

# MIS Quarterly Research Curation

## IS Sourcing

Since 1998, when the first two papers on Information Systems (IS) Sourcing were published in the *MIS Quarterly*, this topic has been widely studied, addressing various issues related to sourcing decisions, organizing and governing sourcing relationships, and sourcing performance. These studies cover a wide range of sourcing models, representing client and supplier perspectives at various levels of analysis (firm, project/contract, team or individual). Studies published in the *MIS Quarterly* build on theories from various domains to expand the understanding of this complex and dynamic phenomenon, offering significant impact for theory and practice.

### Research Curation Team

**Julia Kotlarsky** (The University of Auckland)  
**Ilan Oshri** (The University of Auckland)  
**Jens Dibbern** (University of Bern)  
**Deepa Mani** (Indian School of Business)

## Progression of Research in MIS Quarterly

Early Work	Recent Work	Methods and Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sourcing decisions and outsourcing success emerge as fundamental issues in IS sourcing.</li><li>• Captured diversity of sourcing models. The complex nature of sourcing relationships is demonstrated through a variety of factors that should be taken into account when making sourcing decisions. Interactions between different client- and contract- or relationship- specific attributes revealed.</li><li>• Use of economic theories dominate.</li><li>• Mostly take the client’s perspective.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding the complexity of sourcing engagements is further refined by focusing on specific cases (projects or relationships) and sourcing configurations (i.e., <i>how</i> to source rather than <i>whether</i> to source).</li><li>• Use of a wide range of theories, including organizational, social, and cognitive.</li><li>• While the client perspective is still dominant, more studies focus on the supplier’s perspective.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early research in outsourcing is dominated by qualitative analyses; since 2005, there has been an increase in econometric analyses of survey and archival data.</li><li>• While some survey data and qualitative studies provide a within-firm, contract-level perspective, data informing outsourcing research have largely been at the firm-level.</li><li>• More recently, there has been an increase in within-firm, contract-level content analyses to drive granular insights on the structures and processes that affect sourcing engagements.</li></ul>

### Sourcing Outcomes

- *Sourcing outcomes* are often used to assess normative contractual structures as well as practices used to manage sourcing relationships on an ongoing basis (typically in qualitative case studies).
- Sourcing outcomes, conceptualized as *success in meeting sourcing objectives, ex post performance and/or satisfaction*, have been included in many studies.
- *Performance* is typically included as a dependent variable and measured at firm, project and individual levels. While self-reported measures dominate the literature, various operational indicators too have been used (e.g., cost savings, productivity).

## Thematic Advances in Knowledge

Making the sourcing decision	Designing contractual structures	Managing the sourcing relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on sourcing choices: <i>whether</i> and to <i>what extent</i> to outsource the organization’s IS (function, task, project, or professionals), and <i>where</i> to outsource it (e.g., domestic vs offshore).</li><li>• Studying the determinants of a particular IS sourcing choice and how these determinants are related to sourcing success.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on contractual structures: <i>how</i> to divide risks and incentives between the client and supplier, and <i>how</i> to encourage cooperation.</li><li>• Studying interactions between contract types and different coordination and control mechanisms.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on knowledge processes and practices: <i>how</i> to manage ongoing sourcing engagements.</li><li>• Studying implications of knowledge boundaries and dynamics of interactions between dispersed parties (client-supplier or onsite-offshore).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mainly from the client perspective and predominantly firm level studies.</li><li>• The majority are quantitative studies, and many use TCE combined with another theory.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mainly from the client perspective, project (or relationship) level studies.</li><li>• Quantitative studies, mainly using econometric modeling.</li><li>• The majority adopt TCE theory.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Both client and supplier perspectives.</li><li>• The majority are qualitative, in-depth case studies.</li><li>• A wide range of theories (e.g., organizational and cognitive) are borrowed from other disciplines.</li></ul>