

Role of Procurement Practices in Promoting Sustainability in Project Management

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This research aims to investigate the role of sustainability practices in promoting responsible project management, considering the pressing challenges posed by population growth and the construction industry's significant resource consumption and carbon emissions. With the Earth's finite resources dwindling and population growth exacerbating environmental pressures, the construction sector plays a pivotal role in shaping sustainability outcomes. This study examines current sustainability practices within the industry, particularly focusing on their integration into procurement decision-making processes. It seeks to identify the challenges organizations face in implementing sustainable practices, assess stakeholder reception, and evaluate the effectiveness of training and certification programs to raise awareness among employees. By exploring these aspects, the research aims to provide insights into the opportunities and barriers associated with embedding sustainability principles in project management, ultimately contributing to the advancement of responsible and environmentally conscious practices within the construction sector.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This research adopts a qualitative methodology employing semi-structured interviews with a purposive sampling approach involving four participants. The interviews delve into various aspects of sustainable practices, challenges encountered, and organizational sustainable goals. Through qualitative inquiry, the study aims to gain in-depth insights into the intricacies of sustainability integration within project management practices. By engaging with key stakeholders, the research endeavors to uncover nuanced perspectives and experiences, shedding light on the complexities and opportunities inherent in promoting sustainability within organizations.

Findings/Results: Key findings of the study reveal that many organizations share common sustainable goals, such as achieving carbon neutrality and reducing the usage of deforestation commodities. Integration of sustainability is pursued through explicit mentions of sustainable requirements in bid documents and tendering processes, as well as setting certification standards for supplier selection criteria. Existing sustainability practices include the use of renewable materials, contributions to charity, and waste reduction efforts, such as redistributing surplus materials to other construction sites using a mobile app. Organizations invest in training and certification programs like RICS, BREEAM AIA and LEED, along with conferences and standalone initiatives, to raise awareness among employees. However, there is less stakeholder buy-in due to perceived high costs, and organizations face challenges in finding sustainable solutions to address their sustainability goals.

Practical Implications: The research findings offer practical insights for organizations aspiring to integrate sustainability into project management. Understanding common sustainable goals and strategies can guide benchmarks. Explicitly including sustainability requirements in bid documents and setting supplier certification standards ensures sustainability permeates procurement processes. Adopting existing sustainability practices, like renewable materials and

waste reduction, minimizes environmental impact. Investing in employee training and certifications fosters a culture of sustainability. However, overcoming challenges like stakeholder buy-in and cost concerns demands strategic solutions. In summary, the research provides actionable recommendations to bolster sustainability in project management practices.

Originality/Value: The originality of the research lies in its comprehensive exploration of sustainability practices in project management within the construction industry. By examining the integration of sustainability into procurement decision-making processes, identifying common sustainable goals, and assessing challenges faced by organizations, the research offers valuable insights. Additionally, the study delves into the effectiveness of various sustainability initiatives, such as setting certification standards for suppliers and implementing waste reduction strategies. This holistic approach contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing practical recommendations for enhancing sustainability practices in project management, thus adding significant value to both academia and industry.

Keywords: *Sustainability practices, Project management, Procurement, Construction industry, Stakeholder buy-in, Sustainable goals, Certification standards, Waste reduction, Employee training, Qualitative methodology*