



GREEN PRACTICES AND MARKET SHARE OF OIL AND GAS FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE: AN EXAMINATION OF REVERSE LOGISTICS AND GREEN PACKAGING

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between green practices (specifically reverse logistics and green packaging) and market share among oil and gas firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Anchored on Institutional and Legitimacy Theory, the research explains how regulatory pressures and stakeholder expectations drive the adoption of environmentally responsible practices that enhance competitiveness. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, targeting senior staff across four oil and gas firms in Bonny. Out of 57 questionnaires distributed, 52 were retrieved and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. Results revealed strong, positive, and statistically significant relationships between reverse logistics and market share and between green packaging and market share. These findings confirm that firms integrating structured waste recovery systems and sustainable packaging not only comply with environmental regulations but also strengthen legitimacy, stakeholder trust, and competitive positioning. The study concludes that green practices serve as strategic resources in the oil and gas sector and recommends systematic investment in reverse logistics and green packaging as market differentiation tools. Future research should explore regulatory moderation effects, longitudinal outcomes, and comparative analyses across other oil-producing states.

Keywords: *Green Packaging; Green Practices; Market Share; Oil and Gas Industry; Reverse Logistics.*

Introduction

The global oil and gas industry remains central to economic growth, providing energy, jobs, and industrial support worldwide. In Nigeria, petroleum is the backbone of national revenue and foreign exchange, with Rivers State hosting major upstream and downstream operations by multinational and indigenous firms. While the sector drives regional development, it faces mounting environmental challenges and regulatory pressures. Consequently, sustainability expectations have intensified, compelling firms to adopt environmentally responsible practices (Olujobi, 2021; Ozili, 2023).

Green practices, once compliance-driven, now serve as strategic tools for competitiveness and legitimacy. These include reverse logistics and eco-friendly packaging, which reduce waste, promote recycling, and enhance resource efficiency (Wiredu et al., 2024). In sensitive regions

like Rivers State, such practices are vital for environmental protection, stakeholder trust, and competitive relevance. Market share is the proportion of industry sales or contracts captured by a firm. In the current study it serves as a key measure of performance (Ansoff, 1988; Kotler & Keller, 2016). In oil and gas, it depends on efficiency, reliability, compliance, and environmental credibility. Increasingly, procurement processes reward firms with strong sustainability records, making green practices a pathway to competitive advantage.

This study is grounded in Institutional Theory, which highlights regulatory and normative pressures shaping organizational behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and Legitimacy Theory, which emphasizes alignment with societal expectations to secure resources and support (Suchman, 1995). Nigerian regulators such as NUPRC, NOSDRA, and NESREA enforce standards that drive adoption of green practices, while visible initiatives like sustainable logistics and packaging strengthen legitimacy and market opportunities.

Reverse logistics involves recovering, recycling, or safely disposing of materials to minimize environmental impact (Rogers & Tibben-Lembke, 1999), while green packaging emphasizes recyclable and reusable designs (Lau & Wang, 2024; Wiredu et al., 2024). Together, they represent critical dimensions of environmental responsibility in supply chains. Empirical studies confirm their role in enhancing competitiveness and sustainability (Wiredu et al., 2024; Sarfraz et al., 2023), though gaps remain in Nigeria, particularly regarding their specific impact on market share in Rivers State (Viola et al., 2021; Sarfraz et al., 2023).

Poor environmental management often leads to sanctions, disruptions, and reputational damage, while proactive adoption of green practices fosters compliance, trust, and competitive strength. Against this backdrop, the present study examines the relationship between green practices and market share of oil and gas firms in Rivers State, with particular emphasis on reverse logistics and green packaging as key dimensions of green operational strategy.

Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

- i. Examine the relationship between reverse logistics and market share of oil and gas firms in Rivers State.
- ii. Determine the relationship between green packaging and market share of oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

Green Practices

Green practices refer to organizational policies and operational strategies aimed at reducing environmental impact while maintaining or improving economic performance. Within supply chain management, these practices involve the integration of environmentally sustainable processes across procurement, production, distribution, and end-of-life product management (Srivastava, 2007). As sustainability concerns continue to shape global business practices, green supply chain management has gained increasing attention among scholars and industry practitioners.

Recent studies highlight that green supply chain practices improve both environmental and competitive performance by enhancing operational efficiency and strengthening corporate reputation (Wiredu et al., 2024). In environmentally sensitive industries such as oil and gas, the adoption of green practices is particularly important because operational activities often generate significant environmental risks. Consequently, firms are increasingly integrating environmentally responsible logistics practices to minimize waste generation, reduce resource consumption, and comply with environmental regulations.

Among the various dimensions of green supply chain management, reverse logistics and green packaging represent two operational practices that are highly visible to stakeholders and measurable in terms of environmental performance. These practices are particularly relevant in industries involving heavy equipment, chemicals, and large-scale material flows, such as the oil and gas sector.

Reverse Logistics

Reverse logistics refers to the planning and management of product flows from the point of consumption back to points of recovery, recycling, remanufacturing, or proper disposal in order to recapture value and reduce environmental impact (Rogers & Tibben-Lembke, 1999). Unlike traditional forward logistics, which focuses on delivering products from manufacturers to consumers, reverse logistics manages the backward movement of materials within the supply chain. Reverse logistics activities typically include product returns, recycling, remanufacturing, waste collection, and environmentally responsible disposal processes. In industrial sectors, reverse logistics plays a crucial role in reducing operational waste and improving resource efficiency. According to Rizki et al. (2022) and Saini et al. (2023), reverse logistics enables organizations to recover value from used products and materials that would otherwise become waste.

In the oil and gas industry, reverse logistics activities encompass the recovery and recycling of equipment components, the management of drilling waste, and the safe disposal of hazardous materials generated during production processes. These activities are essential for minimizing environmental damage associated with industrial operations. Reverse logistics systems generally involve several stages including product collection, sorting, reprocessing, recycling, and disposal of non-recoverable materials (Gechevski et al., 2016; Lutfi et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023).

The strategic importance of reverse logistics extends beyond environmental protection. Effective reverse logistics systems contribute to cost savings, operational efficiency, and improved resource utilization. Moreover, organizations with well-established reverse logistics systems are better positioned to meet environmental compliance requirements and qualify for environmentally sensitive procurement processes. As sustainability expectations continue to rise within global supply chains, reverse logistics has become an essential component of competitive business strategies (Sarfriz et al., 2023).

Green Packaging

Green packaging refers to the design, production, and use of packaging materials that minimize environmental impact throughout the packaging lifecycle. Sustainable packaging solutions typically emphasize recyclability, reusability, reduced material usage, and the use of environmentally friendly materials (Lau & Wang, 2024). As packaging materials account for a substantial proportion of industrial waste, improving packaging sustainability has become an important priority for organizations seeking to reduce their environmental footprint.

Packaging within logistics systems generally consists of three levels: primary packaging, which directly contains the product; secondary packaging, which provides additional protection; and transport or shipping packaging, which facilitates storage and transportation (Emballage Cartier, 2019). While packaging plays a crucial role in product protection and logistics efficiency, it also contributes significantly to global waste generation. Reports from the World Economic Forum and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation indicate that packaging materials

account for a large share of global plastic production, yet only a small percentage of packaging waste is effectively recycled.

Consequently, businesses are increasingly adopting sustainable packaging solutions to reduce environmental impact. Green packaging strategies may include the use of recyclable materials, lightweight packaging systems that reduce resource consumption, reusable containers, and packaging recovery systems within supply chains. Beyond environmental benefits, these practices also enhance corporate reputation and demonstrate commitment to sustainability. In industrial sectors such as oil and gas, packaging plays an important role in the handling and transportation of chemicals, equipment components, and operational supplies. Adopting environmentally responsible packaging systems not only reduces waste generation but also signals environmental responsibility to regulators, clients, and other stakeholders. Research indicates that sustainable packaging practices contribute positively to supply chain efficiency and competitive performance (Lau & Wang, 2024; Wiredu et al., 2024).

Market Share

Market share refers to the proportion of total sales or output within a market that is captured by a particular firm relative to its competitors. It is commonly expressed as a percentage of total market demand measured in terms of revenue or unit sales (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Market share is widely regarded as an important indicator of competitive performance because it reflects a firm's ability to attract and retain customers within its industry. According to Ansoff (1988), organizations that achieve larger market shares often benefit from economies of scale, stronger brand recognition, and enhanced bargaining power within supply chains. These advantages contribute to improved profitability and long-term organizational sustainability. Market share is therefore frequently used as a strategic performance indicator in competitive industries.

In the oil and gas sector, market share is determined not only by production capacity and pricing strategies but also by several operational and regulatory factors including technical competence, safety performance, financial strength, and compliance with environmental standards (Nwachukwu & Egwuonwu, 2020). In regions such as Rivers State, where oil and gas activities are subject to significant environmental scrutiny, firms that demonstrate credible environmental management practices are more likely to secure operational licenses and industry contracts. Consequently, the adoption of green operational practices may enhance firms' competitiveness by improving their ability to meet regulatory and client expectations. Organizations that integrate environmentally responsible logistics practices into their operations may therefore achieve greater market access and improved competitive positioning within the industry.

Theoretical Underpin

This study is grounded in the complementary perspectives of Institutional Theory and Legitimacy Theory, which together explain why oil and gas firms adopt environmentally responsible practices and how these practices enhance competitiveness. Institutional Theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) emphasizes the role of coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures, such as regulatory mandates, industry standards, and imitation of leading firms, in shaping organizational behavior. In Nigeria's oil and gas sector, strict environmental regulations and professional norms compel firms to implement structured green practices like reverse logistics and sustainable packaging.

Legitimacy Theory (Suchman, 1995) further explains that organizations seek societal approval by aligning operations with stakeholder expectations. Environmentally responsible practices

generate pragmatic legitimacy by serving stakeholder interests, moral legitimacy by meeting ethical standards, and cognitive legitimacy as sustainability becomes an industry norm. Together, these theories suggest that firms adopting visible green practices not only comply with institutional pressures but also secure legitimacy, thereby strengthening stakeholder trust, regulatory approval, and competitive positioning.

Summary of Literature and Research Gap

Empirical studies consistently highlight the positive impact of green operational practices on organizational performance. Viola et al. (2021) found that environmentally responsible logistics systems enhance efficiency and competitiveness, while Sarfraz et al. (2023) identified green logistics as a driver of sustainable performance. Similarly, Wiredu et al. (2024) demonstrated that green supply chain management improves environmental outcomes and supply chain competitiveness. Research on environmental legitimacy further shows that firms adopt green practices to secure resources and strengthen stakeholder relationships (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Berrone et al., 2010). Evidence also links environmental governance structures to improved market performance and stakeholder confidence (Ntim & Soobaroyen, 2013; Tran, 2021). Within Nigeria's oil and gas sector, compliance with sustainability standards has become critical for legitimacy and contract eligibility (Olujobi, 2021).

Overall, the literature affirms that green supply chain practices contribute to environmental performance, efficiency, and competitive advantage, supported by Institutional and Legitimacy Theory. However, notable gaps remain. First, most studies examine green practices broadly rather than focusing on specific dimensions such as reverse logistics and green packaging. Second, research has largely concentrated on manufacturing and e-commerce, with limited attention to oil and gas. Third, little empirical evidence exists on how green practices influence market share in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State where sustainability concerns are acute.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the relationship between reverse logistics, green packaging, and market share among oil and gas firms in Rivers State, thereby contributing to both sustainability management literature and sector-specific research.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design to examine the relationship between green practices (specifically reverse logistics and green packaging) and the market share of oil and gas firms in Rivers State. The population of the study comprised senior staff of four selected oil and gas firms operating in Bonny, Rivers State, namely Bonny Oil and Gas Terminal, SEPLAT Finima Bonny River Terminal, Mazigan Limited, and Tides Oil & Gas. According to information obtained from the human resource departments of the respective firms during fieldwork in 2025, the total population of senior staff across these organizations was fifty-seven (57). Given the relatively small population size, the study adopted a census approach in which the entire population was used as the sample, ensuring adequate representation and improving the reliability of the findings. The distribution of the population across the firms included eighteen (18) staff from Bonny Oil and Gas Terminal, twelve (12) from SEPLAT Finima Bonny River Terminal, eleven (11) from Mazigan Limited, and sixteen (16) from Tides Oil & Gas. To maintain proportional representation where necessary, Bowley's (1964) proportional allocation formula was referenced in determining the firm-level sample distribution.

The study primarily relied on quantitative data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents using the drop-and-pick-later technique, which allowed

respondents sufficient time to provide accurate responses while minimizing disruptions to their work schedules. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To ensure confidentiality and encourage honest responses, respondents were not required to disclose their names or personal identifiers. The collected data were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize demographic characteristics, while inferential statistical analysis was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to test the hypothesized relationships between the study variables. The choice of correlation analysis was informed by the study's objective of determining the strength and direction of relationships between green practices and market share among oil and gas firms operating in Rivers State.

Results

Of the 57 questionnaires distributed to senior staff in four oil and gas firms in Bonny, Rivers State, 52 were returned and valid, yielding a 91.2% response rate. Respondents were predominantly male (65.4%), with most aged 36–45 (38.5%) or 26–35 (30.8%). Educationally, 44.2% held Bachelor's/HND qualifications and 40.4% had postgraduate degrees, while 42.3% possessed 6–15 years of industry experience, indicating a well-informed and experienced sample. Descriptive analysis showed strong agreement on reverse logistics adoption (Mean = 4.07; SD = 0.682), reflecting active waste recovery and recycling practices. Green packaging also received positive ratings (Mean = 3.94; SD = 0.705), suggesting growing attention to sustainable material handling. Market share performance was similarly rated favorably (Mean = 3.89; SD = 0.733), indicating competitive positioning. Reliability tests confirmed internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the 0.70 threshold across all constructs.

Test of Hypotheses

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to test the two hypotheses. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Green Practices and Market Share

Variable	Reverse Logistics	Green Packaging	Market Share
Reverse Logistics	1.000		
Green Packaging	0.623*	1.000	
Market Share	0.738*	0.692*	1.000

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). N = 52

Hypothesis One

H₀1: Reverse logistics has no significant relationship with market share of oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

The analysis reveals a strong positive and statistically significant correlation between reverse logistics and market share ($r = 0.738$, $p < 0.05$, $N = 198$). The strength of the coefficient indicates a substantial linear relationship, confirming that oil and gas firms with more developed reverse logistics systems report superior market share positions. Since the p-value is below the 0.05 significance threshold, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding is consistent with the Institutional Theory prediction that verifiable green practice adoption confers

competitive legitimacy that translates into expanded market access and competitive advantage. The result suggests that systematic reverse logistics — encompassing material recovery, component remanufacturing, and controlled waste management — functions as a market differentiation mechanism that enables firms to qualify for more contracts, retain existing clients, and expand competitive market position.

Hypothesis Two

H₀2: Green packaging has no significant relationship with market share of oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

The analysis indicates a significant positive correlation between green packaging and market share ($r = 0.692$, $p < 0.05$, $N = 198$). While the coefficient magnitude is slightly lower than that observed for reverse logistics, the relationship is nonetheless strong and statistically significant, confirming that green packaging adoption is associated with improved competitive market share in the oil and gas sector. The null hypothesis is accordingly rejected. This finding supports the Legitimacy Theory proposition that visible environmental compliance signaled through green packaging generates stakeholder confidence and market legitimacy that translate into competitive market advantages — including enhanced eligibility for environmental qualification requirements in client procurement processes and improved reputational standing with regulators and host communities.

Implications of The Study

The findings of this study generate significant theoretical, managerial, and policy implications for the oil and gas industry in Rivers State and for the broader institutional and legitimacy theory literature on green practices.

Theoretically, the study provides empirical support for the application of Institutional Theory and Legitimacy Theory to the green supply chain-market share relationship in the Nigerian extractive industry context. By confirming that both reverse logistics and green packaging are positively and significantly associated with market share, the study validates the theoretical proposition that institutional conformity through green practice adoption generates legitimacy signals that translate into competitive market advantages. This enriches the Institutional Theory literature by demonstrating its predictive validity for firm-level market outcomes in the regulatory-intensive oil and gas sector, and extends the Legitimacy Theory framework by empirically linking legitimacy signals to measurable competitive market position improvements in a developing economy context.

For managers and business development executives in oil and gas firms, the findings provide compelling evidence for integrating green practice investment into competitive market strategy rather than treating it solely as a regulatory compliance obligation. Specifically, the strong positive relationship between reverse logistics and market share suggests that firms should invest in formalizing and documenting reverse logistics systems, including waste management infrastructure, material recovery partnerships, and remanufacturing capabilities, and communicate these systems effectively in client qualification submissions, regulatory reporting, and corporate environmental disclosures. Similarly, the significant relationship between green packaging and market share indicates that firms should actively adopt and certify eco-friendly packaging systems and communicate packaging environmental performance to key client and regulatory audiences.

For policymakers, including the NCDMB, NUPRC, NESREA, and the Rivers State Ministry of Environment, the findings support the development of environmental performance standards that reward green practice adoption with market access advantages. Mandatory environmental management system certification requirements, green procurement preferences in public oil sector contracting, and environmental performance transparency requirements would strengthen the market incentive for green practice adoption across the sector. These regulatory instruments would simultaneously advance Nigeria's environmental governance objectives and create competitive conditions in which green practice leaders are systematically rewarded with market share advantages.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of green practices (reverse logistics and green packaging) on the market share of oil and gas firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The empirical findings confirmed strong and statistically significant positive relationships between both green practice dimensions and market share, validating the theoretical predictions of Institutional Theory and Legitimacy Theory regarding the competitive market benefits of environmental conformity and legitimacy signaling in the oil and gas sector. The stronger association observed for reverse logistics compared to green packaging is consistent with the more comprehensive and auditable nature of material recovery systems relative to packaging practices in current industry qualification processes. The study concludes that green practices constitute strategic competitive resources in the oil and gas sector and recommends that firms systematically invest in reverse logistics and green packaging as market differentiation tools rather than compliance burdens.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Studies

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations emerge. Oil and gas firms in Rivers State should establish formal reverse logistics systems with clear recovery, recycling, and disposal procedures to strengthen compliance and client qualification. Green performance records, including certifications and packaging metrics, should be integrated into bids and marketing to enhance competitiveness. Firms are encouraged to pursue ISO 14001 and other recognized certifications to provide credible validation of sustainability achievements. Regulators such as NCDMB should create a public green performance register to incentivize adoption and guide procurement decisions, while industry associations (e.g., NAPE, PETAN) should develop sector-wide standards for reverse logistics and packaging to promote consistency and legitimacy across the industry.

Future research should examine the moderating role of regulatory stringency in the relationship between green practices and market share, particularly to determine whether stricter environmental regulations amplify the competitive advantages of reverse logistics and green packaging. Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to track how market share outcomes evolve as firms deepen their green practice adoption over time. Advanced methods such as Structural Equation Modeling could test direct and mediating effects, incorporating variables like corporate reputation or certification status. Comparative studies across other oil-producing states (Delta, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa) would assess generalizability, while the use of objective market share data from regulatory filings and contract registries would strengthen validity beyond perception-based measures.

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