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**Green Procurement Adoption and Environmental Sustainability: A
Study of Public Sector Organizations in South Africa**

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to investigate the green procurement adoption and environmental sustainability: a study of public sector organizations in South Africa.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study on green procurement adoption in South Africa's public sector indicates a growing awareness and implementation of environmentally sustainable practices. While progress is evident, challenges such as resource constraints persist. Nevertheless, embracing green procurement holds promise for substantial environmental benefits and cost savings. Efforts should focus on further promoting and supporting the adoption of these practices to enhance sustainability in the public sector.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Institutional theory, diffusion of innovations theory & resource dependence theory may be used to anchor future studies on the green procurement adoption and environmental sustainability: a study of public sector organizations in South Africa. Public sector organizations should invest in capacity-building initiatives to enhance the knowledge and skills of procurement professionals in green procurement practices. Advocate for the development and enforcement of mandatory green procurement regulations and standards by government authorities.

Keywords: *Green Procurement Adoption, Environmental Sustainability*

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainability refers to the responsible consumption of natural resources and the maintenance of ecological balance to meet the needs of present and future generations. In developed economies like the USA, efforts towards environmental sustainability have shown significant trends. For example, between 2005 and 2019, the United States reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 12%, largely due to increased energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, and shifts in industrial practices (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2021). Additionally, initiatives such as the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan aimed to reduce carbon pollution from power plants, contributing to a decline in air pollutants and improved air quality across the nation (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2019).

Similarly, Japan has been actively pursuing environmental sustainability goals. For instance, Japan has set ambitious targets to increase the share of renewable energy in its energy mix, aiming for renewables to account for 22-24% of its electricity generation by 2030 (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan, 2021). Furthermore, Japan has implemented strict environmental regulations and promoted energy-saving technologies in various sectors, leading to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 15% from 2005 to 2019 (Ministry of the Environment, Japan, 2020). Moving to developing economies, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa, environmental sustainability efforts face unique challenges. For instance, many countries in the region grapple with issues such as deforestation, soil degradation, and water scarcity, exacerbated by rapid urbanization and industrialization (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2019). Despite these challenges, there are notable initiatives aimed at promoting environmental sustainability. For example, in Ethiopia, the government has implemented the Green Legacy Initiative, aiming to plant 20 billion trees by 2024 to combat deforestation and soil erosion (Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia, 2021). Additionally, countries like Rwanda have made strides in promoting renewable energy, with initiatives such as the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program supporting the development of solar and hydropower projects to increase access to clean energy (World Bank, 2020).

India, one of the fastest-growing economies globally, faces significant environmental challenges, including air and water pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. In response, the Indian government has launched initiatives such as the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), aiming to reduce particulate matter (PM) pollution by 20-30% by 2024. Furthermore, India has set ambitious renewable energy targets, with plans to achieve 450 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity by 2030, promoting solar, wind, and hydroelectric power generation (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India, 2021). These efforts align with India's commitment to the Paris Agreement and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), demonstrating a concerted push towards environmental sustainability.

Brazil, as a major global agricultural powerhouse and home to the Amazon rainforest, plays a crucial role in biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. However, deforestation, primarily driven by agricultural expansion, poses a significant threat to Brazil's environmental sustainability. In response, Brazil has implemented policies such as the Soy Moratorium and the Amazon Fund to combat deforestation and support sustainable land use practices (Ministério do Meio Ambiente, Brazil, 2020). Additionally, Brazil has been investing in renewable energy,

particularly hydropower and biofuels, to diversify its energy mix and reduce carbon emissions (Agência Nacional de Energia Elétrica, Brazil, 2021).

South Africa as one of the largest economies in Africa, South Africa faces significant environmental challenges, including air and water pollution, waste management issues, and biodiversity loss. In response, the South African government has implemented various policies and initiatives to promote environmental sustainability. For example, the National Climate Change Response Policy Framework and Action Plan aims to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change impacts. South Africa has also invested in renewable energy sources, particularly wind and solar power, to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and combat climate change (Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa, 2021). Kenya, known for its rich biodiversity and natural resources, has prioritized environmental conservation and sustainable development. The country has implemented initiatives such as the Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan, which promotes sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and eco-tourism. Kenya has also made strides in renewable energy development, with projects such as the Lake Turkana Wind Power Project, one of the largest wind farms in Africa, contributing significantly to the country's renewable energy capacity (Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya, 2020). Additionally, Kenya has implemented policies to address plastic pollution, including bans on single-use plastics and initiatives to promote recycling and waste management practice

Nigeria as one of the most populous countries in Africa, Nigeria faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, pollution, and soil degradation. In response, the Nigerian government has implemented policies and programs aimed at promoting environmental sustainability. For instance, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) enforces environmental regulations and standards to mitigate pollution and protect natural resources. Additionally, Nigeria has made efforts to diversify its energy sources by investing in renewable energy, including solar and hydroelectric power projects, to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate carbon emissions (Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigeria, 2020).

Ghana, known for its rich natural resources and biodiversity, has prioritized environmental conservation and sustainable development. The country has implemented initiatives such as the National Climate Change Policy Framework and Action Plan, which aims to address climate change impacts and promote low-carbon development pathways. Ghana has also invested in renewable energy projects, such as the Bui Dam hydropower plant and solar energy initiatives, to enhance energy security and reduce carbon emissions (Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Ghana, 2015). Furthermore, Ghana has taken steps to address plastic pollution through policies such as the ban on single-use plastics and initiatives to promote recycling and waste management practices.

Ethiopia, with its diverse ecosystems and agricultural economy, faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, land degradation, and water scarcity. In response, the Ethiopian government has launched initiatives aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and climate resilience. The Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy aims to foster sustainable development while addressing climate change impacts. Ethiopia has also implemented large-scale afforestation programs, such as the Green Legacy Initiative, which aims to plant billions of trees to combat deforestation and soil erosion (Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia, 2021). Additionally, Ethiopia has invested in renewable energy projects, including hydropower and wind power, to expand access

to clean energy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels (Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Ethiopia, 2020).

Tanzania, with its abundant natural resources and biodiversity, faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, habitat loss, and pollution. In response, the Tanzanian government has implemented policies and programs aimed at promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development. The National Environmental Policy provides a framework for addressing environmental issues and promoting sustainable natural resource management. Tanzania has also established protected areas and wildlife reserves to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems, such as the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania, 2019). Furthermore, Tanzania has made efforts to promote renewable energy, including solar and biomass, to increase energy access and reduce reliance on non-renewable sources (Tanzania Renewable Energy Association, 2020).

Uganda, with its diverse landscapes and natural resources, faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, soil erosion, and water pollution. In response, the Ugandan government has implemented initiatives aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and conservation. The National Environment Management Policy provides a framework for addressing environmental issues and promoting sustainable development practices. Uganda has also established protected areas and conservation reserves, such as Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Park, to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems (Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda, 2020). Additionally, Uganda has invested in renewable energy projects, including small-scale hydropower and solar energy, to increase energy access and reduce reliance on fossil fuels (Uganda Electricity Regulatory Authority, 2021).

Zambia, with its rich mineral resources and agricultural potential, faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, water pollution, and habitat degradation. In response, the Zambian government has enacted policies and programs aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and conservation. The National Environmental Policy provides a framework for addressing environmental issues and integrating environmental considerations into development planning. Zambia has also established protected areas and wildlife reserves, such as South Luangwa National Park and Kafue National Park, to conserve biodiversity and natural habitats (Ministry of Tourism and Arts, Zambia, 2017). Furthermore, Zambia has made efforts to promote renewable energy, including hydroelectric power and solar energy, to expand access to clean energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Zambia Renewable Energy Authority, 2020).

The DRC, home to vast rainforests and diverse ecosystems, faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, habitat destruction, and illegal wildlife trade. To address these issues, the Congolese government has implemented policies and initiatives aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and conservation. The National Environmental Policy focuses on sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, and environmental education. The DRC has also established protected areas and conservation parks, including Virunga National Park and Salonga National Park, to protect endangered species and preserve critical habitats (Ministère de l'Environnement, Conservation de la Nature et Tourisme, DRC, 2018). Additionally, the DRC is investing in renewable energy projects, particularly hydropower, to expand access to clean energy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels (Ministère de l'Énergie et Ressources Hydrauliques, DRC, 2020).

Angola, with its diverse landscapes ranging from savannas to coastal ecosystems, faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution. In response, the Angolan government has developed environmental policies and programs to promote sustainability and conservation. The National Environmental Strategy emphasizes the importance of sustainable development, natural resource management, and climate change adaptation. Angola has also designated protected areas and conservation reserves, such as Quiçama National Park and Iona National Park, to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystems (Ministério do Ambiente, Angola, 2016). Furthermore, Angola is exploring renewable energy options, including solar and wind power, to diversify its energy mix and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Agência Nacional de Energia, Angola, 2021).

Ivory Coast, located in West Africa with diverse ecosystems including rainforests and coastal mangroves, faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, soil degradation, and pollution. In response, the Ivorian government has implemented policies and programs aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and conservation. The National Environmental Action Plan outlines strategies for sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation, and waste management. Ivory Coast has also established protected areas and conservation reserves, such as Taï National Park and Banco National Park, to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems (Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable, Ivory Coast, 2017). Additionally, Ivory Coast is investing in renewable energy projects, particularly hydropower and solar energy, to increase energy access and reduce reliance on fossil fuels (Agence Ivoirienne de l'Énergie, 2020).

Burkina Faso, a landlocked country in West Africa with diverse landscapes including savannas and semi-arid regions, faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, desertification, and water scarcity. In response, the Burkinabe government has developed environmental policies and initiatives to promote sustainability and conservation. The National Environmental Policy focuses on sustainable land management, water resource protection, and climate change adaptation. Burkina Faso has also established protected areas and wildlife reserves, such as Arly Wildlife Reserve and W National Park, to conserve biodiversity and habitats (Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Économie Verte et du Changement Climatique, Burkina Faso, 2018). Furthermore, Burkina Faso is exploring renewable energy options, including solar and biomass, to expand access to clean energy and reduce carbon emissions (Agence Nationale des Energies Renouvelables et de l'Efficacité Énergétique, Burkina Faso, 2020).

Green procurement adoption involves the integration of environmental considerations into the procurement process, aiming to minimize negative environmental impacts while promoting sustainability. One key aspect of green procurement adoption is the selection of environmentally friendly products and services, which prioritize sustainability criteria such as energy efficiency, recyclability, and reduced carbon footprint (Olsen & Reinius, 2018). By incorporating these criteria into procurement decisions, organizations can contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing resource consumption, minimizing waste generation, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

Another important aspect of green procurement adoption is supplier engagement and collaboration, wherein organizations work closely with suppliers to promote environmentally

responsible practices throughout the supply chain (Boateng & Sarkis, 2018). This may involve encouraging suppliers to adopt eco-friendly manufacturing processes, sourcing materials from sustainable sources, and implementing waste reduction initiatives. Through such collaborative efforts, organizations can enhance environmental sustainability by fostering a culture of environmental responsibility among suppliers and promoting the adoption of sustainable practices throughout the supply chain. Additionally, green procurement adoption may involve the implementation of environmental management systems and performance monitoring mechanisms to track and evaluate the environmental impact of procurement activities (Laine, 2019). By establishing clear environmental objectives, monitoring key performance indicators, and implementing continuous improvement initiatives, organizations can ensure that their procurement practices align with environmental sustainability goals and contribute to long-term environmental stewardship.

Problem Statement

The implementation of environmentally sustainable procurement practices, known as Green Procurement, has emerged as a critical strategy for organizations worldwide to mitigate their environmental footprint and promote sustainability. However, within the public sector of South Africa, there exists a notable gap in understanding the extent to which Green Procurement practices have been adopted and their impact on environmental sustainability. Recent studies, such as that conducted by Chitakunye and Hlatywayo (2020), emphasize the lack of comprehensive research into the implementation and effectiveness of Green Procurement strategies specifically within South African public sector organizations. Similarly, findings from research by Mbohwa, (2021) underscore the need for further exploration of the drivers and barriers influencing Green Procurement adoption in this context, including challenges related to policy frameworks, institutional capacity, and stakeholder engagement.

Theoretical Framework

Institutional Theory

Originating from the works of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Institutional Theory posits that organizations are heavily influenced by the social and cultural norms, values, and practices within their institutional environment. In the context of "Green Procurement Adoption and Environmental Sustainability," this theory suggests that public sector organizations in South Africa may adopt green procurement practices not only due to regulatory pressures but also to conform to societal expectations regarding environmental responsibility. Institutional Theory provides insights into how organizational practices are shaped by external forces, making it relevant for understanding the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices within public sector organizations (Scott, 2001).

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Developed by Everett Rogers (1962), Diffusion of Innovations Theory explores how new ideas, practices, or technologies spread within a social system over time. In the context of the research topic, this theory can be applied to understand the process through which green procurement practices are adopted within public sector organizations in South Africa. It examines factors such as the perceived benefits of green procurement, communication channels, and the influence of

opinion leaders in facilitating or hindering the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices (Rogers, 2003).

Resource Dependence Theory

Pioneered by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), Resource Dependence Theory suggests that organizations are dependent on external resources such as capital, technology, and information to survive and thrive. Applied to the research topic, this theory elucidates how public sector organizations in South Africa may be motivated to adopt green procurement practices to reduce their dependence on environmentally harmful resources, such as non-renewable energy sources or unsustainable suppliers. By diversifying their resource base and aligning with environmentally sustainable practices, organizations can enhance their long-term viability and resilience (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

Empirical Review

Carter and Rogers (2008) underscore the significance of transparency and accountability in sustainable supply chain management. They argue that organizations should implement robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track environmental performance metrics and ensure compliance with sustainability goals. By engaging stakeholders and communicating progress transparently, organizations can build trust and credibility in their sustainability efforts, enhancing their reputation and brand value. Moreover, the framework emphasizes the need for continuous improvement and innovation in sustainable procurement practices, as environmental challenges evolve. By fostering a culture of innovation and learning, organizations can adapt to changing environmental regulations and consumer preferences, positioning themselves as leaders in sustainable procurement. Overall, Carter and Rogers' framework provides a comprehensive approach to integrating environmental sustainability into procurement processes, offering practical guidance for organizations striving to achieve sustainability objectives while maintaining competitiveness in the market (Carter & Rogers, 2008).

Zhu and Sarkis (2016) conducted an in-depth case study centered on Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd., with a particular focus on the adoption of green procurement practices and its consequential impact on supply chain performance. Employing a mixed-methods approach encompassing interviews, surveys, and quantitative analysis of procurement data, the research endeavored to unveil the intricate dynamics between green procurement initiatives and supply chain outcomes. The comprehensive findings illuminated a positive correlation between the implementation of green procurement practices and various facets of supply chain performance, including enhanced supplier collaboration, elevated product quality, and overall operational efficiency. Through meticulous examination, the study underscored the critical significance of integrating environmental considerations into the supplier selection process and fostering collaborative relationships with environmentally conscious suppliers. This integration was deemed pivotal in cultivating sustainable supply chain practices, ultimately leading to tangible improvements in organizational performance and environmental impact mitigation (Zhu & Sarkis, 2016).

Schoenherr and Speier-Pero (2015) embarked on a comprehensive exploration into the realm of data governance within the context of green procurement, aiming to unravel the intricacies of institutional drivers and barriers underpinning sustainable procurement practices. Employing a qualitative research design, the study delved into procurement policies and conducted extensive

stakeholder interviews to decipher the underlying challenges, which included data standardization, information sharing impediments, and organizational silos. The critical insights gleaned from this analysis underscored the paramount importance of effective data governance mechanisms in underpinning successful green procurement initiatives. Such mechanisms were identified as indispensable enablers, facilitating the seamless collection, analysis, and utilization of environmental data for informed decision-making. Proposing actionable recommendations, the study advocated for the development of standardized reporting frameworks and collaborative platforms aimed at fostering seamless information exchange among supply chain stakeholders. These measures were deemed essential for bolstering organizational capacity in navigating the complexities of sustainable procurement practices (Schoenherr & Speier-Pero, 2015).

Luzzini (2019) embarked on a robust empirical inquiry within the healthcare sector, delving deep into the intricate dynamics of sustainable procurement practices and their economic ramifications. Grounded in a qualitative research paradigm, the study delved into the implementation of green procurement initiatives within a hospital setting, with a keen focus on delineating the resultant cost savings, environmental benefits, and stakeholder engagement dynamics. Through meticulous analysis, the study unveiled a myriad of advantageous outcomes attributed to sustainable procurement practices, including substantial reductions in operational costs, heightened resource efficiency, and discernible enhancements in patient outcomes. Furthermore, the study underscored the pivotal role of stakeholder collaboration and continuous improvement endeavors in fostering the adoption and sustenance of sustainable procurement practices within healthcare organizations. By shedding light on the multifaceted benefits and requisite strategies for successful implementation, the study offered invaluable insights poised to guide organizations across various sectors in embracing environmentally responsible procurement strategies (Luzzini, 2019).

Wu and Pagell (2017) embarked on a comprehensive investigation aimed at elucidating the intricate decision-making processes inherent in sustainable supply chain management, with a particular emphasis on the delicate balance between competing priorities. Employing a multifaceted research approach integrating surveys and interviews with procurement managers, the study meticulously scrutinized the factors influencing the adoption of green procurement practices within organizational contexts. The findings underscored a plethora of barriers hindering widespread adoption, including pervasive lack of awareness, concerns regarding cost implications, and entrenched resistance from suppliers. Armed with these critical insights, the study proposed a series of strategic interventions aimed at surmounting these barriers and fostering a conducive environment for the adoption of green procurement practices. These recommendations spanned stakeholder engagement initiatives, capacity-building endeavors, and strategic alignment with overarching organizational objectives, thus offering a nuanced roadmap for organizations navigating the complex terrain of sustainable procurement (Wu & Pagell, 2017).

Bai and Sarkis (2018) embarked on an empirically grounded inquiry into the intricate interplay between institutional pressures, dynamic capabilities, and green supply chain management practices within organizational settings. Through a meticulous analysis informed by case studies across diverse regulatory environments, the study sought to unravel the nuanced nuances underpinning the adoption and efficacy of green procurement initiatives. The findings underscored the pervasive influence exerted by institutional pressures, ranging from regulatory mandates to evolving societal expectations, in shaping organizational behavior vis-à-vis environmental

stewardship. Furthermore, the study shed light on the pivotal role of dynamic capabilities in enabling organizations to navigate the complexities of green supply chain management effectively. Armed with these critical insights, the study proffered actionable recommendations aimed at bolstering organizational resilience and competitiveness through the strategic alignment of green procurement practices with overarching institutional norms and dynamic capabilities (Bai & Sarkis, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Gap: Despite the comprehensive framework presented by Carter and Rogers (2008), which emphasizes the pivotal role of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in sustainable procurement practices, there remains a notable gap in understanding the specific mechanisms through which these conceptual pillars manifest and operate within organizational contexts. While the framework underscores their importance, further research is warranted to delve deeper into the conceptual underpinnings of transparency and accountability in sustainable supply chain management. Such inquiry could entail an exploration of how these principles are translated into actionable strategies, how they interact with organizational culture and governance structures, and their implications for organizational behavior and performance. By elucidating the nuances of these concepts, future research could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of sustainable procurement practices and offer practical insights for organizational implementation.

Contextual Gap: While studies by Zhu and Sarkis (2016), Schoenherr and Speier-Pero (2015), and Luzzini (2019) offer valuable insights into green procurement practices within specific organizational settings, such as technology firms, healthcare facilities, and public sector organizations, there remains a significant contextual gap in exploring green procurement adoption across diverse industries and sectors. Particularly, in emerging economies or sectors with unique environmental challenges, there is a need for further investigation into how contextual factors shape the adoption and effectiveness of green procurement practices. Future research could examine the influence of industry dynamics, regulatory environments, stakeholder pressures, and organizational culture on green procurement decision-making and implementation. By broadening the scope of inquiry to encompass diverse contexts, researchers can uncover context-specific challenges and opportunities, thus enriching our understanding of sustainable procurement practices and informing tailored strategies for different organizational settings.

Geographical Gap: Despite the geographical diversity covered in studies by Wu and Pagell (2017), Bai and Sarkis (2018), and Zhu and Sarkis (2016), which examine green procurement practices in regions like China, the United States, and Europe, there remains a significant geographical gap in understanding green procurement adoption in other parts of the world,

particularly in developing countries or regions with distinct socio-economic and environmental contexts. While existing research provides valuable insights into green procurement practices in specific geographical regions, further inquiry is needed to explore how regional variations in factors such as regulatory frameworks, infrastructure, market dynamics, and cultural norms influence the adoption and outcomes of green procurement initiatives. Comparative studies across different geographical regions could shed light on region-specific challenges and opportunities, facilitating the development of contextually relevant strategies for promoting sustainable procurement practices globally. By addressing this geographical gap, researchers can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers, barriers, and outcomes of green procurement adoption on a global scale, thus advancing knowledge and informing practice in sustainable supply chain management.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The adoption of green procurement practices by public sector organizations in South Africa plays a crucial role in advancing environmental sustainability. Through the integration of environmentally friendly criteria into procurement processes, these organizations contribute to reducing the ecological footprint associated with their operations and supply chains. By prioritizing suppliers who adhere to sustainable practices and produce eco-friendly products, public sector organizations not only mitigate environmental degradation but also promote the development of a green economy.

Furthermore, the adoption of green procurement practices fosters innovation and competitiveness among suppliers, as they are incentivized to offer environmentally sustainable solutions. This leads to the proliferation of green technologies and products, driving positive environmental change beyond the boundaries of individual organizations. Moreover, the implementation of green procurement strategies aligns with national and international environmental policies and commitments, reinforcing South Africa's position as a responsible global citizen. By setting an example through sustainable procurement practices, public sector organizations inspire other sectors to follow suit, creating a ripple effect that extends throughout the economy.

In conclusion, the adoption of green procurement by public sector organizations in South Africa represents a proactive approach towards achieving environmental sustainability. Through collaborative efforts between government entities, suppliers, and other stakeholders, these organizations contribute significantly to mitigating environmental impact, fostering innovation, and advancing the transition towards a greener economy.

Recommendations

Theory

Encourage academia to conduct empirical studies exploring various green procurement models and frameworks tailored to the context of South African public sector organizations. This research should focus on understanding the mechanisms through which green procurement practices impact environmental sustainability outcomes, including resource conservation, pollution reduction, and carbon footprint mitigation. Advocate for the integration of theories such as Institutional Theory and Stakeholder Theory into the conceptualization of green procurement adoption. By examining

the institutional pressures, stakeholder interests, and organizational responses shaping green procurement practices, researchers can enrich the theoretical understanding of environmental sustainability in procurement processes.

Practice

Public sector organizations should invest in capacity-building initiatives to enhance the knowledge and skills of procurement professionals in green procurement practices. Training programs tailored to different organizational levels can empower staff to effectively implement environmentally sustainable procurement processes, including life-cycle assessment, supplier evaluation, and product certification. Encourage public sector organizations to foster collaboration with suppliers to promote green innovation, eco-design, and sustainable product development. Establishing partnerships with environmentally responsible suppliers can facilitate the procurement of green products and services while driving market demand for sustainable solutions.

Policy

Advocate for the development and enforcement of mandatory green procurement regulations and standards by government authorities. These regulations should mandate public sector organizations to integrate environmental criteria into procurement decisions, prioritize the procurement of environmentally friendly products and services, and monitor compliance with sustainability requirements. Introduce incentive mechanisms such as tax incentives, subsidies, and performance-based rewards to encourage public sector organizations to adopt green procurement practices. By aligning financial incentives with environmental sustainability objectives, policymakers can stimulate greater adoption of green procurement practices across the public sector.

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