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Institutionalizing sustainability: A structural equation model of sustainable procurement in US public agencies

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# Institutionalizing Sustainability: A Structural Equation Model of Sustainable Procurement in US Public Agencies

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## Abstract

The rapidly growing interest in sustainable operations in practice has been mirrored by an equivalent expanding attention within the academic community. Yet, as encouraging and significant as the recent growth in the area has been – there is still much that needs to be done. For instance, there is surprisingly little empirical research on public sector management and on factors that might lead an organization to become more likely to adopt sustainable practices. The scope of this research therefore is to explore the conditions under which a given organization is more likely to engage and prioritize sustainable procurement practices and to determine the extent to which the leadership style of the organization's top leader can explain the degree to which sustainability is promoted within a specific organization. Data collected with the help of a self-administered survey from a random sample of US public agencies is analyzed using structural equation modeling. Among others, the results of the empirical analysis confirm that the leadership style of an organization's top executive is positively associated with the probability that an agency will engage in sustainable procurement practices. This research is among the first to attempt to provide an actionable model of adoption of sustainable procurement at an organizational level. It contributes to the diffusion of research on sustainability by studying sustainable procurement practices adoption and by developing a model that draws simultaneously on systems theory, stakeholder theory, transformational leadership theory and institutional theory.

Key Words: Sustainability, Strategic Procurement, Sustainable Public Procurement, Transformational Leadership, Institutionalization

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