



The Effect of Procurement Management in achieving Sustainability in Procurement in Four Seasons Hotel in Syria

Wael Alasfar, PhD Student

Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics, University of Sopron, Hungary

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement in four seasons hotel in Syria. In addition, it aims to assessing the level of awareness and understanding the concepts of procurement management and sustainable procurement in the Syrian context.

The research methodology involved the adoption of a survey as a research strategy and quantitative approach, utilized a self-administered questionnaire, to arrive at the major findings of the study. The type of research is a single cross-sectional design in which the collection of data from the respondents was carried out only once. Data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

The paper revealed that there is an effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement in four seasons hotel in Syria. It also revealed that there is a high level of awareness among the respondents about the concepts of procurement management and sustainable procurement.

As far as the researcher is aware, this paper is the first to investigate the effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement in four seasons hotel in Syria; thus its finding will be an original contribution to the field of procurement management and sustainable procurement. In addition, as there has been a shortage of research in the field of procurement management, generally in the Middle East countries, the researcher hopes that this paper will establish a foundation for further research in the region.

Keywords: Procurement, Sustainability, Procurement management, Sustainable Procurement.

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I. Introduction:

In the last decade, many business organizations have tended to adopt the concept of sustainability, and there has become a great interest in the issue of procurement management and focus on its sustainability, given that traditional procurement management covers all activities related to the flow and securing of raw materials for the organization and then to the final consumer, while sustainability in procurement seeks to take social, environmental and economic dimensions into account.

In view of the growing interest in sustainability issues from an environmental, economic and social perspective, and organizations adopting the philosophy of social responsibility of the organization and including it as one of the mechanisms for achieving the competitive advantage of the organization, the researches interested in sustainable procurement management have grown, and many organizations have tended to integrate both procurement management with sustainability to achieve cooperation between the organization and suppliers to preserve the environment and provide clean products with a limited negative impact on the environment while achieving reasonable profitability for the organization.

II. Research Problem & Question:

The problem of the study goes back to the fact that hotels in Syria are affected by many challenges, and the great damage in the tourism sector, which has been affected by political and economic factors in Syria and the region.

As most organizations operate in a work environment characterized by intensive competition, change in the needs and desires of customers and changing market conditions, Therefore the organization is required to

build strong relationships with suppliers through efficient and effective procurement management, and work to secure the best types of support to achieve the set goals.

In light of the above, the problem of research can be identified by the following main question:

To what extent does procurement management affect the sustainable procurement in four seasons hotel in Syria?

III. Literature Review

3.1 Definitions of Procurement Management

The European Union (2014) defines procurement as the act of obtaining or buying goods and services. The process includes preparation and processing of a demand as well as the end receipt and approval of payment.

Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (2013) defines procurement as buying, purchasing, renting, leasing or otherwise acquiring any goods, works or services by a procuring entity and includes all functions that pertain to the obtaining of any goods, works or services, including description of requirements, selection and invitation of tenderers, preparation and award of contracts. (CIPS, 2013, p.42)

Gadde (2017) defines procurement as the purchase of merchandise or services at the optimum possible total cost in the correct amount and quality. He further reiterated that Procurement can also be simply defined as the procedure in which goods or commodities are bought when prices are low. The process of procurement often involves; purchase planning, standards determination, specifications development, supplier research and selection, value analysis, financing, price negotiation, making the purchase, supply contract administration, inventory control and stores, disposals and other related functions. (Gadde, 2017, p.67)

AkımAteş (2018) divides procurement into three categories: (AkımAteş, 2018, p.68)

- 1- Purchases that require specialized research and development, such as newly designed military aircraft.
- 2- Purchases of complex, special purpose projects, such as dams or port facilities that do not involve advances in technology but require managerial and organizational skills.
- 3- Purchases of standard products sold in open markets, such as motor vehicles or medical supplies (off-the shelf purchase). Customized versions of products otherwise available in open markets, such as special purpose computer systems or fleets of police cars.

However, according to the Business Dictionary (2011), "Procurement" is the overarching function that describes the activities and processes through which an organization acquire goods and services. Procurement is the business management function that ensures identification, sourcing, access and management of the external resources that an organization needs or may need to fulfill its strategic objectives. (Brandon-Jones, 2015, p.446)

Procurement exists to explore supply market opportunities and to implement resourcing strategies that deliver the best possible supply outcome to the organization, its stakeholders and customers. Procurement applies the science and art of external resource and supply management through a body of knowledge interpreted by competent practitioners and professionals (Buvik, 2009, p.439).

The process of procurement is often part of an organization's operational strategy as the ability of an organization to purchase certain key resources at the right time and price, would determine their survival or otherwise in today's competitive business environment their success of performance is lean. (Gadde, 2017, p.69)

According to Miles (2015) "Procurement is a complex process that can help organizations become more efficient". This is because all their goods and services would be bought at the right quality, quantity, price and they will be delivered „just in time“, thereby reducing the need to stockpile goods and parts. Reducing the amount of goods that are stored will reduces the amount of resources used to store them. It also ensures that they are not overly transported, which means there is less risk of them being damaged and no resources are required to transport them. By buying goods that are of the right quality means that they are not too good for the role that they intended to fulfill, as such would be at the right price. But they will also note sub-standard, so there is less chance of the parts and goods causing defects. One crucial role procurement plays for organizations, is its ability to create relationships. Creating good relationships with suppliers also mean that they will be flexible and help out if a sudden increase in volume of goods is required. So, procurement really is vital and can really transform companies when it is done right. Although, procurement may not actually produce the goods that are sold, it can actually help to increase profits due to its ability to ensure that operational demands are met. (Miles, 2015, p.72)

However, it is important to note that procurement is and distinct from purchasing. The term purchasing refers to the process of ordering and receiving goods and services. It is a subset of the wider procurement process. Generally, purchasing refers to the process involved in ordering goods such as request, approval, and creation of a purchase order record and the receipting of goods. (Brandon-Jones, 2015, p.449)

Whiles procurement involves the activities involved in establishing fundamental requirements, sourcing activities such as market research, vendor evaluation and negotiation of contracts play a crucial role in successful procurement system. It can also include the purchasing activities required to order and receive goods.

Corporations and public bodies often define procurement as the processes intended to promote fair and open competition for their business while minimizing exposure to fraud and collusion, this according to Gadde (2017) is made smoother by promoting a good business relationship between the buyer and the supplier. (Gadde, 2017, p.73)

According to Ohene-Addae (2012) the process of procurement may differ from company to company, and a government institution may have a slightly different procurement process compared to a private company. The procurement procedure may differ according to the product and the uses of the product. Another important factor that is usually included in the definitions of procurement is the amount in which the product is bought. This is important because the amounts of goods bought are inversely proportional to their cost. Thus, procurement is a process that is carried out by almost every company and individual for its own personal gain or for profits, which involves buying of commodities by choosing the appropriate bidder. (Ohene-Addae, 2012, p.53)

Van Raaij (2016) refers to procurement as a roadmap of activities within the procurement function, the project procurement cycle reflects the procurement activities from the decision to purchase the material or service through to the payment of bills and closing of procurement contracts. It starts from the identification of a need and conducting market analysis through to the process of selecting the supplier, managing their performance and reviewing lessons learnt. It establishes key activities required at every stage of the procurement process while at the same time providing a benchmark for the monitoring and evaluation of the process by procurement monitors and evaluators (Van Raaij, 2016, p.23).

In most studies conducted on public procurement, the procurement process is considered to include contract administration (Handfield, 2011). Other studies such as Lynch (2012) and Gadde (2017) believes that the public procurement process ends with contract award and that anything after contract award is considered contract administration. However, for the purpose of this, the procurement cycle would encompass activities occurring within the entire procurement with it procurement system. (Handfield, 2011, p.57)

3.2 The Procurement Cycle

The procurement cycle consists of activities such as planning, sourcing, contracting, contract management, storing, distribution, disposal and evaluation.

1- Procurement Planning:

Procurement planning is the process whereby an organization decides what to buy, when and from what source. Lynch (2014) describes it as a process whereby procurement practitioners sketch out in advance an arrangement in a diagram on a plan as to what, which, when and how purchases are to be conducted in a given period. During the procurement planning process, the procurement method is assigned and the expectations for fulfillment of procurement requirements determined. Lynch (2012) opined that effective procurement planning is essential for all procuring entities in the implementation of the purchasing objectives. (Lynch, 2014, p.36)

2- Sourcing:

Sourcing is simply the process whereby an organization finds suppliers of goods and services. It's an approach to procurement whereby the business needs of the organization are matched with the supplier market, it is much more than simply centralizing procurement. The approach is founded on a detailed understanding of both the spend profile of the organization as well as of the supplier market. This understanding is continually updated in order to deliver ongoing improvements to the organizations sourcing and procurement performance. (Wallace & Xia, 2014, p.22)

3- Contracting and Contract Management:

After suppliers of goods and services have been selected, there is the need for a written legally- binding agreement between the parties identifying rights and obligations of both parties. This phase is crucial because it includes the negotiation of the terms and conditions in contracts and ensuring compliance with the terms and conditions, as well as documenting and agreeing on any changes or amendments that may arise during its implementation or execution. (Van Weele, 2010, p.18)

4- Storage, Distribution and Disposal:

Storage comes in when goods procured are not being used immediately and therefore the need to store them to ensure that no damage or loss occurs. The timely availability of goods can be very crucial to an organization's operation. Goods may require specialized storage facilities or may have very limited shelf life so the effective storage, handling and management of stock levels are important. Goods in storage need to be delivered to their final destination for usage according to the requirements of the customer or end-user. Distribution may involve complex in-country procurements with delivery to multiple regional stores facilities or end-user sites (Ohene-Addae, 2012, p.55).

5- Evaluation:

The procurement evaluation involves collecting knowledge gained throughout the procurement process and using it to ascertain whether the organizational procurement needs and expectations have been fulfilled and whether “value for money” has been achieved. The procurement evaluation step is geared towards eliciting ideas for improving and optimizing the achievement of procurement needs and stakeholder satisfaction in the outcomes of procurement projects in the future. According to Alarcón and Rivas (2009) the evaluation stage comprises the following steps: establishing the group of people to be interviewed; value stream maps, general and detailed; project surveys; review of performance indicators; analysis of nonconformity reports; cause-effect analysis regarding delays, costs, time cycles and others. This stage is crucial in ensuring the procurement process fulfill its strategic function of improving organizational productivity and profitability. (Alarcón and Rivas, 2009, p.33)

3.3 The Concept and Meaning of Sustainable Procurement

Reflecting broader concerns to achieve sustainable development, sustainable procurement has recently acquired a high degree of salience in policy circles internationally (Brammer & Walker, 2011, p.452).

Sustainable procurement builds on the traditional procurement practice which it seeks to extend through the adoption of sustainability principles. Procurement is defined as acquisition of goods, works and/or services from the supplier (this may be an individual or organization). The procurement process is viewed as involving sourcing (planning: needs identification and assessment, supplier selection) contracting, monitoring and evaluation, and expediting. (Carter & Easton, 2011, p.46).

Sustainable Procurement is a “process of acquiring goods, works and services from a supplier that provides the optimum combination of whole life costs and benefits to meet the customer’s requirements. It is a process whereby organizations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organization, but also to society and the economy, while minimizing damage to the environment. (Coggburn, 2004, p.235)

Sustainable procurement is about the process of purchasing goods and services that takes into account the social, economic and environmental impact that such purchasing has on people and communities. It is about considering what the products are made of, where they have come from, who has made them, how they are transported and how they are eventually disposed of. (Petrović, 2007, p.183)

Sustainable procurement means taking into account economic, environmental and social impacts in buying choices. This includes optimizing not only price, quality, availability but also environmental life-cycle impact and social impacts linked to product/service’s origin (Preuss, 2009, p.213).

3.4 Why is Sustainable Procurement Important?

In both private and public sectors, there is increasing pressure from customers, clients, government and the public to put sustainable procurement into practice. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development stated that relevant authorities at all levels should: “promote public procurement policies that encourage development and diffusion of environmentally sound goods and services”. In response to this, Business Operators and Professionals have been very fast to institute policies and strategies embedding sustainable development concerns; for example, the UK Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production. As a step towards implementing this strategy, the Government established the Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment. A Europe –wide study published in August 2009 found out that 80 percent of buyers initiated sustainable procurement programs in 2008, while 90 percent see them as “critical” to the survival of their business. (Brammer & Walker, 2009, p.127).

Organizations practicing sustainable procurement meet their needs for goods, services, utilities and works not on a private cost-benefit analysis, but with a view to maximizing net benefits for themselves and the wider world. In so doing they must incorporate extrinsic cost considerations into decisions alongside the conventional procurement criteria of price and quality. These considerations are typically divided thus: Environmental, Economic and Social (also known as the “triple baseline”). The important areas of environmental concerns are; more efficient use of raw materials in manufacturing operations, pollution and waste, and energy savings. (Simpson & Power, 2005, p.60)

3.5 Sustainable Procurement: Potential Benefits

A review of existing literature can reveal that if implemented effectively, sustainable procurement has the potential to cut costs, shorten timescales, enhance stakeholder relationships, increase sales, reduce risks, enhance reputation and improve margins. Kennard (2006) indicates that benefits to an organization in adopting a Sustainable Procurement Policy will be to: (Kennard, 2006, p.43)

- Control costs by adopting a wider approach to whole life costing.
- Improve internal and external standards through performance assessments.

- Comply with environmental and social legislation.
- Manage risk and reputation.
- Build a sustainable supply chain for the future.
- Involve the local business community.

A broader list of potential benefits sustainable procurement practices may have for an organization adopting such practices in its operations is availed as including: (Svensson, 2007, p.262)

- The existence of a defined procurement strategy and the value outcomes - the improved social, environmental and economic impacts.
- Compliance with national and international sustainability standards and regulations.
- To have a better understanding of risks in the supply chain.
- Contributes to the sustainable organizational strategy.
- Better commercial/economic decisions from understanding of issues that impact on the procurement decision (whole life cycle).
- Potential benefits in a long-term relationship, innovation, better materials, alternatives, technical advice, emerging technologies.
- If the objective is “grab the cash” it’s not sustainable, build a more sustainable platform and achieve savings year on year.
- Better quality of purchasing staff with more satisfying goals and improved performance
- Education of suppliers.
- Much more proactive internal dialogue and challenge with demand side.
- More effective evaluation of proposals and bids.
- More ‘sustainable’ source of supply.

IV. Research Hypothesis, Variables & Model:

In light of the research problem and its question, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

Hypothesis H1:

"There is a statistically significant effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

The present study relied on procurement management as an independent variable (X), and in achieving sustainability in procurement as a dependent variable (Y).

In light of the above, the model of the study will be as follows:

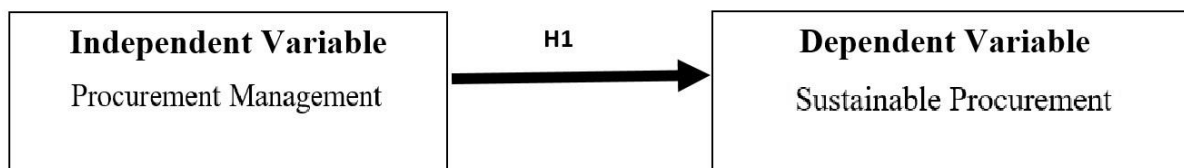


Fig 1: Research Model

V. Research Methodology:

5.1 Study Population and Sample:

The population of this study is hotels in Syria, four seasons hotel as a case study.

The volume of the sample was determined by using the form of Krejcie & Morgan as the following (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970, p.607):

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)}{\frac{p(1-p)}{N} + \frac{E^2}{SD^2}}$$

n: sample volume.

N: community volume.

P: 0.5 E: 5% SD: 1.96

Since N=93 which is the total number of the workers in four seasons hotel, so by using the above formula we find that n=75.

The questionnaire had been administrated personally, (90) questionnaires were distributed, (75) returned and analyzed with a (84%) response rate.

5.2 Instrument Validity and Reliability:

Validity: The questionnaire was reviewed by four experts from the Faculty of Economics at Damascus University, whose knowledge and experiences were sufficient in this scope and to make sure that each item is

measuring exactly what is intended to be measured. Furthermore, a pilot study was conducted on 30 respondents to test the research instrument before distributing it to the whole sample. Upon the feedback of the experts and the pilot study the questionnaire had been amended taking into consideration their suggestions, comments, and directions to achieve the validity of the instrument.

Reliability: Reliability is the extent to which a variable (or set of variables) is persistent in what is intended to measure (Hair et al., 2005). The Cronbach's Alpha value used to test the reliability of the items measuring each variable. A reliability measure coefficient reflects how well items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Accordingly, the internal consistency method was used in this study to examine the reliability of each variable. Table 1 below shows that all the values of alpha are above 0.60, which are considered to be acceptable.

Components	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Procurement Management	0.807	4
Sustainable Procurement	0.728	4
Total	0.835	8

Table 1: Summary of Reliability Analysis

5.3 Pearson Correlation:

5.3.1 for Procurement Management:

Sentences	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Our hotel purchases the required materials through tenders and quotations	.808**	.001
Our hotel offers a fair competition to the suppliers and chooses the best offers	.859**	.001
Our hotel has an independent department of Procurement Management	.881**	.001
Our hotel purchases the required materials in a timely manner to ensure the continuity of production	.882**	.001

Table 2: Pearson Correlation for Procurement Management

The Pearson Correlation value for all sentences is more than 0.5, which can be considered moderately correlated.

5.3.2 for Sustainable Procurement:

Sentences	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
The procurement management in our hotel try to minimize damage to environment & comply with legislations.	.829**	.001
The procurement management in our hotel takes into account the social & economic impact in buying choices.	.809**	.001
The procurement management in our hotel considers what the procured products are made of & how they are transported.	.781**	.001
The procurement management in our hotel considers how the procured products eventually are disposed of.	.865**	.001

Table 3: Pearson Correlation for Sustainable Procurement

The Pearson Correlation value for all sentences is more than 0.5, which can be considered moderately correlated.

5.4 Test of Normality:

Based on table 5 we find that **Sig** for all variables is more than (0.05), so all data are subject to normal distribution.

Statistics	Procurement management	Sustainable procurement
N	Valid	75
	Missing	0
Mean	3.8533	3.7289
Std. Deviation	.95741	1.08039
Skewness	-1.389	-.845
Std. Error of Skewness	.277	.277
Kurtosis	1.732	-.048
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.548	.548

Table 4: Test of Normality for the variables

5.5 Descriptive Statistics of the Data:

5.5.1 Procurement Management:

Table 5 below depicts the Mean and Standard Deviation for procurement management, the values were calculated based on the answers from the respondents.

Procurement Management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test Value = 3		
				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Our hotel purchases the required materials through tenders and quotations	75	3.8400	1.12754	6.452	74	0.000
Our hotel offers a fair competition to the suppliers and chooses the best offers	75	3.8267	1.10739	6.465	74	0.000
Our hotel has an independent department of Procurement Management	75	3.8233	1.10659	6.452	74	0.000
Our hotel purchases the required materials in a timely manner to ensure the continuity of production	75	3.899	1.10521	6.219	74	0.000
Procurement Management	75	3.8533	0.95741	7.719	74	0.000

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of the Data for Procurement Management

Based on the data collected from the respondents the mean of the data after the calculation was 3.8533, which is more than 3.4 and less than 4.2, and Sig is 0.000 less than 0.05, so the workers agree to the content of the sentences.

This means the respondents demonstrate optimal level of attitude towards procurement management. In other words, the respondents show positive attitude towards procurement management.

5.5.2 Sustainable Procurement:

Table 6 below depicts the Mean and Standard Deviation for sustainable procurement, the values were calculated based on the answers from the respondents.

Sustainable procurement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test Value = 3		
				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
The procurement management in our hotel try to minimize damage to environment & comply with legislations.	75	3.7333	1.25562	5.058	74	0.000
The procurement management in our hotel takes into account the social & economic impact in buying choices.	75	3.7733	1.36137	4.919	74	0.000
The procurement management in our hotel considers what the procured products are made of & how they are transported.	75	3.6800	1.40616	4.188	74	0.000
The procurement management in our hotel considers how the procured products eventually are disposed of.	75	3.5432	1.42154	4.195	74	0.000
Sustainable Procurement	75	3.7289	1.08039	5.843	74	0.000

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of the Data for Sustainable Procurement

Based on the data collected from the respondents the mean of the data after the calculation was 3.7289, which is more than 3.4 and less than 4.2, and Sig is 0.000 less than 0.05, so the workers agree to the content of the sentences.

This means the respondents demonstrate optimal level of attitude towards sustainable procurement. In other words, the respondents show positive attitude towards sustainable procurement.

VI. Hypotheses Tests:

Main Hypothesis H1:

"There is a statistically significant effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

Table 7 below explains the effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.453, which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between procurement management and sustainable procurement.

The square of the correlation (R Square value) is 0.205, which indicated that 20.5 % of the volatility and variability in sustainable procurement is explained by procurement management.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.453 ^a	.205	.194	.96621

Table 7: Model Summary

Table 8 below indicates that calculated F is 18.828 with Sig 0.000, which is less than 0.05, that means that there is a significant effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	17.577	1	17.577	18.828	.000 ^b
Residual	68.150	74	.934		
Total	85.727	75			

Table 8: ANOVA^b

Table 9 below shows that Beta is 0.531, meaning that any increase in procurement management will cause an increase the sustainable procurement multiplied by 0.531.

The Regression model can be formulated as the following:

$$\text{sustainable procurement} = 1.750 + 0.531 (\text{procurement management})$$

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.750	.477		3.667	.000
procurement management	.531	.122	.453	4.339	.000

Table 9: Coefficients^a

Based on the above tables, we find that:

"There is a statistically significant effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

VII. Conclusion:

The correlation analysis and regression analysis show a significant positive correlation between procurement management and Sustainable procurement, meaning that there is a statistically significant effect of procurement management in achieving sustainability in procurement at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The workers of four seasons hotel demonstrate optimal level of attitude (positive) towards procurement management and sustainability.

However, additional tests and data collections will be needed to come to a more conclusive result as to whether procurement management is an important factor in analyzing sustainable procurement.

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