



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE MINISTRY OF
HEALTH HEADQUARTERS**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS
AND MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PURCHASING AND SUPPLY
CHAIN MANAGEMENT**

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DECLARATION

I, ...Mwalimu silwembe, declare that the content presented in this dissertation is the result of my own independent work. I further declare that this work has not been previously submitted for assessment or completion for any postgraduate qualification at another institution or for any other qualification.

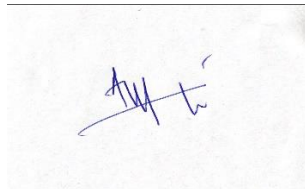
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ABSTRACT

Research Aims: This study aimed to assess the factors influencing sustainable procurement at the Ministry of Health (MoH) headquarters in Zambia. The objectives included: i) examining the impact of financial constraints on sustainable procurement; ii) analysing the role of regulatory compliance as an environmental factor; and iii) assessing how stakeholder engagement and pressure affect implementation.

Design/methodology/approach: The study used a mixed-methods approach with a population of 44 and a sample of 40 participants. These included procurement officials, health service workers, administrators, and finance personnel from the Ministry of Health headquarters. A proportional sampling method was employed to select the participants. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured questionnaires. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods with SPSS version 16, while qualitative data were analysed thematically.

Research Findings: The study found that implementing sustainable procurement within the Ministry faced several challenges across its three main objectives. First, financial constraints arose from limited funding. Second, although regulatory compliance was generally effective, enforcement of these regulations was weak. Lastly Stakeholders were occasionally consulted to offer input on the implementation of sustainable procurement. However, it is crucial to manage the change process well in order to overcome internal opposition, which poses a major obstacle to successful implementation.

Theoretical Contribution/Originality: To promote eco-friendly sourcing, the Ministry should create a sustainable supplier database that centralizes pre-qualified vendors with confirmed sustainability credentials.. It is also essential to incorporate sustainability criteria into procurement processes by making environmental, social, and economic measures mandatory in tender documents and supplier assessments. This will shift the focus away from selecting suppliers based solely on cost.

Keywords: Sustainable Procurement, Financial constraints, Stakeholder Engagement and pressure, Regulatory compliance.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my family who have mostly my parents who have pushed me to be my best and have always supported me through my challenges in school from my primary education till I reached my tertiary education, I would also like to dedicate it to my brother and sisters and lastly to my friends mike, grace and liseli who pushed to be my best from first year to my final year and never give up on my research.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full Meaning
MOH	Ministry of Health
SP	Sustainable Procurement
SHPP	Sustainable Health In Procurement Project
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NSA	National Supply Chain Assessment
SME	Small Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PSO	Public Sector Organisations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
SPP	Sustainable Public Procurement
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
SPSS	Statistical Package For the Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The study aims to investigate the factors influencing the implementation of sustainable procurement policies at the Ministry of Health headquarters in Zambia. It first examines the role of financial constraints as a key economic factor, focusing on how limited financial resources impede the adoption and effective execution of sustainable procurement practices. This involves analysing budget allocations, funding availability, and the overall economic environment to assess their impact on procurement decisions.

Assessing the various factors affecting sustainable procurement policies within the Ministry of Health in Lusaka, Zambia, is essential for the successful implementation and management of health programs (Nambela & Mutono-Mwanza, 2024). Such an assesment encourages cost effectiveness, accountability, and openness in the procurement process in addition to guaranteeing adherence to strict environmental and social criteria.

A wide range of factors are taken into account by sustainable procurement regulations, such as the environmental impact of goods and services over their whole lifecycle, the ethical standards maintained by suppliers, and the incorporation of ideas that support regional economic development. The Ministry may greatly improve its ability to make well-informed purchase decisions that support national health goals and improve population health outcomes by rigorously assessing these aspects.

Furthermore, Improved effective resource management can also result from a careful examination of the possibilities and challenges involved in implementing sustainable procurement methods. Additionally, this approach makes it possible for the Ministry to form significant alliances with regional vendors, which contributes to the development of community capacity. By placing a strong emphasis on local sourcing, the Ministry empowers communities through active involvement in the provision of healthcare services, supports the local economy, and promotes job creation..

Adopting sustainable procurement strategies can ensure that health services are provided in an environmentally friendly manner while also fostering economic prosperity. For instance, the

Ministry can lessen its carbon footprint and enhance the public's health through cleaner environments by obtaining medical goods and services that follow green principles.

In conclusion, a careful assessment of these impacting elements not only improves Ministry of Health procurement procedures but also greatly advances Zambia's larger sustainable development objectives. In order to ensure that health efforts are efficient, egalitarian, and environmentally sustainable, it might be revolutionary to align procurement practices with sustainability principles.

1.2 Background of the study

Sustainable procurement has become a key global strategy to enhance environmental protection, social responsibility, and economic efficiency, especially in public-sector supply chains, such as the Ministry of Health which is government run and owned institution which is located in longacres in lusaka Zambia where its heardquaters are based with a core mandate which is to improve the health and well-being of the Zambian population by providing equitable access to cost-effective, quality healthcare services. This includes developing and implementing healthcare policies, programs, and regulations, and collaborating with other sectors to address the social determinants of health. The ministry also aims to achieve universal health coverage and contribute to the nation's socioeconomic development by fostering a healthy and productive citizenry. those in the health sector. Procurement decisions in health significantly impact access to medicines, availability of health products, public health outcomes, and environmental sustainability through resource use and waste management. International initiatives such as the Sustainable Health in Procurement Project (SHiPP), supported by UNDP and Health Care without Harm, emphasise integrating sustainability into health procurement to minimise harm from medical product manufacturing and disposal. The Ministry of Health in Zambia is in charge of acquiring necessary medications, medical equipment, and supplies for the provision of healthcare services. Even while initiatives like e-procurement have been implemented to increase efficiency and transparency, issues including inadequate finance, poor coordination across procurement organizations, and capacity limitations still exist. In order to improve procurement effectiveness and sustainability, the Zambia National Supply Chain Assessment (NSCA) finds gaps in supply chain performance and suggests improved strategic planning and stakeholder cooperation.

The adoption of sustainable supply chain management techniques in Zambia's public sector, especially the health sector, is heavily influenced by budgetary concerns, policy backing, and leadership commitment. Understanding the elements that facilitate or impede the Ministry of Health's implementation of sustainable procurement is crucial since it is critical to attaining national health goals in line with Vision 2030 and the National Health Strategic Plans. In order to inform policy changes, improve procurement procedures, and encourage more resilient, equitable, and ecologically sustainable health service delivery in Zambia, this study aims to evaluate these characteristics.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Implementing sustainable procurement practices, which are crucial for advancing environmental, social, and economic sustainability and enhancing public health outcomes, presents substantial hurdles for Zambia's Ministry of Health. Despite the existence of frameworks designed to promote sustainability, a thorough knowledge of the variables that affect these implementations such as institutional capacity, stakeholder involvement, and financial constraints is lacking,(Ageron et al., 2012; Kuruneru, 2025; Le Roux et al., 2023 and Stoffel et al. 2019). Furthermore, it's still unknown how effectively these policies work in reality or what changes can be made to guarantee they meet their goals in the absence of efficient evaluation systems. In order to improve healthcare service and environmental stewardship in Zambia, these problems must be addressed. The purpose of this study is to investigate the variables that affect the effective execution of sustainable procurement practices.

1.4 General Objective

To assess the factors influencing the implementation of sustainable procurement policies at the Ministry of Health, Zambia.

1.4.1 Specific objective

1. To examine how financial constraints as an economic factor influence the implementation of sustainable procurement policy at the Ministry of Health, Zambia.
2. To analyse how regulatory compliance as an environmental factor influences the implementation of sustainable procurement policy at the Ministry of Health, Zambia.

3. To assess how stakeholder engagement and pressure as a social factor influence the implementation of sustainable procurement policy at the Ministry of Health, Zambia.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How has the lack of financial support as an economic factor influenced the implementation of sustainable procurement policies at the Ministry of Health, Zambia?
2. How has regulatory compliance as an environmental factor influenced the implementation of sustainable procurement policies at the Ministry of Health, Zambia?
3. How does stakeholder engagement and pressure as a social factor influence the implementation of sustainable procurement policies at the Ministry of Health, Zambia?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is crucial because it pinpoints important variables that affect Zambia's Ministry of Health's capacity to successfully execute sustainable procurement policies, improving efficiency, accountability, and transparency. By addressing these issues, it seeks to enhance the sustainability of health procurement in terms of the environment, society, and economy, promoting improved health outcomes and resource utilization. The results will provide policymakers, procurement professionals, and stakeholders with useful advice on how to get over obstacles, encourage sustainable procurement, and integrate with global and national objectives like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Further research and capacity-building initiatives to improve sustainable procurement in Zambia's public health sector would also benefit from the study.

1.7 Scope of the study

The Ministry of Health employees, procurement and finance personnel, and other health workers will be the focus of this study, which will be carried out at the Ministry of Health headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. Additionally, the research will be conducted from August to December due to scheduling constraints. The triple bottom line theory serves as the foundation for this research since it takes into account social, environmental, and economic factors.

1.8 Definitions of the key terms

Sustainable Procurement

Sustainable procurement is the process of acquiring goods and services that considers not only traditional economic criteria such as price, quality, and delivery timeframes, but also integrates the principles of sustainable development, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship throughout the lifecycle of the product or service. In order to ensure ethical sourcing and promote long-term company sustainability, it strikes a balance between three fundamental dimensions: environmental protection, social equality, and economic viability (Manutan, 2022; NetSuite, 2024).

Financial support

The supply of monetary resources or financial assistance to people, companies, or organizations in order to help pay expenses, manage financial responsibilities, or accomplish particular objectives is referred to as financial support. It can take various forms, including loans, grants, subsidies, guarantees, or investments, provided by governments, private entities, or contractual agreements. Financial support aims to provide stability, promote growth, and facilitate operations or recovery in times of need (CoWork Lab, 2025; Cobrief, 2025)

Regulatory Compliance

Regulatory compliance is the process by which a company or organisation ensures it adheres to all applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and industry standards relevant to its business activities. In order to reduce legal risks, maintain operational integrity, and build stakeholder trust, it entails putting rules and processes in place to operate within legal and regulatory frameworks (Diligent, 2025; Kiteworks, 2025). External government agencies or regulatory authorities enforce regulatory compliance, which is required. Violations may result in fines, legal repercussions, or license revocation (Diligent, 2025).

Stakeholder Engagement and Pressure

The systematic procedure by which an organization finds, comprehends, plans, and carries out measures to involve stakeholders in order to meet their interests, concerns, and influence over a project, program, or organizational activity is known as stakeholder engagement. To win over stakeholders, reduce resistance, and promote trust and responsibility, it entails active communication, cooperation, consultation, and dialogue (APM, 8th ed.).

1.9 Organisation of the rest of the chapters.

In order to provide a clear and comprehensive assessment of the Factors Influencing the Implementation of Sustainable Procurement Policies at the Ministry of Health headquarters in Zambia, the study will be presented in the following structure:

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter provides a detailed assessment and review of the available literature on sustainable procurement policies and the factors influencing their implementation. The review of relevant literature will cover the following essential areas: an empirical and non-empirical review, with a global, regional, and local perspective; theoretical foundations guiding the research; and a conceptual framework guiding the research. It will further highlight the gaps in the literature.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter will describe the research methodology to achieve the study's objectives. It will consist of the study design, including the application of quantitative and qualitative approaches; description of data sources, including primary and secondary data; methods of data analysis and collection; it will also include reliability and validity of data, the target population and location and a discussion of ethical factors, including informed consent and data confidentiality.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter will present the study's findings based on the collected data and analysis. The discussions will be supported by qualitative data and quantitative data, in comparison/contrast with the literature discussed in Chapter Two. The findings will be presented thematically based on themes generated from the specific objectives guiding the study.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

This chapter will summarise the research findings and present conclusions. In addition, it will provide recommendations on how to ensure the successful implementation of sustainable procurement policies at the Ministry of Health Headquarters.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on sustainable procurement and its policy implementation. This chapter provides an empirical review segmented by global, regional, and local studies. The chapter further highlights the theories underpinning the study, a conceptual framework and the identified gaps in the literature.

2.1 Non-Empirical review

2.1.1. Financial constraints

Empirical research from a variety of developing nation contexts supports the idea that financial limitations have a significant impact on how sustainable procurement regulations are implemented.

2.1.2 Government Parastatals in Kenya

A detailed study of sustainable procurement in Kenyan government parastatals (the National Gender and Equality Commission) highlighted cost as a significant barrier. High prices of sustainable products, inadequate financial resources, and budget constraints were reported to limit effective implementation. Procurement units often resorted to least-cost bidding due to insufficient budgets, despite recognising the long-term benefits of sustainable procurement. The study further noted that financial limitations were coupled with organisational resource capacity issues, such as a lack of expertise and insufficient training (Chelangat *et al.*, 2015).

2.1.3 SMEs and Informal Suppliers in Tanzania

Research focusing on green procurement in Morogoro Urban, Tanzania, revealed that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and informal suppliers faced significant financial constraints. These actors struggled with higher upfront costs for green technologies, limited access to Finance, and the absence of subsidies. Large firms demonstrated a better capacity to implement sustainable procurement due to more favourable financial and institutional support, whereas SMEs reported that the cost of green equipment and materials was often unaffordable (Libuhi, 2025).

2.1.4 Factors Limiting Adoption

Limited adoption rates were caused by a lack of knowledge about green procurement policies as well as financial limitations, particularly among SMEs and unofficial suppliers. Investment in sustainable procurement techniques was discouraged by high cost perceptions and financial concerns. Policy incentives and NGO partnerships that helped reduce cost pressures were more beneficial to the formal sectors, but they rarely reached the informal sectors (Libuhi, 2025; Chelangat et al., 2015).

2.1.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Pressure

2.1.2.1 Stakeholder Pressure as a Driver

Numerous studies highlight the pressure that organizations face to implement sustainable procurement processes from both internal and external stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, regulators, and civil society. This pressure makes it legitimate for businesses to match procurement with social and environmental sustainability objectives. According to study by Jakhar et al. (2019), for instance, stakeholder pressure directly affects circular economy practices, with innovation capacities mediating this link. This suggests that stakeholder demands can hasten innovations in sustainable procurement.

2.1.2.2 Role of Stakeholder Engagement

Implementing sustainable procurement is made easier by fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing through meaningful involvement between suppliers, customers, and regulatory agencies. Across the supply chain, successful participation increases accountability, transparency, and trust, which helps businesses better satisfy sustainability requirements. According to Mangla et al. (2017, 2018), effective green supply chain management in emerging economies is supported by supplier development programs and two-way communication.

2.1.3 Regulatory compliance

Several important findings are revealed by an empirical literature assessment on regulatory compliance as an environmental factor influencing the adoption of sustainable procurement policies.

One of the most important aspects of the legal and regulatory framework that affects the use of sustainable procurement is regulatory compliance. Effective implementation might be hampered by ambiguous procurement regulations, subjective interpretations of these laws, and misalignment with procurement oversight objectives, according to studies conducted in Kenyan government parastatals (Nasiche and Ngugi, 2014). Compliance with environmental legislation and policies is necessary to promote and institutionalise sustainable procurement, yet existing laws often offer only weak references or unclear guidance on the topic (Chelangat *et al.*, 2015).

Organisational culture plays a vital role in compliance processes. With changes in regulatory reforms and community expectations, organisations that enforce rules, conformity, and technical attention within a hierarchical culture tend to achieve higher compliance levels (Lisa, 2010). However, resistance to change in public sector organisations may adversely affect the implementation of sustainability policies (Parker and Bradley, 2005). Thus, compliance is not only a matter of regulation but also intertwined with organisational culture and leadership.

Moreover, studies suggest that familiarity and awareness of procurement rules among both purchasers and suppliers directly influence compliance levels. Empirical research has highlighted several significant problems, including supplier opposition, unclear evaluation methods, and a lack of training and information regarding the environmental implications of products (Bouwer *et al.*, 2006; Brammer & Walker, 2007). Thus, information systems and operational tools are essential for converting legal requirements into efficient green procurement procedures.

Lastly, institutional theory emphasizes that by adhering to legal requirements, cultural norms, and public expectations, regulatory compliance aids organizations in gaining legitimacy. Sustainable procurement methods are largely driven by government regulations, which put pressure on businesses to meet stakeholder expectations and environmental standards (Glover, 2014).

Public Sector Organisations (PSOs) are considered centres of production and consumption that procure goods, services, and works of all kinds. Public procurement accounts for an average of 12 per cent of GDP in OECD countries and up to 30 per cent of GDP in many developing countries (OECD, 2015). Procurement and supply operations by PSOs significantly contribute to excessive energy consumption, environmental pollution, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Agyepong and Nhamo, 2017; Roman, 2017). Public procurement, a crucial government activity that promotes economic growth, is an essential tool for governments to satisfy the demands of their citizens while

furthering economic, environmental, and social goals, such as buying from local and minority-owned companies (Nyantakyi, 2019). However, pursuing these difficult goals makes the procurement process more complicated and enhances stakeholder participation in the policies that direct public sector procurement decisions (Stritch et al., 2020). . For example, the Task Force on Procurement and the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Procurement are stakeholders that exercise oversight and involvement in developing sustainable public procurement (SPP) policies, as well as other interventions aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, efficiency, and economy in public procurement (Adjei-Bamfo, 2019). Thus, the willingness, involvement, support, and dedication of all stakeholders—both inside and outside the implementing units—are essential for the successful implementation of sustainable procurement (Qazi & Appolloni, 2022).

2.2 Empirical review

2.2.1 Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

The importance of global legal and policy frameworks in promoting sustainable procurement is emphasized by academics. According to studies, despite the fact that many nations have implemented sustainability laws, obstacles still exist because of gaps in policy enforcement, unclear standards, and a lack of consistency with procurement priorities. For example, despite the existence of regulatory frameworks, Botswana's public sector is subject to policy restrictions such as poor leadership support, fiscal rigidity, and inconsistent interpretation of environmental criteria in procurement rules (Kuruneru, 2025). This implies that effective global sustainable procurement requires more than just the existence of policies; it also requires their clarity, leadership support, and alignment with national agendas (Kuruneru, 2025).

2.2.2 Governance and Organisational Factors

Numerous scholarly works emphasize the critical roles that organizational capabilities, leadership, and governance structures have in promoting sustainable procurement globally. Critical obstacles include institutional inertia and a lack of cooperation from upper management. Sustainable initiatives are frequently undermined by the competition between traditional price-focused procurement procedures and the enforcement of sustainability targets (Chelangat et al., 2015). Furthermore, institutional theory highlights the need for extensive organizational change to firmly integrate sustainability into procurement cultures across the globe by explaining how

formal regulations and informal norms within organizations impact the adoption of sustainable procurement (Chelangat et al., 2015).

2.2.3 Supply Chain Collaboration and Stakeholder Pressure

Another widely accepted viewpoint emphasizes how supply chain cooperation and external stakeholder pressures—like those from customers and regulators—help to promote sustainable procurement. Organizational environmental performance is strengthened through supplier partnership, which includes screening and evaluating suppliers according to sustainability criteria. Businesses are being pushed toward sustainable buying strategies by regulatory and customer demands. In order to support environmental and social sustainability in international procurement, this perspective emphasizes the significance of integrative approaches engaging various supply chain actors and stakeholders (Ageron et al., 2012; Kuruneri, 2025).

2.2.4 Regional-Africa

According to Grandia et al. (2016), organizational elements including top management support, knowledge, and dedication have a significant impact on the extent of sustainable procurement implementation at the regional level. Their study, which was carried out in conjunction with the national government of the Netherlands, emphasizes how important individual actors' active participation and organizational commitment are to the advancement of sustainable procurement in regional public sectors. An environment that facilitates the successful implementation of sustainable procurement policies is created through leadership engagement and the development of internal expertise.

Scholars emphasize the significance of a robust policy environment backed by legislative mandates from a South African perspective. While many South African provinces and municipalities are making progress in sustainable procurement, the literature points out that there are issues with the inconsistency between local implementation frameworks and national legislation. For example, due to uneven institutional capacity and the lack of a clear institutional champion, such as the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer, national policies emphasizing sustainable public procurement (SPP) are recognized but not always fully operationalized at sub-national levels (Le Roux et al., 2023). This implies that implementing regional sustainable

procurement calls for targeted institutional support and capacity building that is in line with local governance in addition to policies.

Stoffel et al. (2019) offer a comparison of sustainable public procurement practices in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. They emphasize that the prioritization of social, environmental, and economic sustainability aspects is influenced by regional settings. In contrast to European regions, where environmental concerns are more prevalent, social factors predominate in sustainable procurement practices in sub-Saharan Africa. This viewpoint calls for a balanced, comprehensive strategy that incorporates multifaceted sustainability concerns and promotes regional adaption of sustainable procurement strategies that match socioeconomic realities and sectoral goals.

2.2.5 Local -Zambia

With the goal of lowering environmental impacts like greenhouse gas emissions and chemical pollution through better procurement practices, the Sustainable Health in Procurement Project (SHiPP), funded by UNDP and Health Care Without Harm, has assisted Zambia in developing national sustainable procurement policies and building capacity for implementation in the health sector (UNDP/Health Care Without Harm, 2023).

The Ministry of Health in Zambia has attempted to adopt computerized procurement systems, however there are still issues with their efficacy and adherence to procurement regulations, which leads to inefficiencies that have a detrimental influence on the provision of healthcare. Implementing sustainable procurement policy is hampered by the Ministry's and many other organizations' noncompliance with procurement legislation (Nambela & Mutono-Mwanza, 2024).

The Zambian government encourages outsourcing and private sector involvement in health supply chains, which have enhanced service delivery and procurement efficiency. This is consistent with national policies that support sustainable procurement practices in the health sector, such as Vision 2030 and the National Health Strategic Plan (USAID, 2014).

2.3 Theoretical review (framework)

2.3.1 Triple Bottom Line Theory

The application of sustainable procurement strategies, which take economic, social, and environmental factors into account when making procurement decisions, is strongly linked to the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concept. Under the TBL theory, sustainable procurement incorporates ethical labor practices, community involvement, and environmental stewardship into supply chain management, going beyond conventional cost and quality criteria.

Researchers stress that TBL-aligned sustainable procurement promotes better supplier relationships built on mutual trust and sustainability objectives, leading to increased transparency and brand reputation (Akhuewu, 2024). This strategy helps businesses achieve social justice, revenue growth, cost savings, and a smaller environmental impact all at the same time (Akhuewu, 2024). Additionally, procurement plays a crucial role in facilitating TBL by attaining long-term financial success, encouraging inclusion through varied supplier participation, and optimizing sourcing methods that prioritize low emissions and renewable resources (Scanmarket, 2025).

In order to deeply integrate sustainability into procurement processes for comprehensive value creation, the TBL framework encourages organizations to establish explicit sustainability targets, regularly evaluate suppliers' sustainability performance, and include stakeholders (Akhuewu, 2024). It improves supply chain innovation and resilience even more, making it possible to address urgent global issues.

2.3.2 Institutional Theory

While acknowledging that resources are also required, institutional theory offers a theoretical lens through which researchers can identify and examine influences that support the survival and legitimacy of organizational practices, including elements like culture, social environment, regulation (including the legal environment), tradition and history, and economic incentives (Baumol et al., 2009; (Baumol et al., 2009; Brunton et al., 2010; Hirsch, 1975; Lai et al., 2006; Roy, 1997). Legitimacy here refers to the adoption of sustainable practices that stakeholders perceive as proper and appropriate (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Institutional theory is traditionally concerned with how groups and organisations better secure their positions and legitimacy by conforming to the rules (such as regulatory structures, governmental agencies, laws, courts, professions, and scripts and other societal and cultural practices that exert conformance pressures) and norms of the institutional environment (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 1991; Meyer and Rowan, 1991; Scott, 2007). According to Institutional Theory, external social, political, and

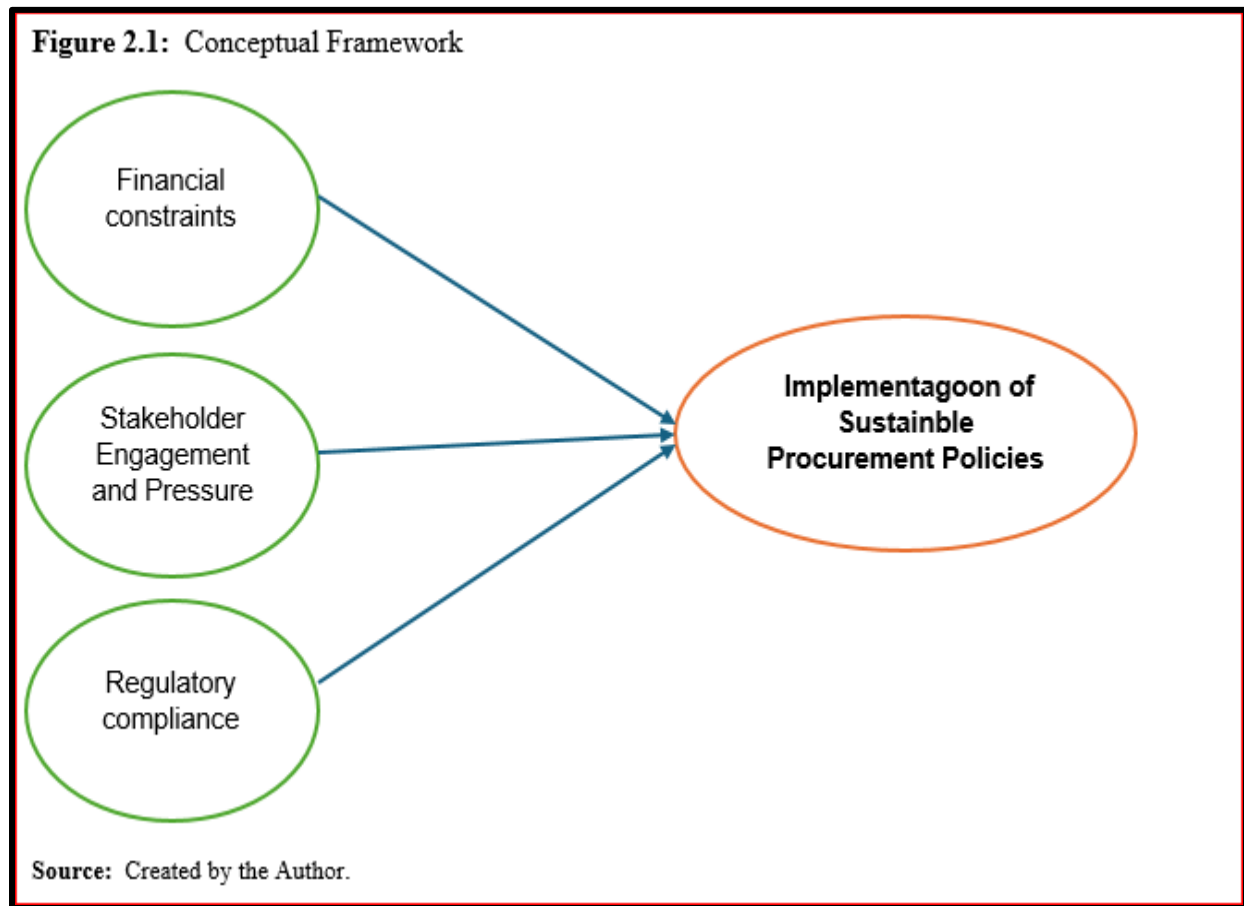
economic pressures influence firms' strategies and organisational decision-making as they seek to adopt legitimate practices or legitimise them in the eyes of other stakeholders (Jennings and Zandbergen, 1995; North, 1990).

2.3.3 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory (ST) is a theory of business ethics and organisational management (Schaltegger et al., 2019). According to ST, organisations aim to generate multiple benefits for different stakeholders (i.e., groups and individuals who can affect or be affected by the organisation—e.g., civil society, communities, customers, employees, governments, shareholders, suppliers) (Freeman, 1984). The origin of ST can be traced to the 1960s, when Stanford Research Institute first proposed the concept of stakeholders, emphasising that organisations need the support not only of their shareholders but also of their stakeholders to exist and thrive. Therefore, a clear imperative emerged between maximising dividends for shareholders and satisfying stakeholders' needs. However, it was not until the early 2000s that ST research began to appear prominently in top business journals (Laplume et al., 2008). Since then, the body of knowledge on ST has more than doubled, as evidenced in the present review. Therefore, ST can be characterized as a theory that (i) encourages organizations to recognize and take into account their stakeholders, who may be internal or external to the organization; (ii) promotes understanding and managing stakeholder needs, wants, and demands; and thus (iii) represents a holistic and responsible framework that goes beyond the focus of shareholders in decision-making processes. This, in turn, (iv) enables organizations to be strategic, maximize their value creation, and safeguard their long-term success and sustainability.

This study and research are more focused on the triple bottom line theory, which encompasses social aspects that stakeholders can focus on. This environmental aspect focuses on the impact of procurement activities on the environment, the existing regulations, and how they can be improved and effectively implemented. It also considers the economic aspect, examining financial constraints as a factor influencing sustainable procurement policies.

2.4 Conceptual framework



The conceptual framework examines the factors that influence the implementation of sustainable procurement policies in a particular context. The practical implementation of sustainable procurement policies is the dependent variable, meaning it is the outcome the framework wants to explain or predict.

The independent variables are the factors that influence the implementation of sustainable procurement policies. These are the financial constraints, stakeholder engagement and pressure, and regulatory compliance. These variables are expected to have a direct or indirect impact on the dependent variable.

The arrow from financial constraints illustrates how the independent variable, representing financial constraints, can act as a challenge to the implementation of sustainable procurement policies.

The arrow from Stakeholder engagement and pressure influences the implementation of sustainable procurement policies. An example of this is the Ministry's engagement with suppliers on sound, sustainable procurement practices.

The regulatory compliance arrow, in relation to existing regulations, influences the successful implementation of sustainable procurement practices. An example is the existing regulations governing suppliers' adherence to environmental standards.

The conceptual framework identifies key factors that influence the implementation of sustainable procurement. However, it may also have limitations or gaps, such as failing to include other potential independent variables that could influence the effective implementation of sustainable procurement.

2.5 Gaps in the literature

This literature review provides an overview and insights into factors influencing the implementation of sustainable procurement policies. It has been demonstrated that many countries have widely adopted sustainable procurement practices to enhance the efficiency, transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of public procurement, while also reducing corruption and improving public service delivery. However, it has also shown that implementing sustainable procurement is challenging, especially in developing countries such as Zambia, where various technological, organisational, environmental, social, and economic factors may hinder its adoption and implementation. Therefore, it is essential to assess the factors influencing the implementation of sustainable procurement policies and their impact on procurement outcomes and performance at the Ministry of Health headquarters.

Although there is literature on the implementation of sustainable procurement at the local, regional, and global levels, there are a number of gaps and areas that need more research::

2.5.1 Financial constraints

According to the examined research, including those by Chelangat et al. (2015), leadership, organizational capabilities, and governance frameworks are essential for promoting sustainable procurement globally. Critical obstacles include institutional inertia and a lack of cooperation from upper management. Sustainable projects are frequently undermined by the competition

between traditional price-focused procurement techniques and the enforcement of sustainability targets.

The aforementioned review makes it clear that government structure, organizational capabilities, and leadership are essential for promoting sustainable procurement practices. In Zambia, organizations like the Ministry of Health face substantial obstacles in their ability to adopt sustainable procurement practices, and they prioritize traditional price-focused procurement methods over sustainable ones.

2.5.2 Regulatory compliance

The studies reviewed, including those done by Grandia *et al.* (2016), Le Roux *et al.* (2023), and Nambela & Mutono-Mwanza (2024). These studies indicate and emphasise the adoption of sound, environmentally sustainable procurement practices and the need for institutional involvement in the operationalisation of these practices

Based on the above review of research, it was identified that there are no stringent laws, fines, or regulatory frameworks in place to ensure the proper, efficient, and effective adoption and implementation of sustainable procurement policies.

2.5.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Strong stakeholder participation is emphasized in the examined studies, such as those by Ageron *et al.* (2012) and Kuruneru (2025), due to the crucial responsibilities that suppliers and customers play in the effective adoption of sustainable procurement policies.

The aforementioned review makes clear that there is a gap in the current frameworks and agreements that guarantee effective stakeholder engagement with regard to the implementation of sustainable procurement policies and the crucial role that stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, and regulatory bodies, can play in their successful implementation.

From the review of the above literature, it has been identified that there is little research which has been done concerning sustainable procurement, particularly at the ministerial level, and less focus has been put on ensuring the implementation of sustainable procurement policies which focus on the environmental, social and economic aspects of procurement activities and their impacts on these factors.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures to be employed to achieve the stated research objectives. It particularly outlines the study approach, design, study population, sample size to be used, sampling techniques and the method of collecting and analysing the data.

3.1 Research Approach

The study will employ a mixed-methods research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to achieve a holistic understanding of the research problem. In order to provide a comprehensive grasp of the research problem, the study will use a mixed-methods research technique, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collecting and analysis. In order to collect primary data from a varied sample, standardized questionnaires will be distributed as part of this multimodal strategy. A combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions will be included in these surveys in order to get numerical data while still permitting complex answers. Additionally, In-depth key informant interviews with chosen participants who have pertinent knowledge or experience pertaining to the research issue will also be carried out. The goal of these interviews is to offer deeper, contextual insights that might not be revealed by quantitative data alone. Secondary data will be obtained from respectable organizations and institutions to complement this primary data collection, guaranteeing a solid basis for comparison and analysis. This thorough methodological framework will enable a thorough investigation of the research questions, resulting in a deeper, more in-depth comprehension of the topic.

3.2 Study Design

The research study thoroughly explores the identified problem, presents the findings, draws informed conclusions, and proposes actionable policy recommendations. This approach or research design uses both a descriptive and a case study design which does a comparison of different literature done by different scholars on multiple cases with regard to the area of research and it fits the study because it provides an analysis and comparison as it helps identify gaps in research and looks at different cases with regard to sustainable procurement and is particularly advantageous given the constrained timeline for conducting the research, as it enables the efficient and systematic collection of high-quality qualitative and quantitative data in real-world

environments. The research design used was a case study and a disruptive design, which answered questions about what, why, and how the problem was identified and provided recommendations.

By integrating qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups, the study will capture rich, nuanced insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. Simultaneously, quantitative techniques, including surveys and statistical analysis, will provide measurable data that can be generalised across a broader population. This dual approach not only enhances the validity of the findings but also fosters a more holistic understanding of the research topic, enabling the formulation of well-rounded conclusions and tailored policy recommendations that address the core issues identified.

3.3 Study Population

The study will focus on Ministry of Health employees who either participate in or are potential participants in the procurement of goods and services, such as medicines and drugs, for public institutions, such as Zamsa. This category comprises employees from different departments, including the procurement department, Finance, and other departments, as well as Ministry of Health workers. The population will be confined to the Ministry of Health headquarters in Lusaka District. This study's target population was 44 Ministry of Health workers which comprised of workers from procurement, health services, administration and finance. The study population was selected to provide adequate and valuable information for the research/investigation, from which the study sample was obtained. These employees from various departments will offer insightful information about how stakeholder pressure, financial limitations, and regulatory compliance affect the Ministry headquarters' ability to successfully implement sustainable procurement strategies.

3.4 Sample Size

Yamane (1967) offers a simplified formula for determining sample sizes. The sample sizes will be determined using this formula, as indicated by the equation below. A 95% confidence level and $\alpha = 0.05$ are assumed for determining the sample size. Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision. Taking N to be 44, the total number of employees at the Ministry of Health headquarters in Lusaka.

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

$$n = \frac{44}{1 + 44(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{44}{1.1.11}$$

$$n = 39.639$$

Therefore, the sample size, rounded to the nearest whole number, is **40**

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, a comprehensive list of respondents will be compiled, and those working at the Ministry of Health Headquarters in Lusaka will be selected to constitute the sampling frame. In a linear sequence, the study included every 5th SME from the sampling frame. Kth element = N/n , where N equals the sampling frame and n equals the target sample. Therefore, $Kth = 44/1.11 = 40$. An appropriate list of respondents will be drawn from the said frame. This study, therefore, proposes using a systematic proportional stratified sampling technique to obtain the stated sample size.

3.6 Data Collection/Instruments

The study will adopt a comprehensive approach by using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect detailed data. Primary data will be collected through in-depth interviews with key informants from the relevant Ministry of Health. This will involve open discussions to gain nuanced insights, as well as the administration of structured questionnaires to obtain specific information. Additionally, secondary data will be collected from a variety of documents in relation to the research area, providing a well-rounded view of the research topic.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data will undergo thorough analysis using both Microsoft Word and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16. This combined approach will enable the creation of a comprehensive range of statistical outputs, including detailed frequency tables, informative pie charts, illustrative graphs, and clear bar charts. To enhance understanding of the data, a descriptive study methodology will be employed in the analysis. This will enable a detailed exploration of patterns and trends in the dataset, ultimately offering valuable insights into the research subject.

3.8 Issues of Reliability and Validity

The proposed mixed-methods approach provides a consistent measure of study variables in both basic and applied research. It utilises both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. Therefore, the approach is very reliable, as it consistently shows high consistency under the same circumstances. Furthermore, the proposed method has consistently measured phenomena with high accuracy; therefore, it is anticipated that the results will accurately reflect the real properties, characteristics, and variations in the physical or social world. Thus, all the measurements are expected to be valid.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The research study will strictly adhere to the highest ethical standards throughout its conduct. The research is committed to ensuring voluntary participation, meaning that all individuals will engage in the study willingly. It emphasises the importance of informed consent by providing clear information about the research and ensuring that consent is obtained before participation. Anonymity and confidentiality will be protected to safeguard participants' identities and data. To reduce potential harm, the study aims to minimise any risks participants might face. The research design ensures scientific validity and focuses on answering important research questions. Fair subject selection will be maintained to prevent bias in participant recruitment. Additionally, the research will undergo an independent review by an impartial body to verify its integrity. Throughout the process, there will be a strong emphasis on always treating participants with dignity and respect.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings from data collected for an assessment of the factors influencing the implementation of sustainable procurement, a case study of the Ministry of Health. The data was collected through questionnaires distributed to 40 respondents from the Ministry of Health Headquarters. The analysis consists of both descriptive and inferential statistics, processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. This chapter will also describe the demographic profile of the respondents, present a detailed analysis aligned with the research questions, and conclude with a discussion that aligns with the key findings.

4.1 Response Rate and Data Screening

In the study, 40 questionnaires were distributed, all of which were completed and returned, resulting in a 100% response rate. This outstanding response rate significantly boosts the reliability and representativeness of the findings. The sample size of 44 was calculated using the Yamane (1967) formula for a finite population, ensuring a 95% confidence level and providing a statistically meaningful representation of the target population.

Data screening was performed in SPSS to identify missing values and outliers, and to assess the reliability of the collected data. The results showed that the data were complete and suitable for analysis. The internal consistency of the measurement scales was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with all values exceeding the accepted threshold of 0.7, indicating high reliability.

4.2 Data Presentation

This Section presents the various data collected from the forty respondents who participated in this research.

Figure 4.1: Gender Composition

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	22	55	55.0

Female	18	45	100.0
Total	40	100	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.1 above shows the gender distribution for a sample of 40 individuals. The data indicate that 22 are male (55%) and 18 are female (45%) in the sample.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24	2	5	5.0
25-34	14	35	40.0
35-44	16	40	80.0
45-54	5	12.5	92.5
55 +	3	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.2 shows the age distribution of a sample of 40 individuals. It indicates that 2 individuals are aged between 18-24, representing 5% of the sample; 14 are aged 25-34, which is 35%; 16 are aged 35-44, making up 40%; 5 individuals fall in the 45-54 age group, representing 12.5%; and 3 individuals are 55 years and above, accounting for 7.5% of the sample.

Table 4.3: Level of Education

Level of education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Diploma	8	20	20.0
Bachelor's Degree	24	60	80.0
Master's degree	8	20	100.0

Total	40	100.0
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Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.3 shows the educational levels of a sample of 40 individuals. It indicates that 8 individuals hold a Diploma, representing 20% of the sample; 24 individuals hold a bachelor's degree, accounting for 60%; and 8 individuals hold a master's degree, accounting for 20%.

Table 4.4: Departments for Respondents

Department	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Procurement	12	30	30.0
Finance	10	25	55.0
Health Services	9	22.5	77.5
Administration	9	22.5	100.0
Total	40	100	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.4 shows the distribution of respondents across different departments in a sample of 40 individuals. It indicates that 12 individuals work in the Procurement department, representing 30% of the sample; 10 individuals are in Finance, representing 25%; 9 individuals are in Health Services, representing 22.5%; and 9 individuals are in administration, also representing 22.5% of the sample.

Table 4.5: Financial Constraints/Economic Factor

How would you rate the adequacy of the financial resources allocated to sustainable procurement activities?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
very adequate	20	50.0	50.0
Adequate	10	25.0	75.0

Neutral	10	25.0	100.0
Total	40	100.00	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.6 presents a frequency distribution of responses to a question, with each response category showing the number of respondents (frequency), the percentage they represent out of the total, and the cumulative percentage, which is a running total of the percentages. Specifically, the response "very adequate" accounts for 50.0% of the respondents, "adequate" makes up 25.0%, and "neutral" also comprises 25.0%, with the cumulative percentages indicating that after "very adequate" responses, 50.0% of the total is covered, after adding "adequate" responses, 75.0% is covered, and including "neutral," the total reaches 100.0%.

Figure 4.6: Financial Support/Sustainable Procurement

To what extent does the lack of financial support limit sustainable procurement implementation in your department?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
To a very great extent	15	37.5	37.5
To a great extent	12	30.0	67.5
To a moderate extent	8	20.0	87.5
To a small extent	4	10.0	97.5
Not at all	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.6 presents a frequency distribution of responses to a survey question, with five categories as shown. The lack of financial support limits the implementation of sustainable procurement. It shows the number of respondents for each category (frequency), the percentage each category represents among total respondents, and the cumulative percentage, which is the running total. Specifically, 37.5% of respondents answered "To a very great extent," 30.0% "To a great extent,"

20.0% "To a moderate extent," 10.0% "To a small extent," and 2.5% "Not at all," with the cumulative percentage reaching 100%.

Figure 4.7: Financial planning integrated/Sustainable Procurement

Is financial planning integrated into sustainable procurement implementation?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	12	30.0	30.0
Agree	16	40.0	70.0
Neutral	3	7.5	77.5
Disagree	7	17.5	95.0
Strongly disagree	2	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.7 presents a frequency distribution of responses to a survey question on financial planning integrated into sustainable procurement implementation. It shows the number of respondents for each category (frequency), the percentage each category represents among total respondents, and the cumulative percentage, which is the running total. Specifically, 30.0% of respondents answered "Strongly agree," 40.0% "Agree," 7.5% "Neutral," 17.5% "Disagree," and 5.0% "Strongly disagree," with the cumulative percentage reaching 100.0%.

4.1.3 Section C: Regulatory Compliance Environmental Factor

Table 4.8: Regulatory Bodies/sustainability standards

How effective do you find regulatory bodies in enforcing sustainability standards in procurement?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very effective	4	10.0	10.0
Effective	15	37.5	47.5
Neutral	10	25.0	72.5
Ineffective	9	22.5	95.0
Very ineffective	2	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.8 presents a frequency distribution of responses to a survey question with five categories on how effective respondents find regulatory bodies in enforcing sustainability standards in procurement. It shows the number of respondents for each category (frequency), the percentage each category represents among total respondents, and the cumulative percentage, which is the running total.. Specifically, 10.0% of respondents answered "Very effective," 37.5% "Effective," 25.0% "Neutral," 22.5% "Ineffective," and 5.0% "Very ineffective," with the cumulative percentage reaching 100.0%.

Table 4.9: Training / Regulatory Compliance

Does the Ministry provide training on regulatory compliance requirements?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	3	7.5	7.5
Agree	25	62.5	70.0
Neutral	5	12.5	82.5

Disagree	5	12.5	95.0
Strongly disagree	2	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.9 represents a frequency distribution of responses to a survey question with five categories. It shows the number of respondents for each category (frequency), the percentage each category represents among total respondents, and the cumulative percentage, which is the running total. Specifically, 7.5% of respondents answered "Strongly agree," 62.5% "Agree," 12.5% "Neutral," 12.5% "Disagree," and 5.0% "Strongly disagree," with the cumulative percent reaching 100.0%.

Table 4.10: Current regulations support or hinder innovation/ sustainable procurement

Do current regulations support or hinder innovation in sustainable procurement?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Support	23	57.5	57.5
Neutral	15	37.5	95.0
Hinder	2	5.0	100.0
Total	40	97.6	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.10 represents a frequency distribution of responses to a survey question. It shows the number of respondents for each category (frequency), the percentage each category represents among total respondents, and the cumulative percentage, which is the running total. Specifically, 57.5% of respondents answered "Support," 37.5% were "Neutral," and 5.0% indicated "Hinder," with the cumulative percentage reaching 100%.

4.1.4 Section D: Stakeholder Engagement and Pressure Social Factor

Table 4.11: Stakeholder Feedback and Planning/Sustainable Procurement

How often do stakeholders provide constructive feedback and get involved in the planning and implementation of sustainable procurement practices?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always	3	7.5	7.5
Often	15	37.5	45.0
Sometimes	18	45.0	90.0
Rarely	4	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.11 presents a frequency distribution of responses to a survey question on how often stakeholders provide constructive feedback and get involved in the planning and implementation of sustainable procurement practices. It shows the number of respondents for each category (frequency), the percentage each category represents among total respondents, and the cumulative percentage, which is the running total. Specifically, 7.5% answered "Always," 37.5% "Often," 45.0% "Sometimes," and 10.0% "Rarely," with the cumulative percentage reaching 100%.

Table 4.12: Stakeholder Pressure/ Sustainable Procurement

Does stakeholder pressure accelerate the implementation timelines for sustainable procurement?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	17	42.5	42.5
Agree	14	35.0	77.5
Neutral	5	12.5	90.0
Disagree	2	5.0	95.0
Strongly disagree	2	5.0	100.0

Total	40	100..0
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Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.12 presents a frequency distribution of responses to a survey question on how stakeholder pressure accelerates sustainable procurement implementation timelines, with five categories. It shows the number of respondents for each category (frequency), the percentage each category represents among total respondents, and the cumulative percentage, which is the running total. Specifically, 42.5% of respondents answered "Strongly agree," 35.0% "Agree," 12.5% "Neutral," 5.0% "Disagree," and 5.0% "Strongly disagree," with the cumulative percentage reaching 100%.

Table 4.13: Mechanisms for Resolving Conflict /stakeholder interests

Are there mechanisms for resolving conflicts arising from stakeholder interests?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	2	5.0	5.0
Agree	26	65.0	70.0
Neutral	8	20.0	90.0
Disagree	3	7.5	97.5
Strongly disagree	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 4.13 presents a frequency distribution of responses to a survey question with five categories regarding whether mechanisms exist to resolve conflicts arising from stakeholder interests. It shows the number of respondents in each category (frequency), the percentage of total respondents represented by each category (per cent), and the cumulative percentage, which is the running total of the percentages. Specifically, 5.0% of respondents "Strongly agree," 65.0% "Agree," 20.0% "Neutral," 7.5% "Disagree," and 2.5% "Strongly disagree," with the cumulative percent reaching 100%.

4.1.5 Section E: open-ended questions

Financial Constraints and Planning

Q1. *Describe specific challenges your department faces due to financial constraints in implementing sustainable procurement.*

“The primary challenge is the higher initial cost of environmentally certified or ethically sourced products compared to conventional alternatives. This often leads procurement to choose the cheaper, non-sustainable option to meet strict budget caps.. Additionally, we struggle to provide workers with specialized training on lifecycle costing and sustainability criteria, and we don't have enough money for the pilot programs that are required to test sustainable products.”

Q2. *What is your view on the role of financial planning in improving sustainable procurement outcomes?*

“It is essential to plan your finances. Results would be greatly enhanced by including sustainability objectives early in the budget cycle, switching from initial price to Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) or lifecycle costing, and setting aside ring-fenced monies for sustainable projects. Sustainable procurement is still an ideal rather than a reality in the absence of focused, strategic financial planning.”

Q3. *Has funding been limited for implementing sustainable procurement, and how has this impacted your department's sustainable supplier selection process?*

“Indeed, a significant obstacle is a lack of financial resources. It immediately affects supplier selection by making us give preference to the lowest bidder over vendors with strong sustainability credentials (e.g., ISO 14001, ethical labor standards).”

Regulatory Compliance and Training

Q4. *In your opinion, what are the main barriers related to regulatory compliance that affect sustainable procurement implementation?*

“The main barriers are often a lack of specific, actionable national regulations for sustainable procurement in the public sector, and sometimes, conflicting policies where traditional

procurement rules (focusing on lowest cost) undermine sustainability requirements. Furthermore, regulatory bodies' enforcement is often perceived as weak or inconsistent.

Q5. How can the Ministry better support staff training and awareness for environmental regulatory compliance?

"The Ministry must establish regular, required, and specialized training programs on environmental regulatory compliance, with a particular emphasis on energy efficiency in acquired items and hazardous waste management. This instruction ought to be hands-on and incorporate health-related case studies, perhaps in conjunction with environmental organizations.."

Stakeholder Engagement and Pressure

Q6. Please share any experiences on how stakeholder engagement has impacted sustainable procurement implementation in your department.

"Successful pilots, like the move to reusable medical supplies, have been made possible by interacting with end users (Health Services employees), whose input guaranteed the preservation of clinical safety. On the other hand, we have accelerated the phase-out of several non-sustainable materials due to pressure from outside NGOs, which has served as a catalyst for change.."

Q7. In your experience, what strategies have been most effective in managing stakeholder pressure?

"Establishing formal, recorded involvement structures (such as quarterly sustainability committees) and proactive communication regarding the how and why of sustainable buying decisions are the most effective strategies. This changes the dynamic from merely responding to pressure to working together toward common objectives.."

Q8. What improvements could be made to current procurement practices to better align with sustainability principles?

"A clear supplier code of conduct that incorporates social and ethical standards should be established, along with mandatory sustainability criteria in all tender documents and a shift away from the lowest-price-only evaluation by giving non-cost factors like environmental performance (such as energy efficiency and waste minimization) more weight.."

Q9. Please provide any suggestions to improve coordination among the departments involved in sustainable procurement.

“Procurement, Finance, Administration, and Health Services should all be represented on a high-level, specialized Sustainable Procurement Working Group. In addition to ensuring that departmental procurement plans are linked and in line with the Ministry's overarching sustainability goals, this group would formalize communication and standardize reporting measures..”

Q10. What additional resources or support would help you implement sustainable procurement more effectively?

“To formally approve and defend the use of life cycle costing over basic initial price evaluation, we require a centralized database of pre-qualified sustainable suppliers, access to professional consulting for complex sustainable tenders (such as large infrastructure projects), and management support..”

Therefore, the following analysis focuses on the available methodological context and provides a comprehensive Thematic and Interpretive Analysis of the Open-Ended Questions (Section E), which directly addresses the three research objectives.

General Conclusion

The qualitative feedback in Section E strongly suggests that the implementation of sustainable procurement at the Ministry of Health, Zambia, is heavily influenced by systemic issues corresponding to all three objectives. An early price bias is caused by financial restrictions (Objective 1). Regulatory compliance is hampered by the absence of explicit, mandated national standards (Objective 2). In order to overcome resistance and inadequate coordination, a formal, cross-functional organization is necessary for stakeholder involvement (Objective 3), which is crucial for institutionalizing change. .

4.3 Discussion of Research Findings

Chapter Four presents primary data collected from Ministry of Health headquarters respondents, reflecting significant empirical insights that address the identified literature gaps:

4.3.1 Financial Constraints

With 37.5% of respondents stating that a lack of financial assistance hinders implementation to a very great extent and 30% to a great amount, the results highlight the inadequate financial resources allotted to sustainable procurement. Despite acknowledging long-term benefits, respondents emphasized that the emphasis on initial cost minimization inhibits sustainable procurement and highlighted difficulties in switching to lifetime costing. This reinforces and solidifies the gap on organizational capacity limitations and financial obstacles discussed in Chapter Two (Chelangat et al., 2015; Libuhi, 2025).

4.3.2 Regulatory Compliance

There were differing opinions on how successful regulatory agencies were, with a sizable percentage believing that enforcement was ineffective or inconsistent. The majority of respondents concurred that in order to incorporate sustainability criteria into procurement procedures, rigorous training and specific legal requirements are necessary. This is consistent with research showing that Zambia's regulatory frameworks are unclear and poorly enforced, which results in non-compliance (Nambela Mutono-Mwanza, 2024; Grandia et al., 2016; Le Roux et al., 2023).

4.3.3 Stakeholder Engagement and Pressure

Only a small percentage of stakeholders reported consistently positive interaction. Internal opposition was identified as an obstacle, and several reported sporadic or infrequent stakeholder feedback. In order to institutionalize cooperation and coordinate departmental efforts, the respondents supported formal organizations like a Sustainable Procurement Working Group. These results support claims made in the literature that successful adoption of sustainable procurement requires robust frameworks for stakeholder participation (Ageron et al., 2012; Kuruneri, 2025).

4.3.4 Holistic Integration of Sustainability Dimensions

According to the qualitative responses, procurement decisions should include mandated sustainability criteria that take social, economic, and environmental factors into account. This echoes the theoretical foundations of the triple bottom line and stakeholder theories covered in Chapter Two, implying that policy and cultural changes are necessary because present practice is still more conventional and cost-focused (Akhuewu, 2024; Schaltegger et al., 2019).

Synthesis and Conceptual Linkage

The primary data in Chapter Four empirically support the literature review's identification of systemic challenges in sustainable procurement implementation in Zambia's public health sector.

There is apparent convergence on three main factors:

Financial constraints often lead to a "lowest price" mentality that diverges from the principles of total cost and lifecycle costing recommended in the existing literature. Furthermore, it is imperative that regulatory frameworks should be strengthened by establishing mandatory environmental and social standards and improving enforcement mechanisms to guarantee compliance. Additionally, formalizing stakeholder engagement through institutional entities can enhance coordination, lower opposition, and maximize cooperative efforts to meet sustainable objectives.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a concise summary of the study's key findings, the conclusions drawn, and the resulting recommendations, all based on the data analysis conducted in Chapter Four. The chapter is structured to directly address the specific objectives outlined in Chapter One, specifically objective 1.4.1, providing a systematic review of how the research questions were answered. Furthermore, the findings are contextualised by comparing them with the theoretical and empirical evidence established in the Literature Review of Chapter Two. The conclusions drawn here fulfil the research's overall aim: to assess the factors influencing the implementation of Sustainable Procurement (SP) at the Ministry of Health (MoH) Headquarters.

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the factors influencing the implementation of Sustainable Procurement (SP) at the Ministry of Health (MoH) headquarters in Zambia. A comprehensive review of the literature showed that the implementation of sustainable procurement and the effectiveness of eGP systems depend on how users interact with them. The study's objectives were clearly defined, and its findings have been summarised accordingly.

It is imperative to there for to note that sustainable procurement can help reduce negative impacts on the environment, improves social aspects such as issues to do with engagement of stake holders such as supplier, community groups, regulatory bodies and pressure from groups like NGOs like worlds health organisation concerned with good health practices, and it can also help organisation move from a cost focus approach to a whole life cycle approach. While sustainable procurement presents numerous benefits, its implementation depends on how regulatory compliance laws and regulations are applied, how financial constraints affect it, and how stakeholder engagement is conducted.

This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the existing literature by assessing the factors influencing the implementation of Sustainable Procurement (SP) at the Ministry of Health (MoH) Headquarters. The research findings have significant implications for policymakers, procurement

practitioners, suppliers, health workers, and other stakeholders involved in procuring related goods, works, and services.

In light of the conclusion above, a more specific discussion aligned with the study objectives is provided below.

Obj 1: To examine how financial constraints as an economic factor influence the implementation of sustainable procurement at the Ministry of Health Headquarters, Zambia.

According to the study's findings, financial resources allocated to sustainable procurement in relation to financial constraints as an economic factor are only partially adequate: 37.5% of respondents indicated that a lack of financial support limits the implementation of sustainable procurement to a very great extent, and 30% to a great extent. Some respondents emphasised that the focus on initial cost minimisation undermines sustainable procurement, despite recognition of long-term benefits, such as adopting whole-life cycle costing, and highlighted challenges in shifting to it. This supports and concretises Chapter Two's gap about financial barriers and organisational capacity constraints (Chelangat et al., 2015; Libuhi, 2025).

Obj 2: To analyse how regulatory compliance as an environmental factor influences the implementation of sustainable procurement at the Ministry of Health Headquarters, Zambia.

According to research findings, mixed perceptions of regulatory bodies' effectiveness were observed: about 10.0% reported it is very effective, about 37.5% reported it is effective, and a significant proportion viewed enforcement as weak or inconsistent. The majority of respondents concurred that in order to incorporate sustainability criteria into procurement procedures, rigorous training and specific legal requirements are necessary. This is consistent with research showing that Zambia's regulatory frameworks are unclear and poorly enforced, which results in non-compliance (Nambela Mutono-Mwanza, 2024; Grandia et al., 2016; Le Roux et al., 2023).

Obj 3: To assess how stakeholder engagement and pressure as a social factor influence the implementation of sustainable procurement at the Ministry of Health Headquarters, Zambia.

According to research findings on stakeholder engagement as a social factor, stakeholder involvement in sustainable procurement varied, with only a minority reporting consistent, constructive engagement: 37.50% of respondents said stakeholders are often engaged, and 45.0% said stakeholders are sometimes engaged. With rates between 7.5% and 10.0% indicating infrequent stakeholder feedback, many reported consistently. One major obstacle identified was internal reluctance. In order to institutionalize cooperation and coordinate departmental efforts, the respondents recommended formal organizations like a Sustainable Procurement Working Group. These results support claims made in the literature that successful adoption of sustainable procurement requires robust stakeholder involvement frameworks (Ageron et al., 2012; Kuruneri, 2025).

5.2 Summary

The study found a relationship between the literature and the research findings, based on the three research objectives, and the following conclusions were drawn.

Firstly, based on objective 1, it was concluded that financial constraints are indeed partially adequate, which poses a barrier to the successful implementation of sustainable procurement. There is a need for the Ministry of Health to move from a price mentality to a whole-life-cycle costing mentality, considering factors beyond price.

Secondly, based on objective 2 in relation to regulatory compliance, it was found that regulatory bodies are effective in monitoring compliance but are very weak in terms of enforcement of compliance with environmental standards, as it is seen to be weak, and there is a need to establish formal training and precise regulatory requirements to embed sustainability criteria into procurement processes.

Finally, the study concluded that stakeholders are sometimes engaged in getting feedback concerning sustainable procurement implementation, and there is need to ensure that internal resistance which acts as a significant barrier to implementation of sustainable procurement is dealt

with by managing the change management process and that formal mechanisms, such as a Sustainable Procurement Working Group, to institutionalising collaboration and align departmental efforts are implemented.

5.3 Recommendations

Building on the conclusion drawn from the present study, the following recommendations are put forth to enhance the implementation of sustainable procurements at the Ministry of Health headquarters:

1. Financial Planning and Resource Allocation by establishing dedicated budget lines and ring-fenced funds to support sustainable procurement initiatives, incorporating total cost of ownership principles in budgeting.
2. Improvement of the Regulatory Framework by working together with regulatory organizations to create required sustainability standards and improve enforcement strategies. Provide procurement employees with frequent, required training on sustainability and compliance standards.
3. Institutionalization of Stakeholder Engagement by creating a Ministry-wide Sustainable Procurement Working Group with representation from all important departments to promote efficient communication, standardized reporting, and cross-functional coordination.
4. By integrating required environmental, social, and economic sustainability factors into contract management procedures, supplier evaluation, and bidding documents, the integration of sustainability criteria into procurement processes moves the emphasis away from lowest-price evaluation.
5. Increasing Awareness and Capacity building by Initiating ongoing capacity-building initiatives, such as seminars, workshops, and refresher courses, will help procurement staff and other pertinent stakeholders develop their knowledge and abilities in sustainable procurement.

6. The creation and maintenance of a centralized database of pre-qualified suppliers with confirmed sustainability credentials in order to expedite environmentally conscious sourcing.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The study encountered challenges, including limited access to internal procurement data due to confidentiality concerns, time constraints, and financial resource limitations, which constrained the extent of data collection and analysis. Despite these challenges, the thorough data collected was adequate to meet the study's goals and produce meaningful conclusions.

5.5 Research Ideas for the Future.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

1. Future researchers ought to think about carrying out a long-term investigation into how sustainable procurement methods affect public health organizations' performance.
2. This researcher suggests immediately conducting a comparative analysis of the implementation of sustainable procurement in Zambia's major ministries and government organizations.
3. It will be beneficial to undertake the study with an exclusive focus on how innovations and digital procurement systems might improve sustainability results in public procurement.
4. Lastly, this researcher suggests that a study be conducted to determine stakeholder views and their impact on sustainability decision-making in government procurement processes in order to compile and add to the body of knowledge.

In conclusion, this study, titled “An Assessment of the Factors Influencing the Implementation of Sustainable Procurement Policies: A Case Study of the Ministry of Health Headquarters,” recognises the inherent limitations of its scope. While it offers valuable insights, it does not fully capture the complexity of sustainable procurement practices. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers explore the four specific areas identified above for further investigation. Further studies can enhance the comprehension and implementation of sustainable procurement practices in the healthcare industry and elsewhere by filling in these gaps. Additionally, this strategy will encourage a more thorough and nuanced comprehension of the opportunities and difficulties.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent

My name is Mwalimu Silwemebe, a student at the University of Lusaka, researching An Assessment of the Factors Influencing the Implementation of Sustainable Procurement: A Case Study of the Ministry of Health Headquarters. Sustainable procurement is the process of acquiring goods and services that considers not only traditional economic criteria such as price, quality, and delivery timeframes, but also integrates the principles of sustainable development, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship throughout the lifecycle of the product or service. It balances three core dimensions: environmental protection, social equity, and economic viability, ensuring ethical sourcing and supporting long-term business sustainability.

The information obtained from the research will be strictly anonymous, and anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured to protect participants' identities and data. To reduce potential harm, the study aims to minimise any risks participants might face. Participation is voluntary, and obtaining informed consent is essential by providing clear information about the research and ensuring consent is obtained before participation.

Instructions

Tick where appropriate

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age group?
☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55+
 2. What is your gender?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Other (please specify)
 3. What is your highest level of education?
☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree
 4. Which department do you work in?
☐ Procurement ☐ Finance ☐ Health Services ☐ Administration ☐ Other (please specify)
-

Section B: Financial Constraints Economic Factor

1. How would you rate the adequacy of the financial resources allocated to sustainable procurement activities?
☐ Very adequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Neutral ☐ Inadequate ☐ Very inadequate
 2. To what extent does the lack of financial support limit sustainable procurement implementation in your department?
☐ To a great extent ☐ Somewhat ☐ Neutral ☐ Very little ☐ Not at all
 3. Is financial planning integrated into sustainable procurement implementation?
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Section C: Regulatory Compliance Environmental Factor

1. How effective do you find regulatory bodies in enforcing sustainability standards in procurement?
☐ Very effective ☐ Effective ☐ Neutral ☐ Ineffective ☐ Very ineffective
 2. Does the Ministry provide training on regulatory compliance requirements?
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
 3. Do current regulations support or hinder innovation in sustainable procurement?
☐ Support ☐ Neutral ☐ Hinder
-

Section D: Stakeholder Engagement and Pressure Social Factor

1. How often are stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of sustainable procurement practices?
☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never
 2. Does stakeholder pressure accelerate the implementation timelines for sustainable procurement?
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
 3. Are there mechanisms for resolving conflicts arising from stakeholder interests?
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Section E: Open-Ended Questions

1. Please describe specific challenges your department faces due to financial constraints in implementing sustainable procurement.

2. In your opinion, what are the main barriers related to regulatory compliance that affect sustainable procurement implementation?

3. Please share any experiences on how stakeholder engagement has impacted sustainable procurement implementation in your department.

4 What is your view on the role of financial planning in improving sustainable procurement outcomes?

5 How can the Ministry better support staff training and awareness for environmental regulatory compliance?

6 In your experience, what strategies have been most effective in managing stakeholder pressure?

7 What improvements could be made to current procurement practices to better align with sustainability principles?

8 Has funding been limited for implementing sustainable procurement, and how has this impacted your department's sustainable supplier selection process?

9 Please provide any suggestions to improve coordination among the departments involved in sustainable procurement.

10 What additional resources or support would help you implement sustainable procurement more effectively?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME AND CONTRIBUTION



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All correspondence should be addressed to the Vice Chancellor

Friday, September 12, 2025

To whom it may concern,
Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR MWALIMU SILWEMBE

This serves to confirm that Mr. Mwalimu Silwembe, Student Number BPS22112934, is a registered student at the University of Lusaka pursuing a **Bachelor of Science in Purchasing and Supply**, which is a **four-year program**. He is currently in **Year 4, Semester 2** of study.

Any assistance rendered to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Mwamba Chanda (Mr.)

SENIOR DEPUTY REGISTRAR

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