JETIR.ORG ISSN: 2349-5162 | ESTD Year : 2014 | Monthly Issue
JOURNAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (JETIR)
An International Scholarly Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Between promise and uncertainty: Community development expectations in facing offshore oil and gas exploration in Suriname

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Abstract: Suriname's positioning as an emerging offshore oil and gas producer presents both opportunities and uncertainties for local communities, particularly in regions such as Nickerie. This study explores how residents perceive the socio-economic implications of energy exploration, with a focus on transparent governance, equitable resource management, and inclusive development pathways. Grounded in the theoretical frameworks of the Resource Curse and Local Content Policy, the research adopts a quantitative approach to examine how governance practices, economic drivers, and policy enforcement shape community expectations and developmental outcomes. The findings suggest that trust in the sector is closely linked to institutional transparency, effective local engagement, and clearly articulated mechanisms for benefit-sharing. However, limited enforcement capacity and unclear reinvestment strategies have fueled public doubt about the equitable distribution of oil wealth. This study emphasizes the critical need to enhance institutional effectiveness, align national policies with local priorities, and convert potential resource gains into sustained, community-centered development.

IndexTerms **- Offshore oil and gas, Suriname, Community development, Resource curse, Local content policy, Governance, Public perception, Sustainable development**

1. INTRODUCTION

Suriname has a multifaceted historical trajectory and a longstanding reliance on extractive and agricultural sectors, which serve as foundational pillars of its economy. Currently, gold and crude oil exports dominate the national output, rendering the economy increasingly vulnerable to global commodity price volatility (World Bank, 2024). The 2020 discovery of extensive offshore oil reserves marked a pivotal shift, positioning Suriname as an emerging oil-producing state—paralleling developments in neighboring Guyana. Exploratory successes by TotalEnergies, Apache, ExxonMobil, and Petronas have generated substantial optimism for economic expansion, increased foreign direct investment, and infrastructural advancement (Europetrole, 2020).

Nonetheless, comparative experiences from other resource-abundant nations demonstrate that without robust institutional safeguards, resource wealth can exacerbate macroeconomic instability, deepen social disparities, and accelerate environmental harm (Ank Kuipers, Reuters, 2023). Staatsolie Maatschappij NV, the state-owned oil enterprise, actively promotes investment opportunities through platforms like the Suriname Energy, Oil, and Gas Summit (SEOGS), aiming to enhance investor confidence and expedite offshore exploration. Additional discoveries by Apache, alongside contributions from ExxonMobil and Petronas, underscore the sector's momentum (Europetrole, 2020). Despite these advances, Suriname's economy remains predominantly dependent on extractive outputs—particularly gold and onshore oil—and thus remains highly sensitive to international commodity price shifts (Inter-American Development Bank, 2021). The country's economic structure is heavily reliant on primary sectors such as mining, oil, agriculture, and forestry (Alex Irwin-Hunt, 2023). Experiences from other resource-rich contexts confirm that in the absence of sound governance, oil wealth may result in fiscal volatility, widening social inequality, and structural economic distortions—phenomena commonly described under the umbrella of the Dutch Disease (Theo E. Wong & Lucia van Geuns, 2021).

This study aims to assess how offshore oil and gas development influences local perceptions of socio-economic progress in Suriname, with a particular focus on the district of Nickerie. By examining community expectations, it seeks to identify how transparent governance, local economic participation, and strategic reinvestment affect perceived benefits. The analysis emphasizes the importance of supporting locally owned businesses, facilitating community shareholding, and ensuring policy frameworks are inclusive and accountable. In doing so, the research explores whether and how offshore resource development aligns with public aspirations for employment, equity, and long-term development outcomes.

Offshore oil and gas development continues to play a crucial role in meeting global energy demand. However, exploration and production activities introduce significant social, economic, and environmental complexities. This study investigates the expectations

of residents in Nickerie regarding the anticipated social and economic effects of offshore oil and gas expansion on local communities in Suriname.

2. Problem Statement

The emergence of offshore oil and gas extraction presents considerable risks for communities situated near operational zones. In Suriname, these challenges are intensified by persistent poverty, pronounced income inequality, and an economically fragile environment susceptible to external market fluctuations, especially those tied to oil and gold exports. This research explores how local populations perceive the potential impacts of offshore hydrocarbon development and how such developments can support long-term economic stability and equitable development outcomes.

3. Research aim

This study seeks to critically assess how offshore oil and gas development influences public expectations of socio-economic transformation in Suriname, particularly among communities in Nickerie. It aims to examine the extent to which transparent governance, equitable revenue distribution, local enterprise support, and effective local content policies shape perceptions of employment creation and social well-being. By testing four hypotheses through quantitative methods and regression analysis, the research evaluates how institutional quality and economic strategies can align extractive sector growth with community aspirations for long-term, inclusive development.

4. Hypotheses

Drawing from the Resource Curse Theory and informed by Local Content Policy frameworks, the following hypotheses guide the analysis:

- H1: Offshore oil and gas development positively influences community development when supported by transparent governance and equitable revenue sharing.
- H2: Economic benefits from offshore activities enhance local social well-being.
- H3: Effective local content policies promote inclusive growth through employment and entrepreneurship.
- H4: Weak governance and rent-seeking behavior undermine socio-economic gains from offshore resource development.

The analytical method—multiple regression analysis—tests these hypotheses using data collected from structured surveys in Nickerie.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Peak Oil Theory

When petroleum was first extracted in 1859, its applications were limited. Over time, oil became deeply embedded in industrialized life, gradually transforming into a central driver of global economies. This increasing dependence became particularly evident following the oil crises of the 1970s, which intensified concerns regarding the finite nature of global oil reserves. The central question emerged: how long can societies remain reliant on fossil fuels, and what alternatives exist when these resources are exhausted? These inquiries remain relevant.

On that critical question, Goodstein (2004) highlights the reserves-to-production (R/P) ratio as one approach to estimating remaining oil supply. This method divides total extractable reserves by current usage, estimating a range of 40 to 100 years of availability. However, alternative models, such as those presented by Campbell and Laherrère (1998), offer estimations of oil availability using different assumptions. Oil companies favor the R/P ratio as it implies consistent production levels. Proponents of peak oil theory challenge this assumption, arguing that oil output will eventually reach its maximum rate—referred to as "peak oil"—before entering a permanent decline. This theory considers both available reserves and the rising cost of extraction over time. The theory gained traction through the work of M. King Hubbert; he accurately forecasted the 1970 peak in oil production in the contiguous United States. Hubbert's model illustrated the progression of oil discovery and production. Initially, new oil fields are discovered rapidly, but over time, discoveries slow as remaining reserves become harder to access.

Production follows a similar arc. During early extraction, oil is abundant and inexpensive to retrieve. As reservoirs deplete, extraction becomes technically challenging and more costly. Thus, output peaks and eventually declines. Heinberg (2003) suggests that peak production occurs when approximately half of the reservoir's volume has been extracted. Hubbert further observed a temporal lag between discovery and full-scale production. Goodstein (2004) posits that the rate at which oil is discovered closely mirrors the rate of its extraction. He also extends Hubbert's model to other natural resources like copper and coal. Nonetheless, questions arise regarding the influence of technological advances. It remains uncertain to what extent modern innovations alter the timeline or validity of peak oil projections.

Most scholars agree on the complexity of forecasting peak production. A study by the U.S. Department of Energy (Hirsch et al., 2005) warns of severe economic and political consequences if societies fail to prepare for peak oil at least a decade in advance. Consequently, realistic strategies are essential to manage the socio-economic risks associated with declining oil dependence.

5.2 Resource Curse

The "resource curse" refers to the paradox wherein countries rich in natural resources experience adverse developmental outcomes. While abundance in oil, gas, or minerals may seem advantageous, it can undermine governance, exacerbate inequality, and hinder sustainable growth. Wealth often becomes concentrated in the hands of a few elites, who leverage control over resources for personal gain rather than national advancement. This phenomenon creates fertile ground for corruption and rent-seeking behavior. Governments may divert revenues into patronage networks instead of public services. Economically, overreliance on resource exports exposes nations to price volatility, inhibiting long-term planning and inducing boom-bust cycles that stifle diversified growth.

Hausmann and Rigobon (2002), in their influential work, outline three dimensions of the resource curse: Dutch disease, rent-seeking, and the effects of volatility. For resource-rich nations like Suriname—with considerable deposits of gold, timber, and

offshore oil—understanding and mitigating these risks is vital. These challenges must be addressed proactively to avoid deepening socio-economic disparities.

5.2.1 Dutch Disease

Dutch disease arises when resource revenues appreciate the domestic currency, rendering other tradable sectors, such as manufacturing, less competitive. As capital and labor shift toward the booming resource and non-tradable sectors, industrial output declines. Corden (1982) characterizes this as a reallocation from the tradable to the non-tradable sector, driven by increased demand and price shifts, without necessarily increasing overall economic productivity.

Matsuyama (1992) adds that industrial sectors typically benefit from increasing returns to scale, unlike resource sectors. Therefore, resource wealth can anchor an economy in less dynamic areas, impeding structural transformation. Hausmann and Rigobon (2002) critique this theory, noting that Venezuela experienced its highest per capita growth during peak oil periods, but later suffered stagnation post-1980, despite diminishing oil income. This contradiction undermines the predictive power of Dutch disease models.

Furthermore, technological advancement in resource-based industries may rival or exceed that of traditional sectors. Historical examples from Australia, Canada, and Finland illustrate how resource-led innovation can catalyze broader economic development (World Bank, 2001).

5.2.2 Rent-Seeking

Hausmann and Rigobon (2002) argue that the influx of natural resource rents distorts incentives, reducing entrepreneurial activity. Rather than investing in innovation, actors compete for access to public revenues. These dynamic fosters inefficiencies and misallocates resources.

Weingast, Shepsle, and Johnsen (1981) and von Hagen and Harden (1994) suggest that ambiguities in property rights over resource revenues can intensify common-pool dilemmas (Berry,2008). In Suriname's context, initial resource management largely benefited external markets and industrial actors. Recent efforts to localize benefits, such as making fuel available for domestic use, signal modest progress. However, broader integration between local enterprises and the extractive sector remains limited.

The common-pool problem manifests when expenditures are shared but benefits remain individualized. This often results in excessive public spending and inefficient fiscal allocations. In resource-abundant nations, low taxation and high rents amplify this problem. Constituencies may compete aggressively for resource revenues during boom periods, fearing potential exclusion.

Nonetheless, rent-seeking theories fail to explain why some resource-rich nations prospered during periods of economic expansion. Hausmann and Rigobon (2002) contend that resource revenues, if well-managed, can finance savings, reduce distortionary taxes, and create conditions conducive to growth. Political leadership becomes essential in allocating rents equitably when revenues decline.

5.2.3 Volatility

Economic volatility linked to resource wealth adversely impacts growth, investment, income equality, and social development. Hausmann and Rigobon (2002) attribute this instability to the inelastic supply of natural resources, which makes prices prone to sudden shocks.

They further note that specialization in non-tradables amplifies price fluctuations. Financial frictions exacerbate these effects by concentrating investment in sectors sensitive to macroeconomic instability. Consequently, output diversification diminishes, and long-term welfare declines.

High oil revenues, rather than fostering resilience, may instead push economies toward inefficient specialization. Stabilization policies become crucial to mitigate these adverse outcomes. According to Hausmann and Rigobon, countries with diversified economies—those maintaining significant non-oil tradable sectors—are less exposed to fiscal volatility. In such economies, adjustments occur through production shifts rather than abrupt changes in public spending.

5.3 Latin America and the Politics of Oil and Gas

David R. Mares (2010) examined the relationship between resource nationalism and energy security, emphasizing how these dynamic impacts the global supply of energy. His study positions Latin America as a crucial player in global hydrocarbon markets, particularly given its capacity to meet the oil demand of major consumers such as the United States. Countries like Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil are leading suppliers. Conversely, Latin America's strategic value has also attracted substantial investments from Eastern powers, including China, Russia, and India. Such geopolitical interest influences regional energy markets and, ultimately, global oil prices, which in turn shape domestic development trajectories.

Mares further questions whether Latin America can consistently meet international oil demand, particularly as tensions between domestic priorities and global energy security persist. Successfully navigating this challenge requires aligning national policy with international expectations. Resource nationalism, when implemented to support public services such as healthcare and education, can yield positive social outcomes. Historically, Latin America's approach to resource governance evolved through periods of authoritarianism in the 1980s and democratic reforms in the following decades. During military regimes, state-driven policies dominated, whereas democratization ushered in reforms aimed at mitigating environmental impacts associated with energy production.

These reforms were shaped in part by the Washington Consensus, a policy framework introduced by economist John Williamson in 1989. The consensus advocated for market liberalization, privatization, and fiscal discipline as strategies to address the region's economic crises of the 1980s. It gained backing from influential financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, reflecting broader geopolitical objectives in the Americas during the post-Cold War period. The Washington Consensus outlined ten core principles, which were intended as descriptive rather than prescriptive. However, the doctrine became synonymous with reducing state intervention and promoting free-market policies. By the 1990s, many Latin American countries had transitioned from state-led to export-oriented market economies. Although the consensus was intended to facilitate growth, critics

noted that it failed to address structural inequalities. Key shortcomings included sluggish productivity gains, persistent poverty, and minimal convergence with developed nations.

The doctrine assumed that economic development should rely on market forces rather than government planning. However, empirical outcomes were mixed. While reforms were implemented widely, their results were disappointing, with limited socioeconomic progress. Consequently, the consensus has since been criticized for oversimplifying development challenges and leaving Latin America in a continuous journey to reach better socio-economic status from exploiting its oil and gas reserves- the climb from the middle-income trap.

5.4 Suriname's Offshore Hydrocarbon Discoveries: Promise or Peril?

According to Wong and van Geuns (2020), recent discoveries in the Suriname-Guyana Basin could contain hundreds of millions of barrels of oil and natural gas. These findings are expected to usher in significant economic, political, and societal changes. To avoid the pitfalls associated with resource wealth, robust institutions and transparent management systems are essential. The authors recommend that Staatsolie Maatschappij NV—the national oil company—prioritize investments in monitoring and auditing mechanisms to ensure sound governance.

Stevens and Lahn (2015) echo this position, stating that evaluating national oil companies is a fundamental responsibility of governments. If budgetary constraints exist, international advisory groups such as the Norwegian Oil for Development (OfD) program or the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) could assist in developing institutional capacity. Guyana has already established a sovereign wealth fund modeled after Norway's. Suriname passed legislation for a similar fund in 2017 to manage revenues from extractive industries, though it remains unclear whether it has been fully operationalized.

In the event of large-scale oil production, a sovereign wealth fund could stabilize Suriname's budget and preserve revenues for future generations. However, establishing such a fund requires comprehensive political frameworks and regulatory safeguards.

While resource exploitation presents opportunities for debt reduction and income generation, environmental concerns remain pressing. As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, Suriname has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions significantly by 2050. This commitment will shape the nation's energy policy in the decades ahead.

The World Bank, in alignment with these goals, announced it would cease financing upstream oil and gas projects post-2019. Whether this position will evolve in light of sustained oil demand from major economies remains uncertain. Moreover, ongoing tensions between the United States and Saudi Arabia over the role of the U.S. dollar in oil trade may prompt shifts in American energy policy, potentially affecting emerging producers such as Suriname and Guyana.

Suriname must avoid repeating the missteps associated with policy frameworks like the Washington Consensus. Instead, it should draw lessons from past reforms and adopt a strategic, forward-looking approach. Bradley et al. (2018) emphasizes the risks of fossil fuel reliance in an era of climate action, warning that significant hydrocarbon reserves may remain unused. The authors encourage nations such as Suriname to engage with global climate policy and prepare for economic transitions.

Wong and van Geuns (2020) conclude that Suriname's potential oil boom must be managed with caution and foresight. Long-term economic planning and political stability are crucial. Establishing a sovereign wealth fund and adhering to global environmental commitments are essential for ensuring that resource wealth contributes meaningfully to national development and intergenerational equity.

6. Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework guides the analysis of socio-economic impacts of offshore oil and gas development on local communities in Suriname, particularly within the district of Nickerie. It aligns with quantitative research methodologies and regression-based analysis to explore the interplay between governance, economic development, and community well-being. The framework is grounded in Resource Curse Theory (Hausmann & Rigobon, 2002) and Local Content Theory (Tordo et al., 2013). These theoretical underpinnings help structure the relationships between independent and dependent variables examined in the study.

Variables

Independent Variables:

1. Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration
2. Economic Factor (e.g., employment, income, infrastructure)
3. Social Factor (e.g., health, education, services)
4. Local Content Policies (prioritization of local labor and businesses)

Dependent Variables:
1. Community Development (e.g., infrastructure, job creation, public services) and
2. Social Well-Being (e.g., satisfaction, equity, security, quality of life)

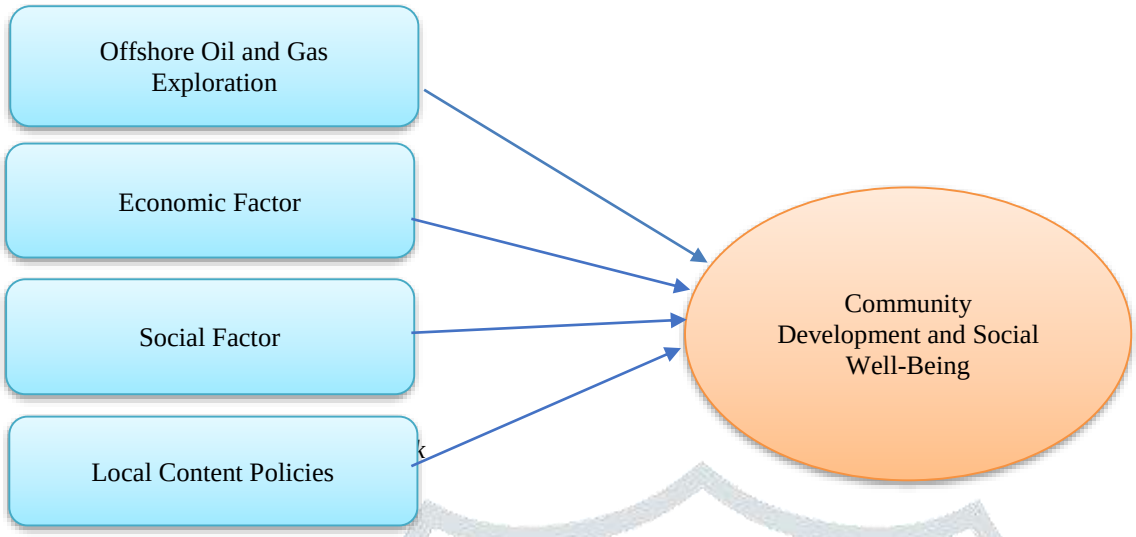


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual model builds upon the theoretical foundations of the Resource Curse Theory and Local Content Policy to assess how offshore oil development affects local communities in Suriname. As articulated by Hausmann and Rigobon (2002), resource-abundant economies risk experiencing governance failures, social inequality, and developmental stagnation if institutional oversight is weak. In contrast, the Local Content Policy framework, as described by Tordo et al. (2013), underscores the transformative role of national strategies that prioritize domestic labor, strengthen local enterprises, and enhance socio-economic inclusion. The conceptual framework reflects these theoretical perspectives by mapping the relationship between oil exploration activities, socio-economic variables, and perceived outcomes in community advancement and quality of life. Moreover, it emphasizes how transparent governance, community participation, and targeted investment are central to aligning extractive sector gains with the lived expectations of citizens—especially in regions such as Nickerie. In doing so, the model enables a robust analytical lens through which to analyze whether Suriname's offshore oil sector can deliver equitable, sustainable benefits to its people.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research approach. Surveys and questionnaires are employed to collect structured data from a broad sample of community members, focusing on their socio-economic conditions, perceptions, and attitudes toward offshore oil and gas development. The survey includes multiple-choice questions, allowing for the collection of quantitative insights.

7.2 Sampling Strategy and Participant Selection

The selection of participants aligns with the research objective and quantitative method data strategy. Random sampling was used to select community members residing near offshore oil sites. Fieldwork was conducted between July and August 2023 in the regions of the Nickerie district. This random sampling method ensures geographical relevance and captures the perspectives of those closest to the impact zone.

7.3 Study Area Description

Nickerie, a coastal district in western Suriname, borders the Atlantic Ocean to the north and Guyana via the Corantijn River to the west. As of the 2012 census, it had 34,233 inhabitants. Nieuw-Nickerie, the district capital, serves as a key riverport and is the third largest urban center in the country (Shata, ABS Consensus, 2012). Offshore oil discoveries have elevated Suriname's status as a prospective hydrocarbon producer. With its coastal communities intricately linked to marine-based activities, assessing the potential impacts of offshore energy projects on these populations is timely and essential.

7.4 Quantitative Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is utilized to examine the influence of the independent variables on dependent variables related to community well-being. This method facilitates the assessment of how government interventions, offshore oil operations, economic indicators, and community participation collectively affect local socio-economic outcomes. The study employs structured surveys to gather quantitative data and the sample size targets 150 respondents within Nickerie.

7.5 Sampling Framework

Stratified random sampling guide participant selection. Which ensures demographic representation (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2014). Stratification was based on socio-economic roles, including government employees, fishermen, and entrepreneurs. This approach strengthens the generalizability of the results (Bryman, 2012).

7.6 Sample Size Determination

The selected sample size (n=150) was determined using a finite population correction formula, providing a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error for N = 34,000:

$$n = (N \times Z^2 \times p(1-p)) / ((e^2 \times (N-1)) + Z^2 \times p(1-p))$$

$$n \approx 151$$

This sample ensures reliable data while maintaining logistical feasibility (Yamane, 1967).

7.7 Validity and Reliability

Diverse stakeholder engagement—including civil servants and community leaders—supports content accuracy. Confidentiality and anonymity protocols foster candid participation. Reliability is maintained through standardized tools (Bryman, 2012).

7.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical rigor is upheld through informed consent, privacy safeguards, and voluntary participation. Cultural sensitivity guides interactions, ensuring respect for local values (Patton, 2015). Adhering to principles of transparency, reflexivity, and fairness enhances the ethical and scholarly validity of the study (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

8. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis applies descriptive techniques through SPSS in handling the main variables including economic factors, social well-being, governance institutions, and local content policies. Findings present empirical findings of community attitudes, expectations, and policy concerns constituting the foundation of further consideration in the pursuit of strategies toward sustainable development in the area.

8.1 Data preparation, screening and Data Sources

Data for this study were obtained through a guided survey questionnaire to obtain quantitative data from Surinamese communities near the offshore oil and gas operations. The survey was held in the District of Nickerie, where the local lifestyles rely on coast-based activities such as river and sea fishing, and touristic scenery viewing. A total of 156 responses were received, of which 3 were found incomplete or inconsistent. Consequently, this left 153 responses that could be statistically processed and analyzed.

To this extent, rigorous data processing and screening processes were conducted at the beginning stage of the study to uphold the reliability and integrity of the data. In this respect, all survey instruments had to be carefully screened and defined so that all answers attained a minimum level of clarity, completeness, and consistency. SPSS was used to enter, clean, and analyze data and hence identify missing values, outliers, and inconsistencies. All these were done in order to contribute to the validity of the results and give a robust statistical analysis, which shall be truly representative of the attitude in the community about economic, social, and governance aspects of oil and gas development offshore.

8.2 Respondents Demographic Profile

The aim of this chapter is to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, which is quite essential in setting into perspective the experiences and perceptions of the community members. The analysis incorporates key variables on age, gender, level of education, and employment status, which give an overview of the socioeconomic composition of the sampled population. Since the survey was conducted in coastal communities where their survival is also dependent on fishing and tourism-related activities, demographic data helps with determining how different groups in the community perceive the possible economic, social, and environmental impacts that the development of the offshore oil and gas sector has on Suriname.

Key variables of the demographic profile of the respondents:

I. Age: Denotes the age range of the individuals included in the survey, measured in years. The age distribution is divided into six groups:
   1. Age 18-24 (9.9%)
   2. Age 25-34 (28.3%)
   3. Age 34-44 (23.7%)
   4. Age 45-54 (27%)
   5. Age 55-60 (6.6%)
   6. Above 60 (4.6%)

II. Gender: Denotes the gender of the 153 individuals who participated in the survey. The classification consists of two distinct categories; male and female
   1. Male- 68 (44.4%)
   2. Female- 85 (55.6%)

III. Education: Indicates the participants' last or highest attained educational qualification. The five distinct categories within this framework:
   1. Lower than high school level- 13 (8.5%)
   2. Highschool level- 65 (42.5%)
   3. Bachelor degree level- 57 (37.3%)
   4. Master degree level- 17 (11.1%)
   5. Doctor / PhD degree level- 2 (1.3%)

IV. Occupation: This represents the present employment status of the individuals surveyed. The aforementioned classification comprises four distinct categories,
   1. Student- 14 (9.5%)
   2. Civil servant- 87 (58.8%)
   3. Entrepreneur/ own business- 52 (35.1%)
   4. Retired- 6 (4.1%)

Overall, this output, with the frequency and percentage of each category of the variables, gives us a demographic profile of the survey respondents in terms of their gender, age, education, and current employment. It renders informative data on the characteristics of the survey.

8.3 Descriptive statistics of Study Variables

This paragraph provides the descriptive statistics of the key study variables, thus offering a profile of the data gathered through 153 usable survey responses. Descriptive statistics describe the data set by using measures of central tendency, distribution, and variation within a data set that gives understanding of the economic, social, and governance dimensions of offshore oil and gas development in Suriname. By analyzing frequencies, means, and standard deviations, this section helps to establish patterns and trends among respondents' perceptions, supporting further statistical analysis. These findings serve as a foundation for understanding how offshore oil activities influence community development, economic diversification, and sustainability efforts in the surveyed coastal areas.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics

Statistics

		Edu	Su & Foreign	Local business support	Educ O&G locals	Re-invest	OGmWkfc	Legislation	Pub IOC	How important do you think the government and oil & gas companies involve local communities in decision-making about offshore oil and gas extraction in Suriname?	Do you agree that your community will benefit when locals are shareholders in the Oil and Gas sector?	Do you agree that your community will profit from a National Prosperity Fund set up with revenues from Offshore oil and gas?	Do you agree that reinvestment s of Offshore oil and gas revenues in tourism will benefit your community?	Do you agree that reinvestment s of Offshore oil and gas revenues in fisheries will benefit your community?	Do you agree that reinvestment s of Offshore oil and gas revenues in local businesses will benefit your community?
N	Valid	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.53	1.9627	3.0588	3.6928	4.6667	.3791	2.5686	2.0915	4.13	4.64	4.53	4.57	1.2157	1.9608	3.3987
Mode		2	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	.00	3.00	4.00	5	5	5	5	2.00	3.00	4.00
Std. Deviation		.828	1.48026	1.70230	2.20431	2.50263	.78665	1.00009	2.00447	1.312	.792	.918	.758	.97967	1.43216	1.43428
Percentiles	25	2.00	.0000	4.0000	.0000	6.0000	.0000	3.0000	.0000	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	.0000	.0000	4.0000
	50	2.00	3.0000	4.0000	5.0000	6.0000	.0000	3.0000	4.0000	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.0000	3.0000	4.0000
	75	3.00	3.0000	4.0000	5.0000	6.0000	.0000	3.0000	4.0000	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.0000	3.0000	4.0000

Figure I.2 Descriptive statistics

Source: Researcher data 2023

Descriptive data analysis provides a meaningful overview of the distribution and central tendencies of the key variables in offshore oil and gas development in Suriname. In this regard, the dataset consists of 153 valid responses for several variables with no missing data to ensure completeness in the analysis:

- The mean values indicate the average perception for each variable, with "How important do you think the government and oil & gas companies involve local communities in decision-making?" (Mean = 4.64) being the highest-rated, reflecting strong public sentiment toward governance participation.
- Standard deviations indicate the spread of responses. Variables such as "Re-invest" (Std. Dev = 2.502), "Education in Oil & Gas Locals" (2.204), and "Reinvestment in Tourism" (1.432) exhibit higher variability, suggesting diverse opinions on these aspects.
- The percentiles (25th, 50th, 75th) reveal distribution trends, with most responses clustering around the upper scales (values of 4 and 5), indicating generally positive perceptions toward offshore oil and gas development's potential benefits.

Implications for the Research

High means and low variance on governance-issue questions indicate broad-based consensus on open governance and fair revenue sharing (supporting hypotheses, H1). Further, the moderate to high scores on local business support and reinvestment in the economy are conducive to the hypotheses (H2), confirming the good reputation of economic gain. However, the greater variation in responses regarding reinvestment strategies and education implies divergent views on the best approach to maximize local benefits, emphasizing the need for more transparent policy guidance in these sectors. Descriptive analysis is to supplement the regression results, presenting an underlying understanding of the perceptions of respondents within the wider socio-economic context.

8.4 Test of Multiple Linear Regression Assumptions

This study examined offshore oil and gas, economic, social, and local content policies that can impact community development and the social welfare of affected communities. For examination of collected data and inferring about the dependent variable through such independent variables, application of multiple regression analysis was a must.

Before conducting a multiple regression analysis, a sequence of preliminary diagnostics tests was performed in order to verify whether a model of multiple regression can be applicable to the present data. Diagnostics included tests for normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and linearity, altogether constituting key assumptions for a valid and successful multiple regression analysis.

1. Normality test

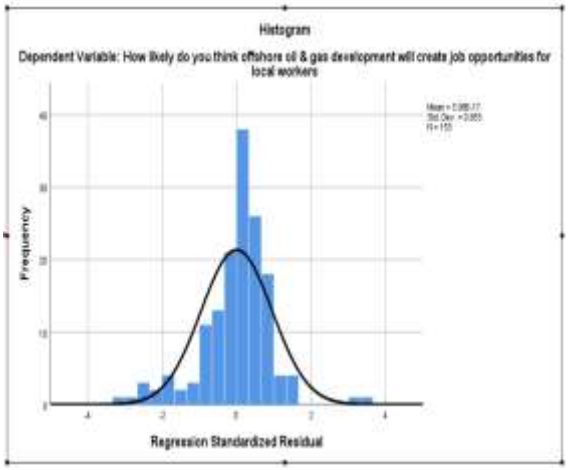


Figure I.3 Normality test

Source: Researcher data 2023

Normality describes a bell-shaped and symmetric distribution in which values cluster at its mean and fewer values at its ends (tails) (Pallant, 2005). Model residuals (error terms) must have a mean of 0 (Field & Golubitsky, 2009). For any vertical drawn through its median, both sides of its distribution must be a reflection of each other. To verify a distribution, researchers utilized a histogram and a normal probability plot and observed that the data adhered at and aggregated near its mean and formed a normal distribution in terms of its shape that is symmetric. The histogram below plots residuals for testing for the probability that off-shore development of oil and gas will generate jobs for local workers. The roughly bell-shaped curve drawn over the histogram indicates residuals follow a roughly bell-shaped distribution, a critical assumption for multiple linear regression. The residuals are centered around zero, with a mean of approximately 0 (5.98E-17), indicating that the model does not exhibit systematic bias in its predictions. The standard deviation of 0.953 suggests that most residuals fall within an acceptable range, reinforcing the model's reliability. While there are some minor deviations at the tails, the overall distribution remains symmetrical, supporting the assumption of normality and validating the model's fitness for making statistical inferences.

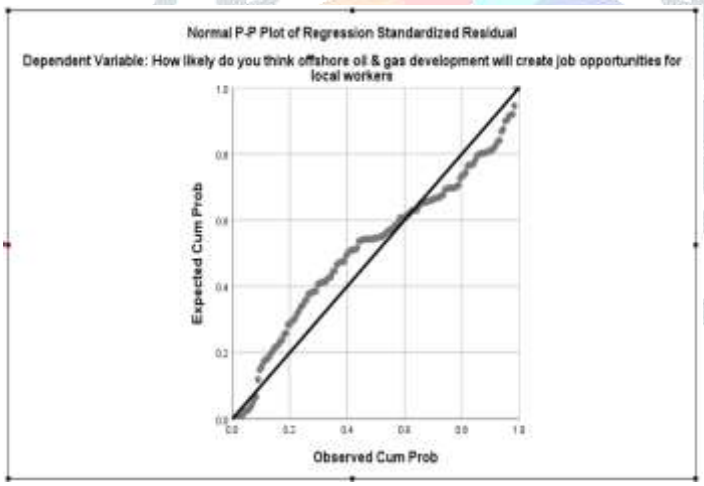


Figure I.4 Normality test P-P plot

Soure: Researcher data 2023

The normal probability plot also computed and examined in order to assess the normal distribution of the variable, The Normal P-P plot for residuals can be used in evaluating whether residuals follow a normal distribution. The plot compares the cumulative probability of residuals with the cumulative probability under a normal distribution for comparative purposes. Ideally, when residuals follow a normal distribution, then ideally, observations must closely follow a 45-degree diagonal line. In this case, the residuals generally follow the expected trend, with only slight deviations at the tails, indicating that the assumption of normality is largely satisfied. Although, slight deviation at both ends, confirms that minor departures occur, but overall distribution confirms that a model for an inferential analysis holds.

2. Linearity and Homoscedasticity test

The scatterplot of regression standardized residuals against standardized predicted values represents the assumptions of homoscedasticity and independence of errors. It is ideal that the residuals should be randomly spread around zero. This without a discernible pattern. The distribution of residuals is fairly scattered, and constant variance is, overall, satisfied with no clustering

present. There is a minor clustering, but overall, significant relationships in the data have been well captured in the model. That confirms model dependability in forecasting job creation probability with offshore oil and gas development.

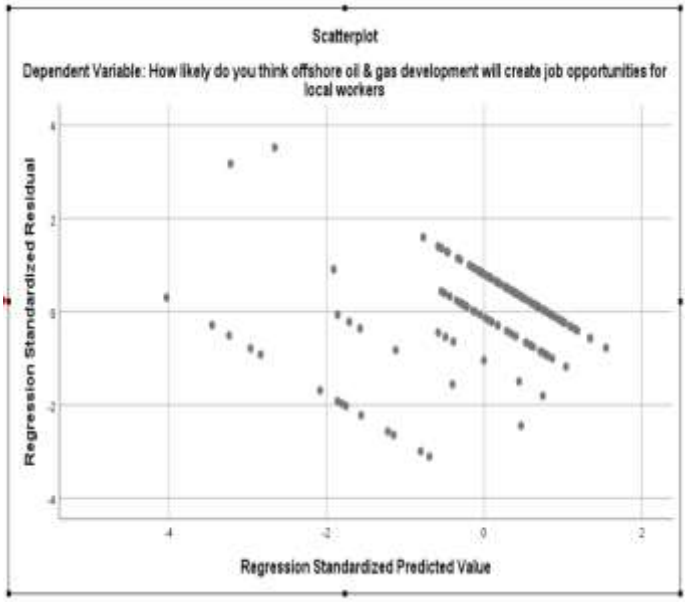


Figure I.5 Scatterplot

Source: Researcher data 2023

3. The Multicollinearity tests

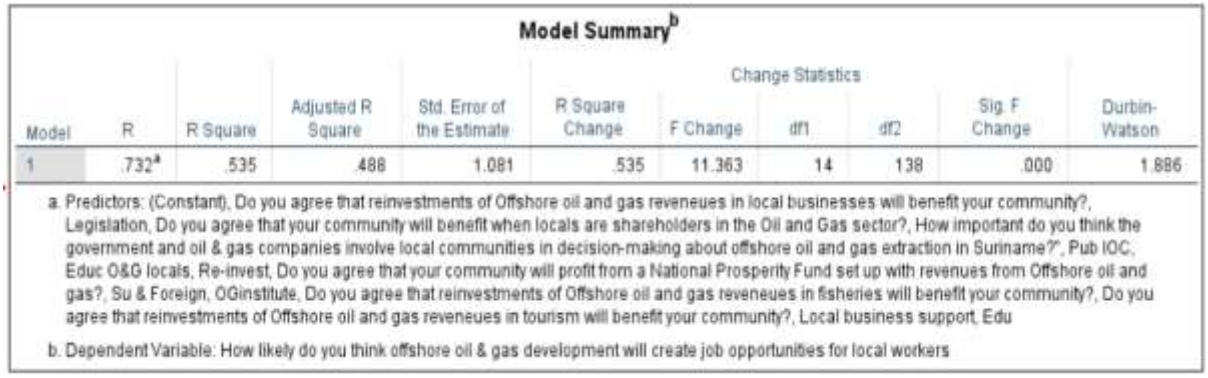
The coefficients table presents a strong case for the model's predictive power regarding the likelihood that offshore oil and gas development will create job opportunities for local workers. Several significant variables positively contribute to the research objectives, reinforcing the relevance of economic, social, and governance factors in shaping community expectations on development. The strongest predictor in the model is the Government and Oil & Gas Companies' Role in Decision-Making ($B = 1.157$, $p < 0.001$), which significantly influences the perception that offshore oil & gas development will create job opportunities. A positive coefficient indicates that greater involvement of government and oil & gas companies in decision-making enhances confidence in job creation, reinforcing governance theories that stress transparent decision-making in resource industries. Similarly, Local Business Support ($B = 0.302$, $p < 0.001$) plays a crucial role, as its strong positive effect suggests that fostering local enterprises boosts optimism regarding employment generation, aligning with economic theories advocating local enterprise development as a key strategy for maximizing resource-based benefits.

Furthermore, Community Benefit through Local Shareholding ($B = 0.239$, $p = 0.017$) is a significant variable, and its positive and significant sign reflects that respondent who believe that local shareholding in oil & gas ventures is beneficial, have increased confidence in job creation potential. This reveals a key potential for holding equity in extractive industries to act as a mechanism for socio-economic empowerment. Finally, Education in the Oil & Gas Sector ($B = -0.111$, $p = 0.014$) reveals a negative sign, and its sign reflects that increased educational level in the sector can contribute towards reduced confidence in job creation, possibly through increased awareness of employment restrictions, such as automation and realities of a foreign workforce. Overall, these observations go towards revealing complex interdependencies between governance, local economic policies, and perceived employment opportunity in the offshore oil & gas economy sector.

4. Autocorrelation test

The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.886 falls close to 2, indicating that autocorrelation is not a concern in this regression model. The Durbin-Watson value between 0 and 4 will identify serial correlation in residuals. Any value close to 2 will mean residuals will not be correlated, and no systemic relation between errors over observations will occur. On the other hand, values

less than 1 will mean positive autocorrelation, in which errors will have a systemic relation over observations, and values greater than 3 will mean a systemic relation in errors in a reverse direction. As 1.886 is close to 2, such a model will satisfy the independence of errors assumption. The absence of autocorrelation ensures that the model satisfies a key assumption of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, making the parameter estimates efficient and unbiased. This enhances the reliability and validity of the regression findings. With no serial correlation in the residuals, the relationships between independent variables (predictors) and the dependent variable (likelihood of offshore oil and gas development creating job opportunities for local workers) remain stable and unaffected by sequential dependency. This strengthens confidence in the model's ability to accurately represent the impact of governance, reinvestment strategies, and local business support on job creation perceptions in Suriname's offshore oil and gas sector.



Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.732[a]	.535	.488	1.081	.535	11.363	14	138	.000	1.886

a. Predictors: (Constant), Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in local businesses will benefit your community?, Legislation, Do you agree that your community will benefit when locals are shareholders in the Oil and Gas sector?, How important do you think the government and oil & gas companies involve local communities in decision-making about offshore oil and gas extraction in Suriname?", Pub IOC, Educ O&G locals, Re-invest, Do you agree that your community will profit from a National Prosperity Fund set up with revenues from Offshore oil and gas?, Su & Foreign, OGinstitute, Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in fisheries will benefit your community?, Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in tourism will benefit your community?, Local business support, Edu

b. Dependent Variable: How likely do you think offshore oil & gas development will create job opportunities for local workers

Figure I.6 Model Summary

Source: Researcher data 2023

5. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

After confirming the multivariate analysis assumptions, SPSS analysis software was used to run multiple linear regression in order to manage information and calculate descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentage. It was adopted in view of its suitability when dealing with the impact of several independent factors with a single dependant variable. Through regression analysis, critical statistical output shall support in answering the objectives of the study and testing hypotheses that were developed during formulating hypotheses.

- **Fitness of the model**

Firstly, the fitness of the model is being tested and presented by the summary table, which include values of R, R2 and adjusted R2.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.732[a]	.535	.488	1.081	.535	11.363	14	138	.000	1.886

a. Predictors: (Constant), Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in local businesses will benefit your community?, Legislation, Do you agree that your community will benefit when locals are shareholders in the Oil and Gas sector?, How important do you think the government and oil & gas companies involve local communities in decision-making about offshore oil and gas extraction in Suriname?", Pub IOC, Educ O&G locals, Re-invest, Do you agree that your community will profit from a National Prosperity Fund set up with revenues from Offshore oil and gas?, Su & Foreign, OGinstitute, Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in fisheries will benefit your community?, Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in tourism will benefit your community?, Local business support, Edu

b. Dependent Variable: How likely do you think offshore oil & gas development will create job opportunities for local workers

Figure I.7 Model Summary

Source: Researcher data 2023

The model summary validates that such a high fit for the study is exhibited through this model of regression. With an R value of 0.732, a high positive relation between the predictors and the dependent variable can be confirmed, and it can be confirmed that the independent variables have a high explanatory value for variation in offshore oil and gas development creating jobs for workers in the locality. With an R-Square value of 0.535, 53.5% of variance in the dependent variable can be confirmed through the predictors, and such a high proportion in social science studies is significant.

The adjusted R-Square value of 0.488 controls for the number of predictors and validates the model's solidity in view of having several variables. Besides, an F-statistic value of 11.363 and its p-value of $p < 0.001$ reveal that overall, the model is significant, and it signifies that overall, the predictors contribute to explaining the dependent variable. The model is in agreement with the purpose of the study, in that it brings together governance, economic reinvestment, and community participation factors, and its generalizability to explaining the impact of offshore oil and gas development in terms of employment opportunity in Suriname is strengthened.

- **Analysis of Variance**

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table shows the overall significance of the regression model and provides insights into how well the independent variables predict the dependent variable. The F-statistic of 11.363 and its significance level ($p < 0.001$) indicate that the regression model is highly significant. This means that, collectively, the predictors explain a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variable—how likely offshore oil and gas development will create job opportunities for local workers.

The Sum of squares for regression (186.016) represents the variability explained by the model, while the residual Sum of squares (161.369) represents the unexplained variance. Since the regression sum of squares is notably higher than the residual sum of squares, this suggests that the model captures a substantial proportion of the variance in the dependent variable.

Overall, this ANOVA result reinforces that the regression model is a good fit for the research, as the predictors significantly contribute to explaining job creation perceptions in the offshore oil and gas sector. The strong model significance suggests that governance, reinvestment policies, and local economic support are key factors influencing employment expectations, aligning well with the study's research objectives

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	186.016	14	13.287	11.363	.000[b]
	Residual	161.369	138	1.169		
	Total	347.386	152			

a. Dependent Variable: How likely do you think offshore oil & gas development will create job opportunities for local workers

b. Predictors: (Constant), Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in local businesses will benefit your community?, Legislation, Do you agree that your community will benefit when locals are shareholders in the Oil and Gas sector?, How important do you think the government and oil & gas companies involve local communities in decision-making about offshore oil and gas extraction in Suriname?", Pub IOC, Educ O&G locals, Re-invest, Do you agree that your community will profit from a National Prosperity Fund set up with revenues from Offshore oil and gas?, Su & Foreign, OGinstitute, Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in fisheries will benefit your community?, Do you agree that reinvestments of Offshore oil and gas reveneues in tourism will benefit your community?, Local business support, Edu

Figure I.8 ANOVA

Source: Researcher data 2023

- **Regression Coefficients**

The regression coefficients table provides insights into the contribution of each independent variable to the prediction of the dependent variable. The analysis focuses on the unstandardized coefficients (B), standardized coefficients (Beta), t-values, and significance levels (Sig.) to determine the strength and direction of relationships between the predictors and the outcome.

The multiple regression analysis reveals key significant predictors influencing perceptions of job creation from offshore oil and gas development. The strongest positive predictor is government and oil & gas companies' role in decision-making ($B = 1.157$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that greater involvement in decision-making enhances confidence in job opportunities, aligning with governance theories emphasizing transparent policy-making and community engagement. Local business support ($B = 0.302$, $p < 0.001$) is positively strong, and one can conclude that developing local companies is a key role in generating jobs and economic development. Community benefits through local shareholding ($B = 0.239$, $p = 0.017$) is positively correlated with job creation, and it can therefore conclude that holding equity is a role in controlling resources for socio-economic empowerment. Similarly, education in the oil & gas sector ($B = -0.111$, $p = 0.014$) has a negative coefficient, suggesting that higher education levels may lead to a more critical understanding of industry employment limitations, such as automation, foreign workforce competition, and skill specialization.

These findings highlight the importance of governance, economic policy, and reinvestment strategies in shaping local perceptions of employment opportunities in Suriname's. offshore oil and gas sector. The regression analysis underscores the critical role of governance, local business support, and equity participation in ensuring that offshore oil and gas development yields tangible benefits for local communities. These findings highlight the importance of strategic policy frameworks that foster inclusive economic growth and workforce development. Conversely, the negative effects of education and tourism reinvestment on job creation perceptions suggest the need for clearer industry employment pathways and more balanced reinvestment strategies to align with local expectations.

Overall, this analysis validates the research hypotheses, demonstrating that governance structures, economic policies, and reinvestment strategies significantly shape public perceptions of employment opportunities in Suriname's offshore oil and gas sector. offshore oil and gas sector.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

This section presents an empirical evaluation of the research hypotheses using the results derived from the regression model. These hypotheses are examined in relation to observable trends in offshore oil and gas development and contextualized within established scholarly literature.

Hypothesis H1 posits that offshore oil and gas development positively affects community development in Suriname, particularly when supported by transparent governance and equitable distribution of resource revenues. The regression results strongly support this hypothesis. Specifically, government and oil company decision-making ($B = 1.157$, $p < 0.001$) emerged as the most influential factor affecting perceptions of employment creation and associated community benefits. This finding aligns with Resource Governance Theory (Mehlum, Moene, & Torvik, 2006), which argues that transparency and accountability in resource governance contribute to sustained economic progress. Moreover, the positive coefficients for support of local businesses ($B = 0.302$, $p < 0.001$) and community shareholding in extraction projects ($B = 0.239$, $p = 0.017$) underscore the importance of fair revenue sharing in enhancing local welfare. These results substantiate the premise that effective governance and fair resource allocation are central to maximizing the developmental benefits of offshore resource extraction in Suriname (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Hypothesis H2 asserts that economic variables such as revenue generation and job creation positively influence social well-being. This hypothesis is also empirically validated. The analysis demonstrates that both community shareholding ($B = 0.239$, $p = 0.017$) and local enterprise support ($B = 0.302$, $p < 0.001$) significantly enhance social well-being, largely through mechanisms that empower households and promote entrepreneurship. The findings confirm that offshore oil and gas expansion contributes meaningfully to socio-economic upliftment within local communities.

Hypothesis H3 suggests that local content policies lead to greater community development through increased employment and business engagement. The results partially support this hypothesis. Although local content policies themselves did not produce a statistically significant direct effect ($p > 0.05$), support for domestic enterprises ($B = 0.302$, $p < 0.001$) did emerge as a meaningful

predictor of job creation. This supports earlier discussions emphasizing that policy effectiveness depends on rigorous implementation and oversight. The insignificant impact of local content policies may reflect legislative gaps, implementation inefficiencies, or reliance on expatriate labor. In the Surinamese context, these limitations are likely linked to the nascent state of local content frameworks. While such policies hold potential, their success depends on strong institutional support and alignment with private sector development.

Hypothesis H4 maintains that weak governance and rent-seeking behaviors undermine the socio-economic returns from offshore development. The analysis offers partial support for this claim. Governmental decision-making again stood out as the most robust predictor ($B = 1.157$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the pivotal role of institutional quality. This outcome is consistent with Rent-Seeking Theory (Krueger, 1974), which holds that resource misallocation due to political capture diminishes development gains. The negative coefficient associated with tourism reinvestment ($B = -0.227$, $p = 0.024$) further indicates that poorly executed diversification strategies can limit employment generation—particularly in areas such as Nickerie, where tourism is not a predominant source of income. The data collectively support the view that transparent governance mechanisms are essential to mitigating rent-seeking and promoting long-term gains from offshore extraction.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how governance, local content implementation, and reinvestment strategies shape community expectations surrounding Suriname's offshore oil and gas exploration. Focusing particularly on the district of Nickerie, the findings reveal a dual narrative of economic promise and structural uncertainty. Transparent governance and inclusive policy frameworks emerged as essential for converting resource wealth into equitable development. Community support for local entrepreneurship and shared ownership indicates a clear expectation for participatory economic growth. However, weak policy enforcement, limited reinvestment outside the oil sector, and institutional gaps continue to raise concerns about long-term inclusivity.The integration of Resource Curse Theory and Local Content Policy Theory offered a critical lens through which these dynamics were analyzed. The research confirms that without strategic reforms—such as binding local content legislation, diversification of reinvestment, and active community engagement—the sector's transformative potential may remain unrealized.

Ultimately, Suriname faces a decisive policy moment. The choices made today will determine whether offshore oil development drives sustainable prosperity or reinforces existing disparities. This study calls for a governance model rooted in transparency, accountability, and forward-looking planning to ensure that the benefits of resource extraction are widely shared and socially just

I. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My sincere gratitude towards Professor Zou Weikang for his guidance throughout my academic journey and to all who contributed to this research.

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