

Integrating Strategic Sourcing and Contract Governance in Saudi Arabia's Entertainment Sector under Vision 2030.

Abstract:

Saudi Arabia's entertainment sector requires procurement arrangements that connect supplier selection with the delivery obligations governing venues, events and supporting services. Competitive tendering alone cannot secure value when specifications, acceptance criteria, decision rights and contractual changes remain disconnected. This paper develops a conceptual framework integrating strategic sourcing and contract governance across the procurement lifecycle. A targeted integrative review combines purchasing, interorganizational contracting, digital procurement and resilience research with official Saudi sector information. The analysis identifies five integration mechanisms: category-sensitive sourcing, translation of evaluation commitments into enforceable obligations, proportionate approval controls, structured post-award monitoring and feedback into subsequent sourcing decisions. Three proposed matrices specify governance requirements, diagnostic indicators and implementation responsibilities. An official-data chart illustrates sector activity without treating attendance as evidence of procurement performance. The framework proposes that sourcing quality influences realized value through contractual clarity and implementation capability, subject to supplier readiness, uncertainty and operational interdependence. Its contribution is an explicit account of the handovers through which pre-award intentions can be preserved during delivery. No company records, interviews or survey observations are claimed. The framework requires empirical testing within Saudi entertainment organizations before its performance effects can be established.

Keywords: strategic sourcing; contract governance; entertainment procurement; supplier performance; commercial risk; Saudi Arabia; Vision 2030.

1. Introduction

Entertainment procurement brings together activities with different operating requirements. Venue maintenance depends on continuity, specialist equipment may require proprietary technical support, and event services can have immovable delivery dates. A contract that is commercially attractive at award can consequently become expensive during implementation if responsibilities or interfaces are unclear. The research problem concerns the connection between selecting a suitable supplier and maintaining an accountable arrangement through which that supplier delivers the intended service.

Official reporting establishes the sector's relevance without revealing individual organizations' procurement effectiveness. The General Entertainment Authority reported more than 72 million visits to events and recreational activities in 2023, alongside 5,406 approved events (GEA, 2024). The Vision 2030 Annual Report 2024 subsequently reported 76.9 million visits and 423 entertainment attractions (Saudi Vision 2030, 2025). These are

activity indicators rather than measures of unique customers, supplier productivity or financial return. They nevertheless establish a substantial setting in which procurement decisions can affect service continuity and investment outcomes.

Strategic sourcing determines how requirements are challenged, supply markets assessed and commercial alternatives compared. Contract governance determines how obligations, authority and adaptation are organized after those choices. Treating them as separate administrative stages creates a practical gap: tender commitments may disappear from the signed agreement, operational teams may inherit unfamiliar conditions, and amendments may alter the economic logic of the original award. This paper examines integration at those transitions rather than assuming that more competition or more contractual detail necessarily improves performance.

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The aim is to develop an evidence-informed framework connecting strategic sourcing with contract governance in Saudi entertainment procurement. Five objectives guide the study: distinguish category-specific sourcing requirements; explain the transfer of tender commitments into contracts; specify proportionate approval and change controls; identify observable performance indicators; and develop propositions for future empirical testing. The framework concerns organizational procurement arrangements and does not assess any named employer's internal practices.

Three research questions organize the analysis. How should sourcing decisions reflect differences in supply risk and operational criticality? Through which contractual and organizational mechanisms can tender intentions be preserved during implementation? Which indicators and research designs would allow Saudi entertainment organizations to evaluate whether integration improves realized value? Answering these questions requires separating published findings from contextual interpretation and from the implementation practices proposed here.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategic Purchasing and Supplier Selection

Carr and Pearson (1999) associate strategic purchasing with supplier evaluation, buyer–supplier relationships and financial performance. Chen et al. (2004) further connect strategic purchasing with supply-management capabilities and organizational outcomes. Paulraj et al. (2006) examine purchasing maturity and supply integration. Together, these studies support involving procurement in business planning and cross-functional coordination. Their evidence originates outside Saudi entertainment, however, so the findings justify a conceptual starting point rather than a prediction of equivalent local effects.

Supplier segmentation provides a way to translate that strategic role into differentiated action. Gelderman and van Weele (2003) show that purchasing portfolio analysis requires judgment about measurement and strategic movement. A routine consumables category should therefore not inherit the same sourcing process as a proprietary attraction-maintenance package. The proposed application distinguishes commercial expenditure from operational

criticality: a relatively inexpensive specialist component can still delay opening, while a high-spend standardized service may have several qualified alternatives.

Price comparison also needs a consistent economic boundary. Ellram's (1995) total-cost-of-ownership approach extends evaluation beyond the purchase price. For entertainment procurement, the proposed boundary includes mobilization, integration, maintenance, licensing, training and exit requirements where relevant. Forecast costs should be separated from contractual commitments and uncertain scenarios. A supplier's apparently lower price cannot be interpreted as better value if exclusions transfer essential delivery costs to the buyer after award.

2.2 Contracts as Governance Mechanisms

Williamson (1979) explains why transaction characteristics matter for governance choices. Investments tied to a particular relationship can create dependency that simple price competition does not resolve. In entertainment settings, bespoke integration, specialist programming or dedicated technical capability may create comparable exposure. The theoretical implication is that sourcing should examine replacement difficulty and adaptation needs before selecting contract duration, performance safeguards or termination arrangements. These choices require category-level evidence rather than standardized assumptions about all suppliers.

Contract scholarship also extends beyond protection against opportunism. Reuer and Ariño (2007) distinguish contractual provisions associated with enforcement and coordination. Schepker et al. (2014) emphasize safeguarding, coordination and adaptation as relevant contractual functions. An agreement can consequently fail despite extensive liability language if it does not identify who supplies information, verifies completion or approves changes. This paper adopts that broader interpretation of governance, treating an operationally usable contract as a working allocation of responsibilities rather than merely a signed legal document.

2.3 Relational Governance and Accountability

Poppo and Zenger (2002) examine complementarity between formal contracts and relational governance. Cao and Lumineau's (2015) synthesis supports considering contracts, trust and relational norms jointly, while recognizing contextual variation. Dyer and Singh (1998) locate potential competitive benefits in interorganizational resources and routines. These contributions suggest that a capable supplier relationship requires both clear obligations and arrangements for sharing information. Neither repeated collaboration nor extensive documentation alone establishes that the relationship is adequately governed.

Lumineau (2017) further distinguishes the controlling and coordinating dimensions of contracts when explaining trust and distrust. For the proposed framework, this means that demanding reporting or approvals can have different effects depending on their purpose and implementation. Joint planning may help anticipate technical problems, whereas unexplained intervention can undermine cooperation. A relationship review should therefore investigate the quality of information exchange alongside compliance. It should also preserve independent evaluation where commercial familiarity might weaken challenge.

2.4 Digital Capability and Supply Resilience

Digital procurement research provides a qualified basis for improving information continuity. Srai and Lorentz (2019) relate digital interventions to purchasing value drivers. Kosmol et al. (2019) emphasize readiness on both sides of the buyer–supplier relationship. Hallikas et al. (2021) associate digital procurement and analytics capabilities with supply-chain performance, while Jahani et al. (2021) map potential procurement applications of Industry 4.0 technologies. Their combined implication is that technology selection should follow a defined process problem and an assessment of participating organizations' capabilities.

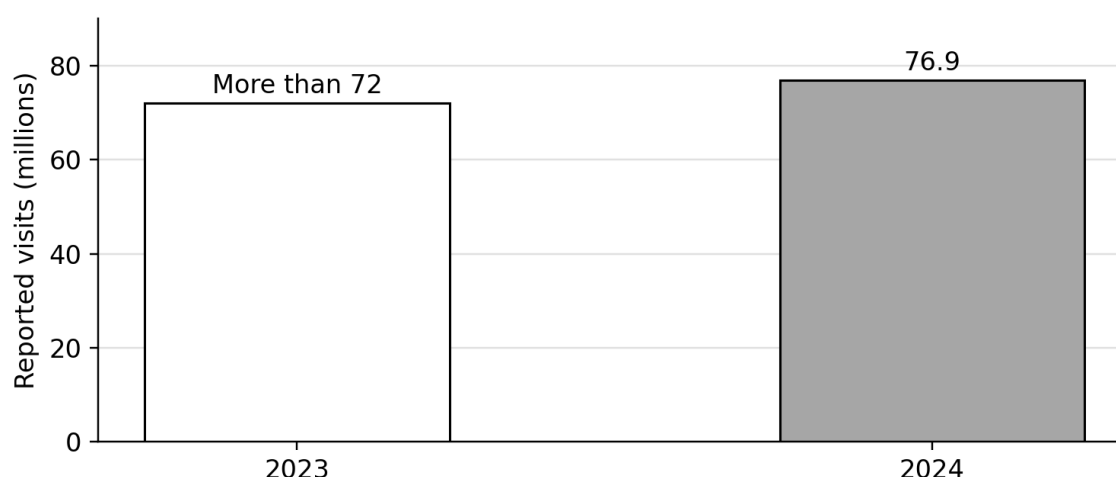
Continuity also depends on the supplier network supporting the contract. Christopher and Peck (2004) examine supply-chain vulnerability and resilience, while Ivanov (2022) integrates agility, resilience and sustainability within a viability perspective. Entertainment operators can use these ideas to investigate dependency on specialist subcontractors, replacement parts or scarce technical expertise. Contractual remedies do not themselves create replacement capacity. The proposed framework therefore includes practical recovery arrangements alongside commercial protection, with attention to what can actually be restored within an operationally meaningful period.

2.5 Saudi Context and Responsible Procurement

The official activity indicators illustrated in Figure 1 establish context rather than demonstrate the effectiveness of a procurement model. Attendance can change because of programming, capacity, marketing or wider demand conditions. Procurement teams should therefore evaluate their contribution through documented delivery and commercial outcomes instead of attributing sector expansion to their processes. The organizational unit of analysis remains a contract or procurement category, with sector information providing the setting in which its consequences matter.

Responsible sourcing broadens the criteria applied to that unit. Carter and Rogers (2008) connect economic, environmental and social considerations in sustainable supply-chain management. The OECD (2023) provides a general governance reference emphasizing accountability and oversight. Applied here, these sources support documented evaluation criteria and responsibilities for relevant sustainability commitments. They do not establish a universal Saudi entertainment tender formula. Any local-content, licensing or other mandatory requirement must be checked for the particular entity and contract before being represented as binding.

Figure 1 Reported Saudi entertainment visits in 2023 and 2024



Sources: GEA (2024) and Saudi Vision 2030 (2025). The 2023 value is a reported lower bound. Reporting coverage may differ; no precise growth rate or unique-visitor estimate is inferred.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Review Approach

The study uses a targeted integrative review and conceptual framework development. Snyder (2019) discusses the importance of matching review methods to research purposes, while Torraco (2005) explains the integrative review's role in knowledge synthesis. The approach is suitable for connecting purchasing and contracting research that addresses related mechanisms through different theoretical lenses. It is not an exhaustive systematic review, and no comprehensive database export, duplicate-removal count or statistical meta-analysis is claimed.

3.2 Source Identification

Targeted web searches identified publisher pages, DOI records, institutional repositories and official Saudi publications. Search combinations included strategic purchasing and supplier performance; contractual and relational governance; contract coordination and adaptation; digital procurement readiness; supply resilience; and Saudi entertainment activity. Sources were checked against publisher or official records where available. The search did not constitute a direct subscription search of Scopus or Web of Science, and the paper makes no claim that those databases were comprehensively screened.

3.3 Inclusion and Appraisal

Academic sources were retained when they directly informed a proposed mechanism or its boundary conditions. Older studies supply foundational concepts; more recent work contributes digital procurement, resilience and governance perspectives. Official publications were retained for contextual information rather than causal inference. Appraisal considered

source provenance, conceptual relevance, empirical versus theoretical status and transferability to entertainment services. Abstract-level access limits the assessment of some methodological details; such sources support only the broad findings visible in their accessible records.

3.4 Analysis and Evidence Boundaries

The synthesis grouped evidence into sourcing, contractual translation, decision rights, performance monitoring and organizational learning. Each group was examined for a practical handover where information or accountability could be lost. Tables and the conceptual diagram were then developed as original analytical proposals. No interviews, confidential procurement files, contract audits or primary financial data were supplied. Consequently, results refer to the synthesis and proposed framework, with no measured effect sizes, tested hypotheses or claims about any organization's compliance.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Aligning Procurement Categories with Delivery Exposure

The first analytical result is that sourcing intensity should follow delivery exposure as well as commercial value. Consider two hypothetical categories: a competitively available cleaning service and a proprietary attraction-control component. The first may permit broader supplier competition and measurable output standards; the second may require technical qualification, compatibility verification and advance recovery planning. This distinction is proposed, not observed in company data. Its purpose is to prevent a single tender template from obscuring materially different sources of risk.

Category assessment should examine availability of substitutes, qualification time, system interfaces, demand uncertainty and consequences of failure. Those dimensions require evidence from technical owners and operators, not procurement judgment alone. High dependency may justify early market engagement or documented continuity arrangements. Low complexity may support simplified sourcing. Periodic reassessment is necessary because supplier availability and internal capability can change; a category's position should remain open to challenge rather than becoming a permanent exemption from competition.

Table 1 Proposed category-sensitive governance requirements

Category profile	Sourcing emphasis	Contract governance
Standardized recurring services	Comparable specifications; qualified alternatives	Output measures; routine acceptance and review
Specialist technical systems	Compatibility; competence; replacement lead time	Technical acceptance; support obligations; recovery arrangements
Time-critical event services	Capacity confirmation; interface planning	Milestones; escalation; documented change authority
Creative or bespoke services	Brief clarity; evaluation of capability	Deliverable approvals; usage rights; revision boundaries

Source: author synthesis. Proposed controls and indicators require organizational validation.

4.2 Defining Requirements before Solicitation

Integration begins when operational needs are translated into a scope that competing suppliers can interpret consistently. A statement requiring reliable service remains incomplete until the buyer defines service boundaries, dependencies, evidence and acceptance responsibility. The sourcing team should identify which inputs the buyer supplies and which the contractor controls. This matters when performance depends on access, approvals or information: attributing every delay to the supplier would distort both evaluation and subsequent contract administration.

Before solicitation, procurement, operations, finance and contracts personnel should reconcile the scope, pricing structure and proposed acceptance method. Suppliers should be able to distinguish mandatory requirements from preferences and priced options. Questions and clarifications should enter a controlled record available through the relevant procurement process. This reduces the possibility that selected bidders work from different assumptions. It also creates a basis for determining whether a post-award request represents an existing obligation, a clarification or an actual change.

4.3 Preserving Evaluation Commitments in the Signed Contract

The second analytical result concerns the handover from evaluation to execution. A useful control is a commitment register connecting material bid representations to contractual schedules and delivery evidence. For example, a proposed response capability should identify its staffing assumption, service window and verification method. A commitment left only in a presentation may be difficult for the operating team to administer. The register should identify contradictions between the scope, negotiated wording and pricing documents before signature.

Commercial evaluation should also compare the conditions under which each price applies. Exclusions, indexation, minimum commitments and buyer-provided resources can materially change the comparison. Evaluators should document assumptions and distinguish reasonably forecast operating costs from speculative risk estimates. The final award recommendation should explain major trade-offs and residual exposures. This creates traceability between the supplier selected, the benefits approved and the obligations actually purchased, without implying that every future contingency can be priced accurately.

4.4 Establishing Proportionate Decision Rights

Jensen and Meckling (1976) provide a theoretical basis for examining incentives and monitoring when decision authority is delegated. The proposed application separates request ownership, commercial evaluation, approval and acceptance where organizational scale permits. Decision rights should also recognize exposure beyond the initial contract price. Exclusivity, renewal commitments or unusual liability positions can warrant specialist review even when the immediate expenditure falls within a routine financial threshold. Specific thresholds remain an organization-level policy decision.

Approval design should provide a reasoned route for exceptions. An urgent operational requirement may justify accelerated review, but the evidence should record why normal timing was unavailable, which alternatives were considered and who accepted residual exposure. Repeated emergency exceptions should trigger investigation of planning or process

capacity. Approval speed alone is therefore an incomplete measure of governance quality: a quick decision can be poorly informed, while a slow decision may reflect either necessary scrutiny or avoidable administrative delay.

4.5 Organizing Post-Award Ownership

A signed contract needs an identified owner, accessible records and a practical commencement review. The review should confirm deliverables, reporting requirements, invoice evidence, escalation contacts and notice dates. Responsibilities should be accepted by the people who will perform them. Where procurement negotiators and service managers are different individuals, an explicit handover reduces dependence on informal memory. The contract repository should preserve the executed agreement and subsequent authorized amendments as the authoritative record.

Monitoring should distinguish early warnings from contractual failures. Staff vacancies, late technical submissions or unresolved interfaces may indicate future difficulty before a milestone is missed. A joint action log can assign responsibility and due dates without automatically treating every issue as a breach. Formal notices and remedies should follow the applicable agreement and authorized advice. The analytical objective is an arrangement that supports intervention while retaining a reliable distinction between discussion, agreement and binding amendment.

4.6 Controlling Variations and Protecting the Award Baseline

Variation management is a major integration point because changes can invalidate the commercial assumptions behind an award. Every proposed change should identify its origin, scope effect, cost, timing and operational consequences. The baseline should remain recoverable so reviewers can distinguish original obligations from additional requirements. Work performed before formal authorization requires a defined exception route; retrospective paperwork should not become the standard mechanism for approving commitments that have already been made.

A change register should also capture causes. Repeated additions may reflect uncertain demand, inadequate initial definition, supplier omissions or evolving operational requirements. Those causes have different implications for future sourcing. Aggregating variation values without explanation can encourage misleading judgments about supplier behavior or procurement quality. Analysis should therefore consider both the cumulative economic effect and the underlying reason for change, with responsibility allocated using the contract and supporting evidence rather than a predetermined narrative.

4.7 Measuring Realized Value

The third analytical result is a measurement architecture linking sourcing intentions with delivery outcomes. Reported savings should specify the comparison baseline and whether scope, quality or volume changed. Contract administration should then track whether agreed benefits persist through invoices, amendments and operational performance. An award saving can be offset by additional commitments, but a higher total expenditure can also reflect genuinely expanded requirements. Reconciliation is needed before either outcome is described as procurement success or failure.

Table 2 proposes indicators that can be calculated from routine records once definitions are agreed. They should be interpreted together. Faster processing could coincide with weaker review, while fewer recorded breaches could reflect incomplete detection. Organizations should establish baseline distributions by contract category and risk level before setting targets. The measures are proposed management tools; this paper supplies no company scores, sector benchmarks or estimated improvements attributable to their adoption.

Table 2 Proposed measures linking award intentions with delivery

Indicator	Operational definition	Interpretation boundary
Commitment traceability	Material evaluated commitments linked to signed obligations / commitments reviewed	Define materiality and verify a sample independently
Contract ownership coverage	Active contracts with an accepted owner / active contracts	Assignment alone does not establish effective oversight
Approval cycle time	Elapsed time from complete submission to authorized decision	Segment by complexity; identify rework separately
Variation exposure	Cumulative authorized change value / original award value	Separate scope expansion from corrective changes
Acceptance timeliness	Deliverables accepted within agreed review time / deliverables due	Attribute delays using documented dependencies
Value reconciliation	Agreed benefit baseline compared with like-for-like delivered cost	Adjust scope, volume and service quality before comparison

Source: author synthesis. Proposed controls and indicators require organizational validation.

4.8 Enabling Digital Traceability

Digital support should preserve a continuous record from requirement to signed obligation, change and acceptance. A procurement identifier linked to a contract identifier can reduce the difficulty of reconciling tender and delivery records. Standard fields should cover ownership, effective dates, notice periods, approved value and material obligations. Access permissions and version controls matter because a readily searchable repository is still unreliable if users cannot distinguish an executed contract from an obsolete draft.

4.9 Connecting Continuity with Responsible Sourcing

Continuity planning should examine the operational feasibility of recovery. A contract may identify a replacement right, yet the alternative supplier might lack access, certification, spare parts or necessary knowledge. The proposed governance review therefore asks who can restore service, within what period and with which dependencies. Testing a recovery arrangement on a limited scope may expose assumptions that written commitments leave unresolved. Such exercises should be proportionate to service criticality and the consequences of interruption.

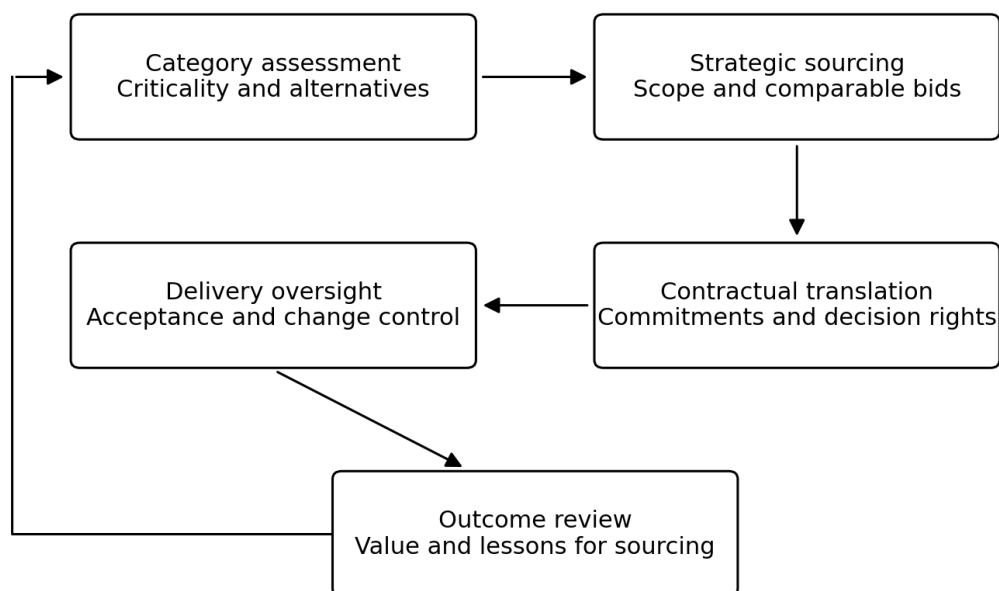
4.10 Proposed Integrated Framework

Figure 2 connects category assessment, sourcing, contractual translation and delivery oversight through a feedback relationship. Four propositions follow. First, sourcing quality is

expected to relate more strongly to realized value where material evaluation commitments are traceable into delivery obligations. Second, clear contract ownership is expected to strengthen the usefulness of post-award monitoring. Third, the benefits of formal controls are expected to depend on their fit with category uncertainty and coordination needs. Fourth, reliable outcome records are expected to improve subsequent category decisions.

These propositions identify relationships for testing rather than established causal effects. Alternative explanations include management capability, supplier quality, contract complexity and organization size. A capable team might both integrate its processes and perform better for reasons unrelated to the proposed mechanism. The framework's value therefore lies in specifying observable links and plausible boundary conditions. It cannot establish that adopting additional controls will produce savings or reduce disputes in a particular entertainment organization.

Figure 2 Integrated sourcing and contract governance framework



Source: original conceptual synthesis. Arrows represent proposed process relationships and feedback, not estimated causal effects.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The review indicates that strategic sourcing and contract governance address connected parts of a single commercial relationship. Selection establishes an intended exchange; governance provides the responsibilities and evidence through which that exchange is administered. The proposed contribution is to identify the handovers that preserve this connection, particularly requirement definition, bid-to-contract translation, ownership transfer and variation review. Saudi entertainment activity provides a relevant application setting, while the absence of organization-level observations limits conclusions about actual performance.

Managers can begin with one category whose contracts are sufficiently comparable for review. The initial task is to reconcile tender assumptions, executed obligations and actual delivery records, documenting gaps before purchasing additional technology or imposing new approvals. A cross-functional team should then pilot the commitment register, assign ownership and agree a small set of indicators. Table 3 sets out proposed implementation responsibilities and evidence. Expansion should follow evaluation of usability and outcomes rather than an assumed maturity timetable.

Table 3 Proposed implementation responsibilities

Action	Accountable function	Review evidence
Define pilot category and baseline	Procurement with operations	Category scope; dependencies; comparable historic records
Validate requirement and commitment register	Technical owner and contracts	Approved scope; evaluated commitments; executed schedules
Confirm authority and ownership	Authorized management	Approval record; accepted owner; exception rationale
Monitor delivery and changes	Contract owner with finance	Acceptance evidence; action log; approved amendments
Evaluate pilot and update sourcing	Cross-functional review team	Reconciled outcomes; user feedback; documented lessons

Source: author synthesis. Proposed controls and indicators require organizational validation.

6. Future Directions

Future research should test the framework through multiple Saudi entertainment cases representing permanent venues, time-limited events and supporting services. Contract-file analysis could trace material tender commitments into executed schedules and compare their subsequent monitoring. Interviews with both buyers and suppliers could explain why particular handovers fail. Access arrangements should protect commercial confidentiality, and coding rules should distinguish missing documentation from confirmed absence of a practice. Independent coding would strengthen the reliability of judgments about contract clarity and traceability.

Longitudinal research could examine comparable categories before and after a defined integration intervention, accounting for changes in scope, supplier composition and operating conditions. Outcome measures might include documented disputes, acceptance delays, authorized variations and reconciled expenditure. Such designs would still require caution about selection effects and concurrent improvements. This paper's targeted search, uneven full-text availability and reliance on evidence from other sectors limit coverage and transferability. Future systematic searches and direct Saudi evidence should refine or reject its proposed relationships.

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