

## IMPLEMENTATION OF PROCUREMENT POLICY IN PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE NIGERIA

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the implementation of procurement policy in public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria. Three research questions were raised. The literature review was based on Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy. A 39-items questionnaire tagged "Procurement Policy and Educational Resources Utilization for Management Questionnaire (PPERUMQ)" structured on the four point likert scale was used to collect the needed data from the sample of nine hundred and six respondents using a stratified random sampling technique, selected from teaching and non-teaching staff of public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was determined using a test-retest technique. The responses from the test-retest study were collated and analyzed, using Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics that yielded reliability coefficient of 0.79. The instrument was validated by the supervisors and other experts in department of educational management. The mean was used to answer the research question. The study finding identified records management, enforcement and review mechanism, organizational culture, lack of political interference, professionalism, corporate governance best practices as key factors that should be considered in implementing procurement policy in public tertiary institutions. Based on the study finding, it was recommended that: In addition to the identification of all factors that will facilitate the implementation of procurement policy in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria, the challenges that will hindered the implementation of this procurement policy should be examined and eliminated by all stakeholders. And that management of public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria should considered the implementation of e-procurement process because of it enormous benefit.*

*Keywords: Procurement, Tertiary Institution, Management, Education, Public & Resources.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

All countries are looking for ways to improve their schools system and to respond better to higher social and economic expectations. Education serves as a means of meeting these societal goals because it enables the individual fit in and contribute to the development of nation. Education is very necessary to get success and to live a happy life, just like food is necessary for healthy body. It provides physical and mental standard and transforms people's living status. The more knowledge we get, the more we grow and develop in life.

Presently, these resources are not sufficiently available for government and other stakeholders to meet the demand and supply needs of educational resources. The obvious shortage in the supply of these educational resources to the different levels of education in view of the demand for education has made educational placement difficult and issues of effective educational resources utilization paramount. The need to employ educational administrators to manage this shortage in supply of educational resources becomes inevitable.

Educational administrators are employed in tertiary institution to manage routine activities and provide instructional leadership at these institutions. They make policies and procedures and implement guidelines for achievement of educational aims and objectives, Educational administrators act as managers, librarians, lecturers, and aids. They have many other responsibilities such as: preparing budgets; overseeing recordkeeping; managing student services.

In view of the fact that there seems to be more demand for education than the supply of educational resources, it is important for educational administrators to develop strategies and policies that will ensure that educational resources are economically, effectively and efficiently utilized. One of such policy is good and effective procurement processes and procedures. In managing the affairs of the University there are policies, rules and regulations and guidelines which must be complied with by all the organs created under the Act. There are rules in relation to the expenditure of public tertiary institution funds irrespective of how they have been generated. Whether the funds are provided through the national assembly (NASS) and state assemblies appropriation, internally generated revenue (IGR), subventions, donor funds etc; rules and procedures are applied to their expenditure. There are also other rules and regulations in relation to the public procurement processes such as Needs Assessment, Planning, budget, development of solicitation documents, advertisement, bid collection, submission and opening, bid evaluation, approvals, award, project execution and administration, and close out. The rules and guidelines are all meant to be obeyed and religiously followed in managing the affairs of the University and there must be consequences for non-compliance.

#### **Factors crucial to the Implementation of Procurement Policy in Public Tertiary Institution**

The following factors are crucial to effective implementation of procurement policy in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria:

**Records management:** In any contemporary industry, the data and reports showing compliance to regulatory needs must be robust and come from a reliable source. Many developing countries lack a systematic approach to managing records. It is argued that accurate and readily accessible records of activities reduce the potential for illicit manipulation resulting from delays, corruption, and inaccuracies. Dysfunctional records management undermines effective management of institution, creating room for corruption or collusion between and employees (Gelderman et al., 2006).

**Media publicity:** The media play a critical role in corporate compliance. Through the media, the corporate community is made aware of the regulatory outcomes (Zubcic & Sims, 2011).

**Enforcement and Review:** Enforcement could be broadly viewed as any actions taken by regulators to ensure compliance (Zubcic & Sims, 2011).

**Organizational Culture:** Due to regulatory reforms and changing community expectations, the role of culture in organizational compliance has gained momentum (Lisa, 2010). Basing on the competing values model (hierarchical culture), which involves enforcement of rules,

conformity and attention to technical matters, individual conformity and compliance are achieved through enforcement of formerly stated rules and procedures (Zammuto & Krakower, 1991) as cited in Parker and Bradley (2000).

**Lack of political interference:** Public procurement is considered an inherently a politically sensitive activity (Schapper et al., 2006). (Bolton, 2006) contended that in public procurement, managers take on the role of agent for elected representatives. However, Pillary (2004) argues that senior officials and political leaders use public office for private gain and this has weakened the motivation to remain honest. Other factors critical to the implementation of procurement policy in tertiary institutions includes: professionalism, organizational incentives, purchaser's familiarity with the rules, top management support, corruption free environment, corporate governance and service delivery.

### **Challenges in Implementing Appropriate Procurement Policy in Public Tertiary Institution**

The following are some of the challenges in implementing procurement policy in public tertiary institutions:

**Inadequate Procurement Capacity:** Public sector's procurement operation demands the availability of a strong capacity of professionals. However, African governments were seriously missing out on this key principle. Good procurement training, as argued by Walker (2003), involves training both government officials and private employees. Government staff and those involved in the business need to know about the basic procurement theory and how to apply it to specific activity.

**Poor Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:** Building a strong public procurement system requires a deliberate strategy to monitor and evaluate the progress of the policy (Walker, 2003). Effective monitoring and evaluation systems provide timely, accurate, and reliable information upon which decision making can be implemented. In many African countries, monitoring and evaluating the progress of procurement activities have either been weak or lacking. This has, in turn, affected the public procurement systems. Writing from the Ugandan context, Agaba and Shipman (2006) observed that the country's public procurement reform efforts were being affected by inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and in particular by the lack of comprehensive statistics on the value of goods and services procured and on the procurement process.

**Inadequate Resources:** Many public procurement reform efforts have largely depended on donor assistance and the national governments have not provided adequate resources (Agaba & Shipman, 2006). The oversight institutions and central procurement units that have been put in place are overstretched in terms of roles and obligations, but lack the adequate financial resources to implement the strategies plan (Walker, 2003). Adequate resources are needed for procurement training, procurement audits and investigations, and general awareness of the various stakeholders on the benefits of putting in place sound procurement policy (Thai, 2001).

Other factors that may hinder the implementation of procurement policy in public tertiary institutions are corruption and declining ethical conduct of public sector personnel, poverty and organizational issues and inadequate resources.

### **Application of Information and Communication Technology in Procurement Processes**

According to MacManus (2003), the following are ways in which governments procuring entities uses IT systems to establish agreements for the acquisition of products or services (contracting) or to purchase products or services in exchange for payment (purchasing). E-procurement employs various elements, including electronic ordering,

Internet bidding, purchasing cards, reverse auctions, and integrated automatic procurement systems.

**Adoption of Web Technology:** Public agencies have adopted Web technology widely in recent years. Agencies post a wealth of information on their Web sites, including their missions, functions, contacts, public relations material, and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). Although all governments used e-mail systems to communicate with vendors and internal buyers, their computer systems are not well integrated with other communication systems (Riley, 2012).

**Automated Procurement Systems:** Automated procurement systems equipped with both ordering and contracting modules enable the state to make procurement decisions at the user level by providing vendors' information and catalogs on the Web. An automated system often decentralizes procurement management, making the procurement organization faster and less hierarchical. The system also saves time and reduces total costs by providing comprehensive views of procurement decisions and multiple procurement choices. Automated procurement systems offer functions ranging from simply providing vendors' performance information and order forms to such sophisticated services as lead-time analysis and asset-management support (MacManus, 2003).

**Purchasing Cards:** Purchasing cards, initially designed by a card company for the procuring entities, have become an alternative payment tool to reduce administrative costs while enhancing procurement accountability (MacManus, 2003).

**Electronic Ordering:** Electronic ordering-filling purchase orders electronically has been adopted by many procuring entities. The management of electronic ordering systems and procurement portal sites is often initiated, developed, and maintained by private businesses (MacManus, 2003).

**Internet-Based Bidding and Reverse Auctions:** Internet-based bidding, that is, using E-commerce through online auctions, has become a common practice in the private sector. The private sector also uses reverse auctions, in which products are to be purchased at specific prices and vendors compete to offer the best prices. Despite their rising popularity in the private sector, these auctions have not been widely used by government owned institutions (Ageshin, 2001).

**Adoption of Digital Signatures:** Digital signatures provide a means of signing electronic documents that use public-key encryption for authentication. They aid procurement and E-commerce by facilitating online financial and documentary transactions (Thai, 2001)

### **Statement of the Problem**

Tertiary institutions are majorly saddled with the responsibilities of preparing student for world of work. Research has proven that the management of public tertiary institutions are confronted with diverse challenges which have impaired the achievement of this noble goal. One of such problems is associated with the way in which the inputs/resources of public tertiary institutions are acquired and managed. Hence, it is necessary that we evaluate the factors and challenges that may hindered the efficient implementation of appropriate procurement policy public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study was to examine the implementation of procurement policy in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria. Specifically, the objective of this study seek to:

1. To examine the factors crucial to the implementation of procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria.
2. To analyse the challenges in using appropriate procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria.
3. To evaluate the various ways of applying information and communication technology in procurement process for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the factors crucial to the implementation of procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges in using appropriate procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria?
3. What are the various ways of applying information and communication technology in procurement process for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The method of inquiring that was used for this study is a descriptive survey. The population for the study covers the 8 public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. These institutions are the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, School of Nursing and Midwifery, College of Health Science and Technology, Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic, Federal College of Education (Technical) and Port Harcourt Polytechnic. The population of respondents comprises the teaching and non-teaching staff of these public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the population of respondents for the study comprises the 8,804 staff of these institutions (3,928 teaching and 4,876 non-teaching). The sample size for the study comprises of 906 staff of these institutions (406 teaching and 500 non-teaching) and the sampling techniques that was used for this study was the stratified random sampling technique.

The research instrument that was used for data collection was a 39 items questionnaire tagged "Procurement Policy and Educational Resources Utilization for Management Questionnaire (PPERUMQ)". The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A was used to collect demographic data for the study while Section B comprises the questionnaire items which was answered on a four point modified likert scale as follows: Strongly Agree = (SA)-4 Points, Agree =(A)-3 Points, Disagree =(D)-2 Points, Strongly disagree =(SD)-1 point. In order to ensure the face and content validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were given to research experts in test and measurement as well as the researcher's supervisor for the validation of the instrument before the final copies of the instrument was administered. The researcher used the test re-test technique to determine

the reliability of the instrument and the result yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.79. The corrected copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher. The research questions raised for the study were analyzed using mean scores. In scoring the questionnaire, the weighted points were added up  $(4+3+2+1) = 10/4 = 2.50$ . The 2.50 became the criterion mean. Items above the criterion mean were accepted.

### Results and Discussion

**Research Question 1:** What are the factors crucial to the implementation of procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Factors crucial to the implementation of procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education

S/N	Items	Teaching Staff Mean Scores	Non Teaching Staff Mean Scores	Weighted Mean Scores	Remarks
17	Records management enhances the implementation of procurement policy.	3.28	3.35	3.31	Agreed
18	Media publicity is crucial to the implementation of procurement policy in public institution.	3.12	3.27	3.18	Agreed
19	Enforcement and Review mechanism is pivotal to the implementation of procurement policy.	3.06	3.14	3.10	Agreed
20	Organizational culture.	2.92	3.01	2.96	Agreed
21	Lack of political interference.	2.98	3.18	3.07	Agreed
22	Professionalism is vital to the implementation of procurement policy.	3.20	3.33	3.26	Agreed
23	Organizational incentives culture	3.02	3.08	3.05	Agreed
24	Perceived rule legitimacy, moral obligation and social influence.	3.02	3.03	3.03	Agreed
25	Purchaser's familiarity with the rules	3.19	3.11	3.15	Agreed
26	Top management support.	3.23	3.39	3.30	Agreed
27	Corruption free environment	3.26	3.39	3.32	Agreed
28	Corporate governance best practices.	3.33	3.36	3.34	Agreed

The data on table 1 showed that items 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 have weighted average mean score of 3.31, 3.18, 3.10, 2.96, 3.07, 3.26, 3.05, 3.03, 3.15, 3.30, 3.32

and 3.34 respectively which is above the criterion mean score of 2.5 and were agreed by the teaching and non-teaching staff of public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria as the factors crucial to the implementation of procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria.

**Research Question 2:** What are the challenges in using procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Challenges in using procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education

S/No	Items	Teaching Staff Mean Scores	Non Teaching Staff Mean Scores	Weighted Mean Scores	Remarks
29	Inadequate Procurement Capacity of the personnel.	3.26	3.48	3.36	Agreed
30	Poor Monitoring and Evaluation.	3.18	3.47	3.31	Agreed
31	Corruption and Declining Ethical Conduct of Public Sector Personnel.	3.16	3.47	3.30	Agreed
32	Poverty and Organizational Issues	2.95	3.14	3.04	Agreed
33	Inadequate Resources	3.25	3.46	3.34	Agreed

The data on table 2 showed that items 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33 have weighted average mean score of 3.36, 3.31, 3.30, 3.04 and 3.34 respectively which is above the criterion mean score of 2.5 and were agreed by the teaching and non-teaching staff of public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria as the challenges in using appropriate procurement policy for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers of Nigeria.

**Research Question 3:** What are the various ways of applying information and communication technology in procurement process for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria?

**Table 3:** various ways of applying information and communication technology in procurement process for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education

S/No	Items	Teaching Staff Mean Scores	Non Teaching Staff Mean Scores	Weighted Mean Scores	Remarks
34	Adoption of Web Technology.	3.20	3.41	3.29	Agreed
35	Automated Procurement Systems	3.04	3.26	3.14	Agreed

36	Purchasing Cards.	2.94	3.05	3.00	Agreed
37	Electronic Ordering	2.90	2.92	2.91	Agreed
38	Internet-Based Bidding and Reverse Auctions	3.13	3.31	3.21	Agreed
39	Adoption of Digital Signatures.	2.84	3.08	2.95	Agreed

The data on table 3 showed that items 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 have weighted average mean score of 3.29, 3.14, 3.00, 2.91, 3.21 and 2.95 respectively which is above the criterion mean score of 2.5 and were agreed by the teaching and non-teaching staff of public tertiary institutions in Rivers state of Nigeria as the various ways of applying information and communication technology in procurement process for educational resources utilization for the management of public tertiary education in Rivers State of Nigeria.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of this study, it was concluded that in the implementation of procurement policy in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria, the factors that will enhance the implementation of this policy should be identified first. Secondly, the anticipated challenges should be evaluated for smooth implementation of appropriate procurement policy.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the finding of the study.

1. In implementing procurement policy in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria, strategies should be put in place to ensure that all factors that are crucial to the implementation of procurement policy are identified and considered in the planning process.
2. In addition to the identification of all factors that will facilitate the implementation of procurement policy in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria, the challenges that will hindered the implementation of this procurement policy should be examined and eliminated by all stakeholders.
3. That management of public tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria should considered the implementation of e-procurement process because of it enormous benefit.

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