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PROCUREMENT ETHICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN SUSTAINABILITY OF ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between procurement ethics and supply chain sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria. The target population comprised 1,250 procurement officers, supply chain managers, logistics heads, and inventory control managers across commercial, manufacturing, and public sector organizations operating in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 303 respondents was established. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations) for the research questions and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) at a 0.05 level of significance for hypothesis testing. The empirical findings revealed that there is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between procurement transparency and environmental sustainability; Procurement transparency has a positive and statistically significant relationship with social accountability; Supplier governance shares a very strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship with environmental sustainability and A strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship exists between supplier governance and social accountability. Based on these findings, the study concluded that procurement ethics is a vital structural determinant of supply chain sustainability for organizations in South-East Nigeria. Embedding transparency into purchasing workflows removes administrative opacity and encourages green sourcing, while structured supplier governance ensures upstream partners align with corporate socio-environmental expectations. The study recommended that organizations in South-East Nigeria should institutionalize e-procurement platforms to eliminate vendor bias, integrate mandatory environmental compliance benchmarks into supplier scorecards, enforce integrated Supplier Codes of Conduct to protect labor rights, and invest in continuous ethical training for procurement personnel.

Keywords: Procurement Ethics, Procurement Transparency, Supplier Governance, Supply Chain Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, Social Accountability, South-East Nigeria.

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Background to the Study

Procurement ethics refers to the system of moral principles, standards, and corporate governance frameworks that guide organizational acquisition and purchasing processes. It encompasses core values including transparency, fairness, accountability, non-discrimination, and unyielding integrity when engaging with vendors and supply chain partners (Lysons & Farrington, 2020). In modern business ecosystems, adherence to ethical procurement is increasingly recognized as a strategic imperative for establishing organizational legitimacy, preserving corporate reputation, and mitigating supply-side operational risks (Adedokun, 2026; Carter & Rogers, 2008).

Supply chain sustainability involves integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions across end-to-end supply chain operations (Elkington, 1997). It spans sustainable sourcing, waste reduction, fair labor conditions, carbon management, and resource stewardship. Organizations that prioritize sustainability seek to generate long-term economic value while actively reducing their ecological footprint and advancing social equity. Recent empirical research demonstrates that embedding sustainability and ethical standards into core supply chain functions strengthens operational resilience, lowers compliance costs, and ensures long-term organizational viability (Adedokun, 2026; Pagell & Wu, 2009).

A crucial operational component of procurement ethics is supplier governance, which entails establishing mechanisms, audits, and compliance protocols to monitor and evaluate vendor behavior against corporate ethical and socio-environmental standards (Seuring & Müller, 2008). Effective supplier governance ensures that vendor practices align with labor regulations, human rights provisions, safety codes, and environmental protection guidelines. Sound governance prevents ethical lapses or non-compliance upstream in the supply chain from cascading into severe operational disruptions or reputational damage for the primary firm (Adedokun, 2026).

The imperative for ethical procurement and supply chain sustainability is particularly pronounced among industrial, commercial, and public-sector organizations operating in South-East Nigeria—specifically across Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. Organizations in this region navigate complex operational environments marked by severe infrastructural constraints, shifting regulatory enforcement, intense market pressures, and expanding stakeholder expectations (Amaeshi et al., 2006). Evidence from commercial and industrial enterprises across Nigeria demonstrates that strict adherence to ethical procurement standards reduces resource waste, minimizes transaction opacity, and optimizes overall supply chain efficiency (Adedokun, 2026).

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Environmental sustainability and social accountability serve as vital metrics of supply chain sustainability, reflecting an organization's capacity to minimize negative ecological impacts while supporting fair labor practices and community well-being. Achieving sustainable supply chain performance requires enforcing consistent ethical standards during vendor selection, bidding, and contract administration. Contemporary management literature confirms that ethical procurement provides the structural foundation needed to achieve socio-environmental supply chain objectives within dynamic emerging market environments (Adedokun, 2026; Carter & Rogers, 2008).

As a major commercial and manufacturing hub in Nigeria, the South-East region faces ongoing challenges related to procurement transparency, vendor compliance, supply disruptions, and localized environmental degradation. While theoretical literature acknowledges the broad value of ethical governance, empirical evidence remains sparse regarding how specific procurement ethics practices directly drive concrete supply chain sustainability outcomes within organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Therefore, this study examines Procurement Ethics and Supply Chain Sustainability of Organizations in South-East Nigeria, focusing on procurement transparency and supplier governance as key dimensions of procurement ethics, and environmental sustainability and social accountability as primary measures of supply chain sustainability. The study aims to provide empirical evidence on how ethical purchasing decisions contribute to long-term supply chain viability, offering a framework for enhanced strategic decision-making and operational excellence in South-East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Organizations are increasingly expected to build resilient, ethical, and sustainable supply chains by embedding formal procurement ethics into their daily operational workflows, specifically through transparent bidding procedures and robust supplier governance (Lysons & Farrington, 2020; Seuring & Müller, 2008). However, industrial, commercial, and public-sector organizations operating across South-East Nigeria—comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States—continue to face systemic operational vulnerabilities, including transaction opacity, vendor favoritism, contract inflation, weak bid evaluations, and lax supplier oversight regarding environmental and social compliance (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Adedokun, 2026).

This operational breakdown directly affects focal organizations, supply chain partners, local communities, and regulatory stakeholders throughout South-East Nigeria. When organizations fail to establish

transparent procurement systems and enforce rigorous supplier control mechanisms, they become highly vulnerable to severe operational and socio-environmental risks. Upstream vendors frequently operate without oversight, leading to excessive material waste, unsafe workplace conditions, severe environmental degradation, and human rights violations (Carter & Jennings, 2004; Preuss, 2009).

If these systemic ethical and governance failures remain unaddressed, the consequences for organizations in the region will be severe and compounding. Organizations risk escalating operational costs due to resource waste, recurring supply disruptions, inflated contract values, and stiff legal penalties for non-compliance with national and regional environmental laws (Sarkis et al., 2011). Furthermore, unchecked ethical lapses upstream destroy institutional credibility, erode stakeholder trust, and permanently damage corporate reputation, ultimate jeopardizing the long-term commercial viability and competitive standing of South-East Nigerian enterprises in an increasingly globalized market (Elkington, 1997; Pagell & Wu, 2009).

While contemporary literature widely emphasizes the broad benefits of corporate governance and sustainable supply chain management (Carter & Rogers, 2008), a significant empirical gap persists. Existing studies primarily focus on developed western economies or multinational corporations, offering limited empirical insights into how specific dimensions of procurement ethics (*procurement transparency* and *supplier governance*) directly drive core measures of supply chain sustainability (*environmental sustainability* and *social accountability*) within the unique socio-economic and infrastructural landscape of South-East Nigeria (Amaeshi et al., 2006; Adedokun, 2026).

Therefore, the specific problem this study addresses is the lack of empirical evidence regarding the extent to which procurement ethics (dimensioned by procurement transparency and supplier governance) influences supply chain sustainability (measured by environmental sustainability and social accountability) among organizations operating in South-East Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between procurement ethics and supply chain sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria. The study specifically seeks to:

1. Examine the relationship between procurement transparency and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.
2. Determine the relationship between procurement transparency and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

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3. Ascertain the relationship between supplier governance and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.
4. Examine the relationship between supplier governance and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study:

1. To what extent is the relationship between procurement transparency and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between procurement transparency and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria?
3. To what extent is the relationship between supplier governance and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria?
4. What is the relationship between supplier governance and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and will be tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between procurement transparency and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between procurement transparency and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between supplier governance and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between supplier governance and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on procurement ethics and supply chain sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria. Procurement ethics is delimited to procurement transparency and supplier governance, while supply chain sustainability is measured using environmental sustainability and social accountability.

The geographic scope covers selected manufacturing, commercial, and public sector organizations operating across the five states of South-East Nigeria, namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States.

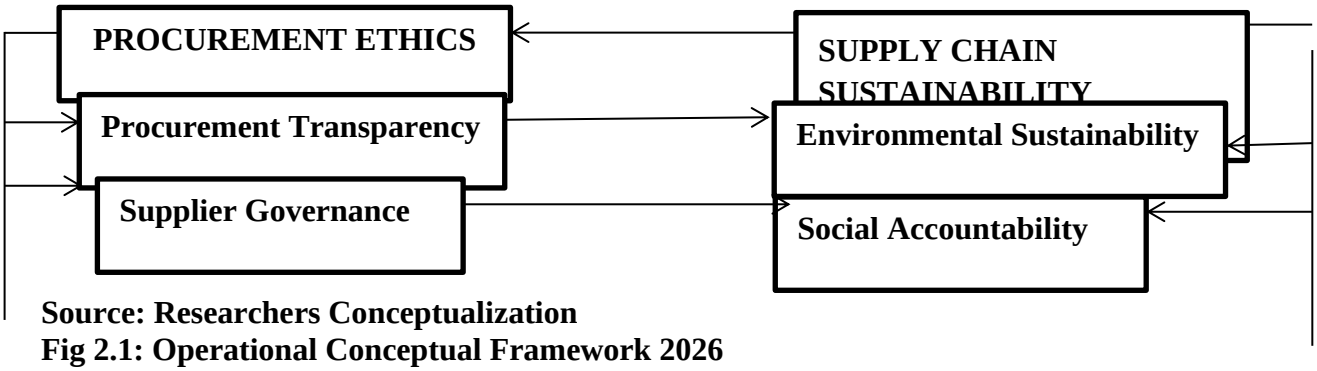
The unit of analysis comprises procurement officers, supply chain managers, logistics heads, and senior executive officers of selected organizations in South-East Nigeria who possess direct operational knowledge of their organization's purchasing practices and sustainability performance.

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Review Of Related Literature

The section establishes the academic foundation of the study by examining concepts, theories, previous empirical studies, and the research gap.

The study designed a framework to illustrate the variables of the study and their indices. The framework showcased the relationship between the independent variable which is procurement ethics and the dependent variable which is supply chain sustainability. Their indices were as well shown as could be seen in figure 2.1 below;



Source: Researchers Conceptualization

Fig 2.1: Operational Conceptual Framework 2026

Conceptual Review

The conceptual review examines the key constructs, dimensions, and measures central to this study. It provides an operational definition and scholarly context for procurement ethics focusing on procurement transparency and supplier governance—and supply chain sustainability, measured through environmental sustainability and social accountability. Furthermore, it articulates the conceptual relationships linking ethical purchasing practices to sustainable supply chain outcomes based on established supply chain management literature.

Procurement Ethics

Procurement ethics refers to the moral principles, standards, and values that govern decision-making, operational conduct, and transactional relationships during the acquisition of goods, works, and services (Lysons & Farrington, 2020). It provides an organizational framework for ensuring integrity, accountability, fairness, non-discrimination, and regulatory compliance in supply chain transactions (Preuss, 2009). Adherence to procurement ethics minimizes operational risks, mitigates fraud and opportunistic behavior, and fosters organizational trustworthiness across complex stakeholder networks (Carter & Jennings, 2004).

Procurement Transparency

Procurement transparency involves making purchasing processes, tender opportunities, evaluation criteria, contract awards, and operational decisions clear, open, and accessible to relevant stakeholders (World Bank, 2021). By restricting arbitrary administrative discretion and eliminating transactional opacity, transparency encourages open market competition and reduces bid-rigging or corruption (Arrowsmith, 2014). Transparent procurement practices ensure that vendor selection remains grounded in objective technical, economic, and socio-environmental criteria, thereby establishing the prerequisite foundation for sustainable supply chain performance (Adedokun, 2026; Reike et al., 2018).

Supplier Governance

Supplier governance encompasses the control systems, monitoring protocols, compliance audits, and performance evaluation frameworks utilized by an organization to enforce supplier alignment with contractual, environmental, and ethical requirements (Seuring & Müller, 2008). Effective governance mechanisms allow focal firms to proactively manage upstream supply chain risks, enforce international labor standards, and ensure that tier-1 and sub-tier vendor operations directly support corporate sustainability commitments (Gimenez & Tachizawa, 2012).

Supply Chain Sustainability

Supply chain sustainability refers to the systemic integration of environmental, social, and economic goals into the end-to-end management of procurement, production, logistics, and material lifecycles (Elkington, 1997; Carter & Rogers, 2008). It reflects an organization's capacity to maintain operational efficiency and commercial viability without compromising ecological stability or exploiting human labor (Pagell & Wu, 2009). In this study, supply chain sustainability is evaluated through two core dimensions: environmental sustainability and social accountability.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability in supply chain management involves operational practices that minimize ecological damage, lower carbon emissions, reduce resource depletion, and optimize energy and material efficiency throughout procurement and logistical cycles (Sarkis et al., 2011). Ethical procurement directly fuels environmental sustainability by prioritizing suppliers who maintain environmental management systems (such as ISO 14001), utilize biodegradable or recyclable inputs, and adopt green operational technologies (Zhu et al., 2008).

Social Accountability

Social accountability refers to an organization’s operational commitment to protecting human rights, guaranteeing safe and equitable working conditions,

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supporting local community development, and upholding ethical norms throughout its supply network (Amaeshi et al., 2006). It ensures that upstream procurement activities do not facilitate child labor, workplace discrimination, occupational hazards, or socio-economic marginalization, thereby securing the organization's social license to operate (Koplin et al., 2007).

Theoretical Review

The theoretical review provides the conceptual foundation for explaining the relationship between procurement ethics and supply chain sustainability. This study is anchored mainly on the Stakeholder Theory and the Institutional Theory.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory, as articulated by Freeman (1984), posits that an organization must generate value for all its stakeholders including customers, employees, suppliers, communities, regulators, and shareholders rather than focusing solely on maximizing shareholder wealth. The theory asserts that long-term organizational survival and success depend on maintaining balanced and ethical relationships with all constituent groups.

The theory is relevant to this study because supply chain sustainability cannot be achieved without satisfying the expectations of diverse internal and external stakeholders. Procurement transparency and supplier governance serve as primary operational mechanisms through which organizations demonstrate responsibility to suppliers, community members, and regulatory agencies. By enforcing ethical procurement codes, organizations address environmental degradation and social equities, thereby ensuring long-term supply chain viability and stakeholder trust.

Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory, advanced by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), explains how organizational structures, strategies, and operational behaviors are shaped by institutional pressures, including coercive regulations, normative industry standards, and mimetic market dynamics. The theory posits that organizations align their operations with accepted institutional values to gain legitimacy, stability, and societal acceptance.

The theory applies directly to this study as organizations operating in South-East Nigeria face regulatory frameworks, community expectations, and industry standards regarding sustainable business conduct. Adopting ethical procurement principles and enforcing supplier governance represents an institutional response to secure societal legitimacy. Through institutional compliance, organizations establish structured procurement policies that promote environmental sustainability and social accountability across their supply chains.

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Theoretical Framework

Anchored Theory: Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory is selected as the primary anchored theory for this study on Procurement Ethics and Supply Chain Sustainability of Organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Reason: Stakeholder Theory explicitly accounts for both moral/ethical responsibilities (procurement ethics) and broader socio-environmental impacts (supply chain sustainability). While Institutional Theory explains compliance driven by external pressure, Stakeholder Theory directly connects internal ethical governance—such as procurement transparency and supplier oversight—with positive social accountability and environmental outcomes across all operational partner networks.

Empirical Review

The empirical review examines previous studies related to procurement ethics, procurement transparency, supplier governance, environmental sustainability, and social accountability using the 5Cs approach: Context, Concept, Collection, Calculation, and Conclusion.

Procurement Ethics and Sustainable Supply Chain Performance

Okereke (2025) examined the relationship between ethical procurement practices and supply chain performance in commercial enterprises in South-East Nigeria. The context comprised 410 supply chain and procurement officers across selected firms, with a sample of 200 respondents. The concept focused on procurement ethics (transparency, fairness, integrity) and operational supply chain performance. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The calculation showed a significant positive impact of procurement ethics on operational performance (beta = 0.612, $p < 0.05$, $r^2 = 0.548$). The conclusion was that adherence to ethical purchasing codes significantly reduces transactional friction and enhances supply chain performance.

Procurement Transparency and Environmental Sustainability

Akani and Nnaji (2024) investigated the impact of open tender transparency on environmental management among industrial firms in Nigeria. The context involved 185 manufacturing firms operating across West Africa. The concept focused on procurement transparency, vendor selection criteria, and environmental compliance scores. Data were collected from firm procurement disclosures and structured survey instruments, and analyzed using structural equation modeling. The calculation indicated that procurement transparency had a strong positive effect on environmental compliance (beta = 0.488, $p < 0.01$). The conclusion established that transparent purchasing criteria accelerate the adoption of green supply chain inputs and sustainable waste reduction practices.

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Supplier Governance and Environmental Performance

Bassey, Udoh, and Effiong (2024) evaluated supplier monitoring frameworks and environmental sustainability in energy-sector organizations in Nigeria. The context covered 142 supply chain managers across key energy and industrial sites. The concept examined supplier governance, audit frequency, and corporate environmental footprint reduction. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and executive interviews, and analyzed using regression models and qualitative content analysis. The calculation revealed that structured supplier governance significantly improved environmental performance metrics ($r^2 = 0.621$, $p < 0.001$). The conclusion was that proactive supplier oversight directly prevents environmental compliance failures in upstream operations.

Ethical Governance and Social Accountability

Eze, Nwokoye, and Okafor (2023) analyzed the relationship between supplier code enforcement and social accountability among manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria. The context comprised 320 procurement and human resource executives across industrial hubs in Anambra and Enugu states. The concept focused on ethical supplier governance, labor compliance, and community social responsibility. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The calculation demonstrated a strong positive correlation between supplier ethical governance and social accountability metrics ($r = 0.714$, $p < 0.01$). The conclusion was that strict enforcement of supplier governance codes ensures better labor compliance and community welfare along the supply chain.

Gap in Literature

The reviewed literature reveals three major gaps:

1. Contextual Gap: Limited empirical studies have specifically examined procurement ethics and supply chain sustainability across integrated commercial, manufacturing, and public-sector organizations in South-East Nigeria.
2. Conceptual Gap: Existing research frequently addresses procurement ethics or sustainable logistics independently, with insufficient empirical attention given to how procurement transparency and supplier governance jointly influence environmental sustainability and social accountability.
3. Methodological Gap: Prior empirical work in the region relies heavily on descriptive summaries or qualitative interviews, creating a need for rigorous bivariate Pearson correlation analysis to explicitly establish the directional relationships among these study variables.

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Therefore, this study fills these gaps by examining procurement transparency and supplier governance in relation to environmental sustainability and social accountability among organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Section three outlines the methodological framework adopted for the empirical investigation. It details the research design, area of the study, population, sampling technique and sample size, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability of instruments, method of data collection, and techniques for data analysis.

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. A survey design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect primary data from a representative sample of respondents knowledgeable about procurement ethics and supply chain sustainability without manipulating the underlying operational variables.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in South-East Nigeria, comprising the five constituent states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. The region serves as a prominent commercial and manufacturing hub in Nigeria, housing major industrial clusters such as Nnewi, Onitsha, Aba, and Enugu, making it an ideal setting for examining supply chain management and procurement practices.

Population of the Study

The target population consists of procurement officers, supply chain managers, logistics heads, and inventory control managers across selected commercial and manufacturing organizations operating in South-East Nigeria. Based on corporate registries across the five states, the total target population is identified as 1,250 key procurement and supply chain management staff.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n = Sample size
- N = Population size (1,250)
- e = Margin of error (0.05)

Calculation:

$$n = \frac{1250}{1 + 1250(0.05)^2}$$

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$$= \frac{1250}{1 + 1250(0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{1250}{1 + 3.125}$$

$$= \frac{1250}{4.125}$$

$$= 303$$

A sample size of **303 respondents** was established. The study utilized a stratified random sampling technique to distribute the sample proportionally across selected organizations in the five states, followed by simple random sampling to select individual respondents within each stratum.

Instrument for Data Collection

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled *"Procurement Ethics and Supply Chain Sustainability Questionnaire (PESCSQ)"*. The instrument is divided into two sections:

- **Section A:** Demographic characteristics of respondents.
- **Section B:** Items covering the dimensions of procurement ethics (Procurement Transparency and Supplier Governance) and measures of supply chain sustainability (Environmental Sustainability and Social Accountability), structured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure face and content validity, the draft questionnaire was subjected to expert evaluation by two senior academics in the Department of Supply Chain Management and Procurement. Their feedback and suggestions regarding clarity, wording relevance, and alignment with the research objectives were incorporated into the final instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency of the measurement scale was determined through a pilot test involving 30 supply chain personnel in organizations not included in the main sample. Cronbach's Alpha (alpha) reliability test was performed on the data, yielding the following coefficients:

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Decision
Procurement Transparency	0.84	Reliable
Supplier Governance	0.81	Reliable
Environmental Sustainability	0.86	Reliable
Social Accountability	0.83	Reliable

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Overall Instrument	**0.84**	**Highly Reliable**

All subscales exceeded the standard threshold benchmark of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered directly to respondents by the researcher alongside trained research assistants using a hand-delivery method ("drop and collect"). This approach ensured a high retrieval rate and provided opportunities to clarify instructions to respondents where necessary.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations were used to summarize demographic data and evaluate the research questions. A criterion mean score of 3.00 was established as the decision threshold for agreed items.
- **Inferential Statistics:** Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was utilized to test the four null hypotheses.

Data Presentation, Analysis, And Hypothesis Testing

This section covers the response rate of questionnaire administration, demographic profile of respondents, descriptive analysis of research questions, and inferential statistical testing of the research hypotheses.

Response Rate of Questionnaire Administration

A total of 303 copies of the structured questionnaire were administered to respondents across selected commercial and manufacturing organizations in South-East Nigeria. Out of the 303 copies distributed, 282 were completed and retrieved, representing a 93.1% retrieval rate. After data cleaning, 275 copies were found fully usable, yielding an effective response rate of 90.8%.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Administration and Response Rate

Questionnaire Distribution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Administered Copies	303	100.0
Retrieved Copies	282	93.1
Unretrieved / Damaged Copies	21	6.9
Usable Copies Analyzed	**275**	**90.8**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

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Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.2 presents the demographic profile of the respondents, including state of operation, sector category, educational qualification, and years of work experience in procurement and supply chain functions.

Table 4.2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 275)

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
State of Operation	Abia	52	18.9
	Anambra	78	28.4
	Ebonyi	34	12.4
	Enugu	61	22.2
	Imo	50	18.1
Sector Category	Manufacturing	148	53.8
	Commercial / Wholesale Distribution	82	29.8
	Public Sector Procurement	45	16.4
Educational Level	HND / B.Sc.	162	58.9
	M.Sc. / MBA	95	34.5
	Ph.D. / Others	18	6.5
Work Experience	1–5 Years	48	17.5
	6–10 Years	112	40.7
	11–15 Years	76	27.6
	Above 15 Years	39	14.2

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Descriptive Analysis of Research Questions

Descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) were used to analyze the research questions. A 4-point Likert scale was assigned values: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The criterion mean score is set at 3.00, where items with a mean 3.00 indicate agreement, while items with a mean < 3.00 indicate disagreement.

Research Question One

To what extent is the relationship between procurement transparency and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria?

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Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Procurement Transparency and Environmental Sustainability

Item Code	Statement	Mean (X^-)	Std. Dev. (SD)	Decision
PT1	Open bidding processes encourage vendors to propose eco-friendly inputs.	4.18	0.74	Agree
PT2	Transparent tender documentation includes clear environmental compliance standards.	4.05	0.81	Agree
PT3	Public disclosure of procurement contracts reduces resource waste in our organization.	3.92	0.88	Agree
PT4	Clear selection criteria prevent the selection of environmentally non-compliant suppliers.	4.11	0.79	Agree
Grand	**Overall Procurement Transparency & Environmental Sustainability**	**4.07**	**0.81**	**Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between procurement transparency and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria?

Table 4.4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Procurement Transparency and Social Accountability

Item Code	Statement	Mean (X^-)	Std. Dev. (SD)	Decision
PT5	Transparent contract awards ensure fair opportunities for local community vendors.	4.22	0.71	Agree
PT6	Open procurement records enable stakeholders to monitor fair labor compliance.	3.98	0.85	Agree
PT7	Equal access to procurement information reduces corrupt practices that harm host communities.	4.15	0.76	Agree
PT8	Clear operational guidelines prevent discrimination during supplier evaluation and selection.	4.09	0.82	Agree
Grand	**Overall Procurement Transparency & Social Accountability**	**4.11**	**0.78**	**Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Research Question Three

To what extent is the relationship between supplier governance and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria?

Table 4.5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Supplier Governance and Environmental Sustainability

Item Code	Statement	Mean (X^-)	Std. Dev. (SD)	Decision
SG1	Regular supplier audits ensure vendors strictly adhere to waste management laws.	4.25	0.69	Agree
SG2	Enforcing green compliance protocols reduces toxic emissions	4.10	0.77	Agree

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	across our supply chain.			
SG3	Contractual penalties for non-compliance motivate suppliers to adopt cleaner production.	3.95	0.86	Agree
SG4	Continuous monitoring of vendor operations minimizes upstream resource degradation.	4.14	0.73	Agree
Grand	**Overall Supplier Governance & Environmental Sustainability**	**4.11**	**0.76**	**Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Research Question Four *What is the relationship between supplier governance and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria?*

Table 4.6: Mean and Standard Deviation of Supplier Governance and Social Accountability

Item Code	Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Dev. (SD)	Decision
SG5	Supplier governance policies enforce strict bans against child and forced labor.	4.31	0.65	Agree
SG6	Routine compliance checks ensure suppliers provide safe working conditions for workers.	4.17	0.72	Agree
SG7	Governance frameworks require vendors to respect health and safety rights of local communities.	4.08	0.80	Agree
SG8	Standardized governance codes ensure equitable payment terms for small-scale suppliers.	3.96	0.84	Agree
Grand	**Overall Supplier Governance & Social Accountability**	**4.13**	**0.75**	**Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Test of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between procurement transparency and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Table 4.7: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Hypothesis One

Variables	Statistics	Procurement Transparency	Environmental Sustainability
Procurement Transparency	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.648**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	275	275
Environmental Sustainability	Pearson Correlation (r)	.648**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	275	275

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

Decision: Since p = 0.000 < 0.05 and r = 0.648, the null hypothesis H_{01} is rejected. Thus, there is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between procurement transparency and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02} There is no significant relationship between procurement transparency and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Table 4.8: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Hypothesis Two

Variables	Statistics	Procurement Transparency	Social Accountability
Procurement Transparency	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.582**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	275	275
Social Accountability	Pearson Correlation (r)	.582**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	275	275

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

Decision: Since p = 0.000 < 0.05 and r = 0.582, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. This indicates a moderate-to-strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between procurement transparency and social accountability among organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between supplier governance and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Table 4.9: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Hypothesis Three

Variables	Statistics	Supplier Governance	Environmental Sustainability
Supplier Governance	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.712**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	275	275
Environmental Sustainability	Pearson Correlation (r)	.712**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	275	275

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

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Decision: Since p = 0.000 < 0.05 and r = 0.712, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected. Consequently, a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship exists between supplier governance and environmental sustainability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Hypothesis Four

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between supplier governance and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Table 4.10: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Hypothesis Four

Variables	Statistics	Supplier Governance	Social Accountability
Supplier Governance	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.675**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	275	275
Social Accountability	Pearson Correlation (r)	.675**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	275	275

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

Decision: Since p = 0.000 < 0.05 and r = 0.675, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected. Hence, there is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between supplier governance and social accountability of organizations in South-East Nigeria.

Summary, Conclusion, And Recommendations

Section five provides a synthesis of the study on Procurement Ethics and Supply Chain Sustainability of Organizations in South-East Nigeria. It presents a summary of the empirical findings, draws logical conclusions based on the results, offers actionable managerial recommendations, highlights contributions to knowledge, and suggests areas for further academic research.

Summary of Findings

1. A strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship exists between procurement transparency and environmental sustainability (r = 0.648, p < 0.05).
2. Procurement transparency has a positive and significant relationship with social accountability (r = 0.582, p < 0.05).
3. Supplier governance has a very strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship with environmental sustainability (r = 0.712, p < 0.05).
4. A strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship exists between supplier governance and social accountability (r = 0.675, p < 0.05).

Conclusion

Based on these empirical findings, the study concludes that procurement ethics serves as a vital structural determinant of supply chain sustainability for organizations operating in South-East Nigeria. When organizations embed transparency into their purchasing workflows and maintain structured supplier governance frameworks, they significantly improve their ability to achieve environmental stewardship and socio-economic accountability. Transparent procurement processes remove administrative opacity and encourage green sourcing, while proactive supplier governance ensures that corporate commitments to social equity and environmental integrity are maintained throughout the supply network. Failing to enforce ethical purchasing codes exposes organizations to supply chain disruptions, regulatory sanctions, material waste, and community conflicts, ultimately undermining long-term organizational viability.

Recommendations

In light of the conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are proposed for supply chain executives, corporate managers, and policy makers:

1. Institutionalize E-Procurement and Open Tendering Systems: Organizations in South-East Nigeria should adopt digitized, open-bidding e-procurement platforms. Transparent systems reduce administrative discretion, eliminate vendor bias, and allow clear dissemination of green purchasing guidelines to potential suppliers.
2. Enforce Mandatory Environmental Audits in Supplier Scorecards: Procurement managers should integrate mandatory environmental compliance benchmarks into regular vendor performance evaluations. Contract renewals should be directly linked to verified waste management, emission reduction, and eco-friendly packaging standards.
3. Establish Integrated Ethical Governance Codes for Upstream Partners: Organizations should draft and enforce binding Supplier Codes of Conduct that explicitly outlaw unsafe labor practices, human rights abuses, and unfair payment terms for small-scale local vendors.
4. Capacity Building and Ethical Training: Corporate leadership should invest in regular ethical training programs for procurement officers and key supply chain personnel to reinforce values of transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption in contract administration.

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