



RESEARCH ARTICLE

INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR DELAY IN PROCUREMENT OF PUBLIC ENGINEERING WORKS CONTRACT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Investigating the Factors Responsible for Delay in Procurement of Public Works Contract in Nigeria is presented. The aim of the study was to Analyze of factors responsible for delay in procurement processes of works contract in Nigeria. The study employed quantitative data using structured online survey instrument. A sample size of 109 respondents were drawn from a population of 150 procurement professionals. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were applied to analyze data of the study. Two research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The p-values obtained are: 0.000; 0.000; 0.000; and 0.020. Conclusions made by the study include: corruption is a significant factor causing delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria; and that stakeholders have significant roles to play in the delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria. The study made the following recommendations: the federal government of Nigeria and the respective States governments should establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track the progress of works contracts; and the public sector should adopt and apply e-procurement technologies to improve transparency, by cutting down on paperwork, and expedite the procurement process. The study has contributed to knowledge by offering good insights to comprehending the factors that cause delays in procurement of public works and proffered multimodal strategy to solve them, which includes modernizing procurement technologies, guaranteeing timely funding, improving the capabilities of procurement staff, use of E-procurement and streamlining regulatory processes. The study's outcome will be beneficial to policymakers, procurement professionals and Nigeria's procurement system.

Keywords: Instrument, descriptive, quantitative, statistics, e-procurement, p-values

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Procurement is the acquisition of goods, services, or works from an external source and is a critical function in both public and private sectors, (Gatobu, 2020). Procurement in the context of works contracts includes tendering, evaluation, negotiation, and contract management, among other stages from project inception to contract award and implementation, (Mensah, 2021). Good procurement procedures guarantee the timely and economical completion of projects, which enhances the overall success of programs aimed at developing infrastructure, (Bisbey, Nourzad, Chu, & Ouhadi).

In developing nations like Nigeria, where the need for reliable infrastructure is critical, effective procurement procedures are essential to the successful completion of infrastructure projects, (Ebekozen, Samsurijan, Aigbavboa, Awe, Amadi, & Emuchay, 2023). In order to promote economic expansion, improve public services, and raise living standards, the Nigerian government has continuously made infrastructure investments, (Azolibe, Okonkwo, & Adigwe, 2020). These investments go toward a wide range of construction projects, such as homes, schools, hospitals, bridges, and roadways, (Kaklauskas, Zavadskas, Lepkova, Raslanas, Dauksys, Vetloviene, & Ubarte, 2021). The efficiency and efficacy of these initiatives have been weakened by ongoing delays in the works contract procurement procedures, notwithstanding these efforts, (Ebekozen et al., 2023).

Several crucial steps are involved in the acquisition of works contracts: project planning, tendering, bid review, contract award, and project execution, (Muhammed, Muhammed, Yakubu, Suleiman, & Adam, 2022). To guarantee that projects are completed on schedule, within budget, and to the necessary quality standards, each step is essential, (Muhammed, et al., 2023). But in Nigeria, there are frequently protracted procurement procedures, which can result in higher expenses, project abandonment, and a decline in the public's confidence in governmental institutions, (Azolibe, et al., 2020).

According to Azolibe, et al., 2020, there are several interconnected causes of these delays. Bureaucratic red tape, which is typified by drawn-out and intricate administrative procedures, is one of the main problems. The procurement process can be considerably slowed down by the requirement for numerous approvals and copious amounts of paperwork. The procurement system is also rife with corruption and fraud, with bribery, favoritism, and fraudulent activities causing delays and inefficiencies in the process.

Procurement delays are also significantly impacted by funding difficulties, (Gatobu, 2020). The procurement process can be stopped by inadequate financial allocations or delays in the availability of cash, which can result in major project delays or cancellations, (Gatobu, 2020). Inadequate planning and subpar project management are other widespread issues. Many projects have delays as a result of inadequate feasibility assessments, arbitrary deadlines, and poor project management techniques, (Azolibe, et al., 2020).

The Nigerian procurement landscape is further complicated by legal and regulatory obstacles, (Imoni, Akande, Jiya, Onuzulike, & Tiza, 2023). The presence of inconsistent regulations and frequent legal challenges might lead to an atmosphere of ambiguity that impedes the



advancement of procurement processes, (Imoni, et al., 2023). It takes time to navigate this regulatory labyrinth, which frequently causes project timeframes to get extended. Delays can also be caused by limitations in expertise and capacity within procurement organizations, (Arantes, & Ferreira, 2020). In some instances, procurement activities cannot be handled efficiently due to a lack of qualified workers and inadequate capacity-building programs, (Imoni, et al., 2023). Due to the intricacy of many infrastructure projects, the procurement industry frequently lacks the high degree of knowledge required, (Arantes, & Ferreira, 2020).

The consequences of these delays are severe, (Azolibe, et al., 2020). Cost overruns are a frequent result that put a burden on public coffers and take funds away from other vital initiatives, (Imoni, et al., 2023). Extended project schedules have an adverse effect on the general growth and well-being of communities by delaying the delivery of essential services and infrastructure, (Arantes, & Ferreira, 2020). In addition to undermining public trust in government agencies, protracted delays discourage private sector investment, which is essential for economic growth, (Abdulwaheed, & Ohida, 2022).

These difficulties have been reported in a number of investigations and reports, (Abdulwaheed, & Ohida, 2022). The procurement system has inefficiencies that have been brought to light in reports from monitoring authorities such as the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), (Azolibe, et al., 2020). Numerous facets of procurement delays have been the subject of academic research, which has shed important light on their origins and possible remedies, (Imoni, et al., 2023). But a thorough analysis that incorporates these conclusions and provides stakeholders with useful suggestions is required, (Imoni, et al., 2023). By carefully examining the causes of delays in Nigeria's works contract procurement procedures, this study seeks to close this gap.

In Nigeria, Delays in works contract procurement process is frequently caused by a variety of factors. Knowing the underlying causes of these delays is crucial to devising mitigation strategies that will improve the procurement process's efficacy and efficiency. Delays also lead to increased project costs and, on occasion, project abandonment. Considering the importance of procurement to the successful completion of construction contracts and the various obstacles Nigeria faces, the goal of this study is to offer a comprehensive examination of the variables causing delays in procurement. The study aims to provide workable ideas to reduce delays and improve the effectiveness of the procurement process by comprehending these aspects.

The success of a project can be greatly impacted by the complicated problem of procurement delays. The body of research indicates that mitigating these delays calls for a multimodal strategy that includes technology adoption, improved coordination, and process enhancements. Organizations can dramatically cut down on delays and boost procurement efficiency by optimizing processes, enhancing communication, and utilizing e-procurement technologies. This will ultimately lead to improved project outcomes.

Conclusively, the timely completion of Nigeria's infrastructure projects depends on resolving the causes of procurement delays. The thorough analysis of this study will give policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders insightful information that will help them put these obstacles behind them. By doing this, the research will promote the prompt completion of



infrastructure projects, promoting economic expansion and raising the standard of living for Nigerians.

There is a dearth of research particularly addressing the distinct socio-economic and regulatory context of Nigeria, despite the existence of general studies on procurement delays. A lot of research uses data from other regions of the world, which could not adequately represent the unique difficulties Nigerians confront. A targeted examination that takes into account Nigeria's unique legal, economic, and cultural characteristics is required to close this gap.

1.1. Aim and Objectives

This will support larger objectives for social and economic development in addition to enhancing the completion of infrastructure projects. Enhancing procurement efficiency can help achieve larger objectives for social and economic development in addition to facilitating the timely and economical completion of projects. The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Identify the key factors contributing to delays in procurement of works contract in Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the role of stakeholders in procurement of works contract delays in Nigeria.

1.2. Research Hypothesis

HO₁: Corruption is not a significant factor causing delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria.

HO₂: stakeholders have no significant role in delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria.

2.0. THE STUDY AREA

Nigeria's procurement industry is one of the biggest and most important parts of the national economy. But problems like delays, overspending, and poor quality frequently afflict it. An inefficient procurement process may make these problems worse. Investigating analyzes of factors responsible for delay in procurement processes of works contract in Nigeria could yield important information for enhancing efficacy and efficiency in Nigeria public procurement system and beyond.

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The study employed a quantitative approach to gather required data, to methodically investigate the factors responsible for delay in procurement processes of works contract in Nigeria.

3.2. Population

Procurement officials, and other pertinent stakeholders involved in procurement in Nigeria make up the population for this study.



The selection formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad 1$$

Where $n \rightarrow$ the required sample size; N = is the Target Population (150 respondents)

e = accuracy level required. Standard error = 5%

Sample calculation

$$n = \frac{150}{1 + 150 * (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{200}{1.37} = 109.09$$

$n = 109$

$n = 109$ Respondents

Therefore, minimum of 109 respondents are required for this study

3.3. Sampling Size and Sampling Technique

The sampling population for this study is 150 respondents who are procurement specialists/professionals and other pertinent stakeholders that are involved in procurement across Nigeria. The random sampling Technique was applied to select 109 respondents from a population of 150.

3.4. Data Collection

The study collected primary data using a structured questionnaire that was designed based on relevant literature, research question, objective of the study and theoretical frameworks to gather needed data from the respondents. An online survey was distributed to respondents who were randomly selected.

3.5. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were employed to analyze collected data and used to test formulated research hypotheses The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used for this analysis.

3.6. Decision Rule

Reject null hypothesis If calculated value is less than critical value. However, accept null hypothesis if calculated value is greater than critical value (tabulated value).

4.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographic Statistics of the Respondents

Data analysis, interpretation and discussion is presented in this section. The main analysis is preceded by the summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondent which is organized into presented in Figures 1 to 7 respectively.

1. Age Distribution of Respondents

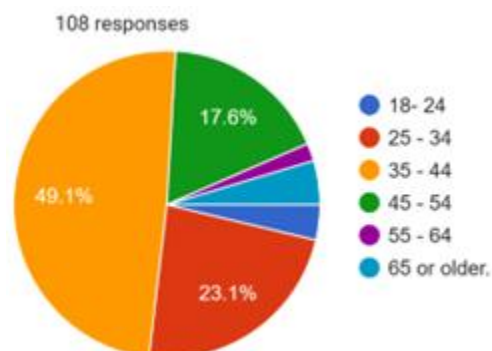


Figure I: Age Distribution of Respondents (Authors' credit)

Figure I present age distribution of respondents. A total of 108 responses were received for this particular question. 7 (6%) of the respondents are between the ages of 18-24; 25 (23.1%) are within the ages of 25-34; 53 (49.1%) are within the ages of 35–44; 19 (17.6%) are within the ages of 45–54; 1 (1%) are within the ages of 55– 64; and 3 (3.2%) are 65% and above. The modal age range of respondents is 35-44 years, indicating that most of the respondents are young people who in the prime of their careers and capable of contributing meaningfully to their respective organizations. The age distribution obtained indicates that the respondents were old enough to comprehend the main points of the study

2. Gender of Respondents

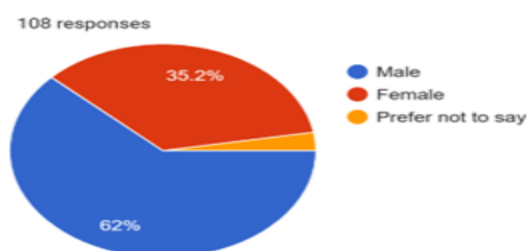


Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents (Authors' credit)

Figure 2, presents the gender distribution of respondents. A total of 108 responses were received, out of which 67 (62 %) of respondents are males; 38 (35.2%) are females; while the remaining 3 (2.8%) respondents chose “prefer not to say”. indicating that more respondents are males.

3. Educational background of respondent

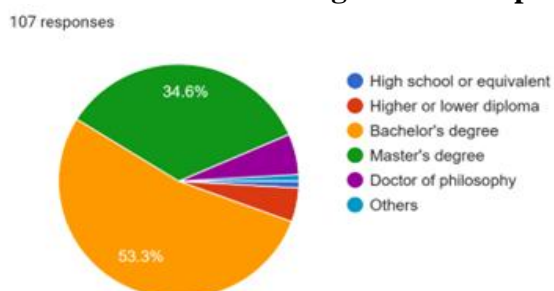


Figure 3: Educational Qualifications of Respondents (Authors' credit)

Figure 3 presents educational qualifications of respondents. A total of 107 responses were received. Educational backgrounds of the respondents, according to the survey, indicates that 6 (6%) are PhD holders; 37 (34.6%) are M.Sc. holders; 58 (53.3%) are B. Sc. holders; 4 (4%) are higher diploma OND holders; 2 (1.1%) hold high school or equivalent qualifications; while the remaining 1 (1%) of respondents hold other qualifications that are not classified. This also indicates that a greater percentage of the respondents are educated enough to contribute meaningfully to the survey.

4. Job title/role of respondents

108 responses

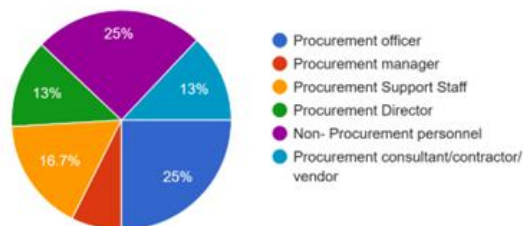


Figure 4 Current Job Title/Role of Respondents (Authors' credit)

Figure 4 and Table 4 present information on job title/role of respondents. A total of 108 responses were received for this particular question. It can be observed that 14 (13%) are Procurement Directors; 8(7.3%) are Procurement Managers; 19 (15%) are Procurement Officers; 27 (25%) are Procurement Support Staff; 27(25%) are Non-Procurement Professionals; while the remaining 13 (14%) respondents indicated that they are “procurement Consultant”.

4.2. Research Hypotheses Testing

The study employed a 5-point Likert scale with the following values assigned are as: 5 for strongly agreed (SA); 4 for agreed (A); 3 for Neutral (N); 2 for disagreed (D); and 1 for strongly disagreed (SD).

Table 1 Summary of Analysis of Relationship between Corruption and delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria.

Question	SD	D	N	A	SA	df	Sum of square	F	Sig.	Decision
1 Corruption is not a significant factor causing delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria.	42	23	5	25	13	107	238.963	4.527	0.00	Reject Ho ₁
2. Monitoring and evaluation is an effective way to significantly mitigate delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria	10	2	6	38	52	107	154.667	12.947	0.00	Reject Ho ₁



ANOVA was employed on SPSS to analyze the quantitative data presented in Table .1; and were used to test research hypothesis (H_{01}) at 0.05 level of significance. The following P-values 0.000 and 0.000 were obtained for survey question 1 and 2 respectively.

Decision

Each of the obtained P-values 0.000 and 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance is lower than 0.05 (95% confidence interval of the difference), which indicates that there is significant Relationship between corruption and delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria. Hence also by applying the decision rule stated earlier in section 2.7; the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is which states that “Corruption is not a significant factor causing delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria” is therefore rejected. While the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that “Corruption is a significant factor causing delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria” is hereby accepted.

The result obtained from testing H_{01} agrees with that of Ravidasan, (2023). Who found that corruption jeopardizes the integrity and quality of the work contracts in addition to delaying the process. It is also not significantly different from the views of Idrees, and Shafiq, (2021), in which they stated that “delays in the procurement process are often caused by widespread issues like corruption and unethical behavior, including bid manipulation, cronyism, and bribes are practices that can make the procurement process less effective.

4.2.2 Relationship between Stakeholders’ activities and delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria.

HO₂: stakeholders have no significant role in delays of procurement of works contracts.

Table 2 Summary of Analysis of relationship between stakeholders’ activities and delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria

Question	SD	D	N	A	SA	df	Sum of square	F	Sig.	Decision
3. Stakeholders have significant role in delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria.	11	2	6	31	54	107	176.250	4.064	0.000	Reject H_{02}
4. Poor stakeholder coordination and communication contributes to procurement delays	8	4	8	43	45	107	140.769	3.427	0.020	Reject H_{02}

ANOVA was employed on SPSS to analyze the quantitative data presented in Table 2; and were used to test research hypothesis (H_{02}) at 0.05 level of significance. The following P-values 0.000 and 0.020 were obtained for survey question 3 and 4 respectively.

Decision

Each of the obtained P-values 0.000 and 0.020 at 0.05 level of significance is lower than 0.05 (95% confidence interval of the difference), which indicates that there is significant



relationship between stakeholders' activities and delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria. Hence also by applying the decision rule stated earlier in section 2.7; the null hypothesis (H_0) is which states that "stakeholders have no significant role in delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria" is therefore rejected. while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that "stakeholders have significant role in delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria" is hereby accepted.

The result obtained from testing H_0 , indicates that stakeholders have significant roles to play in the delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria. This tallies with stakeholder theory, which was articulated by Freeman (1984), and cited by Singh, et al., (2023), the theory states that the interests of all stakeholders should be addressed in decision-making processes. Efficient procurement management practices improve stakeholder involvement by ensuring that contractual responsibilities are satisfied and that communication is clear and timely. The innovative procurement's collaborative features enable stakeholders to access important information, make feedback, and track progress in real-time. This inclusivity creates trust and cooperation, are critical for project success. Bahadorestani, et al., (2020) agreed that effective stakeholder management leads to better project outcomes. Therefore, the success (timely completion according to specified budget, time and quality) or otherwise (delay, poor quality delivery, cost-overrun) can be linked to stakeholders' harmony or lack of it.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The analysis of factors responsible for delays in the procurement processes of works contracts in Nigeria has revealed a complex interplay of organizational, regulatory, and operational challenges. The research objectives 1 and 2 of the study were achieved leading to the following conclusions were made:

- i. The study found several critical factors that contribute to delays in procurement processes of works contract in Nigeria, including poor supervision, unethical practices, inadequate stakeholders' engagement, bureaucratic red tape, inadequate capacity of procurement personnel, insufficient funding, and political interference.
- ii. Delays in procurement processes of works contract in Nigeria have a big impact on the timely completion of projects as well as the general efficiency of Nigeria's public procurement system which results in overspending, protracted project schedules, and subpar output that erodes public trust in government agencies and impede socioeconomic growth.
- iii. Corruption is a significant factor causing delays in procurement of works contracts in Nigeria.
- iv. That stakeholders have significant roles to play in the delays of procurement of works contracts in Nigeria.



5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The federal government of Nigeria and the respective States governments should establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track the progress of works contracts and address issues promptly, reducing the likelihood of delays.
- ii. Government at all levels should conduct regular training sessions to improve the abilities and proficiencies of procurement staff.

Conclusively, the study has Contributed to global repository of Knowledge by localizing research on procurement delays of public works procurement in Nigerian setting. The study's outcome will be beneficial to policymakers, procurement professionals and Nigeria's procurement system.

Competing Interest

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in this paper.

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