

# The Relevance of Public Procurement Procedures on Financial Accountability of Public Universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the relevance of public procurement procedures on financial accountability of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the contribution of procurement planning, sourcing, contract management, contracting, inventory management and evaluation on financial accountability captured with cost reduction of public universities in Ekiti State. The study adopted descriptive research design of a survey type. All the 142 officers in the bursary and audit department of Federal University of Oye Ekiti and Ekiti State Universities constitute the population of this study. Using total population sampling method, all the 142 officers were selected as the sampled size of the study. Data were gathered via the administered closed ended questionnaires to the targeted respondents. To analyze these datasets, correlation and multiple linear regression analysis methods were adopted. It was revealed from the estimation result presented that, procurement planning, sourcing, contract management, contracting, inventory management and evaluation exert a positive effect on cost reduction of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. However, the positive effect is only significant for procurement planning, sourcing, contract management and inventory management to the tune of 0.076( $p=0.030<0.05$ ) for procurement planning, 0.245( $p=0.000<0.05$ ) for sourcing, 0.411( $p=0.025<0.04$ ) for contract management and .189( $p=0.001<0.05$ ), against the insignificant effect of contracting and evaluation on cost reduction of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria with the coefficient and probability values of 0.217( $p=0.059>0.05$ ) for contracting and 0.033( $p=0.546>0.05$ ) for evaluation. Based on the findings made, it can be established that there is a statistically significant relationship between public procurement procedures and financial accountability of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It was recommended that the management of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria should promote the use of sourcing in its procurement function to minimize costs and promote efficiency in procurement functions. Also, to promote the significant effect of contract management, the management of the public universities should train and retrain the staff of the procurement department on effective contract management practices to minimize cost. With this, they will be more conversant with the activities embedded in contract management.

**Keywords:** Public Procurement Procedures, Financial Accountability, Public Universities, Procurement Planning, Sourcing, Contract Management, Contracting, Inventory Management, Evaluation, Financial Accountability, Cost Reduction.

## INTRODUCTION

Universities are often seen as the most powerful weapons to ameliorate the imbalances of a nation through which the living standards of people are made better. This is because education is a form of learning through which skills, knowledge, and habits of a group of persons are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, learning and researches. Owing hugely to widespread public demands for transparency in governance and the global outcry against corruption, accountability is now of serious concern in many countries including Nigeria. One of the critical issues dominating public sector management in Nigeria, as Emmanuel (2012) rightly observed, is lack of financial accountability.

Lack of accountability in the public sector, particularly, tertiary institutions, creates opportunities for corruption with its attendant negative consequences. For instance, through corruption the commonwealth of Nigerians is

being diverted by a few, leaving the nation at a loss. Due to the poor culture of accountability, corruption has become a way of life in Nigeria; to the extent that it is right to say that officials are not only corrupt, but corruption is official (Emmanuael, 2012). It is assumed that huge amount of money is lost through one financial malpractice or the other in tertiary institutions. Enofe, Okuongbe and Sunday (2015) argued that cases of fraud is prevalent in the Nigerian public sector that every segment of the public service, could seem to be involved in one way or the other in some of these nasty acts. Hence, improving financial accountability of tertiary institutions demands identifying the internal and external factors that could affect it. Odero and Ayub (2017) and Adewale (2019) argued that one of the prominent internal factors affecting financial accountability of tertiary institutions is procurement procedure.

Ogunsanmi (2020) opined that procurement function in tertiary institutions is an unavoidable function in the management of the supply chain. It determines, to a larger extent, the performance of organizations in terms of cost reduction, customer satisfaction, quality service and organizational effectiveness and efficiency. In the educational sector, public procurement depicts a huge share of the grand expenditure and ought to be managed judiciously to attain an optimal value. Personal experience of the researcher shows that procurement functions include but not limited to the acquisition of landed properties and infrastructural requirements and facilities, purchase of office furniture and equipment, laboratory equipment and tools, stationeries, office electronics and gadgets, motor vehicles and spare parts, ICT gadgets and even recommended textbooks.

All these functions are expected to be carried out with the procurement process outlined by the Nigeria Procurement Act of 2007. The Act is expected to promote transparency and accountability of procurement officers. Abdiaziz (2019) asserted that public procurement exhibits some basic principles; transparency and accountability. While the transparency principle provides that the complete procurement phases are accurately fair and documented, accountability points out that there is a need for accountability to investors, who may require certain rules to be followed during money usage. This informs that those procurement procedures are mechanisms that hold the key to successful engagements of tertiary institutions because the section serves as an agent for the organization.

In tertiary institutions, there has been obvious inability on the part of government to obtain commensurate value for the huge budgetary spending on provision of public goods. As a matter of fact, collusion by procurement officials and contractors to inflate contract sum has been rampant, delivery of sub-standard jobs permeates the system due to lack of adequate mechanism for quality control; projects, works or services are not often completed within specified period, and there is a culture of rampant abandonment of projects (Enweremadu & Ifejika, 2017). It becomes apparent, therefore, that enhancing accountability and transparency in the award and execution of government contracts in Nigeria is pivotal, in view of the abysmal effects of corruption and opaque procurement processes on the efficiency of the procurement system of tertiary institution.

The operational activities of procurement revolve around procurement planning, sourcing, contract management otherwise known as suppliers' management, contracting, inventory management and evaluation. However, it seemed the procedures are not always followed because of preferential treatment and the eagerness to embezzle. Explaining further Ezeanyim, Uchenu & Ezeanolue (2020) noted that despite the procurement laws which were meant to bring about order and sanity in the public procurement sector, many of the procurement activities still suffer from neglect, dishonesty and lack of openness. Hence, tertiary institutions are still overwhelmed with inadequacies, misuse of public resources and delays in the delivery of projects, goods and services. Undoubtedly, these shortcomings will affect organizational performance.

Several studies have been carried out on public procurement procedures. For example, Makabira and Waiganjo (2014), Atego and Fridah (2015), Zegeye (2015), Kabega, Kule and Mbera (2016), Angela (2016), Rono (2017), Caleb (2017), Gladwell and Patrick (2017), Odero and Ayub (2017), Bibiana and Jane (2018), Ahmed, Aiman and Mohammed (2019), Flora (2019), Abdiaziz (2019), Tirualem and Amanpreet (2020) and Moses and Dominic (2021) have been carried out in developed and developing countries. All these studies reported that there is a positive effect of procurement procedures on organizational performance and not financial accountability. This is an indication that studies on public procurement and financial accountability are still relatively scarce. In the same vein, none of the studies credited to this topic in Nigeria was carried out across all the public Universities in the Ekiti State, Nigeria. Based on the identified gaps, this study is designed to examine the relevance of public

procurement procedures on financial accountability of public Universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

## Research Objectives

Providing solutions to the identified existing problematic practices towards financial accountability in Public Universities, this study specifically examines the contribution of procurement planning, sourcing, contract management, contracting, inventory management and evaluation on cost reduction of public universities in Ekiti State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Public Procurement

In general terms, the public sector consists of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services. It is not, however, always clear whether any particular organization should be included under that umbrella. Therefore, it is necessary to identify specific criteria to help define the boundaries. The concept of public sector is broader than simply that of core government and may overlap with the not-for-profit or private sectors.

Samuel (2018) described public procurement as a legitimate process of obtaining goods, supplies, services and works at the right price/cost, quality, quantity, delivered at the right time and place for the beneficial use by public corporations, governments or individuals through a legal binding agreement. Consequently, Robert, Muno and Gitonga (2014) contended that the generally accepted aim of public procurement is to carry out functions correlated with procurement for the general use in such a way that the supplies procured are from the rights source at the minimal price with the expected features and specified quantity and delivered at the right place and time.

Abdiaziz (2019) asserted that public procurement exhibits some basic principles; transparency, efficiency and accountability. Transparency principle provides that the complete procurement phases are accurately fair and documented. Also, that of accountability points out that there is a need for accountability to investors, who may require certain rules to be followed during money usage. Finally, the principle of cost efficiency and effectiveness ensures meeting the 'six rights' of supply (quantity, quality, price, time, source and place). Procurement plays a vital role in every establishment and according to Ngozi and Adetunji (2015), every organization (private and public) should put in place effective systems of procurement to protect shareholders' funds.

According to Adewale (2019), procurement is the chain of activities to acquires goods and services of the right quantity with the right specification and quality at the right price from the right source and delivered to the right destination. These chains of activities form the procurement cycle. The activities include; procurement planning, sourcing, contracting, contract management, inventory management and evaluation.

**Procurement planning** is the introductory phase of procurement. Adewale (2019) described procurement planning as the method employed by tertiary institutions to plan procurement activity for a specific period. Consequently, planning enables tertiary institutions to set a predetermined standard, establish an overall direction, forecast and dodge futuristic problems and minimize the risks of uncertainty and effective allocation of resources to various units and departments towards the achievement of the set institutional goals.

**Sourcing** involves the location of suppliers in the market place based on material. Caleb (2017) defined sourcing as to include pre - qualification of potential suppliers, preparation and issue of tender documents, requests for quotation or for proposals, evaluation of responses and the selection of successful tender which constitute the entire sourcing process. Charles and Sampson (2019) also argued in the same line by saying that, sourcing stage include activities or processes like enquiry or request for quotation which are sent to suppliers, accompanied by additional documents, such as drawings, specification and any document or information that will enable potential suppliers to submit a quotation. This source can be identified through the internet trade journals, trade exhibition yellow pages of telephone directorate and suppliers' database of the organization.

**Contracting** is a set of promises or agreements legally binded, sealed and enforced by law. Notification of contract is issued to the successful supplier or contractor to deliver the product or service as at when due. Williams and Andrew (2021) explained that technical contents in procurement agreements rely on the project or product. Meanwhile, specific commercial and legal terms are different in different cases. Commercial regulations in the contract contain contract period, payment issues, and rules for handling changes, sanction clauses and agreements for disputes. Ngosi and Adetunji (2015) illustrated the important aspects of a procurement contract is to include price and time of delivery, payment terms and conditions, penalty clauses and warranty conditions and lastly the trade term.

**Contract Management** focus on the choosing the best-evaluated bidder or tender for the execution of tertiary institutions contract involves a lot of serious work, lots of preparation and strategies have to be put in place to arrive at a decision that will be good for the establishment. After the most successful contractor is chosen, the authorizing department does not need to go to sleep and expect the supplies to be delivered on a silver platter. There is the need to seriously manage the contract so that it is successfully delivered. According to Rasheed (2016), contract management is the practice that guarantees both interested parties to a contract (procurement department and supplier) that completely satisfy their separate duties competently and effectively to provide the operational goals necessary from the contract and specifically to offer value for money.

**Inventory management** is the set of functions/activities required for managing and distribution of the inventory levels to the prime users to ensure continuous availability of supplies and minimization of cost of stock. In Abdiaziz (2019) view, inventory management is the application of forecasting and demand, data collection, operational principles and lean-to utilize the total available inventory within the chain of supply at any point in time and minimize the holding costs. The inventory management scope includes; store management, store security, record keeping, replenishment level, inventory forecasting, inventory planning, inventory carrying costs, inventory visibility, inventory valuation, physical inventory, quality management, available physical space for inventory, demand forecasting and return of defective goods among others.

**Evaluation** involves the collection and evaluation of adequate proofs to ascertain whether an assertion corresponds with the established criteria. The audit function could be either internal or external and evening both at times. While the internal audit is concerned with the whole operations/functions of the institution with respect to some certain five key internal control objectives and not just the financial aspects, external audits mainly focus on financial measures that have a direct significant effect on the performance of the tertiary institutions

### **Financial Accountability**

Financial accountability is a concept that is found in any organization, entity or corporation that deal with income and expenditures, even if their major objective is not to make profit, just like the public sector. Implicitly, no matter the objective of an organization, either to make profit or not, there must be some level of financial accountability in that organization. To wit, accountability is the commitment to render an account for a duty assigned (Akinwunmi & Akinola, 2019). This means that accountability in itself is not limited to any particular field like education, social science, management sciences and so on, neither is it limited to any particular religion or sector. In one way or the other, people demand accountability when they have entrusted responsibility to another person.

In the public sector, accountability is highly required by the stakeholders in the sector, especially financial accountability. Also, in the public sector, accountability is the liability accrued by those public officers who implement power and authority, to explain the way in which they have satisfied various duties placed on them (Omodero & Okafor, 2016). From these, financial accountability can be said to be the accountability for the finances entrusted to an individual. Accountability in itself, and even financial accountability assumes that there is a transaction between two parties at least; one party assigns responsibility and another party accepts it with the agreement to explain the way the responsibility was discharged or fulfilled at a later date. One of the instrument sued to measure financial accountability is cost reduction.

**Cost reduction** is the term used to represent the planned and positive tactic to the development of efficiency. Commonly, cost reduction is viewed sometimes as increasing productivity and elimination of waste. In line with

this view, the ability of an organization to effect cost reduction relates to its ability to increase productivity and eliminate waste. When costs are escalated due to one factor or the other, it can reduce the efficiency of financial accountability, especially when finance has been budgeted before the inflation. However, if the company is able to adequately reduce the price or costs, it would tell on the performance of the company, and they would be judged based on the accountability made to the public.

## Conceptual Framework

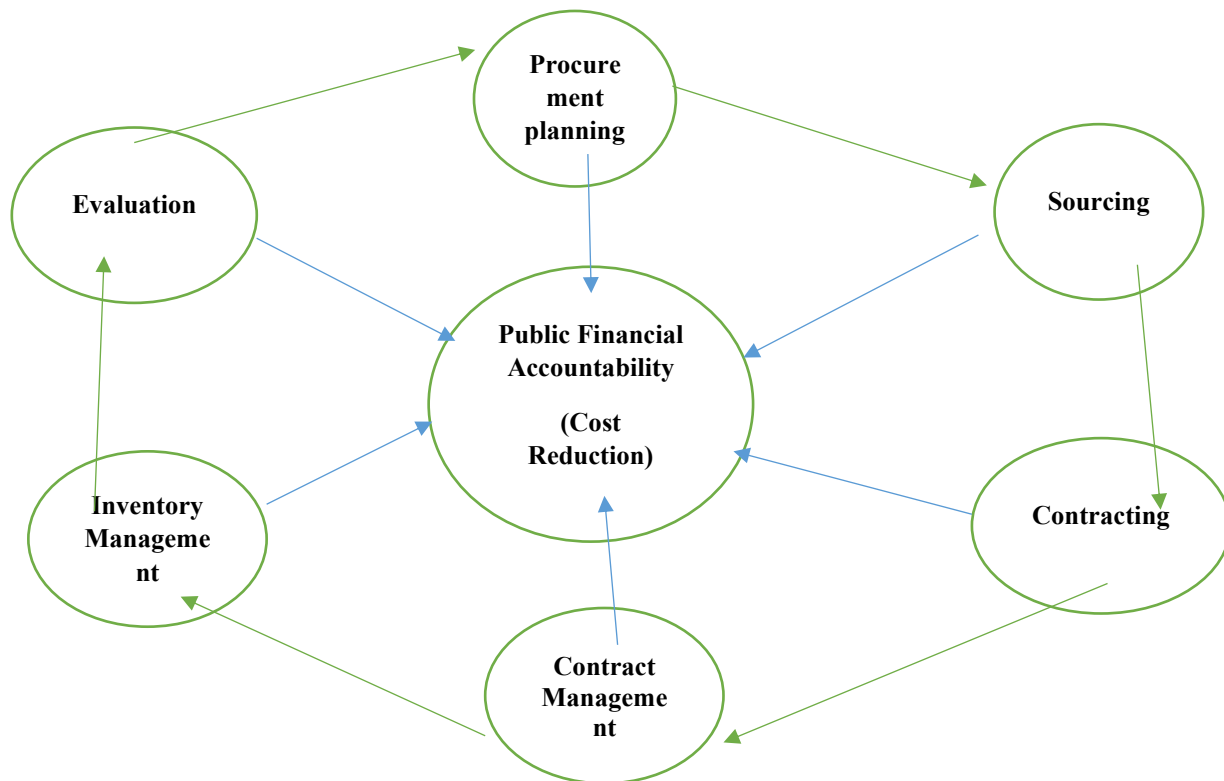


Fig. 2.1 Conceptual Framework (2023)

## Theoretical Review

### Agency Theory

This theory is commonly known in the fields of management science and social science, and it covers a lot of disciplines. It is believed to have been established by Jensen and Meckling (1976) when they asserted that a contractual relationship exists when a person (the principal) gives authority to another entity (the agent) to carry out some activities on his behalf. Agreeably, procurement activities are contractual, as people are being delegated with authority to carry out some responsibilities, which could be in form of purchases. In analyzing the relationship between the principal and agent in a contract, it is believed that there exists some sort of information asymmetry between them. One noticeable application of it is the design of ideal structures of managerial reward (Daly, 2015). This theory is relevant to this study because it clarifies the role of contract management on an institution's financial accountability in the public sector. The procurement unit performs a major part in ensuring the terms of contract are completely enforced and the best interest of the organization's stakeholders is taken into consideration. The management is the agent who should guarantee the interest of citizens in procurement. This theory ensures quality service is provided by the suppliers and any issue that may reduce the wellbeing of the benefactors are strictly eliminated.

### Planning Theory

This theory was introduced by Davidoff and Thomas (1932). Planning theory is the theory in planning, that is the philosophy leading the planning process, such as problem description and goal articulation, etc. not the theory

of planning that encompasses standards, such as densities, walking distances, etc. Planning is defined as integrating the scientific method into policymaking. It is the deliberate attempt made to intensify the rationality of policies in the current and determined future environment. Public procurement procedures are not spontaneous activities. No matter how urgent they might be, some level of planning is involved before they are carried out. Planning is fraught with a lot of challenges. This might not be unconnected to the fact that it is a profession that simultaneously: i) uses knowledge rooted in natural sciences, for example, to plan roads and the physical layout of cities; ii) uses knowledge rooted in social sciences, for example, to understand the social implications of a new road; and iii) aims to contribute to how to do it, when to do it, what to do, and why to do it (Mcfalls, 2016). Planning is a very composite process that cannot be undertaken by a single individual, especially when it comes to the area of public procurement. However, collation of individuals might also make the procurement procedure slow. This shows how paradoxical planning can be sometimes. This theory finds great importance to the study because it agrees that public procurement procedures greatly involve planning in a lot of aspects. From the goods or services to be procured to the means of how it would be delivered back to the organization is all part of the planning process.

### **Empirical studies**

Procurement practices is highly appreciated within and outside Nigeria and by private and public firms. Thus, several studies have been conducted on the subject matter across the globe. For example; Walter and Christopher (2016) established the effect of procurement practices on performance of commercial state-owned enterprises in Indonesia using primary data generated with the aid of questionnaires targeting managers in Finance, Procurement, Production and Sales and Marketing departments in each enterprise. The regression analysis result unveiled that buyer-supplier relationships, supplier selection procedures, organizational capacity and procurement process management practices had a strong impact on the performance of commercial state-owned enterprises studied.

In a similar study, Angela (2016) carried out a study titled, Public Procurement Practices and organizational performance. A case study of the university of Hong Kong, China. Using descriptive and regression methods, the study found out that procurement planning and training workforce are important in influencing the organization's performance. Using content analysis model, Walker and Brammer (2017) investigated the sustainable public procurement procedures among the United Kingdom (UK) public sector. Nature of procurement practices was found to have significant variations in public sector agencies. Also, Rono (2017) examined the effects of public procurement practices on organizational performance within the public sector; a case of Norway Cement Company Limited. Using descriptive analysis model, the result revealed that Organizational success greatly depends on the success of procurement and this makes supplier selection an important function of any organization. The findings also indicate that through strategic partnerships in the form of joint improvement activities and understanding supplier capabilities, the organization has been able to enhance continuity of supply.

In Indonesia Kabega, Kule and Mbera (2016), investigated the effect of procurement practices on performance of public projects in Indonesia using correlation and regression analysis model. There was significant relationship between public procurement planning and performance and that the positive organizational performance in Indonesia Rwanda was attributed to proper public procurement planning. Epiphany (2017) established how institutional legal environment affects performance in public procurement in tertiary institutions in West Nile sub region of Uganda. Quantitative data analysis mainly consisted of descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Spearman Rank Order Correlation). Findings revealed an insignificantly very weak positive correlation between institutional legal framework and procurement performance. Chipepo and Richard (2020) established the factors affecting procurement performance at PATH. The study conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of the independent variables on procurement performance. Using multiple regression analysis model, the study found that the two factors that showed significant effect on procurement performance are information and communication technology and departmental collaboration.

Although numerous studies have examined the relationship between procurement practices and organizational performance across various global contexts, significant gaps remain, particularly regarding financial

accountability in public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Most of the existing literature, such as studies conducted in Indonesia, China, the UK, and Uganda, focuses on commercial enterprises or general public sector institutions and often emphasizes organizational performance rather than financial accountability. These studies also overlook the unique administrative, legal, and institutional dynamics present in Nigerian public universities. Additionally, there is a lack of comparative analysis across Nigerian states, limiting the understanding of regional procurement challenges and best practices. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to the role of institutional capacity, technological integration, and the legal procurement framework specific to Nigeria. These gaps justify the need for a context-specific study that explores how public procurement procedures influence financial accountability within the university system in Ekiti State.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design of a survey type. The population comprised all 142 officers in the bursary and audit departments of the Federal University of Oye Ekiti and Ekiti State University, along with selected procurement contractors and external auditors. Employees in the bursary and audit departments were considered ideal respondents due to their direct involvement in financial processes, while the inclusion of procurement contractors and external auditors was aimed at enriching the findings through triangulation and capturing broader perspectives on procurement practices. Using a total population sampling method, all 142 internal officers were selected as the sample size for the study. Data were gathered through the administration of closed-ended questionnaires to the targeted respondents. The collected data were analyzed using correlation and multiple linear regression analysis techniques.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### Pearson Correlation Matrix

	Cost Reduction	Procurement Planning	Sourcing	Contracting	Contract Management	Inventory Management	Evaluation
Cost Reduction	1.000						
Procurement Planning	0.264	1.000					
Sourcing	0.193	0.836	1.000				
Contracting	0.289	0.736	0.284	1.000			
Contract Management	0.382	0.928	0.543	0.733	1.000		
Inventory Management	0.328	0.732	0.428	0.462	0.529	1.000	
Evaluation	0.281	0.736	0.384	0.538	0.473	0.638	1.000

Source: Data Analysis, 2023

Pearson correlation was conducted to ascertain the relationship between the predictors and outcome variables. Taking the coefficient values into consideration, all the reported coefficient values are positive, indicating that an increase in each of the variable could cause an increase in other variables. Thus, it can be established that all the variables moved in similar direction.

## Multiple Regression

**Table 4.2: Multiple regression result**

Var.	Coe.	St. E.	T-test	Prob
Constant	3.618	1.546	2.339	.020
Procurement Planning	.076	.035	2.168	.030
Sourcing	.245	.069	3.553	.000
Contracting	.217	.150	.316	.059
Contract Management	.411	.050	3.221	.025
Inventory Management	.189	.057	3.337	.001
Evaluation	.033	.055	.604	.546

**Source: Data Analysis, 2023.** R-square-0.612, Adj. R-Square- 0.603, F-Stat- 39.799, Prob-0.000

The adjusted R-square statistics reported in table 4.2 disclosed that about 60.3% of the systematic variation in cost reduction of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria can be jointly explained by procurement planning, sourcing, contract management, contracting, inventory management and evaluation while the remaining 39.7% could be accounted for by other variables not covered by this study. Also, the F-statistics of 39.799 along the probability value of 0.000 revealed that the model is fit. It was revealed from the estimation result presented that, procurement planning, sourcing, contract management, contracting, inventory management and evaluation exert a positive effect on cost reduction of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. However, the positive effect is only significant for procurement planning, sourcing, contract management and inventory management to the tune of 0.076( $p=0.030<0.05$ ) for procurement planning, 0.245( $p=0.000<0.05$ ) for sourcing, 0.411( $p=0.025<0.04$ ) for contract management and .189( $p=0.001<0.05$ ), against the insignificant effect of contracting and evaluation on cost reduction of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria with the coefficient and probability values of 0.217( $p=0.059>0.05$ ) for contracting and 0.033( $p=0.546>0.05$ ) for evaluation.

## Diagnostic Test

Normality Test	Shapiro-Wilk Stat	0.733
	Probability	0.084
Breusch-Pagan Godfrey Heteroscedasticity Test	F-statistics	0.173
	Probability	0.432

**Source: Data Analysis, 2023**

For the normality test result, it was unveiled that there is normal distribution of the estimated model's error term. Also, the Breusch-Pagan Godfrey Heteroscedasticity test result disclosed that there is no problem of heteroscedasticity in the error term of the estimated models. Thus, validated the regression model used for this study.

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between public procurement procedures and the financial accountability of



public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria, using multiple regression analysis for its reliability and robustness in estimation. Findings revealed that procurement planning practices had a positive and significant effect on financial accountability, with a cost reduction coefficient of 0.076 ( $p = 0.030 < 0.05$ ). This suggests that a 1% increase in procurement planning would lead to a 0.076% increase in cost reduction. The significance of this outcome may be due to effective forecasting and monitoring of procurement needs, ensuring resources are optimally allocated. This supports Christopher (2021) and Mdemu (2013), who found that effective procurement planning enhances value-for-money in the public sector.

Similarly, sourcing demonstrated a significant positive effect on financial accountability ( $\beta = 0.245$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). The result implies that strategic sourcing enhances transparency and competitiveness in supplier selection, ultimately improving accountability. The likely explanation for this result could be the adoption of multiple sourcing strategies that reduce overdependence on a single supplier and promote competition. This is consistent with the partner selection theory, which emphasizes the collaborative nature of procurement processes. It also aligns with Walter, Christopher, and Kepha (2015), and Richard, Ojino, and Ayoo (2019), who found a significant link between sourcing and public sector performance.

However, contracting exhibited a positive but *statistically insignificant* influence on financial accountability ( $\beta = 0.217$ ,  $p = 0.059 > 0.05$ ), which is an unexpected finding considering its critical role in procurement. One plausible explanation could be the persistence of non-transparent contracting practices, such as favoritism and single-sourcing, often observed in public institutions. These practices may undermine the expected cost-saving benefits of contracting, even when the procedures are formally in place. This result echoes Arinaitwe et al. (2021) and Kenneth and Chimsunum (2019), who criticized the lack of transparency in public sector contracting in Nigeria.

Likewise, contract management and inventory management showed statistically significant positive effects on financial accountability ( $\beta = 0.411$ ,  $p = 0.025 < 0.05$ ;  $\beta = 0.189$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$  respectively). These findings affirm the importance of monitoring contract execution and maintaining efficient inventory control systems in reducing costs and ensuring accountability. Effective contract management likely helps avoid delays and cost overruns, while sound inventory practices reduce waste and pilferage. These results corroborate Maina and Osoro (2020), Kimundu and Moronge (2019), and Adewale (2019), who emphasized the vital role of contract execution and stock control in organizational performance.

Conversely, evaluation practices also showed a *positive but statistically insignificant* effect on financial accountability ( $\beta = 0.033$ ,  $p = 0.546 > 0.05$ ). This outcome may suggest that while evaluation mechanisms exist, they are either poorly implemented or lack the authority to effect meaningful changes. Institutions may perform evaluations as a routine formality without acting on the findings. This result aligns with the conclusions of Abdiaziz (2019), Oguntola (2017), and Ogunsanmi (2020), who found that procurement evaluation, though theoretically valuable, often fails to influence actual performance due to limited enforcement of corrective measures.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Conclusion

The relationship between public procurement procedures and financial accountability has generated several studies across the globe with mixed findings. While some reported a positive relationship between public procurement practices and financial accountability, many other studies reported a negative relationship. The mixed findings render the study inconclusive and give the impetus for the current study. Consequently, available studies in this context show that few of these studies jointly captured public procurement with procurement planning, sourcing, contract management otherwise known as suppliers' management, contracting, inventory management and evaluation. In the same vein, none of these studies measured financial accountability with cost reduction. This creates a vacuum in literature and therefore gives the motivation for this current study. Based on the findings made, it can be established that there is a statistically significant relationship between public procurement procedures and financial accountability of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

## Recommendation

The following recommendations were made:

1. The management of public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria should promote the use of sourcing in its procurement function to minimize costs and promote efficiency in procurement functions.
2. To promote the significant effect of contract management, the management of the public universities should train and retrain the staff of the procurement department on effective contract management practices to minimize cost. With this, they will be more conversant with the activities embedded in contract management.
3. Also, the management of tertiary institutions should adopt multiple contracting systems where bidders can submit bids for several lots and where a contract could be awarded for each lot. Also, the selection of bidders should be transparent and only the competent bidders should be appointed for the job. This is because a competent bidder will perform an excellent job.
4. Also, the management should implement more effective and efficient control measures to improve the efficiency of public procurement practices in promoting financial accountability in the public sector.

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