

BALANCING REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY AND GOVERNANCE INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC SECTOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT (PSCM) DURING CRISES

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ABSTRACT

Public sector crisis management is essential for quick mobilization and resource distribution during crises. Their essentialities are stemmed from balancing governance integrity with regulatory flexibility, digital platforms, and international standards to enhance transparency and security. That notwithstanding, countries, companies are faced with serious crises finding it difficult to achieve sustainable goals leaving a huge gap to argue. However, this study examined how regulatory flexibility and governance integrity interact in Public Sector Crisis Management (PSCM) during crises using a cross-sectional approach and structured surveys. Data were collected using purposive sampling from 350 public procurement professionals and regulatory experts along with governmental reports and case studies. According to the results, security-oriented procurement policies and accountability improve resilience; while digital transparency initiatives have no clear effect on this regard. Transparency lowers fraud risks and real-time monitoring tools help to enhance control. Direct strengthening of PSCM resilience by regulatory coordination and process streamlining depends on operational alignment as a main mediator. While freedom improves crisis response and creativity, too relaxed rules run the danger of mismanagement. The study emphasises the need of strategic regulations that preserve responsibility while allowing flexibility and so support accountability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public Sector Crisis Management (PSCM) is crucial for effective crisis response, requiring strategic coordination of policies and resources for swift mobilization and allocation (Chiu, 2018). Government policies in public procurement and supply chains establish essential stability, responsibility, and resilience, ensuring transparent and secure practices that mitigate corruption during crises (Racca & Yukins, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for agile legislative

systems that balance regulatory flexibility with governance integrity (Thomann et al., 2023). This balance is evident in the tension between expedited procurement and maintaining bureaucratic independence and competition (Thomann et al., 2023). Enhancing resilience necessitates integrating public procurement with broader governance and public-private partnerships (Bencheckroun et al., 2024), with digital platforms and international standards playing a key role in ensuring transparent and equitable resource distribution (Thomann et al., 2023). Effective crisis management, therefore, hinges on PSCM's ability to harmonize integrity and

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adaptability. Crisis-driven policymaking struggles to reconcile rapid regulatory responses with robust monitoring and accountability within PSCM (Thomann et al., 2023). While overly rigid regulations can hinder responses, the rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines demonstrated the potential of adaptive regulation (Hatchett et al., 2024). Conversely, failures like the Deepwater Horizon oil leak underscore the need to synchronize different forms of accountability in process-oriented regulation (Mills & Koliba, 2015). Regulatory suspensions during crises, such as in the UK financial sector during COVID-19, emphasize the need for comprehensive decision-making frameworks (Miglionico et al., 2020).

The global financial crisis highlighted the importance of responsive and responsible financial control (Iglesias Rodriguez, 2015), leading to more robust post-crisis frameworks incorporating micro- and macroeconomics (Chiu, 2018). Balancing quantitative and qualitative regulatory approaches is crucial for embedding public interest goals in financial institutions within these complex systems (Chiu, 2018). Ultimately, bolstering crisis resilience requires a careful balance between rapid response capacity and preserving governance integrity (Hatchett et al., 2024). Research reveals key gaps in harmonizing regulatory flexibility and governance integrity in PSCM during crises. These include finding the optimal balance between centralization and decentralization in governance structures (Kianpour & Frantz, 2024), addressing public perception of flexible crisis management strategies (Lenz, 2024), and understanding adaptation to slow-onset crises (Nolte & Lindenmeier, 2023). Concerns also exist regarding the potential decline in regulatory quality due to emergency laws and the risks of poorly implemented flexible rules. Furthermore, a significant gap remains in developing secure and adaptable technology solutions for crisis management procurement. These gaps underscore the difficulty of achieving regulatory flexibility while maintaining governance integrity, highlighting the urgent need for further research to develop frameworks that enhance both accountability and adaptability in PSCM. The study development is underpinned by both Public Choice Theory and Principal-Agent Theory to explain the intricacies that exist between the variables understudy. In so doing, the researchers are poised to address the research gaps that exist in the context of this area of study considering the research questions and or the hypotheses developed to test the variables used. This paper contributes to Public Sector Crisis Management (PSCM) by detailing how to balance regulatory flexibility with governance integrity, and also explores managing crises through both centralized and decentralized approaches emphasizing the need for adaptable strategies that the public trusts, and addresses the challenges of creeping crises. The research also examines the long-term impact of emergency laws on democratic accountability and highlights shortcomings in digital governance for crisis response. Ultimately, this study provides a practical framework for policymakers to

ensure crisis management is both flexible and sustainable, bolstering democratic values and resilience. Subsequently, the theory and practical implications that underpin this study will be dealt with accordingly considering other relevant ingredients such as literature review, methodology and research methods, results, discussions and conclusion will be discussed in detailed in the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Public Sector Crisis Management (PSCM)

Public Sector Crisis Management (PSCM) is a comprehensive framework centered on public welfare and service continuity, built on principles of responsibility, resilience, openness, and efficiency. Efficiency enables rapid resource mobilization, while openness and responsibility, often digital-assisted, combat corruption. Resilience relies on adaptive capacity and cooperation (Thomann et al., 2023). PSCM guides public procurement for timely supplies and emphasizes communication and scenario analysis in health crises (Upadhyay & Diwakar, 2024). Public-private partnerships in crisis management also highlight the need for relational governance and risk management (Castelblanco et al., 2023). A holistic approach integrating these principles is crucial for a robust public sector.

2.2 Regulatory Flexibility in PSCM During Crises

Regulatory flexibility is vital in Public Sector Crisis Management (PSCM) for efficient response and adaptation during crises like pandemics and financial meltdowns. Strategic and administrative flexibility, allowing quick adjustments in strategies and operations, enhance crisis management, as seen in banking during COVID-19 and Germany's refugee crisis (Alzuod & AlQhaiwi, 2022; Lenz & Eckhard, 2022). Adaptable controls, like operational changes in Chinese companies and regulatory adjustments in Canadian nursing, demonstrate its practical application during COVID-19 (Li & Song, 2022). While offering benefits like rapid response and resource optimization (Cruz Hernández et al., 2023; Lynch et al., 2020), regulatory flexibility carries risks of corruption and reduced accountability (Prud'homme et al., 2024). Thus, it must be balanced with transparency and responsibility to maintain public trust.

2.3 Governance Integrity in Crisis-Driven PSCM

Governance integrity in crisis-driven Public Sector Contract Management (PSCM) relies on transparency accountability, and anti-corruption measures (Racca & Yukins, 2024; Silva, 2024). Transparency ensures public oversight, while legal frameworks promote accountability. Anti-corruption systems prevent systemic failures in emergency procurement (Racca & Yukins, 2024; Silva, 2024). Balancing accountability with rapid regulatory flexibility is challenging but aided by strong legal frameworks and digital platforms. Research

highlights governance flaws during crises, impacting public trust (Martinez-Bravo & Sanz, 2024), but also demonstrates technology's positive role and the link between good governance and better crisis outcomes (Gebka et al., 2024). Strategic planning, technology, and monitoring are crucial for PSCM resilience and efficiency.

2.4 The Balance Between Regulatory Flexibility and Governance Integrity

During crises, regulatory flexibility is vital for efficient public sector supply chains, enabling quick adaptation through simplified processes. However, it must be balanced with government integrity to prevent corruption. Adapting laws swiftly, as seen in South Korea's COVID-19 response, highlights this need. While flexibility enhances efficiency, particularly in healthcare procurement (Park, 2024), it risks reduced control and corruption if not managed by transparent anti-corruption measures and evolving checks (Park, 2024). Harmonizing integrity and flexibility is key to effective PSCM (Thomann et al., 2023; Park, 2024), with historical examples like SARS and MERS reinforcing this (Park, 2024). The right balance, characterized by clear policies and accountability, yields better outcomes, unlike situations with insufficient control (Park, 2024). Strategic flexibility's success in banking (Alzuod & AlQhaiwi, 2022) underscores the broader need for adaptability alongside integrity in crisis management.

2.5 Transparency and Contextual Sensitivity in Regulatory Practices

Transparent and context-sensitive government policies are essential for effective Public Sector Crisis Management (PSCM), building trust and accountability (Silva, 2024). Open legal frameworks inform citizens and enable accountability (Silva, 2024). While tailored regulations enhance PSCM resilience and improve resource allocation (Esien, 2020; Mendonça et al., 2025; Wongkar et al., 2024). Though technology aids transparency (Chowdhury, 2019; Jopang et al., 2024), challenges like data security and rapid decision-making exist (Sari & Muslim, 2023). Integrating transparency and contextual awareness into regulatory systems is crucial for robust crisis management (Sari & Muslim, 2023; Bluemmel, 2021; Dudley & Wegrich, 2016).

3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilizes a cross-sectional design, collecting data from public sector entities, regulatory agencies, and procurement departments involved in crisis management. This approach is beneficial for assessing the prevalence of factors at a given time due to its user-friendliness and cost-effectiveness, enabling efficient data collection (Voleti, 2024; Taha & Nawaiseh, 2023; Mukherjee & Roy, 2023).

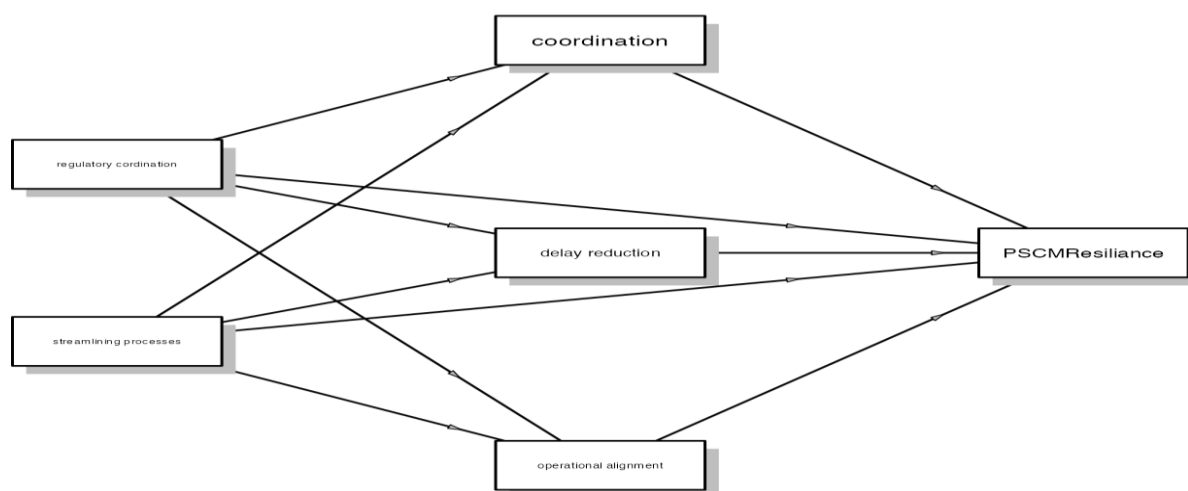


Figure 1. Research model

Source: Author's Construct, 2024

The research analyzes how regulatory policies influence PSCM resilience, specifically focusing on accountability, transparency, and adaptability. While cross-sectional studies like this one are valuable for identifying relationships and generating hypotheses, they do not establish causality (Voleti, 2024; Mukherjee & Roy, 2023). The study targeted legislators, public procurement officials, and regulatory authorities who were involved in supply chain operations during previous crises. Purposive sampling was employed to specifically select

respondents with direct expertise in procurement and regulatory functions under challenging conditions. This deliberate approach ensured the inclusion of "information-rich cases" crucial for gaining deep insights into the subject (Douglas, 2022; Palinkas et al., 2015). By intensively sampling these individuals, the researchers gathered significant data reflecting their complex experiences with procurement and regulatory challenges during crises, ultimately aiming to enhance governance policies. Out of 400 total responses, 350 were deemed

valid after data cleaning. Primary data for this study was collected via structured questionnaires, a method known for effectively gathering information for governmental responses (Rao et al., 2024). Secondary data, including reports and case studies, was used for triangulation. The survey assessed accountability, adaptability, openness, and procurement security within regulatory frameworks, measuring PSCM resilience through indicators like operational alignment and fraud prevention. A 5-point Likert scale was used for attitudes and perceptions, chosen for its balance and reliability (Mirahmadizadeh et al., 2018). To mitigate common method bias (CMB), questions for different variables were administered at separate times (Wall et al., 2022). The survey was pre-tested with 50 individuals, with all scales exceeding the recommended Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 for internal consistency. Factor analysis confirmed construct validity. Research model is presented on the figure 1.

4. RESULTS

Data analysis used several statistical methods to investigate how legislative policies impact PSCM resilience during crises. Mediation analysis explored indirect effects of operational alignment and coordination (Wang, 2024). MANOVA assessed the balance between governing integrity and regulatory freedom, examining independent variables' influence on PSCM resilience and procurement governance (Ergun et al., 2022). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) identified latent elements in regulatory development (Tian et al., 2022). Non-parametric tests were chosen due to data characteristics (Zouari et al., 2021). These methods collectively highlight the importance of adaptive strategies and digital tools in enhancing supply chain resilience through improved visibility and collaboration (Zouari et al., 2021), offering insights for effective crisis strategies.

Table 1. Multivariate Tests (Evaluating Transparency and Contextual Sensitivity in Government Regulations for PSCM Resilience During Crises)

		value	F	df1	df2	p
AccountabilityThroughRegulatoryMeasures	Pillai's Trace	0.13049	12.606	4	336	<.001
	Wilks' Lambda	0.870	12.606	4	336	<.001
	Hotelling's Trace	0.15008	12.606	4	336	<.001
	Roy's Largest Root	0.15008	12.606	4	336	<.001
DigitalPlatformsandTransparency	Pillai's Trace	0.01258	1.070	4	336	0.371
	Wilks' Lambda	0.987	1.070	4	336	0.371
	Hotelling's Trace	0.01274	1.070	4	336	0.371
	Roy's Largest Root	0.01274	1.070	4	336	0.371
SecurityinProcurementRegulations	Pillai's Trace	0.07897	7.203	4	336	<.001
	Wilks' Lambda	0.921	7.203	4	336	<.001
	Hotelling's Trace	0.08575	7.203	4	336	<.001
	Roy's Largest Root	0.08575	7.203	4	336	<.001
ImpactofTransparentProcurementPractices	Pillai's Trace	0.03591	3.129	4	336	0.015
	Wilks' Lambda	0.964	3.129	4	336	0.015
	Hotelling's Trace	0.03725	3.129	4	336	0.015
	Roy's Largest Root	0.03725	3.129	4	336	0.015
DisclosureRequirementsinRegulatoryFrameworks	Pillai's Trace	0.02789	2.410	4	336	0.049
	Wilks' Lambda	0.972	2.410	4	336	0.049
	Hotelling's Trace	0.02869	2.410	4	336	0.049
	Roy's Largest Root	0.02869	2.410	4	336	0.049
RealTimeMonitoringviaDigitalTools	Pillai's Trace	0.06247	5.598	4	336	<.001
	Wilks' Lambda	0.938	5.598	4	336	<.001
	Hotelling's Trace	0.06664	5.598	4	336	<.001
	Roy's Largest Root	0.06664	5.598	4	336	<.001

SecureCommunicationChannels	Pillai's Trace	0.02460	2.119	4	336	0.078
	Wilks' Lambda	0.975	2.119	4	336	0.078
	Hotelling's Trace	0.02523	2.119	4	336	0.078
	Roy's Largest Root	0.02523	2.119	4	336	0.078
TransparencyandFraudReduction	Pillai's Trace	0.04576	4.028	4	336	0.003
	Wilks' Lambda	0.954	4.028	4	336	0.003
	Hotelling's Trace	0.04796	4.028	4	336	0.003
	Roy's Largest Root	0.04796	4.028	4	336	0.003
SecurityofSupplyChainData	Pillai's Trace	0.03625	3.159	4	336	0.014
	Wilks' Lambda	0.964	3.159	4	336	0.014
	Hotelling's Trace	0.03761	3.159	4	336	0.014
	Roy's Largest Root	0.03761	3.159	4	336	0.014
InvestmentinDigitalProcurementSecurity	Pillai's Trace	0.00465	0.393	4	336	0.814
	Wilks' Lambda	0.995	0.393	4	336	0.814
	Hotelling's Trace	0.00467	0.393	4	336	0.814
	Roy's Largest Root	0.00467	0.393	4	336	0.814

Source: Field data, 2024

Analysis of factors influencing regulatory measures and procurement transparency during crises (Table 1) yielded significant findings related to accountability through regulatory measures ($p<.001$), security-related procurement rules ($p<.001$), clear procurement policies ($p\leq0.015$), real-time monitoring via digital tools ($p<.001$), transparency and fraud mitigation ($p=0.003$), and supply chain data security ($p=0.014$), all highlighting their critical roles in bolstering procurement resilience and integrity. Conversely, digital platforms and

transparency ($p=0.371$), secure communication channels ($p=0.078$), and investment in digital procurement security ($p=0.814$) showed no direct significant influence on crisis procurement outcomes, suggesting these areas warrant further investigation to fully understand their impact. This indicates that while foundational elements like accountability and real-time oversight are crucial, the direct effects of broader digital integration and secure communication in crisis procurement require more nuanced exploration.

Table 2. Models Info (Mediation analysis on the mechanisms through which government regulations influence PSCM resilience during crises)

Mediators Models		
	m1	coordination ~ regulatory coordination + streamlining processes
	m2	delay reduction ~ regulatory coordination + streamlining processes
	m3	operational alignment ~ regulatory coordination + streamlining processes
Full Model		
	m4	PSCM Resilience ~ coordination + delay reduction + operational alignment + regulatory coordination + streamlining processes
Indirect Effects		
	IE 1	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ coordination $\Rightarrow$ PSCM Resilience
	IE 2	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ delay reduction $\Rightarrow$ PSCM Resilience
	IE 3	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ operational alignment $\Rightarrow$ PSCM Resilience
	IE 4	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ coordination $\Rightarrow$ PSCM Resilience
	IE 5	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ delay reduction $\Rightarrow$ PSCM Resilience
	IE 6	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ operational alignment $\Rightarrow$ PSCM Resilience
Sample size	N	350

Source: Author's own construct, 2024

The table 2 shows the mediation analysis on the mechanisms through which government regulations influence PSCM resilience during crises.

The table also explains the mediator models outlining the full model and indirect effects of the model and its subsequent outcomes on the variables considered.

Table 3. Indirect and Total Effects

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	2.31e-4	0.00144	-0.00259	0.00305	2.31e-4	0.161	0.872
	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ delay reduction $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	2.14e-4	5.64e-4	-8.91e-4	0.00132	2.14e-4	0.379	0.704
	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ operational alignment $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	-0.01247	0.00661	-0.02541	4.84e-4	-0.01247	-1.887	0.059
	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ coordination $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	-1.42e-4	8.90e-4	-0.00189	0.00160	-1.48e-4	-0.160	0.873
	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ delay reduction $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	0.00183	0.00235	-0.00277	0.00643	0.00190	0.781	0.435
	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ operational alignment $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	-0.48036	0.04616	-0.57084	-0.38989	-0.49792	-10.406	<.001
Component	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ coordination	-0.12019	0.05166	-0.22145	-0.01894	-0.12303	-2.327	0.020
	coordination $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	-0.00192	0.01195	-0.02535	0.02150	-0.00188	-0.161	0.872
	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ delay reduction	-0.02644	0.06128	-0.14655	0.09367	-0.02259	-0.431	0.666
	delay reduction $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	-0.00809	0.01015	-0.02798	0.01180	-0.00947	-0.797	0.425
	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ operational alignment	0.02502	0.01304	-5.48e-4	0.05059	0.02431	1.918	0.055
	operational alignment $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	-0.49825	0.04744	-0.59123	-0.40528	-0.51275	-10.503	<.001
	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ coordination	0.07401	0.04984	-0.02368	0.17170	0.07853	1.485	0.138
	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ delay reduction	-0.22627	0.05912	-0.34215	-0.11040	-0.20037	-3.827	<.001
	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ operational alignment	0.96410	0.01258	0.93943	0.98876	0.97108	76.610	<.001
Direct	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	0.98059	0.01163	0.95779	1.00338	0.98059	84.305	<.001
	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	0.50794	0.04681	0.41620	0.59968	0.52651	10.852	<.001

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Total	regulatory coordination $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	0.96857	0.01319	0.94271	0.99442	0.96857	73.423	<.001
	streamlining processes $\Rightarrow$ PSCMResilience	0.02926	0.01273	0.00432	0.05421	0.03033	2.299	0.021

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Note. Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Source: Field data, 2024

Mediation analysis explored how coordination, delay reduction, and operational alignment influence the link between government regulatory practices and Public Sector Supply Chain Management (PSCM) resilience during crises (Table 3 & Figure 2). Both regulatory coordination (0.98059, $p < 0.001$) and process streamlining (0.50794, $p < 0.001$) directly enhanced PSCM resilience. Operational alignment proved to be the most significant mediator, especially between process optimization and PSCM resilience (indirect effect of

-0.48036 , $p < 0.001$), emphasizing its crucial role. In contrast, coordination and delay reduction had minimal mediating effects. Overall, the findings highlight the critical importance of regulatory coordination and process optimization for building resilience, with operational alignment as a key mechanism. Policymakers should prioritize these elements to strengthen supply chain resilience during crises.

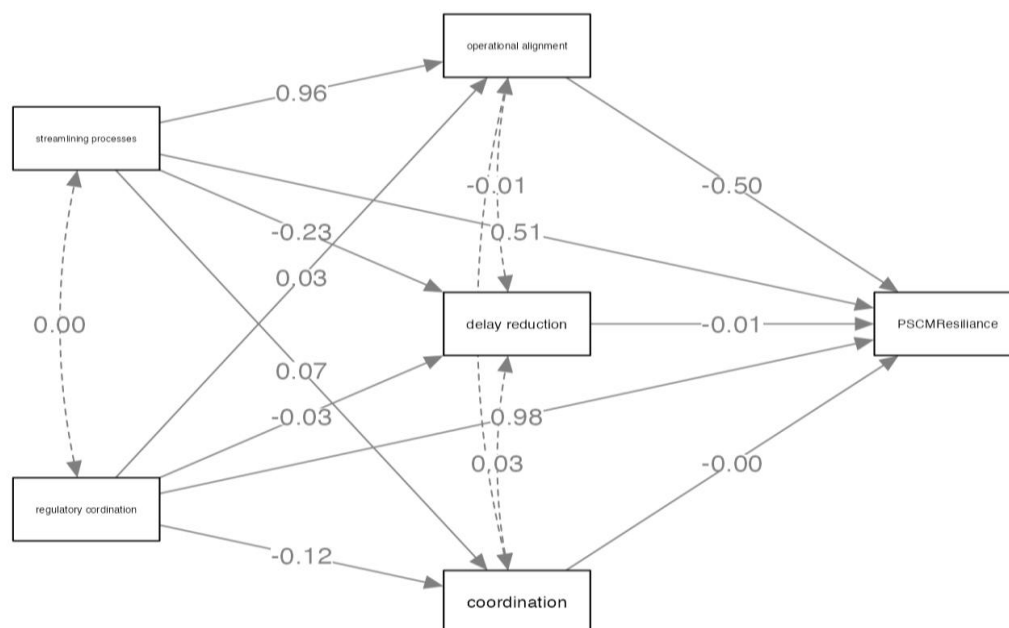


Figure 2. Path model: Statistical Diagram

Source: Authors' construct, 2024

Table 4. Multivariate Tests (Balancing Regulatory Flexibility and Governance Integrity in PSCM During Crises)

		value	F	df1	df2	p
RegulatoryFlexibilityandResponseEfficiency	Pillai's Trace	0.07726	7.033	4	336	<.001
	Wilks' Lambda	0.923	7.033	4	336	<.001
	Hotelling's Trace	0.08373	7.033	4	336	<.001
	Roy's Largest Root	0.08373	7.033	4	336	<.001
FlexibilityandAccountabilityCompromise	Pillai's Trace	0.01212	1.030	4	336	0.392

		value	F	df1	df2	p
MismanagementRisksfromRelaxedRegulations	Wilks' Lambda	0.988	1.030	4	336	0.392
	Hotelling's Trace	0.01227	1.030	4	336	0.392
	Roy's Largest Root	0.01227	1.030	4	336	0.392
	Pillai's Trace	0.06567	5.904	4	336	<.001
OversightMechanismsandIntegrity	Wilks' Lambda	0.934	5.904	4	336	<.001
	Hotelling's Trace	0.07028	5.904	4	336	<.001
	Roy's Largest Root	0.07028	5.904	4	336	<.001
	Pillai's Trace	0.01692	1.446	4	336	0.219
EfficiencyComplianceBalance	Wilks' Lambda	0.983	1.446	4	336	0.219
	Hotelling's Trace	0.01721	1.446	4	336	0.219
	Roy's Largest Root	0.01721	1.446	4	336	0.219
	Pillai's Trace	0.00737	0.624	4	336	0.646
AdaptabilityofProcurementRegulations	Wilks' Lambda	0.993	0.624	4	336	0.646
	Hotelling's Trace	0.00743	0.624	4	336	0.646
	Roy's Largest Root	0.00743	0.624	4	336	0.646
	Pillai's Trace	0.01581	1.349	4	336	0.251
InnovationThroughFlexiblePolicies	Wilks' Lambda	0.984	1.349	4	336	0.251
	Hotelling's Trace	0.01606	1.349	4	336	0.251
	Roy's Largest Root	0.01606	1.349	4	336	0.251
	Pillai's Trace	0.08730	8.034	4	336	<.001
CorruptionRiskswithRelaxedRegulations	Wilks' Lambda	0.913	8.034	4	336	<.001
	Hotelling's Trace	0.09565	8.034	4	336	<.001
	Roy's Largest Root	0.09565	8.034	4	336	<.001
	Pillai's Trace	0.01640	1.401	4	336	0.233
ImpactofStringentRegulations	Wilks' Lambda	0.984	1.401	4	336	0.233
	Hotelling's Trace	0.01668	1.401	4	336	0.233
	Roy's Largest Root	0.01668	1.401	4	336	0.233
	Pillai's Trace	0.01113	0.946	4	336	0.438
EthicalStandardsAmidFlexibility	Wilks' Lambda	0.989	0.946	4	336	0.438
	Hotelling's Trace	0.01126	0.946	4	336	0.438
	Roy's Largest Root	0.01126	0.946	4	336	0.438
	Pillai's Trace	0.01400	1.193	4	336	0.314

		value	F	df1	df2	p
	Wilks' Lambda	0.986	1.193	4	336	0.314
	Hotelling's Trace	0.01420	1.193	4	336	0.314
	Roy's Largest Root	0.01420	1.193	4	336	0.314

Source: Field data, 2024

An analysis of PSCM governance integrity and regulatory flexibility during crises (Table 4) reveals key insights. Regulatory flexibility and response efficiency significantly influence PSCM resilience ($p < .001$), indicating that rapid legislative adaptation is crucial for effective crisis operations. Innovation Through Flexible Policies also emerged as significant ($p < .001$), highlighting that flexibility fosters creativity vital for navigating disruptions. Crucially, Flexibility and Accountability Compromise showed no significant effect ($p = 0.392$), suggesting that increased flexibility doesn't necessarily reduce accountability, allowing for a balance between integrity and performance. However, Mismanagement Risks from Relaxed Regulations were significant ($p < .001$), underscoring that loosened rules without proper control can compromise resilience. Conversely, Oversight Mechanisms and Integrity Factor ($p = 0.219$), Compliance Balance ($p = 0.646$), Procurement Regulation Adaptability ($p = 0.251$), Corruption Risks with Relaxed Regulations ($p = 0.233$), strict rules ($p = 0.438$), and ethical standards ($p = 0.314$) showed minimal direct impact on the flexibility-governance integrity balance. In conclusion, regulatory flexibility is critical for PSCM resilience in crises, particularly in driving innovation and responsiveness. While it carries mismanagement risks if unchecked, it generally enhances crisis response and maintains governance integrity. Other factors like oversight and ethics appeared less directly influenced by regulatory flexibility in this context.

5. DISCUSSIONS, AND CONCLUSION

A key study on Public Sector Crisis Management (PSCM) emphasizes that regulatory flexibility and efficient response are crucial for resilience during crises (Mendonça et al., 2025; Chowdhury, 2019). The research challenges the notion that flexibility compromises accountability, suggesting a balance is achievable (Jopang et al., 2024). However, it warns of significant mismanagement risks with relaxed regulations if not carefully overseen (Bluemmel, 2021). While factors like oversight, integrity, and corruption risks had minimal direct impact on the flexibility-governance balance during crises due to the urgency of rapid response (Dudley & Wegrich, 2016; Esien, 2020), innovation driven by flexible policies emerged as a key driver of resilience (Chowdhury, 2019). Strict rules, while essential for long-term stability, showed less immediate impact on this balance in turbulent times. The study

further highlights that regulatory accountability (Flynn, 2020) and security in procurement regulations (Smith, 2019) are vital for governance and operational safeguards. Transparent procurement (Milovanović et al., 2024) and real-time monitoring with digital tools (Scholten et al., 2020) are critical for resilience, reducing inefficiencies, building trust, and enabling agile decision-making. Specifically, transparency, fraud reduction ($p = 0.003$), and supply chain data security ($p = 0.014$, Choudhury et al., 2022) directly contribute to integrity. Conversely, broader digital platform adoption (Habib et al., 2022), specific disclosure policies (Tan et al., 2019), secure communication (Kwon & Han, 2021), and current digital security investments (Mendonça, 2024) showed minimal direct influence on crisis procurement outcomes, suggesting a more indirect or contextual impact. Ultimately, the study concludes that regulatory coordination and process optimization directly drive PSCM resilience, with operational alignment serving as a vital mediator that translates policies into improved outcomes. Integrating digital platforms like blockchain can further enhance transparency, particularly for local governments. These findings urge policymakers to prioritize interventions that boost operational alignment, streamline regulations, and leverage digital technologies for better transparency and resource allocation, optimizing regulatory processes while maintaining operational compliance and fostering international cooperation. Comprehensive governance systems integrating transparency, contextual awareness, and operational coherence are essential for future crisis resilience. This paper argues that PSCM resilience in crises relies on regulatory flexibility. Quick rule changes enable operational continuity and effective responses without compromising governance integrity. A balanced approach is crucial, allowing strong control alongside rapid decision-making. The study also warns against overly lenient rules, which can lead to inefficiencies and mismanagement if unchecked. Innovation is key to crisis resilience, with flexible policies encouraging creative solutions. While ethical standards and rigorous laws are important for consistent governance, flexible regulations may be more effective in immediate crises. For procurement resilience, accountability and transparency are essential. Strong rules, consistent laws, and ongoing monitoring help ensure fair resource distribution and reduce corruption. The effectiveness of digital platforms and disclosure rules depends on contextual factors like infrastructure. Ultimately, regulatory flexibility involves building an adaptable system that preserves governance

integrity. Policymakers should prioritize regulatory coordination and digital innovation to create flexible and robust supply chains. The study identifies limitations, including context-specific conclusions, data availability challenges, the difficulty of assessing the impact of legislative changes during crises, potential measurement biases, insufficient research on stakeholder opinions and political pressures, and the omission of technological issues affecting digital channel efficiency. These limitations highlight the need for further research across

diverse contexts to enhance public sector crisis management resilience.

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