include place, profession, values and stakeholder interests (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Chreim, 2007; Johnson & Ashforth, 2008; Nag et al., 2007; Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997).

In the context of universities, research may be a core organizational work activity which expresses the CED components (Albert & Whetten, 1985). At the department level of this identity, each department is distinctive in regards to its discipline. This means that, while the core work activity at the organization level of identity may just consist of “research”, the core work activity at the department level is the specific research activity carried out in each of the different departments (i.e. biology research, geography research, etc). Thus the content of the identity, for the member to identify with, differs from each department to the next and from each department to the organization as a whole. The example of the biology researcher above illustrates this idea.

This thesis takes an extra step by adding a more precise facet of research as a university’s core work activity due to the sample university’s emphasis on sustainability. Sustainability refers to how biological and other systems remain diverse and productive over time: a necessary precondition for the well-being of humans and other organisms. At its most basic, when focusing on our part in the ecosystem, it is defined by what

people do, as business and as individuals, to help slow climate change and protect natural resources (Gobble, 2012). With the growing amount of literature on sustainability and its links to broader societal concerns (Quental, Lourenço, & Da Silva, 2011), it is no surprise that this specific research topic may be held at the higher level (organizational) identity of our sample.

There are several reasons why sustainability research is an ideal core work activity to study in the current organizational research landscape. Sustainability itself has been a subject tackled with great urgency in organization studies recently, with papers trying to conceptualise this field and proposing models for further implementation of sustainability practices (Svensson, 2012). It was found that many companies are actively integrating sustainability principles into their businesses and investments even through economic downturns (Gobble, 2012). The integration of these principles may even contribute to higher profits since it was shown that a sustainable strategy, such as a more efficient use of resources and waste reduction, was able to reduce cost (Shrivastava, 1995). There are other incentives to introducing these strategies to a business, such as an increased competitive advantage (David, Kline, & Dai, 2005; Lindgreen, Swaen & Johnston, 2009) and, most relevant to our research, the creation of a unified organizational identity (Chong, 2009; Luring & Thomsen, 2009). Sustainability has clearly become a way of doing business (Gobble, 2012), further demonstrating how important sustainability is to organizational studies; organization researchers have found links between a company's reputation and its sustainability

disclosure and also observed that companies use sustainability disclosure in order to communicate their legitimacy (Giovana, 2011).

This later notion brings sustainability to the foreground of the identity the organization wishes to portray towards outsiders. This inclination towards sustainable practices with the thought of the outsider in mind also brings about the idea that sustainability is tied to an organization's prestige. Companies are using the image of sustainability awareness in hope of positive perceptions. These positive perceptions attributed to the organization could be perceived to come from both organization insiders and outsiders since both groups would be aware of the communicated sustainability disclosure. Regardless of what outsiders really do think, employees may be inclined to think that their organization is seen as environmentally responsible, due to all the positive communication that outsiders may be noticing.

Aside from the growing literature and interest, the urgency of sustainability research is suggested in the fact that it has become a common field of research amongst various scientific disciplines. In a university sector, sustainability is common to diverse departments with different disciplinary foci. With such a wide coverage, researching sustainability may be regarded as a step toward consilience, an attempt to bring together scholars from different backgrounds and disciplines in order to create an integrated program of research (Quental, Lourenço, & Da Silva, 2011).

Sustainability research is the core work activity of choice for studying departmental identification within the university setting since it can be both a generic and specific concept. It is generic in the sense that it is a core work activity found at the

organizational level which is compatible across departments. At the same time, it has various specific sub-fields in different academic disciplines and can therefore also be found in unique forms at the lower level of identity, the department level. Focusing on sustainability research as the content of identity at the department level thus permits the definition of a behavioral domain, which is also common among departments with different disciplinary specialties.

As discussed so far, an organization sub-group, such as a department, has been found to be a more focused level for identification research because identification with the sub-group has been associated more strongly with positive outcomes than identification with the organization. In order to study identification at the department level, it is important to specify what makes up the departmental identity which would overlap with an employee's personal identity. Due to the more distinctive nature of a department over an organization, a department's identity would be made up of more specific values and core work activities that may appeal to researchers who are studying a specific field. Due to the nature of sustainability to be a topic that can be department specific while also being found throughout different departments, it becomes the ideal behavioral domain to study departmental identification.

As was previously mentioned, past studies suggest that departmental identification, and sub-group identification in general, is more predictive of organizational outcomes than OI (Christ, Van Dick, Wagner, and Stellmacher, 2003; Ellemers et al., 1998; Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, and Christ, 2004; Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000). These studies raise the question of whether predictors of

department identification are also similar to predictors of OI. In fact, research on the process of identification is not relatively well developed (Ashforth et al., 2008). One basic theoretical idea for why organization members may identify at both the organization and subgroup level was developed by Ashforth, Harrison and Corley (2008). They describe that this is due to the individual's need to balance opposing desires of assimilation and uniqueness. Individuals prefer being part of a group, while at the same time they want to avoid sameness. By raising this theory, Ashforth et al. suggest that specific lower level identities (i.e. departmental identities) are needed to offset organizational identities that are usually made up of abstract and holistic terms. The greater the organization, the greater the need for a more localized context of its identity, and that may be achieved through the departmental identity. This theory suggests that the two identity levels work hand in hand, offering the individual the optimal potential for identification.

Seeing as how these two levels work hand in hand, we should expect similar results when predicting identification at each level. One construct that has been shown consistently to predict identification at the organizational level is perceived external prestige. This thesis will test to see if this same predictor works at the departmental level.

Perceived external prestige

Perceived external prestige refers to an individual's beliefs about how organizational outsiders view the organization or, more broadly, how outsiders are thought to view the in-group. The construct is similar to the construed external image construct from Dutton's studies (1991, 1994). Though studies reveal similar predictive results for both constructs (Ashforth et al., 2008; Fuller et al., 2006), this thesis focuses on prestige because it capitalizes on a group's positive and status generating aspects for the individual perceiver. In this case, the individual perceiver is an employee who is part of a university's department. The perceived external prestige is developed through direct interactions with stakeholders and through information received from third parties (Kulik & Perry, 2008). Similarly to identification, this construct has been found to have an immediate impact on the attitudes and behaviors of organizational members (Bhattacharya et al., 1995; Brown et al., 2006; Hatch & Schultz, 2000; Kulik & Perry, 2008).

More importantly, as noted before, perceived external prestige is predictive of identification itself at the organizational level (Bhattacharya et al., 1995; Fuller et al., 2006; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Dukerich, Golden & Shortell, 2002; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994; Fuller, Hester Barnett, Frey & Relyea, 2006; George & Chattopadhyay, 2005; Johnson & Ashforth, 2008; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; March & Simon, 1958; Smidts, Pruyn & van Riel, 2001). Given this thesis' focus on the sub-group level, our aim is to see whether the construct predicts departmental identification as well. In order to do so, we

should first discuss how perceived external prestige would predict identification followed by how the construct can be used at the department level.

Looking at all the studies where either perceived prestige or construed external image is a variable, the results are generally congruent. The basis of studying this construct as a predictor for identification was proposed by Dutton et al. (1994) where the organization members' beliefs about outsiders' perceptions of the organization helped to enhance identification between the member and the organization. Ashforth and Mael (1989) had also previously suggested the importance of prestige since that element may attract an individual targeting the organization for means of identification. In other words, perceived external prestige helps a member by addressing his or her needs and desires for self enhancement. A member wants to be associated with an organization that features positive attributes for his or her own esteem; thus, a positive perception of prestige should produce a closer bond between members of the organization and the organization itself since all members want to bask in the same positive light (Dukerich, Golden & Shortell, 2002; Fuller, Hester Barnett, Frey & Relyea, 2006; George & Chattopadhyay, 2005; Johnson & Ashforth, 2008; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Smidts, Pruyn & van Riel, 2001). This corresponds to the idea that people want to identify more with high status groups (Ellemers, 1993) and high status organizations (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) since individual members reflect a group's standing unto themselves through identification and prefer a more prestigious group (Tajfel, 1978).

The notion that people want to identify with more prestigious groups works well when discussing why a sub-group and department would have its own prestige for members to perceive. The level of distinctiveness of a group has been related to size (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000) and a large-sized group, such as a vast organization, may imply sameness and a lack of distinctiveness. A smaller group within the organization may provide the desired level of distinctiveness, as well as inclusiveness (Brewer, 1991), and thus the potential for added prestige.

Using the example of a biology researcher at Concordia University, we could compare how an accomplishment at the university level has a different impact on the prestige as opposed to an accomplishment for the Biology department. Let's say a Concordia alumni came up with the plan implemented by the government of Canada to confront the issues of global warming and that the media just reveals the university that this person attended, but not the specific department. This adds prestige to the university as a whole because it shows that Concordia shapes students to be influential leaders and every member of Concordia University shares this added prestige. However, no researcher is elevated over any other working at Concordia because the added distinction of the school's popularity is shared by everyone. This would not be the same if the media prominently stated that the famous alumni came from a specific department, like the Biology department.

This is because out of all the researchers within the university, only those from the distinctive department would be able to bask reflected glory of being part of the

same department featured in the media, and share the added prestige. At the department level, the researchers have an added distinction which differentiates them from the university as a whole. They are not merely researchers at Concordia, but researchers at Concordia's Biology department and this makes any department specific accomplishments attributable to fewer people, elevating their status over others.

As with identification, certain studies have already brought the construct of perceived external prestige to the sub-group level. The best example of this is a research by Kulik and Perry (2008), who focused on the HR managers' perceptions of what line managers think of the HR function. This study focused solely on the HR department's perceived prestige instead of the prestige thought to be attributed to the organization as whole. Their research found evidence for a positive link between a change in the HR department's strategic role and perceived external prestige.

The HR department's perceived external prestige was measured by asking HR managers only what they believed line managers thought of the HR department's change in strategic role. In this case, the line managers were just one external group which determined the prestige perceived to be attributed to this department. However, the line managers are also part of the larger organization and thus share the same in-group as the HR department members at the organization level. This suggests that the definition for perceived external prestige may need to be revisited so as not to bring about confusion as to which groups are perceived to attribute prestige to the department.

Although the perceived external prestige construct appears throughout the literature as referring to what is believed outsiders think, Kulik and Perry (2008) have demonstrated that it can also refer more generally to an out-group within an organization, not just organizational outsiders. This distinction has not been made in previous research simply because the focus was on the organization level, and anyone in the implicit out-group was automatically an organizational outsider. Hence, by focusing on the department level, an out-group member is not necessarily “external” to the firm. In order to simplify our terminology, we will therefore refer to perceived prestige only, dropping the qualifier ‘external’. In addition, we can conceptualize that there are at least two types of out-groups in relation to which employees in a department may perceive attributions of prestige.

One of the out-groups includes those who are outside the department but part of the organization and the other includes those who are completely outside of the organization. In this thesis’s context, this would distinguish the focus of perceived prestige between members of the university who are not part of a researcher’s department and researchers who are outside of the university.

Removing the word “external” also no longer limits the construct to what a group member believes only outsiders think; it can now include what a group member believes someone within his or her group thinks. In the context of this study, this would mean that a member of Concordia’s Biology department might not just be concerned about what he or she believes researchers from other departments or researchers from other universities think of their department, but also about what they believe their

department colleagues think. Indeed, such perception of prestige may be necessary in order for a department member to experience his or her own beliefs about the department's identity as shared and collective among all members.

To illustrate, let us look at a scenario where Concordia's Biology department has made a breakthrough in mapping the human genome, which results in the credited biologists being asked to present their findings at several conventions. This will certainly make the department more prestigious, but through whose eyes is that prestige believed to reflect onto the in-group? A biologist who was not part of the research might think that his or her fellow department colleagues find the department to be highly prestigious, and he or she may assume so since the discovery came from the department they all belong to and that is believed to be in part about discovery of the human genome. But what about researchers from other departments at Concordia? Does the biologist reckon they find the Biology department more prestigious due to this breakthrough? How about what he or she believes researchers outside of Concordia think? Does perceived prestige from these different points of view differ in significant ways and affect the way the biologist identifies with her department?

This is what is meant when discussing three different foci for perceived prestige. These three different perceptions of prestige will be perceived through the eyes of colleagues within the department, researchers within Concordia University but outside of the department and researchers outside of the university. The focus of the perceived prestige from outsiders of the university is limited to researchers in order to remain

consistent with the other foci (i.e., other department members and other faculty members in the university). As such, all can be assumed to be researchers.

Hypotheses

As highlighted thus far, this thesis research adds to the literature by focusing on better understanding identification at the department level. This thesis also adds to the literature by differentiating between different foci of perceived prestige (i.e. department members, organization members and organization outsiders), which is one of the main predictors for identification. Now that these two theoretical notions have been addressed separately, it is time to bring them together.

This thesis aims to test if perceived prestige in relation to different foci brings about different levels of predictive validity in explaining departmental identification. In the context of this thesis where the importance placed on sustainability research represents the department's identity, this means that the perceived prestige attributed to the department's sustainability research by the three different foci (Perceived prestige from the department, perceived prestige from Concordia and perceived prestige from outsiders) would lead to a different level of identification between a department member and his or her department. Bringing this terminology and framework to our example, this means that this thesis will be looking at what a Biology department member believes other researchers within think of the Biology department's efforts in sustainability research and how this perception affects his or her level of identification with the Biology department. As explained previously, these other

researchers are split into three groups in this case: researchers within the same department (i.e. Biology), researchers outside of the department but within the same university (i.e. Concordia) and researchers outside the university.

The reason the influence may differ from one audience to the next is because these different foci of perceived prestige are not equally proximate to the department. With sustainability research as the core work activity signaling the identity, we predicted how different foci of perceived prestige may show differential predictive validity on identification with the department because of audience social proximity.

Audience social proximity in this paper refers to how close or removed groups are from the in-group to which an individual belongs. Organizational membership and organizational sub-group membership are both assumed to be primary bases for identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). That assumption leads to the argument that organizational outsiders are more socially distant than both department colleagues and university colleagues since outsiders neither share the same organizational identity or organizational sub-group identity. Using this logic of primary bases, if the academic discipline of departments (ie. Accounting, Biology, Economics etc.) is a basis of group identification, then department colleagues should be socially more proximate than university colleagues.

Using our ongoing example, the assumption would be that an individual from the Biology department and his or her colleagues have greater social proximity compared to university members outside of their department because they are part of a more specific in-group. An individual in this study's sample may define themselves as a

researcher, a researcher within Concordia, or a researcher within the Biology Department of Concordia and social proximity increases in that order. This is the extent of how social proximity is used in the context of this study. Social proximity acts as a primary underlying mechanism derived from how we would anticipate the three different perceived prestige foci to explain departmental identification, making it an explanatory mechanism.

H1a) There is a positive correlation between perceived prestige and Departmental Identification.

H1b) The correlation grows stronger as audience social proximity increases. We assume that social proximity increases from Outsider Perceived Prestige, to Concordia Perceived Prestige , to Insider Perceived Prestige .

- i) The correlation between Departmental Identification and Insider Perceived Prestige is greater than the correlation between Departmental Identification and Concordia Perceived Prestige .
- ii) The correlation between Departmental Identification and Concordia Perceived Prestige is greater than the correlation between Departmental Identification and Outsider Perceived Prestige .

Methods

The study was carried out at Concordia University located in the city of Montreal. The sample consisted of professors and researchers from six different departments. The university setting was ideal for studying multiple identities within an organization due to its multidisciplinary nature.

The research design focuses on the individual as the unit of analysis, with the department as the contextual reference point for measurement. Since research was assumed to be a core work activity at the department level, and was thus related to departmental identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985), we sampled individuals from several departments in which research on sustainability was carried out. Sustainability research is a specific identity content that nevertheless has a universal meaning as a generic attribute across all the chosen departments. However, sustainability research also has particular meanings within each department because of its unique research traditions and topics of sustainability study. As a result, the relationship between perceived prestige and identification can be studied by specifying the unique content for measurement of the perceived prestige while assuming a comparable basis of affiliation for identification. Departments were chosen in order to include a variety of departmental contexts in the extent to which sustainability research was part of a formal sub-unit identity, thus seeking to increase variability in individual-level perceptions of perceived prestige (PP).

Sample and Data Collection

Participants were selected from a sampling of 150 faculty members of Concordia University (i.e., full professors, associate professors, assistant professors and professors emeritus). Names and mailing addresses were obtained from their department's websites. Of those 150 faculty members, 57 responded providing complete survey data for a response rate of 38%. These members were taken from the departments of Accounting, Economics, Biology, Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering (BCEE), and Geography, Planning and Environment (Geography).

The degree to which sustainability research may be a formal attribute of departmental identity was assessed by reviewing the different department websites of Concordia University. Each department website offered a list of its research staff, accompanied by their coordinates and research interest. Research interest was assumed to be an indication of the research valued by the department. A researcher was deemed to have an interest in sustainability research if their research interests included key words such as sustainability, climate change, ecology, resource management, conservation, renewable energy, or environment related issues. A department's interest in research, expressed as a percentage, was assessed by dividing the number of researchers with those specific interests by the total number of researchers within the department. For example, at the time of this study, the Biology department's website showed the contact information and research interest of 24 faculty members. Of these 24 researchers, 11 were interested in either Conservation Biology, Ecology, resource

distribution and management, Climate Change, or wildlife conservation and management which were all subjects deemed to fall within sustainability related research. In contrast, the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering only had 3 of their 36 researchers studying Power Systems and Renewable Energy, which was the only subject within the department related to sustainability research. This made the department's documented interest respectively 45.8% and 7.5% in Electrical and Computer Engineering. Six departments were selected this way and their varying level of interest in the field can be found in Appendix 1.

To study the relationship between perceived prestige and departmental identification, I used a survey methodology and correlational analysis. A survey questionnaire featuring multi item measures for both constructs along with several control measures was distributed to the six departments. Both a hardcopy and an online survey were offered to give the faculty members the option to choose their preferred method of response (see Appendix 2 for a sample questionnaire). The surveys sent were identical in every way when it came to the items and measures, the only difference being the list of examples presented when explaining the reference content of sustainability research in each department. For example, in accounting, sustainability research "can entail researching ethical perspectives in accounting practices and environmental related issues", while in Geography "It can entail researching habitat restoration, climate change and natural resource management".

Surveys were mailed in May 2012 and were accompanied with a return envelope for internal mail, as well as a Tim Horton's gift card for incentive. Faculty members were

informed of this research project via e-mail seven days prior to receiving the link to the online survey. The paper survey was sent the very same week as the online survey. The initial mailing was followed 3 weeks later by a reminder e-mail. In June, a second and final reminder e-mail was sent.

Though 47.33% of respondents attempted to take the survey on-line, several questionnaires were left mostly unanswered. Adjusting for that, our response rate was 37.33% with a total of 57 responses. Most respondents (21%) came from the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and the fewest (11%) from the department of BCEE. Also, the majority of respondents (68.4%) had been involved in sustainability research and the average amount of years spent researching within that related field was 8.96. The department of Geography showed the greatest average involvement in sustainability research (5.55 on a scale with the maximum of 8), as was predicted with the documented interest found in the department website (Appendix 1). Geography and Biology had the two highest response rates, with 64.7% and 50%, respectively. Also, members from these two departments, along with the department of BCEE, declared the highest interest in sustainability research, ranging from 58% to 69.4%. This required us to account for results which may be biased due to the respondents' possible self-selection to participate in this research because of their high documented interest in the subject matter.

However, the aforementioned department of BCEE only had a 20% response rate and the response rates from the other departments appear unrelated to their members' claim of interest in sustainability research. Also, the department of accounting

displayed a strong response rate (40%), probably due to respondents' self-selection as a result of this research being associated with the business faculty. Such a strong response rate from that department, which had one of the least documented interests in sustainability (12%), means that though the departments with the highest documented interest in sustainability had a greater response rate than other departments, departments with a much lower interest were also well represented. The lack of a clear trend renders it difficult to estimate the amount of bias present in the results; in order to control for any response bias due to departmental affiliation, the departments would be accounted for as control variables in the analysis.

Measures

Every construct used in this research was measured through the surveys sent out. The primary section to the survey included eight questions, asking the respondents how they, and other people within their environment, perceived the research carried out in their department, as well as how they identified with both their department and their organization. The remaining six questions of the survey collected demographic data and research related control variables, such as the importance of teaching versus research in their department. The primary section of the survey contained the measures for the key variables while the later section contained the measures for the control variables

Key Variables

Management researchers measure perceived prestige using the same approach as in the social identity literature, which is by asking respondents what other people think about their organization. Our eight item perceived prestige measure developed for this research (see Appendix 2) comes from Kulik and Perry's (2008) *HR Construed Image Scale* and Mael & Ashforth's (1992) measure of *perceived external prestige*. Though both of these measures had to be altered to ask what people believe others think of their department and not their organization, the setting of the Kulik and Perry measure had to be changed to a university setting. The items found in the latter measured the perceptions of line managers regarding their HR unit and staff, while ours measured perceptions involving research within a university. The four Kulik and Perry items were added to the other four items derived from the study by Mael & Ashforth (1992) and modified slightly so that the key variables would pertain to sustainability research carried out in one's department. This created the eight-item perceived prestige (of sustainability research) measure used in this thesis which was scored on 5-point Likert scale (1 = disagree strongly; 5 = agree strongly). The same measure was used to create three different scales to measure the three different perceived prestige constructs: perceived prestige from department members (Insiders PP), perceived prestige from Concordia members (Concordia PP), and perceived prestige from outsiders (Outsider PP).

The only difference between the three scales was a preceding statement which specified the audience to be considered by the respondent. For example, the measure

for perceived prestige from insiders begins with: “In general, I believe the members of my department...”, followed by (a) have a positive impression of my department’s research endeavours in sustainability, etc. The measure for perceived prestige from Concordia members begins with, “In general, I believe faculty members at Concordia University outside my department...” while the measure for perceived prestige from outsiders begins with, “In general, I believe researchers outside Concordia University...”.

The Departmental Identification construct was measured using two slightly altered versions of the direct measure of organizational identification from Bergami and Bagozzi (2000). It is an aided visual diagram where two circles are overlapping to a various degree with the question asking the following:

“please describe your relationship with your department by using the following diagrams. Imagine that the circles at the left represent your own personal identity (what describes you as a unique individual), while the circles at the right represent the identity of your department. Which diagram best describes the level of overlap between your own identity and your department’s identity” (as seen in Appendix 2).

This measure asks the respondent to answer about their department’s identity directly, instead of referring to the sustainability research, as was done in the earlier measurements. As it constitutes a different measurement technique than the perceived prestige measures, it should help to reduce concerns about common method variance.

A scale version of this measure, with only the numbers 1 to 8 from which to choose, was also included to check for this measure’s reliability ($\alpha = .852$). The single item asked to what extent the respondent’s own sense of who they are overlaps with

their sense of what their department represents on a scale ranging from one to eight (where “one” means not at all and “eight” means to a great extent)

Control Variables

With the cognitive similarities between the two levels of identification – departmental and organizational – we wanted the analyses controlled for organizational identification (OI). As previously discussed, sustainability research is also part of the university’s identity and field specific sustainability research is split accordingly between corresponding departments. This means that both organizational and departmental identification may be related to each other since both levels of identification have sustainability research as a core work activity. Controlling for OI helps ensure that any effect found at the department level is due to the perceived prestige measure independently of organizational effects. There could be strong ties between both constructs, and if that is indeed the case, it should be accounted for. A modified version of our Departmental Identification measure was used to calculate the impact of this construct, which was the measure’s original purpose (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). As with the Departmental Identification measure, the Organizational Identification measure consisted of a visual diagram, where two circles are overlapping to a various degree, and an 8 point scale version of this measure. The only difference was that respondents were asked to circle the response which best described their relationship with the organization rather than with the department.

The research focused on the impact of the perceived prestige attributed to the sustainability research within six different departments, necessitating the inclusion of several control variables. This study controlled for the professors' involvement in sustainability research, the amount of years in their respective departments, and the amount of years working in sustainability. Dummy variables were used to indicate to which department a respondent belonged (i.e., five separate variable columns where 1 = a specific department and 0 = any other department) and whether or not they were part of the university's administration (1 = yes; 0 = no).

A five point scale measured if the researchers thought their departments were more involved in teaching rather than research by asking to indicate the relative importance they attached to both research and teaching as central to the mission of their department. "Only research is important" was at one end of the scale while "Only teaching is important" was at the other end. This control variable was added in part due to findings that certain university departments were more involved with teaching and less involved with research and vice-versa, depending on their resources (Clark, 1989). If it was found that certain professors had no interest in research as a whole, this might translate in a lack of correlation between their identification with the department and the positive perceptions attributed to the research carried out in it. Their identification might be more related with another core work activity (i.e. lecturing) which this thesis is not using as a basis for a department's increase in prestige. Thus, the importance of teaching over research should be included as a control variable in case a lack of

correlation between the two construct is due to a cognitive dissonance with one of them.

To control for their positions, respondents were asked to select their academic rank out of the list provided (i.e., full professor, assistant professor, associate professor and professor emeritus). Their degree of involvement with sustainability research was also controlled by asking respondents to select on a scale from 1 to 8 (1 = not at all; 8 = to a great extent) to what extent their research involved environment sustainability. Respondents were also asked indicate how many years they had been in their current department at Concordia University and how many years they had been involved in sustainability research.

A preliminary analysis showed that the only applicable distinction in rank or position was the part-time versus the full time staff; the only significant correlations came from the professor emeritus position, which is not a full time position like the other ranks. To keep this series of position variables for the analysis while reducing the number of independent variables, the position category was then changed into the binary category now named “Position” which distinguished between being part time/retired and being a full time department member. Doing so reduced five categories to one while capturing any significant correlation for the multiple regression. With the study’s small sample size ($N = 57$), simplifying the analysis this way increased the statistical power.

Two other variables underwent the same simplification for the regression analysis: “Involvement in Sustainability Research” and “Years Working in Sustainability

Research” were highly correlated with one another ($r = .759, p < 0.01$), and a preliminary regression analysis using each variable separately produced identical results. These results are understandable since it would be expected that the more years spent researching within a field, the more a researcher would feel involved. Thus, the two variables appear to tap into two facets of a similar underlying construct. Due to their strong statistical correlation and similarity with one another, the values for these two variables were averaged under a new “Experience” variable to be used in the regression analysis.

The preliminary analysis also revealed that the control variables “Years in the Department” and “Department Interest in Teaching versus Research” both had negligible correlation coefficients ranging from .066 to .043 with no statistical significance; therefore, they were not included in any regression analyses in this study. They were also not significant in the regression analysis and did not alter the regression results when included. To summarize, the control variables included in the regression analysis were the departments (i.e., Biology, Accounting etc.), the positions (i.e., part time or full time), experience in sustainability research, and organizational identification.

Verifying assumptions at the department level

Identification is achieved when individuals perceive that a group to which they belong has the same attributes as them, which creates a large overlap between the identity of the individual and the group. For this to be the case there is the assumption

that there is a group identity to identify with, and group identities are assumed to be shared by members and distinguished between groups, unlike personal identities which are unique to the individual (Ashforth et al., 2008; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). Most identification studies simply take the identification definition and all its assumptions as a given, regardless of the context, and proceed with their measures. This study wishes to confirm the assumption that a person's perceptions of an attribute of the group's identity is perceived to be shared among all members of the group, before moving forward, since this is the context of how constructs are measured in this thesis.

If an identity, or one's perception of an identity's attributes, is assumed to be shared at the departmental level, then an individual should think that others close to him hold similar perceptions of that identity. In order to verify this assumption with this study, we included an additional measure focusing on the prestige which the individual personally attributes to the sustainability research carried out in his or her department. Using our example, personal prestige is what a member of the Biology department actually thinks of his or her department's endeavours regarding sustainability research. The measure for this variable is similar to that used for the other perceived prestige variables except that every statement in the scale is presented in the first person. The eight item measure for this construct asks how strongly the respondents agreed or disagreed (1 = disagree strongly; 5 = agree strongly) with a series of 8 statements: "For each of the following statements please select the answer that best reflects your personal opinion". The full measure can be found in Appendix 2 under the first question

(Q1) of the survey. The goal of this measure was to correlate it with the perceived prestige from the individual's colleagues (i.e., Insiders PP) to see if there was a high correlation between the two.

The correlation between personal prestige and the perceived prestige from the insiders (i.e. colleagues the department), was found to be high ($r = .836, p < .01$) (Appendix 4). The unstandardized regression coefficient (b) for Insider PP was .793 ($p < .001$), which concurs with the correlation, providing adequate evidence to support our assumption. It appears that each member perceives their personal thoughts on the department's prestige to be shared by those of his or her colleagues within the department. The personal prestige was also found to be correlated with Departmental Identification ($r = .27, p < .05$).

Results

The reliabilities of the measures from the full final samples were all strong; Insider PP ($\alpha = .921$), Concordia PP ($\alpha = .905$), Outsider PP ($\alpha = .893$), and Departmental Identification ($\alpha = .852$). A descriptive summary, with mean and standard deviation, of the key variables across the different departments can be found in Appendix 3; the correlations for all variables appear in Table 1.

Appendix 3 reveals that the differences in perception across the departments are consistent with what was expected given the preliminary data regarding the varying interest in sustainability research from each department found in Appendix 1.

Corroborating with the information from department websites, both the departments

of Geography and Biology, which had the greatest interest in sustainability research, reported the highest scores for all perceived prestige foci. However, this did not translate to the Departmental Identification. The best example displaying this is the comparison between the departments of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) and Geography. Geography boasts higher perceptions of prestige (4.68, 4.10, & 4.11) on a 5 point scale than ECE (3.78, 3.40, & 3.46), while ECE boasts a much higher Departmental Identification (6.00) on an 8 point scale than Geography (4.46). All means for perceived prestige variables were significantly different at least at the .05 level and the difference in the mean for departmental identification was significant at .055. This shows that there may not be a direct link between the identification and the behavioral component of the identity chosen for this study.

The first hypothesis (H1 a) predicted a positive correlation between perceived prestige and Departmental Identification. This was supported with the positive correlations we found between Departmental Identification and each of the three different perceived prestige foci (Table 1), although several of these correlations were only marginally significant at the 0.10 level.

Bivariate Correlations

Table 1

Bivariate Correlations for all Key Variables

Key Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Personal PP	–				
2. Insider PP	.84**	–			
3. Concordia PP	.57**	.69**	–		
4. Outsider PP	.68**	.67**	.74**	–	
5. Departmental Identification	.27*	.24 ^φ	.24 ^φ	.29*	–

Note. Values are rounded up to two decimal places. PP = Perceived Prestige.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed. ^φ $p < .10$, two-tailed.

Table 1 cont.

Bivariate Correlations for all Control Variables

Control Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. Organizational Identification	.32*	.23 ^φ	.28*	.42**	.31*	–				
7. Department interest in Teaching versus Research	.01	.04	.02	-.05	.17	.01	–			
8. Involvement in Sustainability Research	.32*	.34*	.22 ^φ	.29*	.03	.19	.12	–		
9. Years in the Department	-.07	.07	-.06	.07	-.21	.02	-.01	.12	–	
10. Years working in Sustainability Research	.30*	.35**	.30*	.36**	-.05	.13	.08	.76**	.33*	–

Note. Values are rounded up to two decimal places.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed. ^φ $p < .10$, two-tailed.

Table 1 cont.

Bivariate Correlations for all Control Variables

Control Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11. Accounting	-.05	-.29*	-.22	.05	-.14	.03	-.12	-.19	-.11	-.16
12. Biology	.15	.16	.13	.08	.16	.07	.15	.04	.04	.07
13. BCEE ^a	-.17	-.17	-.05	-.07	-.14	.10	-.17	.12	.14	.16
14. Economics	-.39**	-.30*	-.29*	-.38**	.05	-.34**	.21	-.18	-.03	-.18
15. ECE ^b	-.01	-.04	-.05	-.12	.27*	.08	-.03	-.01	-.23	-.80
16. Geography ^c	.38**	.55**	.41**	.37**	-.23	.05	-.04	.21	.13	.21
17. Assistant_Prof	.07	-.00	-.02	-.05	-.13	-.06	-.12	-.20	-.46	-.27
18. Associate_Prof	.04	.03	.03	.05	.05	.15	-.15	-.03	-.14	-.14
19. Full_Prof	.06	.08	.09	.10	.05	-.11	.20	.32*	.45**	.47**
20. Professor_Emeritus	-.30*	-.19	-.18	-.21	-.00	-.00	.10	-.25	-.12	-.19
21. Part of Administration	.10	.05	-.08	.18	.12	.18	-.02	.04	.18	.18

Note. * $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

^aBuilding, Civil, and Environmental Engineering. ^bElectrical and Computer Engineering. ^cGeography, Planning, and Environment.

Table 1 cont.

Bivariate Correlations for all Control Variables

Control Variable	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
11. Accounting	–										
12. Biology	-.24	–									
13. BCEE ^a	-.17	-.17	–								
14. Economics	-.18	-.18	-.13	–							
15. ECE ^b	-.24	.24	-.17	-.18	–						
16. Geography ^c	-.23	-.24	-.17	-.19	-.24	–					
17. Assistant_Prof	.28*	-.09	.01	-.02	-.09	-.09	–				
18. Associate_Prof	.09	-.18	-.09	-.13	.09	.19	-.40**	–			
19. Full_Prof	-.24	.05	.14	.09	.05	-.05	-.29*	-.62**	–		
20. Professor_Emeritus	-.13	.39**	-.09	.11	-.13	-.14	-.12	-.25	-.19	–	
21. Part of Administration	.15	.03	.01	-.16	.03	-.07	-.19	.18	.02	-.12	–

Note. * $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

^aBuilding, Civil, and Environmental Engineering. ^bElectrical and Computer Engineering. ^cGeography, Planning, and Environment.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted for each of the three perceived prestige foci with the inclusion of the control variables. These regressions were calculated using departmental identification as the dependent variable. The results showed that regression coefficients of the three perceived prestige foci were all significant at the 0.05 level (Table 2). The unstandardized regression coefficient (b) for Insider PP was .967 ($p < .01$), for Concordia PP was .650 ($p < .05$), and for Outsider PP was 1.074 ($p < .01$). Also, a change in R-Square was present between the control only model and the models with the predictor added (ie. one of the three prestige foci). Adding Insider PP to the control model changed the R-Square from 0.279 to 0.379, adding Concordia PP to the control model changed the R-Square from 0.279 to 0.343, and adding Outsider PP to the control model changed the R-Square from 0.279 to 0.396. An incremental F -test (Table 2) revealed that this increase in the explained variance was statistically significant at the .05 level: Insider PP ($R^2 = .38$, $F(1, 47) = 7.568$); Concordia PP ($R^2 = .34$, $F(1, 47) = 4.578$); Outsider PP ($R^2 = .40$, $F(1, 47) = 9.104$).

The regression results also revealed significant effects in regards to the control variables, most notably three of the departments and organizational identification (OI). The departments of Accounting, BCEE and Geography were generally found to have significant effects at the .10 level or greater in the regression models whether a perceived prestige predictor was present or not. However, in the regression model where the Insider PP was introduced to the equation, the only department to have a significant effect was Geography ($b = -2.27$, $p < .01$). The control variable OI had a

significant effect at the .05 level or better in the control model ($b = .37, p < .01$), the model with Insider PP ($b = .30, p < .05$), and model with Concordia PP ($b = .31, p < .05$). OI was not found to be significant ($p > .10$) in the model containing Outsider PP which means that OI is more certain to account for the variance when the foci for perceived prestige is members within the university. Outsider PP and OI share a greater amount of variance from Insider PP and OI as well as from Concordia PP and OI.

Table 2
Regression Analysis with Individual Variables

	Departmental Identification					Personal Prestige		
Accounting	-1.318*	-1.266*	-0.93	-1.118 ϕ	-1.584**	-0.057	-0.017	0.258
Se	0.653	0.619	0.593	0.601	0.582	0.255	0.247	0.164
Biology	-0.205	-0.129	-0.571	-0.417	-0.517	0.494*	0.459*	0.096
Se	0.695	0.667	0.646	0.657	0.63	0.272	0.266	0.178
BCEE	-1.5 ϕ	-1.526*	-1.136	-1.474*	-1.441*	-0.352	-0.422	-0.102
Se	0.777	0.744	0.712	0.718	0.689	0.304	0.297	0.196
Economics	-0.56	0.069	0.353	0.211	0.232	-0.605*	-0.4	-0.167
Se	0.751	0.746	0.706	0.722	0.692	0.294	0.298	0.195
Geography	-1.545*	-1.457*	-2.272**	-1.898**	-2.102**	0.568*	0.533*	-0.136
Se	0.653	0.629	0.66	0.64	0.62	0.255	0.251	0.182
Position	0.581	0.733	0.108	0.321	0.268	0.978**	0.915*	0.402 ϕ
Se	0.878	0.857	0.835	0.849	0.807	0.343	0.342	0.23
Experience in SR		-0.012	-0.031	-0.02	-0.038		0.015	0
Se		0.037	0.035	0.036	0.035		0.015	0.01
Org Identification		0.373**	0.303*	0.308*	0.22		0.107*	0.049
Se		0.132	0.126	0.131	0.132		0.053	0.035
Insiders PP			0.967**					0.793**
Se			0.35					0.097
Concordia PP				0.65*				
Se				0.302				
Outsiders PP					1.074**			
Se					0.355			
R square	0.159	0.279	0.379	0.343	0.396	0.395	0.459	0.778
Incremental F Value (CV 2.145)			7.568*	4.578*	9.104*			

Note. * $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed. $\phi p < .10$, two-tailed.

Table 3
Regression Analysis with two Comparison Variables

	Departmental Identification	
Accounting	-0.922	-1.523*
Se	0.593	0.615
Biology	-0.630	-0.537
Se	0.648	0.639
BCEE	-1.188	-1.439*
Se	0.714	0.696
Economics	0.369	0.245
Se	0.707	0.699
Geography	-2.336**	-2.128**
Se	0.663	0.630
Position	0.021	0.231
Se	0.840	0.823
Experience in SR	-0.031	-0.037
Se	0.035	0.036
Org Identification	0.284*	0.222
Se	0.128	0.134
Insiders PP	0.773 ^φ	
Se	0.401	
Concordia PP	0.334	0.131
Se	0.337	0.388
Outsiders PP		0.969*
Se		0.476
R square	0.392	0.398

Note. * $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed. ^φ $p < .10$, two-tailed.

Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the correlations grow stronger as social proximity increases. Social proximity was assumed to increase from Outsider PP, to Concordia PP, to Insider PP. This was broken down into the following two hypotheses:

- The correlation between Departmental Identification and Insider PP is greater than the correlation between Departmental Identification and Concordia PP (H1 bi)
- The correlation between Departmental Identification and Concordia PP is greater than the correlation between Departmental Identification and Outsider PP (H1 bii)

A Steiger's Z-test was performed to compare the correlations. Steiger's Z-test (Steiger, 1980) was developed to compare correlations, especially "correlated correlations", meaning two correlations which share a similar variable and are, therefore, not independent from one another. It is calculated using not only the correlation coefficients of the two correlations being compared but also the correlation coefficient of the two independent variables. Using this to study the correlations being analysed in H1bi, the three correlations coefficients needed to calculate Steiger's Z would be for the correlations between:

- Departmental Identification and Insider PP ($r_{5,2} = 0.243, p < .10$)
- Departmental Identification and Concordia PP ($r_{5,3} = 0.242, p < .10$)
- Insider PP and Concordia PP ($r_{2,3} = 0.689, p < .05$)

This third correlation ($r_{2,3}$) is between the two independent variables whose correlations with the dependent variable are being compared. Taking this extra correlation into account when finding the difference between the two correlations removes any multicollinearity between the independent variables, which were the perceived prestige

variables in this study. A Fisher Z-transformation was used to find the Z score for both correlations between the independent and dependent variable because the r values may not be normally distributed. The difference between the two Z scores is found and then multiplied by a factor which incorporates the third correlation between the two independent variables. The resulting z-value can then be compared to a critical z-value like in other z tests. The Z-value ($z = .01, p = .50$) was not found to be greater than the critical value ($cv = 1.65$); thereby, not supporting the hypothesis. A Steiger's Z-test was also performed to compare the correlation between Departmental Identification and Concordia PP and the correlation between Departmental Identification and Outsider PP which also yielded an inconclusive result where the Z-value ($z = .465, p = .32$) was not found to be greater than the critical value ($cv = 1.65$); thereby, not supporting the hypothesis. There is insufficient evidence to confirm the order predicted.

A meaningful comparison of effects might need to take control factors into account, and so to test these directional hypotheses, the values resulting from a partial correlation analysis and a regression analysis might help find a trend where a correlation analysis could not. Variables such as organizational identification and department membership, which are correlated with departmental identification and the perceived prestige variables, may confound some of the zero-order correlations. Knowing this, a partial correlation analysis was conducted, taking every relevant control variable into account (i.e. departments, position, experience and organizational identification). The resulting partial correlations for departmental identification and Insider PP, Concordia PP and Outsider PP ($r = 0.37, p < .05$; $r = 0.30, p < .05$; $r = 0.40, p < .05$ respectively) were more distinct than the corresponding raw correlations ($r = 0.24, p < .10$; $r =$

0.24, $p < .10$; $r = 0.29$, $p < .05$). A Steiger Z-test using the partial correlation coefficients did not provide further evidence for the hypotheses predicting an order because the two corresponding Z-values found ($z = .587$, $p = .28$; $z = .998$, $p = .16$) were still below the critical value ($cv = 1.65$). However, the difference in size of the partial correlation coefficients does show a possible trend that can be further investigated in a regression analysis.

Though the regression coefficient of each prestige variable was already described above, in order to properly compare the regression coefficients, we had to run two new regressions (Table 3) each containing two comparison variables together (Insider PP and Concordia PP, as well as Concordia PP and Outsider PP). Due to the high correlations between the different predictor variables being compared, multicollinearity might be an issue. In light of this, the variance in inflation (VIF) was also calculated.

In the regression analysis containing both the Insider PP and Concordia PP, the Insider PP ($b = .243$, $p < .10$) was marginally significant with a p value of .06 while Concordia PP ($b = .344$, $p > .10$) was not significant. The VIF values were respectively 2.808 and 2.017. These are far below the typical VIF danger values (ie. nearing 10) which mean that multicollinearity is not in effect (Cohen et. al., 2003).

Though the p value for Insider PP is .06, it is above the .05 level but still a very close result. Combined with the idea that comparisons are directional (i.e. one-tailed) and therefore, a 90 % confidence interval (i.e. .05 level one-tailed) is appropriate, the regression results show a trend where insider PP might be seen as having a stronger effect on Departmental Identification than Concordia PP. This trend is in alignment with H1bi.

In the regression analysis containing both the Concordia PP and Outsider PP, the Concordia PP ($b = .131, p > .10$) was not significant while the Outsider PP ($b = .969, p < .05$) was significant at the .05 level. The VIF values were respectively 2.706 and 3.120. Like before, these are far below the typical VIF danger values and thus, multicollinearity is not in effect (Cohen et al., 2003). Since the Outsider PP coefficient is significant and the other is not, we can notice a trend indicating that its relative strength in the model is greater than Concordia PP. This trend is in the opposite direction to the one predicted in hypothesis 1bii, which help shed some light on the inconclusive correlation analysis regarding the same correlations.

Summarizing these findings, by using the regression coefficients of the prestige variables we have found that each significantly explains departmental identification with a significance of at least 95%, confirming our first hypothesis. Also, when comparing the significance of these prestige variables, a trend was found indicating that both Department PP and Outsider PP may contribute more to departmental identification than Concordia PP. This is in line with H1 bi and provides an opposite direction to the predictions of H1 bii meaning that there is insufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that the correlation grows stronger as the assumed social proximity increases.

Discussion

This study contributes to the existing knowledge of identification within the organization by focusing on departmental identification instead of organizational identification. Evidence was found supporting that predictions regarding identification at the organizational level (Ashforth et al., 2008; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994)

can similarly be made at the departmental level of a multi department organization. As with organizational identification, perceived prestige was found to be linked to departmental identification.

The positive correlations we found showed that when department members thought their peers (i.e., from either their department, their university, or from outside) attributed prestige to their department's endeavours in sustainability research, the department members reported higher levels of identification with their department.

As a post hoc interpretation, these findings may be reflective of a member's identification through one of two types of identification brought forth by Ashforth, Harrison and Corley (2008); affinity and emulation. Identification through affinity is when a member recognizes that a group is similar to him/herself when they join or choose to join. Identification through emulation is when a group member changes to become more similar to the group. The end result in both cases is identification with the group, but it is assumed to happen from the beginning through affinity while it is assumed to happen over a period of time through emulation. This is due to a time period needed for the change to occur if the initial personal identity is not overlapped with that of the group, or in this case, the department.

A look at the control variables provides a hint at which of these two identification processes are at play in regards to sustainability research. While we cannot be certain that the belief in prestige increases identification, since our correlations are based on data at only one point in time, our time variable hints that the overlap between a department member's identity and that of their department was achieved through emulation.

The variable “years working in sustainability” was significantly correlated with each of the three perceived prestige groups: Insiders ($r = .35, p < .01$), Concordia ($r = .30, p < .05$), and Outsiders ($r = .36, p < .01$). These correlations show that as a scholar spends more time researching sustainability, he or she is more likely to believe that researchers within their social network find this research prestigious. Since a relationship between perceived prestige and identification with the department was also found, the correlation with a time variable suggests that the process for a researcher’s identification is related to the time they are studying sustainability. This would mean that the identification process in this case occurs through emulation because a researcher would believe over time, while researching sustainability, that others attribute prestige to this research at the same time that it makes the researcher identify with the department. There is unlikely to be a correlation with how long someone studies sustainability if it occurred through affinity.

This study was also a first at distinguishing between different perceptions of prestige, which came about due to the in-group consisting of an organizational sub-group’s members instead of consisting of all members within an organization. The results of the study regarding the different foci of perceptions did not entirely support what was predicted but are interesting all the same.

It was hypothesized that the correlations between perceptions of prestige and departmental identification would be greater as social proximity increases. In this paper, social proximity was framed as how close or removed groups are from the in-group in terms of shared identity. Though members of Concordia outside of a specific department do not share the same departmental identity, they are still assumed to share the same organizational identity since,

regardless of their department, every researcher at Concordia is a member of Concordia. Since researchers outside of Concordia cannot share this same membership, they are assumed to be more socially distant from a specific department within Concordia than researchers in other departments within Concordia.

The results indicated that social proximity, as I had defined it, did not moderate the strength of identification since both Insider and Outsider PP were found to have greater relative strength than Concordia PP in the regression model. This means that the level of prestige believed to be attributed to the department's research by both insiders and outsiders are better predictors of Departmental Identification than the perceived prestige coming from Concordia members outside the department. In terms of social distance, the results meant that the group assumed to be most socially distant to the in-group (i.e. researchers outside of Concordia) had a greater impact on identification than a group with less social distance (i.e. researchers within all of Concordia) as per our assumptions.

This result could either mean that social proximity is not a predictor of identification, or that our assumptions for social proximity were incorrect. Our definition for social proximity involved the level of shared organizational identity. However, organizational identity might not be the only identity determining social distance. The questions asked in the survey may serve as a clue to see if another identity is at play, explaining these results and offering a different understanding of social proximity.

To keep the focus of this sample and data on researchers, we had asked the respondents to limit their answers to only what other researchers thought of the department's research endeavours. It is possible that the majority of peers outside the university, within a

researcher's social network, study a similar field. Researchers studying a similar topic may interact more with one another through participation at conferences and conventions and be more likely to follow their research through the interest in similar literature (i.e. academic journals). In other words, the unique knowledge associated to the particular research might lead to the creation of a different in-group sharing a different identity.

This has been found in the literature before under the designation of a group of professionals where members within it carry out highly critical organizational functions and possess esoteric knowledge (Pratt et al., 2006). Just as people within the same organization or department share an organizational or departmental identity, individuals sharing the same profession share a professional identity. Thus far, a shared professional identity was found in the fields of medicine, law and accounting (Pratt et al., 2006) and our research results could indicate that a professional identity is also present among university researchers.

If social proximity was understood through a shared professional identity instead of a shared organizational identity, then groups sharing a similar profession would be more socially proximate to one another, regardless of whether or not the groups are within the same organization. This is congruent with the trends found through our regression results which showed that the two foci which might be the source of the perceived prestige which predicted Departmental Identification with the greatest significance, may have shared the same profession. This post hoc analysis assumes that these two foci, department colleagues and organizational outsiders, studied in similar research fields as each respondent.

To summarize, as hypothesized, perceived prestige has a significant relationship with accepting a component of the department's identity into one's self-concept (ie. identification)

and determining the gap between a department's identity and a member's personal identity. This shows that perceived prestige is an underlying factor in explaining the amount of identification at the department level, as it is at the organizational level. That being said, the foci with the most significant effect on determining the amount of identification were the department colleagues and the organizational outsiders, putting our understanding of social proximity in question.

Research Limitations and Generalizability

In this study, the prestige perceptions were measured in relation to just one specific core work activity signaling the identity: sustainability research. By asking how well this core work activity was perceived by the different groups, one could argue that through part of the content of identity covered, the core values making up identity from each department were not directly explored in this study. From the multitude of work activities possibly linked to an identity, we only looked at researching sustainability. However, unlike other possible work activities, the one chosen is considered a core work activity to the organization, meaning that this identity characteristic would be more representative of the actual identity, helping improve the limitation mentioned.

Also, this being a cross-sectional study using correlational design, the causality remains unconfirmed. Correlational designs are the main designs used in organizational research (Scandura & Williams, 2000). Unfortunately, an analysis in this research design cannot differentiate the causal sequence (Mathieu and Taylor, 2006). This means that the reverse causal sequence might be in effect, meaning that the individuals' departmental identification would predict what they believe others think (i.e. the perceived prestige of the three foci). This reversal of causality would insinuate that department members are projecting their views onto others. Since this study obtained only correlations based on data at one point in time, causality in either direction cannot be confirmed and we can only speculate if the results are reflective of a member's identification either through assimilation or congruence.

Also, the three different prestige perceptions (Insider PP, Concordia PP and Outsider PP) were highly correlated to one another ($.67 \leq r \leq .74$) and significant to the .01 level. It is possible

that the three perceived prestige measures do not tap into different constructs and might instead be the same halo/factor. However, the regression analysis hinted that Concordia PP may have different factors influencing it compared to Insider and Outsider PP. The results also showed that collinearity between the different perceived prestige variables in the same equation was not a statistically significant problem. The sample's small size limits the tests that can be performed. If it were a larger sample, a factor analyses could be conducted to test whether perceived prestige from different sources were distinct.

While this thesis dealt with the core work activity of sustainability research, the combined notion that it was not necessary for one to take part in the activity and that it was used to differentiate between the departments' different identities adds to the generalizability of the results. The study even controlled for experience related to sustainability research, limiting it to just being seen and analysed as a central, enduring and distinctive attribute of the identity. This is in line with the organizational identity definition proposed by Albert and Whetten (1985) which this thesis brought to the department level. By having sustainability research simply being an attribute whose emphasis differs from one department to the next makes it substitutable for any central, enduring and distinctive attribute. This generalizes the results to any particular identity component as defined by Albert and Whetten (1985).

In the case of Concordia University, the core organizational identity attribute of sustainability could be substituted by both innovation and university-community partnerships, for instance. The reason for choosing these two attributes as examples is because both of these attributes are found at the organizational level, just like the emphasis on sustainability. Both innovation and university-community partnerships are part of Concordia University's Academic

Plan 2012-2016. Similarly to sustainability, these attributes may be found within the departments to a varying degree. While it could have been assumed that certain departments such as Biology and Geography had a greater interest in sustainability research than Electrical and Computer Engineering, it could likewise be assumed that an interest in innovation is more present in Electrical and Computer Engineering than History or English Literature. As for the university-community partnerships, they could stem from different partnerships between the community and certain departments. It is unlikely that every department is tied to the community to the same degree. This similarity to the use of sustainability research in this thesis could lead us to assume that the prestige coming from how innovative or community centric a particular department is could also correlate with how its members identify with it.

Practical Implications

With our results demonstrating a link between perceived prestige and identification, it would be recommended that any specific identity attribute, setting the department apart from others, should be publicised more. This will simultaneously ensure outsiders' awareness to the prestige associated with the department, and let department members know of the possible prestige perceived by outsiders. For example, if Concordia's Biology department had a breakthrough in wildlife conservation and it was brought to the attention of the media, a biology researcher at Concordia may believe his or her department to be more prestigious by knowing that this news is being published for others to see. This is regardless of what an outsider might think when reading this news online or in print. Department members will make up their own perceptions of what the department's prestige may be and this can lead to a

greater identification with their department. Thus, in light of this study's result, it would be encouraged to raise awareness to any advancement in a department's research endeavours since it signals prestige to both outsiders and insiders.

This leads to more pertinent implications for using recruitment, internal newsletters and poster events to manage the department's identity. If a department wishes to concentrate on a specific area of research, sustainability for instance, then during the recruitment of a management or supervisory position, that specific identity should be highlighted as a preferred interest of the candidate. This will let both potential candidates from outside know of the department's particular identity while also having those within the department made aware of which aspect of identity a department desires to focus on. Once the candidate is chosen and appointed for the department related position, the blurb for the public press should also highlight the specific aptitude. If the candidate is already well known for his or her interests in that particular topic, sustainability for instance, then the department receives an increase in prestige in regards to sustainability.

The results point to identification happening over time, with the help of positive perceptions of prestige. By using the recruitment techniques described above, the department could steer its members toward which identity it is they should be identifying with. The press regarding the recruitment would reinforce the perceived prestige which would lead to identification. At the same time, the newly recruited member would already have a smaller gap between his or her personal identity and the department's desired identity. As seen in the results, this recruit now being an insider could also influence the degree of identification of his or her fellow insiders.

Internal newsletters highlight endeavours specific to the department's preferred identity may not have as strong an effect. While promoting a specific identity to outsiders is important, our results imply that perceived increase in awareness from Concordia members outside the department would not have as significant an impact. Thus, there is not as much a need for an internal newsletter which would be received by every university member, highlighting specific departmental achievements. More resources should be spent on making outsiders of Concordia aware of any department's accomplishments. Alternatively, the finding that perceived prestige coming from Concordia members has a lesser effect on identification could be due to a lack in awareness, amongst the members of the university, of a department's success. A stronger emphasis on highlighting department specific achievements in an internally distributed Concordia newsletter, might rectify this.

As for student poster presentations, they should be open to the public and have a specific theme, reinforcing a department's particular identity. In the case of sustainability, there could be an event where certain departments showcase only the student projects centering on sustainability related topics. The same could be done for promoting some of the engineering departments' interest in innovation, another important attribute, where only posters pertaining to innovations in technology would be showcased. Another alternative would be to have a specific award handed out for the best research project focusing on sustainability. This alternative would not force exclusion of projects which were not in theme with the specific identity a department would want to promote. Though events such as these would be public, using social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Google +, Youtube) to raise awareness of these

events and their outcomes would give an added boost to the perceived awareness of university outsiders.

Future research

Our findings revealed a different understanding of social proximity. With the assumption that the majority of a researcher's peers work within the same field, our results indicated that the perceived prestige coming from researchers studying a similar field has a more significant effect on the gap between a department member's personal identity and the department's identity. Social proximity may be understood through the similarities between the profession, or research interests, of different groups. This would be regardless of whether or not the groups are within the same organization.

The notion that the field of study might transcend the actual organization when studying the proximity of groups suggests the need for future research to explore beyond the organization and its structure, encouraging a network study. Detailed network mapping could show which interactions are key and whether or not they relate to the results found in this study where perceived outsider opinion is a major factor for identification. With continued examination of different in-groups (i.e. professional groups) and their perceptions of what outsiders may believe regarding their identity, we believe future research will bring us a step closer to better understanding the identification process.

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Appendix 1

Breakdown of Departments Sampled

Department	Sustainability Research Interest (%) per Department	Department Response Rate	Average Involvement in Sustainability of Sample per Department ^a
Accounting	12.0	10 (40.0%)	3.10 (38.8%)
BCEE ^b	36.7	6 (20.0%)	5.33 (66.6%)
Biology	45.0	12 (50.0%)	4.64 (58.0%)
Electrical and Computer Engineering	7.50	11 (30.0%)	3.92 (49.0%)
Economics	16.7	7 (19.4%)	3.14 (39.3%)
Geography, Planning, and Environment	58.8	11 (64.7%)	5.55 (69.4%)

Note. All information was obtained from Concordia University's department websites in the research interest section of each department member's profile.

^aAverages were calculated on an 8 point scale asking to what extent does the research involve environmental sustainability (1 = *not at all*, 8 = *to a great extent*). ^bBuilding, Civil, and Environmental Engineering.

Appendix 2

Sample Survey

Survey sent out to members of the Accounting Department

CONSENT FORM

This is to state that I agree to participate in a research study conducted by MSc student William James Morizio and his supervisor Kai Lamertz of the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University (contact information: klamertz@jmsb.concordia.ca; 514-8484-2424 ext. 4136)

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to investigate *sustainability research* as an important facet of departmental identity at Concordia University. In addition, the study investigates the links between image, identity and identification at the department level.

B. PROCEDURES

Participating in this research involves completing a survey. I will be asked about my level of involvement with sustainability research and how much that research means to me. Other questions will ask about the importance other people may attribute to sustainability research carried out in my department. To protect confidentiality, all results from this study will be aggregated and reported in summary format only. Since the survey is anonymous, the answers I provide to the questions cannot be traced back to me personally.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

By participating in this research study, I will contribute to better understanding the process of identification and its link with image within the setting of a multi-departmental structure. My participation will also help to better understand how sustainability may become an integral part of a departmental identity.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is ANONYMOUS
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

☐ Yes

☐ No

This first question and the 3 others following it are about the research on sustainability conducted in your department. We would like to know what you think about sustainability research carried out in your department, and we would like to know about your impressions of what others think about that research.

The term "sustainability" is used here to refer to the continued well-being of humans and other organisms with minimal long term effect on our environment. It can entail researching ethical perspectives in accounting practices and environmental related issues, for example.

1. First, we ask about your personal opinion of the importance of sustainability research in your department. For each of the following statements, please select the answer that best reflects your personal opinion.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Agree Strongly
I have a positive impression of my department's research endeavours in sustainability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't think my department contributes to sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am reluctant to use results found in my department pertaining to sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I view my department as competent in sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would downplay any association with the sustainability research carried out in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider the research on sustainability carried out in my department as prestigious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be proud to have my children do research on sustainability in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would accept into my program students who did research on sustainability in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Now we ask about your impression of the importance *other faculty members of your department (i.e. your departmental peers)* place on sustainability research carried out in your department.

For each of the following statements, please select the answer that best completes the following sentence:
In general, I believe the members of my department ...

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Agree Strongly
... have a positive impression of my department's research endeavours in sustainability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...don't think my department contributes to sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... are reluctant to use results found in my department pertaining to sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... view my department as competent in sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.... would downplay any association with the sustainability research carried out in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... consider the research on sustainability carried out in my department as prestigious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... would be proud to have their children do research on sustainability in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... would accept into their programs students who did research on sustainability in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Now we ask about your impression of the importance *faculty members in other departments at Concordia University (i.e. your university peers)* place on sustainability research carried out in your department.

For each of the following statements, please select the answer that best completes the following sentence:
In general, I believe faculty members at Concordia University outside my department ...

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Agree Strongly
... have a positive impression of my department's research endeavours in sustainability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...don't think my department contributes to sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... are reluctant to use results found in my department pertaining to sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... view my department as competent in sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.... would downplay any association with the sustainability research carried out in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... consider the research on sustainability carried out in my department as prestigious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... would be proud to have their children do research on sustainability in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... would accept into their programs students who did research on sustainability in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>









4. Now we ask about your impression of the importance *your peers outside of Concordia University (e.g., researchers at other universities)* place on sustainability research carried out in your department.

For each of the following statements, please select the answer that best completes the following sentence:
In general, I believe researchers outside Concordia University ...

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Agree Strongly
... have a positive impression of my department's research endeavours in sustainability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...don't think my department contributes to sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... are reluctant to use results found in my department pertaining to sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... view my department as competent in sustainability research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.... would downplay any association with the sustainability research carried out in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... consider the research on sustainability carried out in my department as prestigious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... would be proud to have their children do research on sustainability in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... would accept into their programs students who did research on sustainability in my department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next, we are interested in how much you identify with your department more generally (i.e., beyond research on sustainability).

5. Please describe your relationship with your department by using the following diagrams. Imagine that the circles at the left represent your own personal identity (what described you as a unique individual), while the circles at the right represent the identity of your department. Which diagram best describes the level of overlap between your own identity and your department's identity.

A		Far Apart
B		Close Together but Separate
C		Very Small Overlap
D		Small Overlap
E		Moderate Overlap
F		Large Overlap
G		Very Large Overlap
H		Complete Overlap

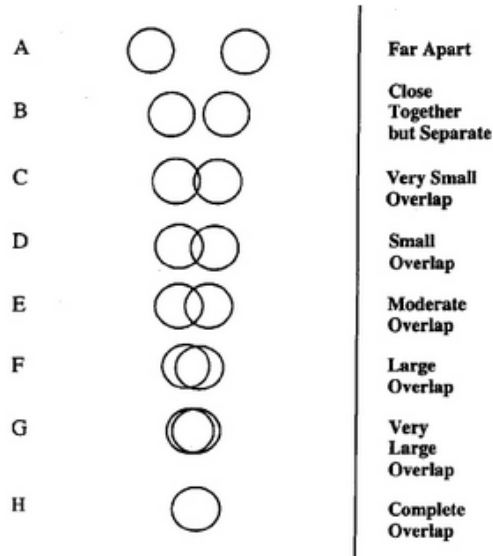
- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D
- ☐ E
- ☐ F
- ☐ G
- ☐ H

6. On a scale from 1-8 (where 1 means not at all and 8 means to a great extent), to what extent does your own sense of who you are (i.e. your personal identity) overlap with your sense of what your department represents (i.e. your department's identity)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next, we are interested in how much you identify with Concordia University.

7. Please describe your relationship with Concordia University by using the following diagrams. Imagine that the circles at the left represent your own personal identity (what described you as a unique individual), while the circles at the right represent the identity of Concordia University. Which diagram best describes the level of overlap between your own identity and Concordia University's identity.



- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D
- ☐ E
- ☐ F
- ☐ G
- ☐ H

8. On a scale from 1-8 (where 1 means not at all and 8 means to a great extent), to what extent does your own sense of who you are (i.e. your personal identity) overlap with your sense of what Concordia University represents (i.e. Concordia's identity).

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Next, we are interested in the relative importance you attach to research and teaching as central to the mission of your department.

9. Using the rating scale below, please rate the relative importance you believe is placed on teaching versus research as the central work activity in your department.

Only research is
important
☐

Research is more
important than teaching
☐

Both are of Equal
Importance
☐

Teaching is more
important than research
☐

Only teaching is
important
☐

These final 5 questions concern information regarding your academic experience as well as your current position within Concordia University.

10. On a scale from 1-8 (where 1 means not at all and 8 means to a great extent), to what extent does your research involve environmental sustainability.

1
☐

2
☐

3
☐

4
☐

5
☐

6
☐

7
☐

8
☐

11. How many years have you been in your current department at Concordia University? (enter just a number)

12. How many years have you been involved in sustainability research? (enter just a number)

13. What academic position do you currently hold at Concordia University?

- ☐ Assistant Professor
- ☐ Associate Professor
- ☐ Full Professor
- ☐ Professor Emeritus
- ☐ Other

14. Are you currently in an administrative position at Concordia?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Appendix 3

Descriptive Summary of Key Variables from Each Department

Department		Personal Prestige	Insider PP	Concordia PP	Outsider PP	Departmental Identification
Accounting	<i>M</i>	3.63	3.46	3.38	3.48	4.50
	<i>SD</i>	.51	.63	.49	.60	1.10
BCEE ^a	<i>M</i>	3.92	3.40	3.14	3.69	4.68
	<i>SD</i>	.60	.69	.67	.39	1.44
Biology	<i>M</i>	4.21	4.09	3.68	3.73	5.65
	<i>SD</i>	.74	.58	.74	.64	1.14
ECE ^b	<i>M</i>	3.98	3.78	3.40	3.46	6.00
	<i>SD</i>	.64	.62	.76	.77	1.83
Economics	<i>M</i>	3.23	3.23	2.89	2.95	5.36
	<i>SD</i>	.78	.62	.47	.32	1.60
Geography ^c	<i>M</i>	4.55	4.68	4.10	4.11	4.46
	<i>SD</i>	.52	.43	.77	.69	1.72

Note. Values are rounded up to two decimal places. PP = Perceived Prestige. *M* = average. *SD* = standard deviation.

^aBuilding, Civil, and Environmental Engineering. ^bElectrical and Computer Engineering. ^cGeography, Planning, and Environment.