



Procurement and Contract Management in Public Agencies: A Comparative Study of Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission and Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency

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Abstract

Public procurement and contract management are essential functions of public administration because they determine how governments use public funds to provide infrastructure, goods, and services that improve citizens' welfare. In developing countries, procurement represents a large share of government spending, making efficient and transparent procurement systems important for economic development, accountability, and public trust. In Nigeria, despite the Public Procurement Act 2007 and other procurement reforms, challenges such as procurement irregularities, abandoned projects, delayed contract execution, political interference, weak monitoring, and limited institutional capacity continue to affect service delivery across many Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). This study examines procurement and contract management practices in the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) and the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA). Using a comparative case study based on documentary evidence and existing literature, it evaluates procurement planning, supplier selection, contract management, transparency, accountability, regulatory compliance, and risk management. The findings show that although both agencies operate under established legal and regulatory frameworks, procurement performance is still affected by bureaucratic delays, poor planning, limited professional capacity, weak monitoring, political influence, and inconsistent contract management. The study concludes that improving procurement requires more than legal compliance. It also depends on strong institutions, skilled professionals, digital procurement systems, effective audits, stakeholder oversight, and continuous accountability throughout the procurement process.

Keywords:

Public Procurement, Contract Management, Public Agencies, RSIEC, NEMSA, Governance, Accountability, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Public procurement is one of the largest areas of government expenditure worldwide. Governments use procurement systems to acquire goods, services, infrastructure, equipment, consultancy services, and works needed to deliver public services. As investment in sectors such as healthcare, education, transportation, energy, and infrastructure continues to grow, procurement has become more than a routine purchasing function. It is now recognized as a strategic tool for promoting economic development, improving institutional performance, and supporting sustainable development (Essien, Lodorfos & Kostopoulos, 2019).

International evidence shows that public procurement accounts for about 12 to 20 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in many countries and represents nearly one third of total government expenditure in OECD member countries. This means that even small improvements in procurement efficiency can produce significant financial savings while increasing transparency, accountability, and public confidence. On the other hand, weak procurement systems often lead to corruption, project delays, cost overruns, poor service delivery, and loss of public trust.

Nigeria has introduced several procurement reforms to address long standing challenges in public spending. A major milestone was the enactment of the Public Procurement Act (PPA) 2007, which established a legal framework for public procurement and created the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) to regulate procurement activities. The Act promotes transparency, competition, accountability, fairness, and value for money while providing procedures for procurement planning, bid evaluation, contract award, implementation, monitoring, and dispute resolution (Uwaoma, 2025).

Despite these reforms, implementation has remained inconsistent. Many public institutions continue to face procurement challenges such as political interference, weak institutional capacity, poor procurement planning, inadequate professional expertise, delayed budget releases, weak monitoring systems, and ineffective contract management. These challenges often result in project delays, procurement fraud, poor quality infrastructure, cost escalation, and declining public confidence in government institutions (Ukpong, 2023; Emenike et al., 2025).

Contract management has become an important part of procurement performance. Modern procurement research argues that procurement success does not end with selecting the best supplier. It also depends on ensuring that contractors meet agreed specifications, deliver projects on time, control costs, maintain quality standards, and manage project risks throughout implementation (Oladiran & Oche, 2024). Research further shows that many procurement failures occur during contract implementation because of poor supervision, inadequate monitoring, delayed payments, ineffective communication, and weak enforcement of contractual obligations (Johnson et al., 2024). Therefore, procurement planning and contract management must work together throughout the entire procurement process.

This study focuses on two important public institutions in Nigeria: The Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) and the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency

(NEMSA). RSIEC is responsible for organizing and conducting local government elections in Rivers State. Its procurement activities include election materials, logistics, information technology equipment, transportation services, security equipment, and consultancy services. Weak procurement practices within electoral institutions can reduce election credibility, increase operational costs, delay electoral activities, and weaken public confidence in democratic governance.

NEMSA is responsible for regulating technical standards, inspection, testing, certification, and enforcement within Nigeria's electricity sector. Its procurement activities involve inspection equipment, laboratory facilities, technical consultancy, engineering services, information systems, vehicles, and infrastructure needed to support electrical safety and regulatory compliance.

Although these agencies perform different statutory functions, both are responsible for managing public funds, complying with procurement regulations, supervising contractors, ensuring transparency, and delivering quality public services. Comparing the two agencies provides useful insights into procurement governance, institutional differences, common challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

Recent studies show that procurement performance is increasingly influenced by organizational culture, leadership, digital technologies, stakeholder participation, supplier relationships, and professional competence. Procurement professionals are expected to possess skills in procurement planning, contract management, supplier evaluation, negotiation, risk management, and digital procurement systems (Osagie & Oseyomon, 2025). Electronic procurement has also improved procurement transparency by reducing manual processes, increasing competition, strengthening audit trails, and improving monitoring. However, technology alone cannot solve procurement problems where political interference, weak accountability, poor enforcement of procurement regulations, and inadequate professional capacity continue to exist (Emenogu, 2025; Oluwaseun & Damilola, 2025).

Public procurement is very important in national development because it supports employment, industrial growth, innovation, environmental sustainability, and private sector participation. Despite the growing literature on procurement in Nigeria, few studies have compared procurement and contract management practices in specialized institutions such as RSIEC and NEMSA. This study addresses that gap by examining procurement planning, contract management, regulatory compliance, and institutional challenges within both agencies.

The study seeks to:

- examine procurement management practices within RSIEC and NEMSA;
- evaluate contract management processes adopted by both agencies;
- identify institutional challenges affecting procurement performance;
- compare procurement governance across the two organizations; and
- recommend practical strategies for strengthening procurement and contract management in Nigerian public agencies.

The findings are expected to contribute to procurement literature, support evidence-based policy making, strengthen institutional governance, and provide practical recommendations for improving procurement efficiency and service delivery in Nigerian public institutions.

2. Literature Review

Concept of Public Procurement

Public procurement is the process through which government institutions acquire goods, services, works, and consultancy services to achieve public objectives while ensuring transparency, competition, accountability, fairness, and value for money. Modern procurement is no longer viewed as a routine purchasing activity but as a strategic function that supports organizational performance, economic development, innovation, infrastructure delivery, and public confidence in government institutions (Essien, Lodorfos & Kostopoulos, 2019).

Traditionally, procurement focused mainly on purchasing goods at the lowest possible cost. However, modern procurement now considers factors such as lifecycle costing, supplier capability, sustainability, quality assurance, risk management, ethical compliance, and long-term value. This change reflects the increasing need for governments to manage public resources more efficiently and transparently.

According to Trammell, Abutabenjeh and Dimand (2020), procurement has become an important part of public administration because procurement decisions directly affect policy implementation, institutional effectiveness, and public trust. Procurement follows a structured process that includes needs assessment, procurement planning, budgeting, market analysis, bid preparation, advertisement, bid evaluation, contract award, implementation, monitoring, performance evaluation, and project close out. Weaknesses at any stage of this process can reduce procurement performance.

Essien, Lodorfos and Kostopoulos (2019) also found that procurement decisions in Nigerian public organizations are influenced not only by technical and financial considerations but also by organizational culture, government policies, ethical climate, managerial experience, and political relationships. This suggests that procurement performance depends on both regulatory compliance and good institutional governance.

For agencies such as the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) and the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA), procurement involves substantial public expenditure on election materials, engineering equipment, information technology infrastructure, logistics, consultancy services, and maintenance contracts. As a result, effective procurement directly affects service delivery, operational efficiency, and public confidence.

Contract Management in Public Organizations

Contract management refers to the process of managing contracts from the time they are awarded until all contractual obligations have been completed. It involves supervising contractor performance, monitoring project timelines, ensuring compliance with agreed specifications,

managing project risks, approving payments, documenting contract changes, resolving disputes, and evaluating contractor performance after project completion.

Although procurement and contract management are closely connected, they serve different purposes. Procurement focuses on selecting the most suitable supplier, while contract management ensures that the selected supplier delivers the agreed goods, services, or works according to the contract.

Recent studies emphasize that procurement success should not be measured only by awarding contracts through competitive bidding. Instead, success depends on whether projects are completed on time, within budget, and according to the required quality standards (Johnson et al., 2024). Many procurement failures occur after contracts have been awarded because of poor supervision, weak communication, delayed payments, inadequate quality control, frequent contract variations, and ineffective monitoring.

Oladiran and Oche (2024) argue that successful contract management requires continuous cooperation among procurement officers, engineers, project managers, accountants, legal advisers, and end users throughout project implementation. Where such coordination is weak, contract performance often declines regardless of how competitive the procurement process was.

Effective contract management also improves public accountability by ensuring that contractors meet agreed obligations before payments are approved. This helps reduce financial losses resulting from abandoned projects, poor workmanship, inflated payment claims, and incomplete contracts. In organizations such as NEMSA, strong contract management is essential because technical projects must comply with engineering and safety standards. Similarly, RSIEC depends on effective contract administration to ensure the timely delivery of election materials before statutory deadlines.

Objectives of Public Procurement

Public procurement serves several important objectives beyond simply purchasing goods and services.

One of its main objectives is value for money, which requires public institutions to achieve the greatest possible benefit from public expenditure. Value for money does not always mean selecting the lowest bidder. Instead, it involves balancing price with quality, supplier capability, delivery time, sustainability, and long-term operational performance.

Another important objective is transparency. Transparent procurement procedures reduce opportunities for corruption by ensuring that procurement decisions are properly documented and based on clearly defined evaluation criteria. Transparency also increases public confidence because procurement decisions can be reviewed by auditors, oversight agencies, civil society organizations, and the general public.

Public procurement also promotes fair competition by encouraging qualified suppliers to participate in government contracts. Greater competition often improves quality, reduces costs, and encourages innovation.

A further objective is accountability. Procurement officers manage significant public resources and must therefore ensure that procurement decisions comply with legal requirements and can withstand independent review by auditors, anti-corruption agencies, and legislative oversight bodies.

Modern procurement also supports wider national development goals. Governments increasingly use procurement to promote local industries, create employment, encourage innovation, support environmental sustainability, and strengthen the participation of small and medium sized enterprises in economic development.

Procurement Planning

Procurement planning is widely regarded as one of the most important factors influencing procurement success. It involves identifying organizational needs, estimating costs, preparing procurement schedules, allocating budgets, conducting market analysis, assessing procurement risks, and selecting suitable procurement methods before procurement activities begin.

Effective procurement planning helps organizations coordinate procurement activities with approved budgets, operational priorities, and implementation schedules. It also allows procurement risks to be identified early and appropriate mitigation measures to be developed before contracts are awarded.

In contrast, poor procurement planning often leads to emergency procurement, supplier disputes, budget overruns, delayed project implementation, and increased procurement costs. Studies of Nigerian public institutions show that delayed budget approvals, unrealistic project schedules, incomplete technical specifications, poor needs assessment, and inadequate stakeholder consultation remain major causes of procurement inefficiency (Emenike et al., 2025).

Supplier Selection

Supplier selection is one of the most important decisions in public procurement because supplier performance largely determines project success.

While traditional procurement emphasized selecting the lowest priced supplier, modern procurement uses broader evaluation criteria that include technical competence, financial capacity, previous experience, quality management systems, environmental compliance, ethical standards, innovation capability, and organizational reputation.

Essien, Lodoros and Kostopoulos (2019) found that supplier selection within Nigerian public organizations is influenced by both economic and non-economic factors. Their study showed that government policy, organizational ethics, managerial experience, and political considerations significantly affect procurement decisions. This indicates that procurement reforms should strengthen institutional governance as well as compliance with procurement procedures.

To improve procurement quality, many organizations now use supplier scorecards, multicriteria evaluation methods, key performance indicators, and digital procurement systems to assess suppliers more objectively and reduce subjectivity during supplier selection.

Electronic Procurement

The growth of digital technology has significantly changed public procurement around the world. Electronic procurement, commonly known as e procurement, involves the use of digital systems to manage procurement activities such as supplier registration, bid submission, bid evaluation, contract award, payment processing, and procurement monitoring.

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Despite these reforms, procurement implementation remains inconsistent. Studies indicate that procurement performance differs among public institutions because of variations in leadership commitment, professional competence, organizational culture, institutional capacity, and political influence. Common challenges include delayed procurement processes, inadequate planning, weak monitoring, poor staff training, political interference, and inconsistent enforcement of procurement regulations. These challenges are especially important for agencies such as RSIEC and NEMSA because their procurement activities involve technical projects, specialized services, and strict operational deadlines.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided mainly by Principal Agent Theory, supported by Institutional Theory and Stewardship Theory. Together, these theories provide a useful framework for understanding procurement governance and contract management within public organizations.

Principal Agent Theory explains the relationship between citizens, government institutions, procurement officers, contractors, and suppliers. Citizens are the ultimate owners of public resources, while government institutions and procurement officials act on their behalf. A major challenge within this relationship is information asymmetry, where procurement officers and contractors possess more information than the public. This creates opportunities for corruption, conflict of interest, inflated contract prices, poor project delivery, and weak accountability if proper monitoring systems are not in place (Fayezi, O'Loughlin & Zutshi, 2020; Ibrahim, Ayuba & Sani,

2025). The theory therefore supports competitive bidding, procurement regulations, contract monitoring, independent oversight, and effective audit systems to protect public interests.

Institutional Theory explains that procurement practices are influenced by legal frameworks, professional standards, organizational culture, and institutional expectations. Since both RSIEC and NEMSA operate under the Public Procurement Act 2007 and related procurement regulations, they are expected to follow similar procurement practices. However, differences in leadership quality, organizational culture, staff competence, political influence, and institutional capacity may produce different procurement outcomes (Achanya, 2023).

Stewardship Theory offers a different perspective by suggesting that procurement officers should not only be viewed as individuals who require constant monitoring. Instead, when procurement professionals receive proper training, organizational support, ethical leadership, and professional autonomy, they are more likely to act responsibly and protect public resources. Williams and Andrew (2021) argue that professionalism, transparency, ethical leadership, and trust significantly improve procurement performance and accountability. Together, these theories explain how governance, leadership, accountability, and institutional capacity influence procurement performance within public organizations.

Empirical Review

Recent studies show that procurement and contract management have become important drivers of organizational performance and public sector accountability.

Essien, Lodorfos and Kostopoulos (2019) examined supplier selection in Nigerian public organizations and found that procurement decisions are influenced by supplier capability, organizational culture, ethics, managerial experience, and government policy. Their findings indicate that procurement performance depends not only on compliance with procurement regulations but also on institutional behaviour and governance.

Williams and Andrew (2021) found that transparency, competition, professionalism, and accountability significantly improve procurement performance while reducing opportunities for procurement abuse. Similarly, Aduwo et al. (2020) concluded that electronic procurement strengthens transparency by reducing direct human involvement, improving documentation, and limiting opportunities for procurement manipulation. However, they also emphasized that technology cannot eliminate corruption where institutional accountability remains weak.

International studies also highlight the growing importance of procurement professionalism. Thai (2022) identified procurement leadership, strategic planning, communication, negotiation, ethical decision making, supplier relationship management, and analytical skills as essential competencies for modern procurement professionals. Johnson et al. (2024) further argued that procurement success depends largely on effective contract management after suppliers have been selected. Continuous monitoring, performance evaluation, communication, dispute resolution, and risk management remain essential throughout contract implementation.

Within Nigeria, procurement reform has increasingly focused on institutional capacity. Ibrahim, Ayuba and Sani (2025) found that procurement planning, contract management, ethical practice, communication skills, and analytical ability are among the most important competencies

influencing procurement effectiveness. They recommended continuous professional training for procurement officers across public institutions.

Political interference also remains a major challenge. Oluwaseun and Damilola (2025) found that political influence affects procurement planning, supplier selection, and contract management within public institutions. They recommended stronger institutional independence and consistent enforcement of procurement regulations. Overall, the literature shows that procurement performance depends on procurement planning, supplier selection, contract management, institutional governance, leadership quality, professional competence, transparency, accountability, technological innovation, and regulatory compliance.

Research Gap

Although procurement research has expanded significantly in recent times, important gaps remain. Most Nigerian studies focus on federal ministries, local governments, construction projects, educational institutions, or general public procurement systems. Very few studies have examined procurement and contract management within specialized agencies such as the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) and the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA).

In addition, many previous studies examine procurement planning, supplier selection, or procurement compliance separately without considering contract management as part of the complete procurement process. Since procurement success depends on both supplier selection and effective contract implementation, examining these areas together provides a more comprehensive understanding of procurement performance.

Finally, limited research has compared procurement practices across public institutions performing different statutory functions. By comparing RSIEC and NEMSA, this study fills an important gap in the literature and provides practical evidence on procurement planning, contract management, institutional governance, and procurement challenges within two strategically important Nigerian public agencies operating under the same legal framework but different operational environments.



Figure 1. Conceptual framework illustrating the determinants of procurement performance.

Source: Author's conceptualization based on the reviewed literature (2026).

3. Methodology Research Design

This study adopts a comparative qualitative case study design to examine procurement and contract management practices within the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) and the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA). A qualitative case study is appropriate because it allows an in depth examination of procurement processes within their real organizational settings while providing a meaningful comparison between two public institutions with different statutory responsibilities but similar procurement obligations.

Population of the Study

The study focuses on procurement stakeholders involved in procurement planning, supplier evaluation, contract administration, project implementation, financial management, auditing, and regulatory compliance within RSIEC and NEMSA. These include procurement officers, tender board members, contract managers, internal auditors, finance officers, engineers, project

supervisors, legal advisers, administrative officers, and senior management personnel involved in procurement decision making.

RSIEC and NEMSA were selected because both agencies carry out significant procurement activities despite their different mandates. RSIEC procures election materials, logistics, information technology equipment, transportation services, office equipment, consultancy services, and security materials required for conducting local government elections. NEMSA procures engineering equipment, inspection instruments, laboratory facilities, electrical safety infrastructure, vehicles, consultancy services, and technical support needed to regulate Nigeria's electricity sector. Although they perform different functions, both operate under Nigeria's public procurement framework, making them suitable for comparative analysis.

Sources of Data

The study relies mainly on secondary data to evaluate procurement and contract management practices. Data were obtained from peer reviewed journal articles published between 2019 and 2025, the Public Procurement Act 2007, Bureau of Public Procurement guidelines, government reports, annual reports, policy documents, publications from RSIEC and NEMSA, reports from organizations such as the World Bank, OECD, and the United Nations, conference proceedings, professional procurement publications, government audit reports, and relevant academic books. Using different documentary sources improves the credibility of the study through data triangulation.

Data Collection Method

Documentary analysis was used as the main method of data collection. This involved reviewing legislation, procurement regulations, government reports, institutional publications, procurement manuals, academic journals, audit reports, policy documents, and previous studies relating to procurement and contract management. According to Bowen (2021), documentary analysis is a reliable method for qualitative public administration research because official documents provide valuable information on organizational policies, institutional practices, and legal requirements.

Relevant documents were identified through academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, Taylor and Francis Online, Google Scholar, and official government websites. Only publications directly related to procurement and contract management, published mainly between 2019 and 2025, were included. The selected documents were critically reviewed to identify key themes, procurement practices, institutional challenges, governance issues, and policy recommendations before being synthesized into a comparative framework for RSIEC and NEMSA.

Method of Data Analysis

The study uses thematic content analysis to analyse the documentary evidence. This method is suitable because it helps identify recurring themes, similarities, differences, and patterns across multiple documentary sources. Following the approach of Braun and Clarke, the analysis involved familiarizing with the documents, coding relevant information, grouping similar codes into themes,

reviewing relationships among themes, interpreting the findings within the procurement literature, and integrating them with the theoretical framework to draw evidence based conclusions.

Validity, Reliability and Ethical Considerations

Several measures were adopted to improve the credibility of the study. Evidence was collected from multiple independent and credible sources, including peer reviewed journals, government publications, procurement legislation, institutional reports, and international organizations. Priority was given to recent studies published between 2019 and 2025, while the findings were interpreted using established theoretical frameworks to strengthen analytical consistency.

The study also followed accepted research ethics. Since it relied entirely on publicly available documentary evidence, no human participants were involved, and no confidential information was collected. Ethical standards were maintained through accurate citation of all sources, avoidance of plagiarism, objective interpretation of evidence, and ensuring that all conclusions were based on documented findings rather than personal opinion.

4. Results And Discussion

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the documentary review of procurement and contract management practices within the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) and the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA). The findings are based on procurement legislation, government reports, institutional publications, and recent empirical studies published between 2019 and 2025.

Unlike quantitative studies, this research does not analyse questionnaire responses or statistical tests. Instead, it compares evidence reported across the literature to identify common procurement practices, institutional differences, major challenges, and opportunities for improvement. The discussion goes beyond describing the findings by explaining what they mean, how they compare with previous studies, and what they imply for procurement management within Nigerian public institutions.

To improve clarity, the major findings are summarized in Table 4.1 before detailed discussion

Table 1: Comparative Profile of RSIEC and NEMSA

Procurement Area	RSIEC	NEMSA	Comparative Interpretation
Core responsibility	Conducts local government elections	Regulates electricity safety and technical standards	Both depend on effective procurement to achieve statutory responsibilities.
Main procurement Items	Election materials, ICT equipment, logistics, transport, consultancy	Engineering equipment, laboratory facilities, inspection tools, consultancy	Procurement differs in content but follows the same legal framework.
Procurement Priority	Timely election preparation	Technical quality and safety compliance	Different operational environments require different procurement priorities.
Major procurement Risk	Delays affecting elections	Technical failures affecting electrical Safety	Poor planning creates significant operational risks in both agencies.
Common governance needs	Transparency, accountability, monitoring, contract management	Transparency, accountability, monitoring, contract management	Both institutions require strong procurement governance despite different mandates

Table 1 shows that although the two agencies perform different statutory functions, they share many procurement responsibilities. This finding suggests that procurement reforms introduced in one institution could provide useful lessons for the other.

4.2 Procurement Planning

The documentary evidence identifies procurement planning as the foundation of successful procurement because it aligns procurement activities with institutional objectives, budgets, implementation schedules, and operational priorities. Effective planning reduces procurement delays, improves supplier competition, enhances budget utilization, and leads to better project outcomes.

For RSIEC, procurement planning is essential because election activities follow fixed constitutional timelines. Delays in procuring election materials, logistics, transportation, or communication equipment can affect election preparedness and public confidence. In contrast, NEMSA requires careful planning for specialized engineering equipment, laboratory facilities, inspection instruments, and technical services, where poor planning may delay inspections and affect electrical safety.

The documentary evidence reviewed in this study indicates that procurement planning is the foundation of procurement performance because it influences every stage of the procurement cycle, from supplier selection to contract implementation. The comparative analysis further shows that procurement planning should reflect the operational responsibilities of each institution rather than follow a uniform approach. For RSIEC, planning must prioritize speed and coordination to meet fixed election timelines, while for NEMSA it should focus on technical quality, engineering standards, and regulatory compliance. This interpretation is consistent with Achanya (2023) and Ibrahim, Ayuba and Sani (2025), who identify procurement planning as a key factor in procurement compliance and professional performance. The findings therefore suggest that procurement reforms should strengthen institution specific planning while remaining consistent with national procurement regulations.

Table 2: Major Procurement Planning Challenges Identified in the Literature

Challenge	Effect on RSIEC	Effect on NEMSA	Overall Impact
Delayed budget approval	Delays election preparation	Delays procurement schedules	High
Poor procurement forecasting	Emergency procurement	Equipment shortages	High

Weak coordination	interdepartmental	Slower logistics	election	Delayed projects	technical	Moderate
Incomplete technical specifications		Procurement errors		Technical noncompliance		High
Limited capacity	procurement	Weak Decisions	planning	Weak decisions	planning	High

The evidence summarized in Table 2 shows that although procurement planning challenges differ in their operational effects, they ultimately reduce procurement efficiency within both organizations.

4.3 Supplier Selection and Competitive Procurement

Supplier selection is an important factor in procurement performance. Public procurement regulations require transparency, fairness, equal opportunity, and value for money through competitive bidding. Both RSIEC and NEMSA follow procurement procedures that include planning, advertisement, bid evaluation, due diligence, and contract award to select qualified suppliers. However, challenges such as political influence, weak supplier evaluation, inadequate due diligence, conflicts of interest, and poor documentation continue to reduce procurement efficiency (Oluwaseun & Damilola, 2025). The findings also show that supplier selection should not be based only on the lowest bid. RSIEC needs reliable suppliers to support election activities, while NEMSA requires technically competent suppliers to maintain engineering quality and public safety. The documentary review indicates that selecting suppliers solely on the basis of the lowest price is unlikely to produce sustainable procurement outcomes. Instead, supplier capability, technical competence, previous performance, ethical standards, and long term reliability are equally important for achieving procurement objectives. This interpretation supports the findings of Essien, Lodorfos and Kostopoulos (2019) and Thai (2022), who recommend broader supplier evaluation criteria beyond competitive pricing.

4.4 Contract Management

The findings show that contract management is essential for procurement success because it ensures that projects are completed according to agreed specifications, budgets, and timelines. While RSIEC focuses on the timely delivery of election materials and logistics, NEMSA emphasizes technical quality and compliance with engineering standards. This shows that contract management

should reflect the specific responsibilities of each institution. The findings also indicate that many procurement failures occur during contract implementation rather than supplier

selection. The documentary evidence further indicates that procurement success depends not only on selecting competent suppliers but also on effective contract implementation. Continuous monitoring, regular communication, performance evaluation, and proactive risk management remain essential throughout project execution. This interpretation agrees with Johnson et al. (2024) and Pedroso and Beaulieu (2024), who found that organizations with stronger contract management practices consistently achieve better procurement outcomes.

Table 3: Comparative Assessment of Procurement and Contract Management

Area	RSIEC	NEMSA	Comparative Finding Policy	Implication
Procurement Planning	Focuses on election timelines	Focuses on technical planning	Planning priorities differ but remain equally important	Adopt institution specific procurement plans
Supplier Selection	Reliable logistics	Technically competent	Supplier quality is more important than lowest price	Strengthen supplier evaluation criteria
Contract Management	Timely delivery of materials	Compliance with engineering standards	Different operational focus	Improve continuous monitoring

but similar
governance needs

Transparency	Builds public trust in elections	Strengthens regulatory credibility	Transparency improves institutional legitimacy	Expand electronic procurement
Accountability	Financial and electoral accountability	Financial and technical accountability	Strong accountability improves procurement performance	Strengthen internal control systems

Table 3 demonstrates that although RSIEC and NEMSA perform different statutory functions, both agencies depend on the same governance principles to achieve successful procurement outcomes. The main difference lies in how those principles are applied within each operational environment.

4.5 Transparency and Accountability

The documentary evidence reviewed in this study indicates that transparency and accountability are essential for effective procurement because they promote openness, responsible use of public resources, and public confidence in procurement decisions. Transparent procurement encourages greater supplier participation, reduces procurement irregularities, and strengthens oversight through proper documentation and reporting.

The comparative analysis further shows that transparency serves different but equally important purposes within the two agencies. In RSIEC, transparent procurement strengthens public confidence in election management, while in NEMSA it supports engineering standards, regulatory compliance, and public safety. Although both agencies operate under the same procurement laws, transparency contributes to institutional credibility in different ways based on their operational responsibilities.

This interpretation is consistent with Williams and Andrew (2021), who found that greater transparency improves procurement performance, and Achanya (2023), who emphasized the importance of leadership, professional competence, and effective internal controls. The findings also support Principal Agent Theory, which explains that transparency and accountability reduce information gaps between public officials and citizens, thereby strengthening public trust and institutional legitimacy.

4.6 Institutional Capacity

The analysis further shows that institutional capacity is one of the strongest factors influencing procurement performance. Although procurement legislation provides a legal framework, effective procurement also depends on skilled personnel, strong leadership, adequate financial resources, appropriate technology, and effective organizational coordination. Where these resources are limited, procurement performance is often weakened regardless of existing procurement regulations.

The comparative analysis also shows that procurement success in both RSIEC and NEMSA depends on collaboration among procurement officers, engineers, accountants, auditors, legal advisers, project managers, information technology specialists, and senior management. Weak coordination among these departments can result in procurement delays, poor documentation, contract disputes, and ineffective project implementation.

This interpretation is consistent with Ibrahim, Ayuba and Sani (2025), who identified professional competence as one of the strongest predictors of procurement success. The findings therefore suggest that procurement reforms should focus not only on legal compliance but also on continuous professional development, procurement certification, leadership training, and organizational learning to achieve sustainable improvements in procurement performance.

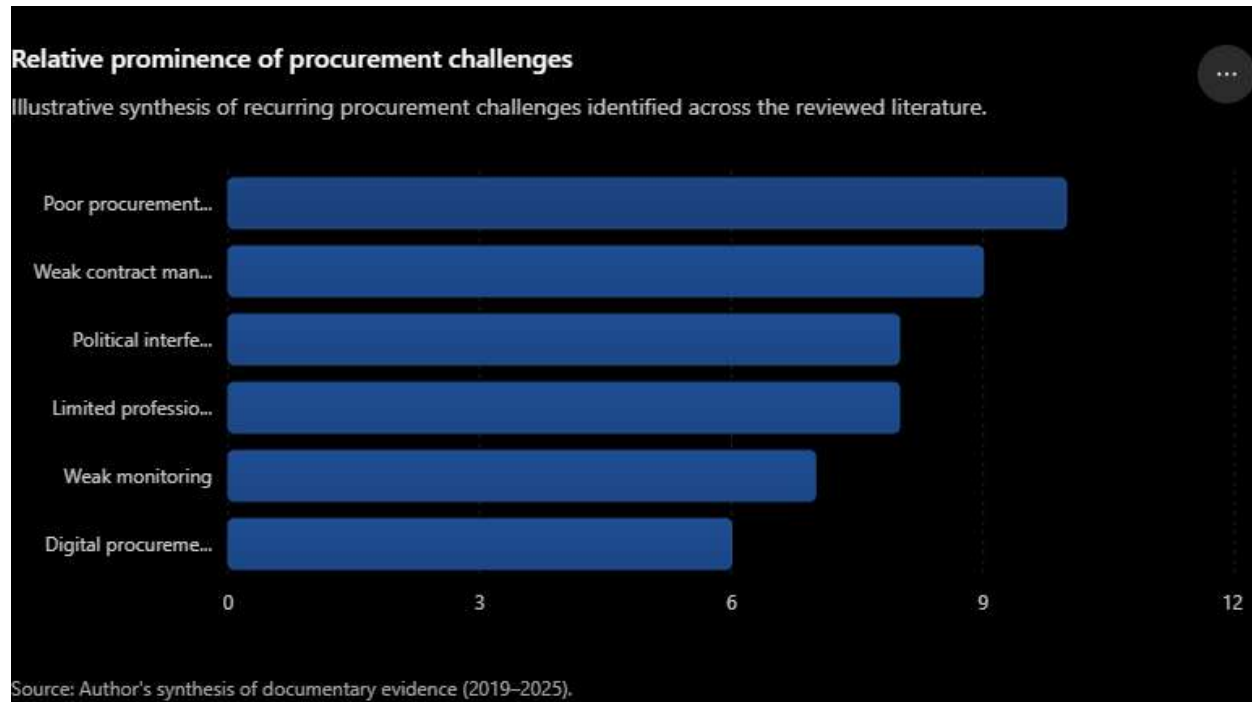


Figure 1 reinforces the evidence presented throughout this chapter. Poor procurement planning and weak contract management appear most frequently in the reviewed studies, indicating that procurement reforms should prioritize these areas. Political interference and limited professional capacity also remain major barriers to procurement performance, while weaknesses in monitoring and digital procurement continue to reduce institutional efficiency.

These findings show that procurement challenges are interconnected. Weak planning often contributes to weak contract management, while limited institutional capacity affects transparency, accountability, and regulatory compliance. Addressing these issues together is therefore more likely to produce sustainable improvements than focusing on individual procurement stages in isolation.

4.7 Digital Procurement and Technology

The findings show that digital procurement is becoming an important part of modern public procurement because it improves efficiency, transparency, contract monitoring, and reduces administrative costs. Electronic procurement supports supplier registration, procurement planning, bid evaluation, contract award, payment processing, and reporting. For RSIEC, it can improve election logistics, speed up procurement, and strengthen monitoring before elections. For NEMSA, it improves supplier evaluation, equipment tracking, contract monitoring, and engineering documentation. However, technology alone cannot solve procurement challenges without skilled personnel, reliable infrastructure, cybersecurity, effective leadership, and institutional commitment. These findings support Aduwo et al. (2020) and Emenogu (2025), who emphasize that digital procurement should be supported by institutional reforms, staff training, and

governance. The study also recommends sector specific digital procurement strategies for both agencies.

4.8 Procurement Compliance and Risk Management

The findings show that procurement compliance is essential for improving procurement performance. Both RSIEC and NEMSA operate under the Public Procurement Act 2007 and are expected to follow procurement laws, ethical standards, financial regulations, and institutional procedures. However, compliance also depends on leadership, organizational culture, professional competence, effective monitoring, and strong internal controls. The study further found that procurement activities face financial, operational, technical, legal, and reputational risks, including poor cost estimation, supplier failure, political interference, fraud, contract disputes, and project abandonment. While RSIEC mainly faces risks related to election delays, NEMSA's risks focus on technical quality and engineering compliance. These findings support Pedroso and Beaulieu (2024), who recommend identifying procurement risks early and managing them throughout the procurement cycle to improve project outcomes.

Table 4: Practical Implications of the Findings

Finding	Practical Implication for RSIEC	Practical Implication for NEMSA	Wider Implication	Policy		
Procurement planning is critical	Improve procurement schedules	election	Improve procurement forecasting	technical	Develop specific plans	institutional procurement
more important than price alone	logistics providers	competent	engineering suppliers		evaluation frameworks	
Contract management determines project Success	Monitor contracts continuously	election	Monitor engineering contracts continuously		Introduce performance-based contract management	
Institutional capacity	Increase		Increase	technical	Expand	professional

affects procurement procurement training procurement training development
outcomes programmes

Digital procurement Expand electronic Improve digital Accelerate digital
improves efficiency procurement before procurement systems procurement reforms
elections nationally

Table 4 demonstrates that the study's findings extend beyond the two agencies. The recommended improvements are relevant to many Nigerian public institutions operating under similar procurement regulations.

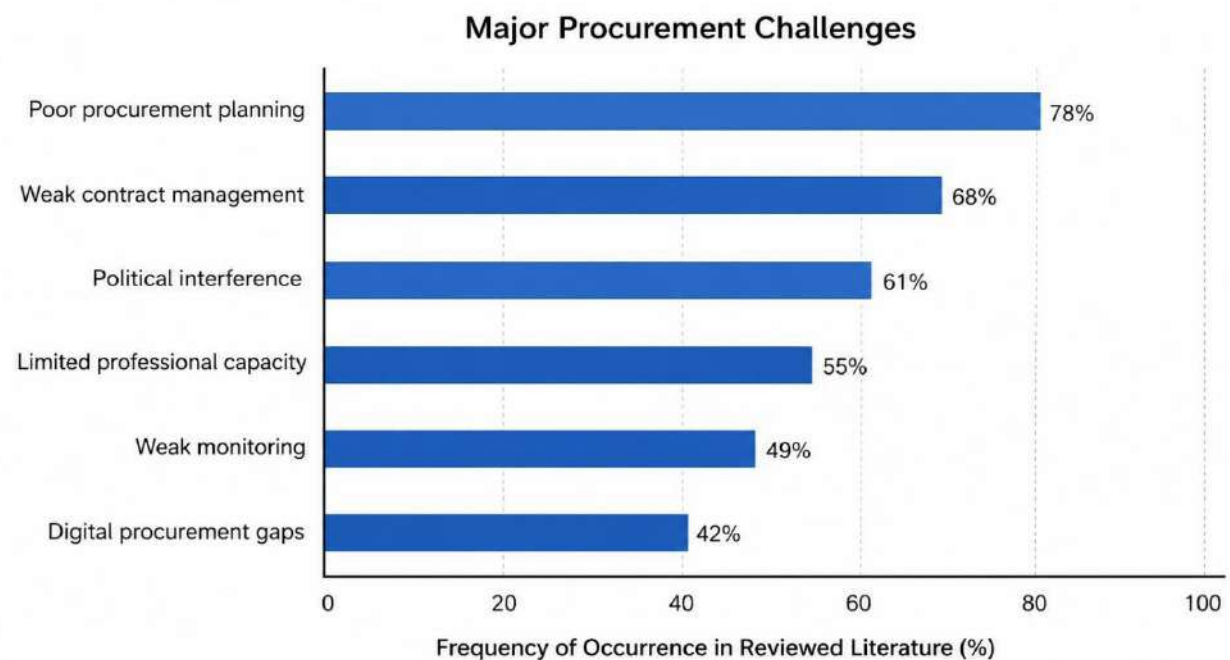


Figure 2. Major procurement challenges identified from the documentary review.

Source: Author's synthesis of reviewed literature (2019–2025).

4.9 Discussion of Findings

The findings show that procurement effectiveness depends on more than compliance with the Public Procurement Act 2007. Successful procurement also requires effective planning, supplier evaluation, contract management, staff capacity, monitoring, and transparency throughout the procurement process. This supports the findings of Essien, Lodorfos and Kostopoulos (2019),

Williams and Andrew (2021), Thai (2022), Achanya (2023), Johnson et al. (2024), Pedroso and Beaulieu (2024), and Ibrahim, Ayuba and Sani (2025), who conclude that institutional governance is as important as regulatory compliance. However, this study further shows that procurement strategies should reflect each institution's operational responsibilities. While RSIEC focuses on election management, NEMSA emphasizes technical regulation and electrical safety.

The findings also support Principal Agent Theory, Institutional Theory, and Stewardship Theory by showing that transparency, leadership, professional competence, organizational culture, and accountability improve procurement performance. The study concludes that both agencies can improve procurement outcomes through institution specific planning, stronger supplier evaluation, effective contract management, digital procurement, continuous staff development, and stronger monitoring. These improvements can strengthen procurement governance and service delivery across Nigerian public institutions.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined procurement and contract management practices within the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) and the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA) using a comparative qualitative approach based on documentary evidence. The study evaluated procurement planning, supplier selection, contract management, transparency, accountability, institutional capacity, digital procurement, regulatory compliance, and risk management to determine how these factors influence procurement performance in the two public institutions.

The findings show that although RSIEC and NEMSA perform different statutory functions, both operate under the same public procurement framework and experience many similar procurement challenges. Effective procurement planning, transparent supplier selection, strong contract management, continuous monitoring, professional competence, and institutional accountability were identified as the main factors influencing procurement success. The study also found that weak procurement planning, political interference, limited professional capacity, poor monitoring, and inconsistent contract management continue to reduce procurement efficiency and affect service delivery.

A key contribution of this study is that it demonstrates that procurement effectiveness depends on more than compliance with procurement laws. While the Public Procurement Act 2007 provides an important legal foundation, sustainable procurement performance requires strong institutional leadership, skilled procurement professionals, effective contract administration, digital procurement systems, and continuous organizational improvement. The comparison between RSIEC and NEMSA further shows that procurement strategies should reflect the operational responsibilities of each institution. For example, RSIEC requires procurement systems that prioritize speed and coordination because of fixed election timelines, while NEMSA requires procurement systems that emphasize technical quality, engineering standards, and regulatory compliance.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, both agencies should strengthen procurement planning by conducting comprehensive needs assessments, realistic

budgeting, market analysis, and procurement scheduling before procurement activities begin. Second, supplier selection should place greater emphasis on technical competence, previous performance, financial capacity, and quality rather than focusing mainly on the lowest bid. Third, contract management should be strengthened through regular performance monitoring, timely project inspections, clear reporting procedures, and effective communication between contractors and procurement officials.

The study also recommends greater investment in professional development. Procurement officers, finance personnel, engineers, auditors, and project managers should receive continuous training in procurement legislation, contract management, digital procurement, procurement ethics, and risk management. In addition, both agencies should expand the use of electronic procurement systems to improve transparency, strengthen documentation, reduce procurement delays, and enhance accountability throughout the procurement process.

The Bureau of Public Procurement should continue supporting public institutions through regular compliance monitoring, procurement audits, technical guidance, and professional capacity development. At the same time, institutional leadership should protect procurement processes from political interference and strengthen internal control systems to ensure that procurement decisions remain objective, transparent, and consistent with national procurement regulations.

Although this study provides useful insights into procurement governance within RSIEC and NEMSA, it is limited by its reliance on documentary evidence. Future studies should complement these findings through interviews, surveys, or case studies involving procurement officers, contractors, suppliers, auditors, and other stakeholders. Additional comparative studies involving other public institutions would also provide a broader understanding of procurement and contract management practices across Nigeria.

In conclusion, effective procurement and contract management remain essential for improving public sector performance, strengthening institutional accountability, and delivering quality public services. By improving procurement planning, strengthening contract management, investing in professional capacity, expanding digital procurement, and promoting transparency and accountability, RSIEC, NEMSA, and other public institutions can achieve better procurement outcomes and contribute more effectively to sustainable national development.

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