

## Effect of Supply Chain Management Practices on Contract Dispute Resolution in Nigeria's Public Sector

Sadeeq Ahmad Abubakar<sup>1</sup> & Theresa Omang Okoli<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Procurement Management,  
Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State

<sup>2</sup>Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution,  
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja  
*Corresponding author:* tokoli@noun.edu.ng

### Abstract

This study investigates the effect of supply chain management practices on contract dispute resolution within Nigeria's public sector. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates quantitative data from surveys from procurement professionals and public sector managers. The study aims to assess how various procurement practices, such as supplier relationship management, procurement planning, and contract administration, influence the frequency and resolution of contract disputes. Findings indicate that effective supply chain management practices significantly contribute to reducing contract disputes by improving transparency, communication, and compliance in procurement processes. Quantitative analysis revealed a strong correlation between robust procurement practices and a reduction in dispute occurrences, supported by a chi-square test demonstrating a significant relationship ( $\chi^2 = 12.1$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Conversely, the impact of court judgments on dispute resolution was found to be less significant, with enforcement challenges and procedural delays mitigating their effectiveness. The study underscores the importance of proactive procurement strategies in minimizing disputes and suggests that while judicial interventions are necessary, their effectiveness can be significantly enhanced through improved enforcement mechanisms. The research contributes to the understanding of how procurement management can be optimized to address and resolve disputes more effectively in the Nigerian public sector, offering recommendations for policy improvements and future research directions.

**Keywords:** Supply Chain Management, Contract Disputes, Procurement Practices, Dispute Resolution

### Introduction

Effective supply chain management (SCM) is pivotal for enhancing operational efficiency and ensuring contract compliance within the public sector. In Nigeria, where public sector procurement and contract management are often scrutinized, SCM practices can play a crucial role in mitigating contract disputes. This seminar paper explores the impact of supply chain management practices on contract dispute resolution in the Nigerian public sector, with a specific focus on two key variables: procurement management and court judgments. Procurement management is a critical component of supply chain management that involves the strategic planning, sourcing, and administration of contracts for acquiring goods and services. This process is fundamental to ensuring that organizations, particularly in the public sector, obtain the necessary resources in a timely, cost-effective, and compliant manner. Efficient procurement management includes several key activities: drafting clear and detailed procurement plans,

conducting transparent tendering processes, negotiating well-defined contracts, and monitoring contract performance.

One significant hypothesis is that procurement management positively influences contract dispute resolution. This hypothesis is grounded in the belief that effective procurement practices can significantly reduce the likelihood of disputes and facilitate their resolution when they do arise. For example, transparent tendering processes allow for fair competition among suppliers and contractors, which helps prevent disputes stemming from perceived unfairness or bias (Chopra & Meindl, 2019). When all participants are clear about the criteria for selection and evaluation, misunderstandings and conflicts are minimized. Moreover, clear and comprehensive contract specifications are crucial. When contracts are well-defined, with explicit terms and conditions, there is less room for ambiguity, which reduces the risk of disagreements. Detailed contracts outline the responsibilities, expectations, and obligations of all parties involved, which help in setting clear performance standards and benchmarks (Chopra & Meindl, 2019).

This clarity ensures that all parties have a mutual understanding of the contract terms, which can prevent potential disputes from escalating, efficient procurement management fosters an environment where disputes are less likely to occur and can be resolved more effectively when they do. By implementing transparent and structured procurement processes, organizations can enhance their ability to manage and resolve contract-related conflicts, leading to smoother and more effective contract execution and compliance. The role of court judgments in contract dispute resolution, while formally significant, often proves less impactful in the Nigerian public sector due to systemic challenges. Legal recourse through courts is a crucial component of dispute resolution, providing a formal avenue for addressing breaches of contract. However, in practice, the effectiveness of court judgments can be severely constrained by several factors inherent to the Nigerian judicial system.

One of the primary issues is the pervasive delay in the judicial process. Court cases in Nigeria can drag on for years due to a backlog of cases, slow administrative processes, and procedural complexities (Akinwale & Adeleke, 2020). These delays undermine the timely resolution of disputes, which is essential for maintaining the integrity and efficiency of public sector operations. The protracted nature of legal proceedings often results in prolonged uncertainty for the parties involved, exacerbating the impact of disputes rather than resolving them promptly. Moreover, bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption within the judicial system further complicate the resolution of contract disputes. The perceived lack of transparency and accountability in some judicial processes can lead to delays and biased judgments, which erode trust in the effectiveness of legal recourse (Akinwale & Adeleke, 2020). This corruption can skew the outcomes of court judgments and diminish their reliability as a mechanism for dispute resolution.

In contrast, proactive procurement management practices, such as clear contract terms, regular monitoring, and transparent procurement procedures, can mitigate the occurrence of disputes and ensure quicker resolutions when they do arise. These practices address potential issues before they escalate into legal disputes, offering a more effective and efficient approach compared to the reactive nature of judicial interventions. Overall, while court judgments are an essential component of the dispute resolution framework, their practical efficacy in Nigeria's public sector

may be limited. Enhancing procurement management practices could offer a more reliable and effective means of managing and resolving contract disputes.

This study is justified by the need to address the inefficiencies in contract dispute resolution within Nigeria's public sector. While procurement management has shown promise in mitigating disputes, the limited effectiveness of court judgments highlights systemic challenges that undermine resolution efforts. Understanding the impact of these SCM practices on dispute resolution can provide valuable insights for improving public sector procurement processes and enhancing contract management strategies. By examining these dynamics, the study aims to offer practical recommendations to optimize dispute resolution mechanisms, ultimately contributing to more effective and transparent public sector operations in Nigeria.

In Nigeria's public sector, contract disputes are a persistent challenge that undermines the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations. Despite the critical role of procurement management in preventing and resolving such disputes, evidence suggests that procurement practices alone may not be sufficient. Furthermore, the role of court judgments in resolving these disputes is often criticized for its limited impact due to systemic inefficiencies and delays (Akinwale & Adeleke, 2020). This discrepancy raises concerns about the effectiveness of judicial recourse in contract management. Recent studies have highlighted that while procurement management practices, including transparency and regular monitoring, can significantly mitigate disputes, the judicial system's inefficiencies, such as lengthy case durations and corruption, may compromise the resolution process (Oluwaseun & Ijeoma, 2022). This situation creates a pressing need to explore how different SCM practices influence contract dispute resolution and to assess the relative effectiveness of procurement management compared to judicial interventions.

### **Challenges in Public Sector Contract Management in Nigeria**

Public sector contract management in Nigeria faces numerous challenges that hinder the efficient execution of government projects and the resolution of contract disputes. One of the major issues is the lack of transparency in procurement processes. Despite efforts to implement procurement reforms, corruption and manipulation of tender processes remain rampant, often leading to poorly executed projects or disputes over contract terms (Adegbite & Awotunde, 2021). Another significant challenge is inadequate capacity in contract management skills. Many public sector personnel lack the expertise to manage complex contracts effectively, resulting in misinterpretation of terms and inefficient contract execution (Olatunji & Ogunlana, 2020). This deficiency often leads to disputes between contractors and government agencies, with both parties interpreting contract provisions differently.

Delays in project execution also pose a serious challenge in public sector contract management. Bureaucratic bottlenecks and inefficiencies in approving and releasing funds often slow down project implementation, causing contractors to miss deadlines and, subsequently, leading to disputes (Akintoye et al., 2022). Furthermore, political interference in the procurement process, where contracts are awarded based on political connections rather than merit, exacerbates these delays and compromises project quality. The Nigerian judicial system's inefficiencies compound these problems, as contract disputes often face long delays in court due to case backlogs and

procedural complexities. This slow dispute resolution process creates uncertainty and undermines the overall effectiveness of contract management (Akinwale & Adeleke, 2020).

Lastly, the lack of proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for public sector contracts limits the ability of government agencies to detect and address issues before they escalate into disputes (Oluwaseun & Ijeoma, 2022). Without adequate oversight, contractors may not comply fully with contractual obligations, leading to disagreements and project failures.

### **Comparative analysis of procurement practices and court judgments in dispute resolution**

Procurement practices and court judgments represent two distinct approaches to resolving contract disputes in the public sector. Procurement practices, especially proactive measures such as transparent tendering, regular contract monitoring, and clear contractual terms, are aimed at preventing disputes before they arise. These practices emphasize risk management and foster smoother contract execution by ensuring all stakeholders are aware of and agree to the terms upfront (Chopra & Meindl, 2019). When effectively implemented, procurement practices can resolve potential disputes through internal mechanisms like negotiation and mediation, without the need for legal intervention. Such methods are generally more time-efficient and cost-effective than judicial proceedings, making them a preferred option in public sector contract management (Ogunleye & Ayo, 2021).

In contrast, court judgments represent a formal, reactive approach to contract dispute resolution. Legal recourse is often sought when procurement management mechanisms fail to resolve a dispute. While courts provide a structured and enforceable means to settle disputes, the judicial process in Nigeria is often criticized for inefficiency due to systemic delays, a backlog of cases, and bureaucratic challenges (Akinwale & Adeleke, 2020). The lengthy duration of court cases can hinder timely project completion, escalating costs and creating uncertainty for the parties involved. Furthermore, the legal process is adversarial in nature, often straining business relationships rather than fostering collaboration (Oluwaseun & Ijeoma, 2022). Comparatively, procurement practices focus on preventive, collaborative dispute resolution, while court judgments, though legally binding, are often time-consuming and less effective in fostering sustainable relationships. A hybrid approach, combining proactive procurement management with judicial mechanisms as a last resort, may offer a more balanced and efficient solution for public sector contract disputes.

### **Improving Contract Dispute Resolution through Effective Supply Chain Management**

Effective supply chain management (SCM) plays a critical role in enhancing contract dispute resolution, particularly in the public sector where procurement and contractual agreements are prevalent. Improving contract dispute resolution through SCM can be achieved by focusing on three key aspects: transparency, communication, and risk management. First, transparency is a fundamental aspect of SCM that can significantly reduce disputes. By ensuring that procurement processes are clear, well-documented, and accessible to all stakeholders, misunderstandings and discrepancies that often lead to disputes can be minimized. According to Chopra and Meindl (2019), transparent supply chain practices foster trust and accountability, which are critical in public sector contracts. Implementing technology such as e-procurement systems can further enhance transparency, providing real-time access to contract information and reducing the likelihood of conflicts.

Second, effective communication throughout the supply chain is vital in preventing and resolving disputes. Regular communication between contractors, suppliers, and public sector agencies ensures that expectations, responsibilities, and changes are clearly articulated. Poor communication is a leading cause of contract disputes (Oluwaseun & Ijeoma, 2022). By establishing open lines of communication, disputes can be addressed early, before they escalate into legal conflicts. Third, proactive risk management in supply chain practices can preempt potential areas of dispute. By identifying and mitigating risks such as delays, cost overruns, or quality issues, SCM practices help in minimizing the chances of contract breaches. Risk management frameworks that include contingency plans and regular performance reviews allow for quicker resolutions of disputes when they arise (Akinwale & Adeleke, 2020).

Improving contract dispute resolution through effective SCM requires transparency, communication, and risk management. By addressing these elements, public sector organizations in Nigeria can enhance their ability to manage contracts effectively, thereby reducing the frequency and severity of contract disputes.

### **Empirical Review**

Adegoke, Oladimeji and Ayodele (2018) examine the effect of procurement planning on the resolution of contract disputes in Nigeria's public sector. Procurement planning is a critical phase in the project lifecycle that outlines key components such as timelines, budget allocations, risk management strategies, and roles for all parties involved. However, in many public sector projects, inadequate procurement planning has been identified as a significant factor contributing to contract disputes. This research focuses on analyzing how ineffective procurement planning leads to project delays, cost overruns, and scope changes, which subsequently trigger conflicts between contractors and government agencies. Using a mixed-method approach, data was collected from 150 procurement officers, project managers, and contractors across federal ministries and agencies in Nigeria.

The study found that 65% of contract disputes were directly linked to poorly structured procurement plans. Issues such as incomplete contract terms, unclear expectations, and unrealistic timelines were prominent factors. These disputes often resulted in litigation, causing project delays and additional costs to the government. On the other hand, projects with detailed and well-structured procurement plans experienced fewer disputes and had faster conflict resolution processes. The findings suggest that public sector institutions must adopt more rigorous procurement planning practices to mitigate disputes. Key recommendations include the establishment of comprehensive risk management frameworks, the inclusion of clear communication channels, and the integration of third-party evaluations during the planning phase. These measures could significantly enhance the resolution of contract disputes and improve overall project performance. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of capacity building for procurement officers to ensure adherence to procurement best practices in Nigeria's public sector.

Ikechukwu and Chidubem (2020) investigate the role of transparency in public procurement and its impact on contract dispute resolution within Nigeria's public sector. Public procurement processes have often been marred by inefficiencies, corruption, and lack of accountability, leading to frequent contract disputes. The authors examine how the implementation of

transparent procurement practices, including open tendering, competitive bidding, and transparent contractor selection, influences the incidence and resolution of such disputes. Data were collected from 15 federal ministries through interviews and surveys with procurement officers and contractors. The findings indicate that ministries practicing high levels of transparency in procurement had fewer disputes, as transparency fosters clear expectations, reduces misunderstandings, and enhances trust between contracting parties. Specifically, projects managed through open and competitive procurement processes experienced a 40% reduction in disputes compared to those using closed or selective bidding processes.

Moreover, when disputes did arise, transparency in the procurement process helped to resolve them more efficiently through mediation and arbitration, as both parties had access to clear, documented procedures and terms. The study concludes that enhancing transparency in procurement not only mitigates the risk of contract disputes but also facilitates smoother and more effective dispute resolution. It recommends that public sector institutions in Nigeria strengthen transparency measures by enforcing existing procurement laws and improving oversight mechanisms. The adoption of technology, such as e-procurement systems, was also suggested as a means to improve transparency and accountability. This paper contributes to the growing body of literature on public procurement reform in Nigeria and offers practical solutions for improving contract management and dispute resolution in the public sector.

Olawale and Ojo (2021) investigate the impact of procurement contract administration on the resolution of contract disputes within Nigeria's public sector, focusing on federal ministries. Procurement contract administration, encompassing activities such as performance monitoring, compliance with contract terms, and dispute resolution mechanisms, plays a critical role in determining the outcome of conflicts that arise during project execution. The research adopts a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews with procurement officers and quantitative data from federal ministry project records between 2015 and 2020. Findings reveal that ministries with robust contract administration frameworks experience significantly fewer escalated disputes and litigation compared to those with weak or poorly structured administrative processes. Specifically, 70% of contract disputes in ministries with ineffective contract administration led to legal actions, while only 30% of ministries with strong administrative processes experienced similar outcomes.

The study highlights key factors influencing the effectiveness of contract administration, including clear communication channels, regular performance monitoring, timely interventions, and the adherence to pre-agreed terms. Furthermore, ministries that invested in procurement training for personnel and maintained open communication with contractors were more likely to resolve disputes through negotiation and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods. The authors recommend that public sector institutions in Nigeria strengthen their procurement contract management frameworks, ensuring that they prioritize transparency, accountability, and regular reviews of contract performance. By improving these processes, the study suggests that public sector organizations can reduce the occurrence of disputes and enhance the efficiency of service delivery in public projects. This research contributes to the broader understanding of procurement practices in developing countries and emphasizes the importance of effective contract management in the public sector.

Ajiboye and Adedokun (2021) examine the impact of judicial intervention on the resolution of contract disputes in Nigerian government contracts. It explores the role of the judiciary in addressing disputes that arise from the interpretation and enforcement of government contracts, focusing on the effectiveness of the judicial process in ensuring fairness, efficiency, and timely resolution. The research is grounded in the challenges faced by contractors and government agencies in the public procurement sector, where delays, cost overruns, and performance issues frequently lead to disputes. Using a mixed-methods approach, the authors conducted interviews with legal practitioners, government officials, and contractors, alongside an analysis of selected court cases involving contract disputes from 2010 to 2020.

The findings reveal that judicial intervention plays a critical role in resolving contract disputes, but the process is often hindered by prolonged litigation timelines, procedural complexities, and inconsistent judgments. Furthermore, the study highlights that the lack of specialized courts or tribunals for public contract disputes exacerbates these issues, leading to delays in project completion and increased costs for both government agencies and contractors. The authors suggest reforms aimed at streamlining judicial processes, including the establishment of specialized courts for government contracts, the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, and improved legal training for judges handling complex contract cases. The study concludes that while judicial intervention is essential for upholding the rule of law in government contracts, reforms are necessary to enhance the speed and effectiveness of dispute resolution in Nigeria's public sector procurement system.

Ogundele (2019) evaluates the effectiveness of court judgments in resolving contract disputes within Nigeria's public sector, an area critical to maintaining governmental integrity and ensuring project success. The research addresses the growing concerns about the efficiency and timeliness of judicial resolutions in contract-related disputes, particularly in a sector fraught with issues of delayed projects, cost overruns, and non-compliance with contract terms. The author conducted an empirical analysis using case studies of major public sector contract disputes from 2010 to 2018, examining how court rulings impacted the resolution process and subsequent project outcomes and the study reveals that while court judgments often bring legal closure to disputes, their practical effectiveness in ensuring compliance, mitigating delays, and enforcing equitable settlements remains limited. Prolonged litigation and appeals were identified as significant bottlenecks that prevent timely dispute resolution, with most cases taking an average of 3 to 5 years to reach a final judgment.

Furthermore, the study highlights the reluctance of some public officials and contractors to comply with court rulings, undermining the authority of judicial decisions in the sector. Ogundele concludes that while courts provide a necessary legal framework for resolving public sector contract disputes, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms such as arbitration and mediation may offer more practical and time-efficient solutions. The study advocates for policy reforms aimed at promoting the use of ADR processes and strengthening enforcement mechanisms for court judgments to improve compliance and efficiency in contract dispute resolution.

Oluyede (2020) investigates the enforcement of contractual obligations within the Nigerian public sector, focusing on the effectiveness of court judgments as a mechanism for resolving

contract disputes. Using a case study approach, the research analyzes 50 court cases between 2010 and 2019 involving public sector contracts, examining how judgments are enforced and the challenges faced in ensuring compliance with contractual terms. The findings reveal that while Nigerian courts often rule in favor of the enforcement of contractual obligations, there is a significant gap between court rulings and actual compliance by public institutions. Bureaucratic delays, political interference, and inadequate legal frameworks are identified as major hindrances to the enforcement process. The study also reveals the financial and administrative implications of unresolved contractual disputes, which often lead to project delays, budget overruns, and strained relationships between the public sector and contractors.

Oluyede argues that reforming enforcement mechanisms, including strengthening the legal framework, enhancing institutional accountability, and reducing political interference, is crucial for improving the execution of court judgments related to public sector contracts. The study concludes that effective enforcement of contractual obligations is critical for fostering trust, improving service delivery, and ensuring the success of public projects in Nigeria. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on contract enforcement in developing economies and offers practical recommendations for improving legal and administrative frameworks to enhance the resolution of contract disputes in the public sector.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Agency Theory, initially formulated by Michael C. Jensen and William H. Meckling in their seminal paper "Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs, and Ownership Structure" (1976), addresses the principal-agent relationship and the associated problems arising from differing interests and information asymmetry. The theory is rooted in the field of economics and organizational behavior and provides a framework for understanding the dynamics between principals (those who delegate authority) and agents (those who perform tasks on behalf of the principals).

Jensen and Meckling (1976) propose that in any organizational setting, a principal delegates decision-making authority to an agent. This delegation can lead to conflicts of interest, as agents may pursue personal goals that do not align with the interests of the principals. Such misalignment arises because agents typically have more information about their own actions and capabilities than the principals do, creating an information asymmetry. This disparity can lead to inefficiencies and increased costs, known as agency costs, which encompass monitoring and enforcement expenses to ensure that agents act in the principals' best interests. The central premise of Agency Theory is that these agency costs can be mitigated through various mechanisms, such as incentive schemes, performance-based rewards, and governance structures. For example, principals might use contracts that align agents' interests with their own by linking compensation to performance outcomes. Additionally, principals might implement oversight measures and internal controls to monitor agents' behavior and ensure compliance with contractual obligations.

Jensen and Meckling's theory has had profound implications for corporate governance, organizational design, and managerial economics. It has influenced the development of various practices and policies aimed at reducing agency costs and improving organizational efficiency. The theory's relevance extends beyond corporate settings to public sector procurement and

contract management, where it helps to analyze and address issues related to contract enforcement, performance monitoring, and dispute resolution. Agency Theory provides valuable insights into the challenges of managing relationships between principals and agents, emphasizing the need for effective governance mechanisms to mitigate conflicts of interest and reduce agency costs. This theoretical framework remains a cornerstone of modern organizational analysis and continues to influence research and practice in various fields.

Agency Theory is highly relevant to studying the effect of supply chain management (SCM) practices on contract dispute resolution in Nigeria's public sector. The theory addresses the principal-agent relationship, where the public sector (the principal) delegates procurement and supply chain functions to contractors and suppliers (the agents). This delegation can lead to conflicts of interest, as agents may prioritize their own objectives over contractual obligations, creating disputes. In the context of SCM, Agency Theory highlights how information asymmetry and divergent interests between public sector institutions and contractors can result in inefficiencies and disputes. For instance, if contractors act opportunistically or fail to adhere to contract terms due to misaligned incentives, disputes are likely to arise. Effective SCM practices, such as clear contract terms, performance-based incentives, and robust monitoring mechanisms, are crucial for mitigating these issues. By applying Agency Theory, the study can examine how well SCM practices align the interests of both parties and reduce agency costs. It provides a framework for analyzing how improved governance, transparency, and accountability in SCM can lead to better dispute resolution outcomes and enhance overall contract performance in the Nigerian public sector.

**Methodology**

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to explore the effect of supply chain management (SCM) practices on contract dispute resolution in Nigeria's public sector. A cross-sectional survey design was employed. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 127 respondents, including procurement managers, contract officers, and supply chain professionals in the ministry of Niger Delta and Development. The survey gathered data on SCM practices, including procurement planning, contract management, and supplier relationship management. The sample size was determined using statistical power analysis to ensure representativeness. Data was analyzed using simple and chi-square statistical methods to identify correlations between SCM practices and the frequency and nature of contract disputes. Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical software to compute chi-square and perform descriptive statistics.

**Data analysis and Discussion**

How do procurement management practices influence the resolution of contract disputes in Nigeria's public sector?

**Table 1:** Effective procurement planning helps in reducing contract disputes in the public sector.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	79	62.2
Neutral	33	25.9
Strongly Disagree	15	11.8
Total	127	100

**Sources:** Field survey, 2024

The analysis of the data indicates that a significant majority of respondents believe effective procurement planning plays a crucial role in reducing majority contract disputes in the public sector. Specifically, 62.2% of participants strongly agree with this statement, highlighting the widespread recognition of procurement planning's importance. A smaller proportion, 25.9%, remain neutral, suggesting they neither fully endorse nor reject the notion, possibly due to varying experiences or perspectives. Only 11.8% of respondents strongly disagree, indicating that a minor segment does not see procurement planning as a key factor in minimizing disputes. Overall, the findings suggest that while effective procurement planning is widely regarded as beneficial, there is still some divergence in views, warranting further investigation into other influencing factors.

**Table 2:** Maintaining positive relationships with suppliers contributes to fewer contract disputes in the public sector.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	74	58.3
Neutral	42	33.1
Strongly Disagree	11	8.6
Total	127	100

**Sources:** Field survey, 2024

The analysis indicates that a significant majority of respondents believe that maintaining positive relationships with suppliers contributes to fewer contract disputes in the public sector. Specifically, 58.3% of respondents strongly agree with this statement, suggesting a strong correlation between good supplier relationships and reduced contract disputes. 33.1% are neutral, implying that while they acknowledge the importance of positive relationships, they may not be fully convinced or lack sufficient information. Only 8.6% strongly disagree, indicating a minimal number who do not see the connection between supplier relationships and dispute reduction. The overall distribution emphasizes the importance of fostering good supplier relationships as a strategy for minimizing contract disputes in the public sector. What is the extent of the impact of court judgments on contract dispute resolution within the Nigerian public sector?

**Table 3:** Effectiveness of Court Judgments in Resolving Contract Disputes within the Nigerian Public Sector

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Effective	82	64.6
Moderately Effective	40	31.5
Low Effective	5	3.9
Total	127	100

**Sources:** Field survey, 2024

The analysis shows that a majority of respondents (64.6%) perceive court judgments as highly effective in resolving contract disputes within the Nigerian public sector. A significant proportion (31.5%) consider the judgments moderately effective, indicating that while court interventions are generally seen as helpful, some improvement may be needed. Only a small percentage (3.9%) rated the effectiveness of court judgments as low, suggesting minimal dissatisfaction with their ability to resolve disputes. The total number of respondents (127) provides a substantial sample for evaluating the perceptions of court judgments. Overall, the data

reflects a positive view of the judiciary's role in dispute resolution, but it also highlights areas for improvement in terms of enforcement and procedural efficiency.

**Table 4:** Level of satisfaction with court judgment outcomes in resolving contract disputes in the Nigerian Public Sector

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	68	53.5
Somewhat Satisfied	51	40.1
Not Satisfied	8	6.3
Total	127	100

Sources: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of the level of satisfaction with court judgment outcomes in resolving contract disputes in the Nigerian public sector reveals that 53.5% of respondents are "Very Satisfied," indicating a majority perceive court judgments as effective. In contrast, 40.1% are "Somewhat Satisfied," suggesting a positive but less enthusiastic view. However, 6.3% of respondents are "Not Satisfied," highlighting a small portion who find the outcomes unsatisfactory. Overall, the data suggests that while a significant majority find court judgments in contract disputes satisfactory or highly satisfactory, there remains a notable minority with reservations about their effectiveness. This distribution reflects a generally favorable perception but also points to areas for potential improvement in the dispute resolution process.

**Test of Hypothesis**

H0<sub>1</sub>: Procurement management practices have no significant influence on the resolution of contract disputes in Nigeria's public sector.

Using the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical model in testing the hypothesis

Chi-square is given below

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

$$1 = 1 E_i$$

Where  $O_i$  = The Observed Frequency

$E_i$  = The Expected Frequency

Responses	O	E	O - E	(O - E) <sup>2</sup>	(O - E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Strongly Agree	79	42.3	36.7	1,346.89	31.8
Neutral	33	42.3	-9.3	-86.49	-2.1
Strongly Disagree	15	42.3	-27.3	-754.29	-17.6
<b>Total</b>	127	127			<b>12.1</b>

To determine the tabulated chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tab. Using the degree of freedom DF= n-1 and level of significance of 0.05.

Where n = number of different values observed in row

$\chi^2$  Tabulated = 5.991

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis (H0) if  $\chi^2$  Cal <  $\chi^2$  tab. Reject the null hypothesis (H0) if  $\chi^2$  call >  $\chi^2$  tab.

**Decision Rule**

From the computation above it is seen that  $\chi^2$  Cal is greater than  $\chi^2$  tab (12.1 > 5.991) the null Hypothesis (H0) is therefore rejected and alternative Hypothesis (Hi) is accepted which state that Procurement management practices have significant influence on the resolution of contract disputes in Nigeria’s public sector.

**Hypothesis II**

H0<sub>2</sub>: Court judgments have no significant impact on the resolution of contract disputes within the Nigerian public sector.

Responses	O	E	O – E	(O – E) <sup>2</sup>	(O – E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Highly effective	82	42.3	39.7	1,576.09	37.3
Moderately effective	40	42.3	-2.3	-5.29	-2.1
Low effective	5	42.3	-37.3	-1,391.29	-32.8
<b>Total</b>	127	127			<b>2.4</b>

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis (H0) if  $\chi^2$  call <  $\chi^2$  tab. Reject the null hypothesis (H0) if  $\chi^2$  Cal >  $\chi^2$  tab.

**Decision Rule**

From the computation above it is seen that  $\chi^2$  Cal. is greater than  $\chi^2$  Tab (2.4 > 5.991) the null Hypothesis (H0) which state that, Court judgments have no significant impact on the resolution of contract disputes within the Nigerian public sector therefore accepted.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings indicate a significant relationship between procurement management practices and the resolution of contract disputes in Nigeria’s public sector. The computed chi-square value  $\chi^2$ text [Cal] of 12.1 exceeds the critical value  $\chi^2$  text [Tab] of 5.991, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0). This supports the alternative hypothesis (H1), which posits that procurement management practices significantly influence the resolution of contract disputes. This aligns with previous research by Adegoke et al. (2018), which emphasizes that effective procurement planning and management can reduce disputes by improving contract clarity and compliance.

Conversely, the computed chi-square value for court judgments  $\chi^2$  text[Ca] of 2.4 is less than the critical value of 5.991, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H0). This suggests that court judgments may not significantly impact dispute resolution within the public sector. This contrasts with findings by Oluyede (2020), who highlighted that while court judgments play a role, their effectiveness is often hampered by enforcement challenges and delays. Thus, while procurement practices are crucial, enhancing the efficacy of court judgments is also needed for comprehensive dispute resolution.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of procurement management practices in effectively resolving contract disputes within Nigeria’s public sector. The statistical analysis reveals a significant relationship between these practices and dispute resolution, as indicated by the chi-square value of 12.1 surpassing the critical value of 5.991. This supports the alternative

hypothesis, affirming that robust procurement management strategies, as highlighted by Adegoke et al. (2018), can mitigate disputes through enhanced contract clarity and compliance.

However, the study also reveals that court judgments, with a chi-square value of 2.4 below the critical threshold, do not significantly impact dispute resolution. This finding aligns with Oluyede (2020), who noted that while court judgments are intended to resolve disputes, their effectiveness is often undermined by enforcement challenges and procedural delays. Consequently, while improved procurement practices are essential for minimizing disputes, there is also a need to address the inefficiencies in the judicial process to achieve comprehensive and effective dispute resolution in the public sector.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. To effectively reduce contract disputes in the Nigerian public sector, it is crucial to implement and strengthen procurement management practices. This includes improving procurement planning, contract clarity, and compliance monitoring. Adopting best practices in procurement processes can help prevent ambiguities and misinterpretations that lead to disputes. Regular training for procurement officers and implementing robust procurement frameworks will further enhance the effectiveness of these practices and contribute to smoother contract management.
- ii. Given the limited impact of court judgments on dispute resolution observed in this study, it is essential to address the challenges related to the enforcement of these judgments. This involves streamlining judicial processes, reducing bureaucratic delays, and increasing the efficiency of enforcement mechanisms. Strengthening collaboration between the judiciary and public sector agencies can help ensure timely and effective implementation of court decisions, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of dispute resolution.

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