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The Impact of Sustainable Sourcing and Ethical Supply Chain Practices on Organizational Performance in Public Sector Logistics Stores

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<p>Keywords</p>	<p>Sustainable Sourcing, Ethical Supply Chain Practice, Organisational performance.</p>

1. Introduction

Supply chain management has experienced significant change because of growing environmental concerns, the growing expectations of the stakeholders, and the pressure of regulations (Ali et al., 2022; Farooq & Ahmad, 2023; Anser et al., 2024; Anser et al., 2025a,b). In the last twenty years, supply chains have been transformed to focus on being cost-effective and on sustainability-based networks that are designed to incorporate environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and resiliency in their operations (Naeem, 2023; Naeem et al., 2023; Naeem et al., 2024; Naeem et al., 2025a,b). The pandemic, weather disasters, and unstable politics of 2020-2025 have shown weaknesses in the conventional procurement systems and highlighted the necessity of socially responsible and sustainable procurement practices.

Sustainable sourcing refers to the process of implementing environmental, social, and economic aspects into the sourcing decision in an effort to lessen the ecological footprint and increase resiliency over the long term (Khan et al., 2023; Memon et al., 2025; Shahab et al., 2025; Shaikh et al., 2025a,b; Mujtaba et al., 2025a,b; Bohio et al., 2025; Sial et al., 2025). The green sourcing, supplier certification, life-cycle analysis, and waste reduction are some of the practices that are now the key focus of organisational competitiveness and efficiency. Recent research indicates that the concept of sustainable sourcing is one of the key strengths of the company that facilitates the establishment of reputational capital and improved operational results. Supply chain practices, such as ethical practices, have become a strong issue in the face of greater scrutiny of organisations in terms of transparency, accountability, and governance. Ethical procurement focuses on anti-corruption policies, fair labour policy, human rights management, supplier audit, and procurement transparency. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed that the supply chain is more resilient and trusted by people governed by ethics. The need for sustainable and ethical procurement is augmented in the field of defence logistics. The functions of the Pak Navy Departs in aiding military operations are the purchase, storage, repair, and provision of essential supplies. Depot procurement operations define the readiness of the fleet, the safety of personnel, and the preparedness of operations directly. Regardless of this importance, public sector logistics depots have a high dependency on the traditional cost-based systems of procurement, urgency, and short-term operation requirements.

Lack of sustainability and ethical values puts public sector logistics depots in jeopardy of inefficiencies, the generation of waste, non-compliance by suppliers, and corruption. Besides, there is a lack of empirical studies into sustainable and ethical sourcing in the military logistics industry in Pakistan. This loophole restricts evidence-based policy-making and procurement reform. The given paper explores the influence of sustainable sourcing and ethical supply chain implementation on the organizational performance in public sector logistics departments to provide a specific contextual understanding to help inform procurement modifications, accountability, and efficiency in logistics. Although any other country has been using sustainable and ethical procurement systems, public sector logistics departments still use cost-driven procurement systems that have little sense of supplier sustainability and ethical conduct. Such a gap will expand to inefficiencies and wastes, environmental risks, and governance challenges. Also, there is no empirical evidence of sustainable and ethical sourcing in logistics in Pakistan to promote institutional reform. There is therefore a need to conduct a systematic investigation on the impact of these practices on the organizational performance of public sector logistics depots. This study intends to investigate the impact of sustainable sourcing and ethical supply chain on the organizational performance of Pakistani firms. To measure the accessibility of sustainable sourcing and organizational performance at public sector logistics depots.

To understand how the concept of ethical supply chain practices influences the organizational performance in public sector logistics depots.

To examine the overall impact of sustainable sourcing and ethical supply chain activities on the public sector logistics depot performance. What is the effect of sustainable sourcing on organizational performance at public sector logistics departments? How do ethical supply chain practices influence the organizational performance in public sector logistics depots? What are the joint impacts of sustainable sourcing and ethical practices on the performance of the public sector logistics depot?

The paper combines Resource-Based View, Stakeholder Theory, and Triple Bottom Line with the modern ESG and Circular procurement literature. It adds to the paucity of academic studies on sustainable procurement in South Asia. Results give empirical data that could be used in relation to procurement reforms, governance enhancement, refining supplier selection, and enhancing operational efficiency in public sector logistics depots. The research educates the public sector logistics leadership and policymakers about the collaboration of sustainability and ethical principles to procurement SOPS in order to enhance transparency and governance.

2. Literature Review

The chapter is a review of literature on sustainable sourcing, ethics of supply chain operations, and organizational performance. It provides theoretical backgrounds and the latest empirical findings (2020-2025) to determine the effects of sustainability and ethics on the outcomes of organizations. The situation of discussion contextualizes the global trends in the domain of logistics, specifically in the case of the public sector logistics depots, and the practice of procurement has a direct impact on the state of operational preparedness and performance.

Sustainable Sourcing Sustainability has taken center stage in modern supply chain management, courtesy of the pressures on the environment, limited resources, and demands by its stakeholders. Although the concept of sustainability is not new in the supply chain theory, the concept has been adopted widely in recent years owing to the requirements of the regulator and other disruptions across the world. Sustainable sourcing has become a strategic imperative that increases sustainability in operations and overall business success, as acknowledged in modern literature. Sustainable sourcing involves the use of the environmental, social, and economic footprints in the procurement decisions, thereby ensuring that environmental degradation is minimized, fair labor practices are maintained, and the stability of the economy. The theory coincides with a circular approach to procurement that encourages efficiency of resources, minimization of waste, and the use of renewable resources. Sustainable sourcing in logistics results in improved security of resources, decreased hazardous wastes, and preparedness to respond to missions. Public sector logistics organizations in developing nations are usually trailing after the commercial sector because they are highly structured, relaxed, and prioritize control and urgency.

2.1 Sustainable Sourcing Internal Drivers Sourcing Drivers

Internal motivations also comprise organizational productivity, long-term cost reductions, risk avoidance, and leadership devotion. Sustainable sourcing minimizes energy use, reduces costs and disruption in the supply chain, enhances organizational culture, and provides leadership support.

2.2 External Drivers

Extrinsic forces encompass the regulatory framework, expectation of stakeholders, international standards, competition in the market, and the development of technology. These drivers are intensified by environments, geopolitical pressures, large spending, and security needs.

2.3 Sustainability Sourcing Dimensions

Sustainable sourcing is a set of environmental sourcing criteria, life-cycle costing, environmental certification of suppliers, circular sourcing, minimisation of waste, and social sustainability. Environmental standards enhance operation and environmental performance, whereas life-cycle costing raises financial sustainability. The compliance and reliability of suppliers are indicated through certifications such as ISO 14001. Circular procurement aids in the reuse and recycling of materials, which reduces waste and emissions. Social sustainability covers the areas of labour rights, community duties, and diversity of suppliers. All these dimensions present the core of sustainable procurement in defence and commercial cases.

2.4 Supply Chain Ethical Supply Chain Practices

Ethics supply chains focus on procurement activities, transparency, accountability, fairness, and legality. Ethics dwell on governance, anti-corruption, and integrity in sourcing decision-making. This is because corruption scandals, labour rights issues, and vulnerability of the public sector procurement have raised scholarly interest in ethical sourcing. All these conditions make defence procurement especially vulnerable to ethical risks because of large contracts, few suppliers, confidential information, and limited control. Ethical practices are thus necessary in order to protect the integrity of resources, keep operations ready, and preserve the confidence of the people.

2.5 Dimensions of Ethical Supply Chain Practices

Transparency and information disclosure, anti-corruption practices, supplier audit, human rights and labour protection, whistle-blowing system, and fair selection of suppliers belong to ethical supply chain management. Transparency will make corruption less effective and also increase accountability, and the governance structure will integrate auditing and compliance. Supplier audits are used to ensure ethical practices, safeguard human rights, labor rights through the protection of human rights, whistleblowing, reporting of misconduct, and fair procurement to avoid discrimination and nepotism.

2.6 Public Sector Logistics Ethical Procurement

Specialized procurement, limited competition, political influence, and national security constraints are some of the ethical risks that are posed to procurement. Ethical practices should be implemented in public sector logistics depots because these provide the means to safeguard assets, maintain operational preparedness, and maintain institutional legitimacy.

2.7 Organizational Performance

Efficiency, reliability, responsiveness, cost-effectiveness, and the quality of service are seen in organizational performance. In the case of supply chains, the reliability of its supplier, two conditions of the accuracy of inventory, control of costs, and mitigation of risks are defined as a form of performance. Logistics performance comprises the availability of supplies, accuracy of procurement, responsiveness, environmental performance, and equipment and personnel preparedness.

Sustainable and ethical procurement improves performance with better supplier relations, less fraud, and enhanced transparency, as well as long-term reliability.

2.8 Dimensions of Organizational Performance

The key dimensions are operational efficiency, cost efficiency, supply chain responsiveness, service quality, environmental and social performance, and risk management. The dimensions are reinforced by ethical and sustainable practices, which enhance governance, compliance, and resilience.

3. Theoretical Foundations

The proposed study relies on various theoretical viewpoints that explain the connection between sustainable sourcing, ethical sourcing, and organizational performance.

3.1 Resource-Based View (RBV)

According to RBV, competitive advantage is created by the unique organizational capabilities. Sustainable and ethical procurement is a strategic competency that increases operational stability and sustainability.

3.2 Stakeholder Theory

The Stakeholder Theory focuses on meeting the demands of suppliers, regulators, employees, and society. Sustainable sourcing ensures that the procurement practice is in line with the expectations of the stakeholders.

3.3 Triple Bottom Line (TBL)

TBL incorporates social, social and economic performance. By focusing on environmental and social aspects, sustainable sourcing helps to tackle them, whereas ethical procurement enhances governance.

3.4 Circular Economy Theory

The concepts of the circular economy encourage recycling, reuse, and resource optimization, which strengthen the resilience of supply chains and reduce the reliance on non-renewable resources.

3.5 ESG/ Governance Structures.

ESG structure affects procurement through enhanced performance with transparency, compliance, and sustainability.

3.6 Empirical Studies

Empirical studies always correlate sustainable and ethical sourcing with better organizational performance. Recent research shows that circular procurement results in improvements in the environment and economy, ethical procurement results in improved resilience, and governing structures result in better transparency and efficiency. Nevertheless, very few empirical studies are conducted on logistics, and this is especially true in third-world countries.

3.7 Research Gaps

Limited empirical studies that define sustainable and ethical procurement in military authorities and organizations: No studies of public sector logistics depots, presence of under-representation of logistics in SCM literature, and lack of incorporation of ESG and circular procurement in organizations.

3.8 Conceptual Framework

The theoretical model introduces the idea that sustainable sourcing and ethical sourcing supply chain activities directly influence positive organizational performance at public sector logistics depots.

4. Research methodology

4.1 Research Design

The paper assumed a quantitative study design in a bid to look at how the performance of an organization can be affected by practices of sustainable sourcing and ethical supply chain in public sector logistics depots. Primary data was collected by using a cross-sectional survey design in one instance at a point in time. This design was thought to be suitable because of time limitations and an aim to test the connections between variables.

4.2 Research Approach

The deductive method was used, and it was based on the existing theories such as the Resource-Based View, the Stakeholder Theory, and the Triple Bottom Line. Prior literature developed the requisite hypotheses, which were tested.

4.3 Population and Sample

The sample included procurement officers, supply officers, logistics, storekeepers, and administrative personnel employed in Karachi-based public sector logistics depots. Convenience sampling was used, given the access restrictions. Fifty questionnaires have been distributed, and 50 responded, which is a 100 percent response.

4.4 Data Collection

The structured questionnaire was made of an instrument with a structured questionnaire that was used to collect data. The tool had three categories that dealt with sustainable sourcing, ethical supply chain activities, and organizational performance. The five-point Likert scale was used, which included strongly disagree to strongly agree.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

Expert review and correlation with available literature were tools for maintaining content validity. Cronbach's alpha was used to conduct reliability analysis, and the values were more than the acceptable level, which is indicative of a high internal consistency.

4.6 Reliability Results

All internal consistency was outstanding in all three constructs. The Cronbach's Alpha of Sustainable Sourcing was 0.873, Ethical practices was 0.920, and Organizational performance was 0.901. Such values are far beyond the lower bound of 0.70, and it is certain that the measurement scales are very reliable and the items within a construct have the same underlying dimension.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Reliability Level
Sustainable Sourcing	0.873	6	Excellent
Ethical Practices	0.920	6	Excellent
Organizational Performance	0.901	6	Excellent

4.7 Composite Reliability (CR)

PLS-SEM was used to compute Composite Reliability (CR) values, which are another reliability measure with indicator loadings taken into consideration. All the constructs were above the desired measurement with SS of CR = 0.905, EP of CR = 0.938, and OP of CR = 0.924. The internal consistency of the measurement model is also substantiated by these values (Hair et al., 2019).

Construct	Composite Reliability (CR)	Interpretation
Sustainable Sourcing	0.905	Excellent
Ethical Practices	0.938	Excellent
Organizational Performance	0.924	Excellent

4.8 Data Analysis Technique

Smart PLS software was used to perform the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was chosen because of its applicability in small sample sizes and prediction. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and structural model analysis were done.

5. Data Analysis and Results

Rest Profile Respondent profile consisted of procurement officers, logistics personnel, and storekeepers with different years of experience. Most of them had related professional experience within the public sector logistics supply chain operations.

a. Measurement Model

The supplementary material involves the evaluation and analysis of the measurement model developed from the conducted research. Factor loading, average variance extracted, and composite reliability were the measures used in evaluating the measurement model. All the constructs had the appropriate recommended thresholds, which confirms convergent validity and reliability. The structural model evaluated the correlation between sustainable sourcing, ethical supply chain activities, and the performance of organizations. Bootstrapping was used to analyses path coefficients, t-values, and p-values.

5.2 Hypotheses Testing

The findings reveal that ethical supply chain practices positively affect organizational performance to a large extent. Sustainable sourcing shows a positive but insignificant direct influence on organizational performance.

Hypotheses	Path	Beta (β)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H1	SS \rightarrow OP	0.215	1.289	0.204	Not Supported
H2	EP \rightarrow OP	0.635	4.103	0.01	Supported

5.3 Coefficient of Determination

The R^2 value indicates that sustainable sourcing and ethical supply chain practices explain a substantial proportion of variance in organizational performance, reflecting strong model explanatory power.

Dependent Variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Interpretation
Organizational Performance	0.708	0.695	Substantial Explanatory Power

5.4 Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination indicates the level of dependence of the predictor variables on an independent variable (Draper, 1966, p. 3).

The value of R^2 means sustainable sourcing and ethical supply chain practices explain a significant percentage of variance in organizational performance; that is, this model explains strong model explanatory power.

5.5 The Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

According to the analysis of the effect size, ethical practices in the supply chain have a greater impact on the performance of organizations than sustainable sourcing does. The results of predictive relevance affirm tolerable model forecasting ability.

5.6 Summary of Findings

The practices of ethical supply chains are very positive for the performance of organizations. The direct relationship between sustainable sourcing and performance is positive, though insignificant. The existence of governance and ethical systems is a decisive factor in the logistics performance.

6. Discussion

This research also indicates that the ethical supply chain practices have a strong positive effect on the organizational performance at the public sector logistics depots. This finding is consistent with the previous studies that have underscored the importance of transparency, governance, and accountability towards enhancing operational efficiency and institutional trust. Supplier audits, procurement transparency, and anti-corruption measures are ethical mechanisms that minimize risks, enhance dependability, and compliance with logistics systems.

Sustainable sourcing positively yet statistically does not significantly affect the organizational performance. It can be indicative of the preliminary point at which sustainability thinking integration takes place within public sector logistics depots, since environmental issues take a back seat to the pressures of urgency and cost-efficiency. The same has been mentioned in the developing-country contexts of public sector logistics firms, where long-term support at the institutional level is necessary in the context of sustainability initiatives to achieve measurability of performance improvement. This is a combination of the effect of sustainable sourcing and ethical practice that implies that sustainable sourcing is more of an enabling principle of ethical governance, but sustainability has a modulating effect on risk reduction and resiliency. The findings can be explained by the Resource-Based View, Stakeholder Theory, and Triple Bottom Line frameworks that governance-based capabilities bring about immediate performance gains in public sector logistics firms supply chains.

7. Conclusion

This paper has studied how sustainable sourcing and ethical supply chain practices can change the organizational performance in public sector logistics depots. The results reveal that the supply chain practices related to ethics have a considerable positive and statistically significant effect on the reliability of operations, transparency, and performance, and the practices concerning sustainable sourcing have a positive yet non-significant direct impact. These findings seem to suggest that enhanced ethical governance in public sector logistics depots would have a direct and immediate benefit in comparison to detached sustainability programs.

The incorporation of ethical standards in procurement systems improves accountability, reliability on suppliers, and credibility of the institution. Sustainable sourcing is strategically significant to resilience in the long-term, environmental responsibility, and compliance. In general, the research provides empirical data to the scarce sources in the public sector logistics firm's literature and the significance of ethics-based procurement reform in the framework of the firms supply chain in Pakistan.

8. Recommendations

Public sector logistics depots are advised to institutionalize the ethics in procurement, such as supplier audit, transparency measures, and anti-corruption measures. Supplier evaluation and procurement decision-making should be progressively incorporated with the sustainability criteria. Awareness in relation to ethics and sustainable procurement should be enhanced by the introduction of training programs. Public sector logistics leadership is expected to make procurement SOPs consistent with ESG and the principles of the circular economy. The longitudinal effects of sustainability initiatives on public sector logistics firms need to be investigated in the future.

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