

## PROCUREMENT OUTSOURCING STRATEGIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF INDIGENOUS OIL AND GAS COMPANIES IN SOUTH/SOUTH NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between procurement outsourcing and sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South, Nigeria. The aims were discovering the link between procurement outsourcing and sustainability. The correlation design was used in the study. An organized survey was used to collect primary data. Using the census sample approach, the study's population comprised the 33 operational and registered indigenous oil and gas businesses in South and South Nigeria, comprising five managers in each of the 33 enterprises. Outsourcing and a sustainability questionnaire were used to gather data. Supervisors' approval and screening of the research instrument validated it, and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to determine the instrument's dependability, with all of the items scoring higher than 0.70. The analysis revealed strong and positive relationships between procurement outsourcing and all three dimensions of sustainability. The findings indicate that firms leveraging procurement outsourcing are better positioned to improve their operational processes, enhance cost-effectiveness, foster innovation, and strengthen compliance with local content expectations, all of which contribute to long-term organizational sustainability. The study concludes that procurement outsourcing serves as a strategic approach that enhances the sustainability profile of indigenous oil and gas companies. The study recommends the adoption of environmentally conscious procurement outsourcing practices that promote resource efficiency and ecological responsibility and the implementation of inclusive procurement strategies that engage local suppliers, promote workforce development, and reinforce corporate social responsibility to support social sustainability.

**Keywords:** Economic Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, Procurement Outsourcing, Social Sustainability, Organisational Sustainability

### INTRODUCTION

The oil and gas sector holds significant economic importance for Nigeria, especially within the South/South region, which is rich in reserves and production operations. Despite its role as a key revenue generator, the industry contends with pressing challenges such as sustainability concerns, limited local content development, and the broader push for economic diversification. According

to Udom (2023), sustainability for indigenous businesses includes not only financial viability but also a dedication to environmental care, corporate social responsibility, and community empowerment. Since outsourcing provides a solution to capacity constraints, operational inefficiencies, and skill shortages, it may be both a blessing and a curse for domestic oil and gas enterprises in the South/South region. Businesses can concentrate on their core competencies, such as production and exploration, which are critical to their competitive positioning, by outsourcing non-core operations like logistics, facility management, and catering (Nwoye & Ukandu, 2023).

Outsourcing has emerged as a widely adopted strategy, enabling firms to delegate non-core operations such as technical support and supply chain functions in pursuit of cost savings and operational efficiency. For indigenous oil and gas companies in the region, outsourcing presents both opportunities and risks. It allows these firms to concentrate on their primary capabilities like exploration and production while leveraging specialized external support for ancillary services. When effectively managed, outsourcing can enhance sustainability by lowering operational expenses, which in turn frees up resources for reinvestment in infrastructure, technology, and long-term growth initiatives—all of which are vital for maintaining a resilient and competitive presence in the sector.

Although outsourcing's influence on organizational performance has been widely studied, its implications for sustainability within Nigeria's indigenous oil and gas companies—especially in the complex South/South region—remain insufficiently explored. In the oil and gas industry, the literature currently available on outsourcing frequently highlights its potential for cost reduction and operational efficiency, but it pays less attention to how it interacts with more general sustainability goals (Baldwin et al., 2023). Furthermore, given the South/South region of Nigeria's dynamic and complicated sociopolitical climate, where problems like environmental degradation, local community unrest, and oil theft are common, it is even more important to comprehend how outsourcing can contribute to or hinder sustainable development in this region (Odeyemi et al., 2022). This gap is particularly pronounced when accounting for the local environmental pressures, social tensions, and economic disparities. The present study seeks to address this deficiency by examining how procurement outsourcing affects the sustainability of these firms, offering insights into how organizational practices align with long-term environmental, social, and economic objectives.

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

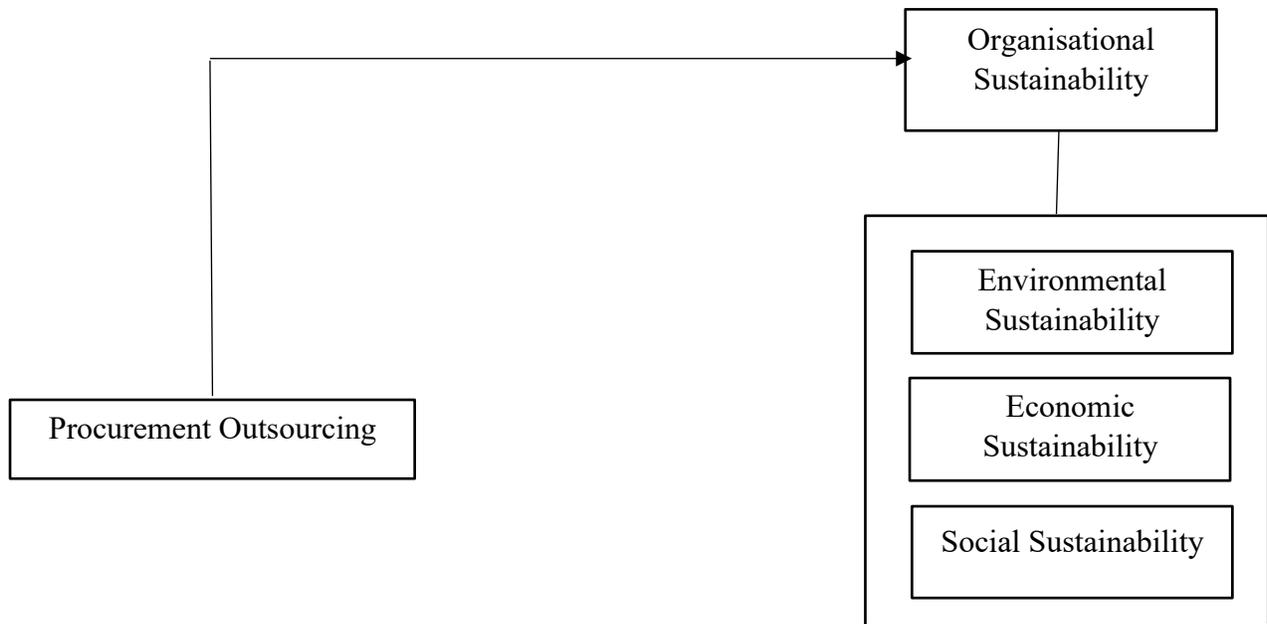
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between procurement outsourcing and sustainability of indigenous Oil and Gas Companies in South/South Nigeria. Therefore, the following specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the relationship between procurement outsourcing and environmental sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the relationship between procurement outsourcing and economic sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria.
- iii. To examine the relationship between procurement outsourcing and social sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The study conceptual model takes a linear relationship between procurement outsourcing and sustainability of indigenous Oil and Gas Companies in South/South Nigeria. Procurement

outsourcing as predictor variable while the criterion variable which is organizational sustainability and was measured with environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of procurement outsourcing and sustainability of indigenous Oil and Gas Companies in South/South Nigeria

Source: Research’s Desk (2025). Measures of sustainability are adopted from the work of Khalid et al (2012).

### Research Questions

The following research question was formulated for the study.

- i. What is the relationship between procurement outsourcing and environmental sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between procurement outsourcing and economic sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between procurement outsourcing and social sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria?

### Statement of Hypotheses

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between procurement outsourcing and environmental sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between procurement outsourcing and economic sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between procurement outsourcing and social sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

#### Stakeholder Theory

Since its inception in 1984, Stakeholder Theory has become a key framework in business ethics and strategic management, offering an alternative to the traditional profit-centered model. It emphasizes that organizations operate within a network of relationships involving stakeholders such as employees, customers, communities, and regulators each with valid interests in the organization's actions (Freeman, 1984). Rather than focusing solely on shareholder returns, the theory advocates a broader view that incorporates social and environmental responsibility alongside economic goals, promoting long-term sustainability (Freeman et al., 2023; Harrison et al., 2022).

This perspective is particularly relevant to the outsourcing practices of indigenous oil and gas firms in Nigeria's South/South region, where economic activities often intersect with environmental and social challenges. Outsourcing, though useful for reducing operational costs, can negatively impact local communities and employees if not approached ethically. Issues such as job displacement, community disengagement, and social unrest may arise if stakeholder interests are overlooked (Udom, 2023). Stakeholder Theory urges companies to align outsourcing decisions with inclusive practices—such as fair labor standards and local workforce development—to maintain trust, reduce tensions, and support sustainable development (Nwoye & Ukandu, 2023).

#### Conceptual Review

##### Procurement Outsourcing

Procurement outsourcing involves entrusting the sourcing and purchasing of goods, services, and materials to an external provider—typically a specialized procurement service provider (PSP)—who manages key procurement functions such as supplier selection, contract negotiation, inventory control, and logistics. This strategic approach allows organizations to concentrate on their core operations while benefiting from reduced costs, enhanced procurement efficiency, and access to specialized expertise and technologies (Kunz et al., 2022). As global supply chains grow increasingly complex and competitive, procurement outsourcing has become a vital tool for improving procurement cycle times, securing better quality goods and services, and optimizing sourcing strategies. Organizations often pursue this strategy to achieve significant cost savings by leveraging the provider's industry knowledge, supplier networks, and negotiation power. Additionally, external providers bring in-depth understanding of global markets and best practices in supply chain management, enabling firms to make more informed procurement decisions, improve supplier relationships, and strengthen their competitive position (Meyer & Kizielewicz, 2022; Harrison et al., 2022).

##### Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the capacity of systems biological, social, or economic to endure and maintain balance over time without exhausting the resources they rely on. It encompasses practices that meet present needs while safeguarding environmental, social, and financial resources to ensure the well-being of future generations. As global challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, inequality, and economic instability intensify, sustainability has gained prominence as a multidimensional concept grounded in three interrelated pillars: environmental, social, and economic sustainability (Jones et al., 2023). These pillars highlight the need for integrated

development strategies that advance environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic growth. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, provide a global roadmap for achieving sustainable development by 2030 (UN, 2022). In the business context, sustainability involves embedding these principles into strategic planning, operations, and decision-making, with the aim of fostering long-term profitability and resilience while minimizing negative impacts. Companies are increasingly pursuing sustainable practices such as reducing waste, enhancing resource efficiency, adopting renewable energy, and promoting ethical supply chains. Additionally, sustainability reporting has become vital for promoting transparency and accountability to stakeholders (Jones et al., 2023).

## **Measures of Sustainability**

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental sustainability refers to the responsible management and conservation of natural resources to ensure that ecosystems continue to provide essential services for future generations. It emphasizes reducing environmental degradation through efforts such as pollution control, biodiversity preservation, and climate change mitigation, aiming to balance human development with the planet's ecological capacity. As global population growth and intensified human activity contribute to deforestation, pollution, overfishing, and global warming, environmental sustainability has gained urgency. It calls for integrating sustainable practices into business operations, policies, and everyday life to safeguard vital systems like soil, air, water, and biodiversity while ensuring human well-being (Jones & Kumar, 2023). Central to this approach is the conservation of natural resources—using energy, water, and raw materials efficiently to meet present needs without compromising future generations. This includes promoting renewable resources and improving efficiency through sustainable consumption, green technologies, and a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydro power, which help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and curb climate change (Sharma et al., 2022; Lee & Zhang, 2023).

### **Economic Sustainability**

Economic sustainability refers to the capacity of an economy to maintain a consistent level of output over time without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It emphasizes the efficient use of resources, the long-term stability of economic institutions, and a balanced integration of environmental protection, social equity, and economic growth. By drawing on concepts from economics, environmental science, and social justice, economic sustainability ensures that today's economic practices do not deplete natural resources, degrade ecosystems, or deepen social inequalities. In an era marked by climate change, resource scarcity, and widening income gaps, economies must adopt resilient and adaptive growth strategies that promote long-term prosperity while preserving critical assets. This includes reducing waste, using raw materials and energy efficiently, and minimizing harmful externalities through sustainable practices like energy-efficient technologies and environmentally friendly agriculture (Adams & Fathi, 2023). Sustainable economic growth also hinges on innovation, technological advancement, and productivity improvements that enable ongoing development without exhausting essential resources, ultimately fostering a steady trajectory of inclusive and balanced progress (Bhandari & Singh, 2023)

### **Social Sustainability**

Social sustainability refers to a society's ability to support the long-term well-being, equity, and cohesion of its members by ensuring access to basic needs, fostering inclusivity, and promoting social justice. Unlike environmental and economic sustainability, which focus on resource management and growth, social sustainability centers on building resilient, inclusive communities through equal access to education, healthcare, employment, and political participation. It emphasizes social equity—where individuals, regardless of background, enjoy equal opportunities—and supports policies that promote community engagement, cultural preservation, and human development. Strong social capital, community involvement, and access to essential services are vital for enhancing social cohesion, reducing inequality, and empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to a sustainable society (Hahn et al., 2023; Wang & Zuo, 2022; Rahman et al., 2023; Bolanle et al., 2023).

### **Empirical Review**

Research by Barney, and Clark, (2007) examined the relationship between procurement outsourcing, sustainability and satisfaction of employees in a Pharmaceutical Industry in Pakistan. The result showed a positive relationship between procurement, sustainability, and satisfaction. A similar study was conducted by Brousseau, and Glachant, (2019) on process efficiency, job satisfaction and sustainability among three private airlines employee, where the respondent's identified supervision, process efficiency, nature of the job and promotion opportunities to be moderately related to job satisfaction.

Chuchin, & Castro, (2021) conducted a study on risk management disparity and risk management satisfaction in public and private universities in Pakistan. The study employed the survey research design, and the sample size used in the study was 200 academic staff consisting of 50 respondents randomly selected from each of the two public and two private universities in Pakistan selected for the study. The results showed disparity in risk management between public and private sector academic staff, with the private universities handling risk management better than the public universities. Smith, et al. (2022) examined the relationship between cost savings and energy consumption programs on management staff and job satisfaction of UNILIVER. The result showed a significant relationship between cost savings and job satisfaction ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) this was supporting the hypothesis that benefits are significant in explaining procurement outsourcing and job satisfaction.

Teece, (2007) studied the impact of procurement, sustainability and leadership styles on job satisfaction from higher educational institutions in Pakistan. The study showed that procurement has a significant influence on job satisfaction, but leadership styles had less influence and had partially significant relationship with job satisfaction of educationist in Pakistan. Similarly, procurement outsourcing system and employee satisfaction was investigated by Wang, & Luo, (2022) for small and medium enterprises in Taiwan; the findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between procurement outsourcing and employees' job satisfaction. A similar study by Adger, et al. (2021) on factors influencing employee job satisfaction: A study in cement industry of Chhattisgarh, India revealed those three variables that were environmental (work conditions), organizational (salary) and behavioral (promotion) have positive significant impacts on job satisfaction. Furthermore, organizational factors which are leadership styles and 360-degree

feedback were found to be the most important aspects for job satisfaction of the employees in the company.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was a correlational study as it focused on assessing the relationship between procurement outsourcing and sustainability of indigenous Oil and Gas Companies in South/South Nigeria. Hence, The cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. The population of this study consisted of the thirty-three (33) registered and functional indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South, Nigeria. In this study the researcher adopts a census technique to study all the 33 indigenous oil and gas companies in South/South, Nigeria because the population is small. However, five (5) managers in each of the indigenous oil and gas companies were selected as the sample element. The study utilized a well-structured questionnaire, designed in Likert five-point and its reliability was ascertained through Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient with a threshold of 0.70. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the dimensions of the predictor variable and the measures of the criterion variables as well as to test the hypotheses which was stated in the null form with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

A total of 165 copies of the questionnaires were administered to respondents. 153 questionnaire representing 92.7 percent were returned. 11 questionnaire representing 5.4 percent were returned but not suitable for data analysis. 142 questionnaire representing 86.0 percent were correctly filled and thus suitable for data analysis.

#### **Bivariate Data Analysis**

The study relationships were evaluated using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The study employs a 95% confidence level, or alpha of 0.05. Criteria: The following formula of decision rule is applied to any bivariate test results: if the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected since the set variables have a significant association. Since there is no significant relationship between the variables, the null hypothesis is not rejected if the p-value is  $\geq 0.05$ .

#### **Procurement Outsourcing and measures of Sustainability**

Table 1 shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for Procurement Outsourcing and measures of Sustainability. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes us able to answer our research question and generalize our findings to the study population.

Table 1: Correlation matrix for Procurement Outsourcing and Sustainability Measures

			Procurement Outsourcing	Environmental Sustainability	Economic Sustainability	Social Sustainability
Spearman's rho	Procurement Outsourcing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.860**	.875**	.615**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	142	142	142	142
	Environmental Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.860**	1.000	.814**	.818**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	142	142	142	142
	Economic Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.875**	.814**	1.000	.789**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	142	142	142	142
	Social Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.615**	.818**	.789**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	142	142	142	142

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between procurement outsourcing and organisational sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria?

To address Research Question 1, which examines the relationship between procurement outsourcing and organisational sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South Nigeria, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation results presented in Table 2 were analyzed. The findings indicate a very strong positive correlation between procurement outsourcing and environmental sustainability ( $\rho = 0.860$ ), suggesting that as procurement outsourcing increases, so does environmental sustainability. Similarly, the result shows a very strong positive correlation between procurement outsourcing and economic sustainability ( $\rho = 0.875$ ), indicating that higher levels of procurement outsourcing are associated with improved economic sustainability. In the same vein, a strong positive correlation was also observed between procurement outsourcing and social sustainability ( $\rho = 0.615$ ), implying that the adoption of procurement outsourcing contributes significantly to the enhancement of social sustainability in the firms studied.

In testing the corresponding hypotheses, the p-values associated with each relationship were examined to determine statistical significance. For environmental sustainability (Ho1), economic sustainability (Ho2) and social sustainability (Ho3), the p-values were all less than the 0.05 significance threshold ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), thereby justifying the rejection of the null hypotheses in each case. These results confirm that there is a statistically significant relationship between procurement outsourcing and all three measures of organisational sustainability environmental,

economic, and social among indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South Nigeria. Hence, procurement outsourcing plays a pivotal role in promoting sustainable organizational practices within the sector.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### **Procurement Outsourcing and Sustainability of Indigenous Oil and Gas Companies in South-South, Nigeria**

The findings of the study indicate a significant positive relationship between procurement outsourcing and the sustainability of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South Nigeria. This supports the view that procurement outsourcing serves as a strategic approach to enhance organizational sustainability, aligning with perspectives from Davenport and Harris (2007) who emphasized the use of artificial intelligence and big data analytics in decision-making. Integrating technologies such as machine learning and natural language processing enables organizations to extract meaningful insights from HR and operational data, contributing to targeted interventions and workforce optimization (Kitchin, 2014; Cascio & Boudreau, 2016). Moreover, the application of descriptive HR analytics, particularly in recruitment, enhances the efficiency of hiring processes and supports evidence-based outsourcing decisions (Davenport, 2018; Marler & Boudreau, 2017). Despite challenges related to data quality, privacy, and the need for skilled personnel (Rasmussen & Ulrich, 2015), the benefits of procurement outsourcing in terms of enhancing productivity and employee experience remain substantial. As such, advancing HR analytics and procurement technologies is becoming vital to sustaining competitive advantage in the oil and gas sector.

Further empirical evidence reinforces the critical role of procurement outsourcing in promoting organizational sustainability among indigenous oil and gas firms in South-South Nigeria. Unwene and Orga (2024) found that local content policy and procurement of local materials significantly contribute to operational safety and cost control. Wilson-Oshilim et al. (2025) revealed that while supplier appraisal and management commitment were positively associated with performance, overly rigid procurement procedures could negatively affect corporate outcomes. Ogbu et al. (2023) proposed a procurement framework incorporating green and circular economy principles, underscoring procurement's environmental impact. Ogbuke (2024) emphasized that technological enhancements in procurement outsourcing correlate with improved organizational performance, especially for indigenous firms. Nkpolu-Oroworukwo et al. (2024) linked optimized value-chain processes—including procurement outsourcing—to competitive advantage. Meanwhile, Olujobi et al. (2024) highlighted financing and expertise deficits as barriers to sustainability, suggesting outsourcing as a strategic workaround.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the study affirms that procurement outsourcing serves as a pivotal driver of sustainability for indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South Nigeria. It significantly influences environmental, economic, and social sustainability dimensions, offering more than just cost reduction it functions as a strategic tool for innovation, operational efficiency, and alignment with local content objectives. The strong correlations observed highlight its role in enhancing resilience, bridging capability gaps and enabling long-term value creation. Procurement outsourcing should therefore be regarded as an essential component of broader sustainability and competitiveness strategies within the indigenous oil and gas sector. Based on the findings, the following three recommendations are made:

1. Indigenous oil and gas companies should prioritize green procurement by outsourcing to suppliers that adhere to environmentally friendly standards, such as eco-certified materials, low-carbon logistics, and waste-reduction practices. This will help reduce environmental footprints and align procurement functions with global sustainability goals, including life-cycle analysis and circular economy principles.
2. Firms should strategically outsource procurement to partners with strong technological capabilities and cost-management expertise to optimize procurement efficiency, reduce transaction costs, and improve operational performance. Leveraging data analytics and performance tracking in outsourced procurement can drive better financial decision-making and long-term profitability.
3. Companies should embed local content policies in procurement outsourcing agreements to ensure the inclusion of indigenous suppliers, promote job creation, and foster equitable economic participation. This supports social equity, strengthens community relationships, and contributes to inclusive growth within host regions.

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