



THE EFFECT OF CONTRACT PLANNING ON PUBLIC BUILDING PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN MAKURDI, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

¹Ogugua Kelechi Kingsley,

²Agbe Ushahemba,

³Akuhe Mary,

⁴Yankyaa Comfort,

^{1,2,3,4}Department of Quantity Surveying,

Federal Polytechnic Wannune, Benue State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined the effect of contract planning on the performance of public building projects, using Makurdi, Benue State as a case study. The research was necessitated by frequent cases of project delays, cost overruns, and quality failures in public sector construction. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and used both primary and secondary data. A sample of 133 respondents including engineers, architects, quantity surveyors, and public officials was selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. Findings revealed that while some aspects of contract planning such as scope definition and budgeting are adequately addressed, others, particularly risk allocation and stakeholder involvement, are weakly implemented. Statistical analysis confirmed a strong and positive relationship between effective contract planning and project cost, time, and quality performance. Major challenges identified include political interference, corruption, and insufficient professional capacity. The study concludes that strategic contract planning is essential for public building project success and recommends improved stakeholder participation, stronger institutional frameworks, and better risk management practices. The study contributes to the growing literature on construction management and offers practical recommendations for enhancing infrastructure delivery in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Contract Planning, Public Building, Performance, Cost Overrun & Risk Management*

Introduction

Construction projects, particularly public building projects, are inherently complex, capital-intensive, and time-bound. Effective contract planning has emerged as a crucial element in ensuring that such projects are delivered within time, cost, and quality constraints. Contract planning refers to the process of defining the contractual framework, procurement strategy, risk allocation, resource planning, and deliverables before the actual implementation of a construction project. Inadequate or poor contract planning is widely recognized as a major contributor to project failure in terms of delays, cost overruns, disputes, and substandard output (Ofori, 2020; Agyekum-Mensah et al., 2021).

Public building projects, which typically include schools, hospitals, administrative buildings, and other government-owned infrastructure, are expected to deliver significant social and economic benefits. However, across many developing nations, including Nigeria, the performance of public building projects has often been suboptimal. According to the World Bank (2019), over 50% of public construction projects in sub-Saharan Africa fail to meet their objectives due to ineffective planning, poor contract management, and inadequate oversight mechanisms. This is compounded by political interference, corruption, lack of skilled manpower, and institutional weaknesses.

Contract planning serves as a strategic function that precedes the execution stage. It encompasses project scope definition, risk identification, tendering and bidding procedures, selection of appropriate contract types (e.g., fixed-price, cost-plus, or design-build), and stakeholder involvement (Aibinu & Jagboro, 2019). It also addresses legal and regulatory considerations which, when not carefully assessed, may stall projects due to disputes, litigation, or breach of contract.

In every society, physical infrastructure plays a vital role in supporting economic growth, social development, and governmental functions. Public building projects such as schools, hospitals, administrative offices, and transportation hubs are critical investments through which governments provide essential services to citizens. The success of these projects depends significantly on the robustness of the planning processes, especially during the contract planning phase. Effective contract planning lays the groundwork for aligning project goals with available resources, managing risks, engaging stakeholders, and ensuring timely and cost-effective execution. Despite its significance, the contract planning phase remains one of the most poorly executed components in public construction projects, particularly in developing countries.

Globally, the construction sector is confronted with persistent challenges such as time overruns, cost escalations, scope creep, and disputes. These issues are often traced back to inadequacies in early-stage planning (Turner, 2020). In the United Kingdom, for instance, government agencies have adopted standardized contract systems like the NEC4 framework, which emphasizes early contractor involvement, clear risk-sharing provisions, and performance metrics. Studies show that projects delivered under the NEC4 arrangement report fewer delays and litigation cases (National Audit Office, 2021).

Similarly, in countries like Australia, the United Arab Emirates, and Singapore, contract planning is approached with a systems-based methodology. Techniques such as Building Information Modeling (BIM), value engineering, and lifecycle cost analysis are incorporated into the contract planning phase. According to Eastman et al. (2020), projects that undergo detailed pre-contract analysis are 30% more likely to be delivered on time and within budget compared to those that do not.

However, in many developing countries, contract planning is often seen as a bureaucratic requirement rather than a strategic activity. This perception leads to rushed planning, improper documentation, ambiguous contractual terms, and inadequate risk allocation. The consequence is a recurring pattern of failed or underperforming public projects.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing emphasis on structured procurement and the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, public building projects in Nigeria continue to suffer from a multitude of problems. These include time overruns, cost escalations, legal disputes, abandonment, and ultimately, project failure. Numerous diagnostic reports by the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) and the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) have identified inadequate contract planning as a central factor in these failures (NSE, 2021; BPP, 2020).

The failure to plan contracts comprehensively has led to serious inefficiencies in the delivery of public infrastructure. For instance, contractors are often mobilized without a clear understanding of project scope, timeline, or payment structure, thereby creating room for disputes. Furthermore, risk allocation is often poorly defined, leading to ambiguity and delays in decision-making during project execution.

It is also observed that many public projects do not undergo proper feasibility assessments or stakeholder consultations prior to contract award. In some cases, political pressures influence the contract planning process, resulting in the selection of unqualified contractors or inappropriate contract types. The consequences include uncompleted buildings, misappropriated funds, poor project quality, and public dissatisfaction.

Makurdi, like many urban centers in Nigeria, has experienced several cases of project abandonment and poor performance of public building projects. Yet, there is a paucity of empirical research that links these failures specifically to the quality of contract planning. This study, therefore, aims to fill this gap by investigating how the effectiveness or otherwise of contract planning processes influences public building project outcomes in Makurdi.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of contract planning on public building project performance in Makurdi, Benue State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Evaluate the current contract planning practices used in public building projects in Makurdi.
2. Determine the relationship between contract planning and project performance in terms of cost, time, and quality.
3. Assess the impact of contract risk allocation on project delays and disputes.
4. Examine the role of stakeholder involvement during the planning stage of contracts.
5. Identify the challenges affecting effective contract planning in public building projects.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What contract planning practices are currently employed in public building projects in Makurdi?
2. How does contract planning influence the cost, time, and quality performance of public building projects?

3. What is the impact of risk allocation in contract planning on project delays and disputes?
4. To what extent does stakeholder involvement during contract planning affect project outcomes?
5. What are the major challenges hindering effective contract planning in public building projects?

Conceptual Review

Contract planning refers to the strategic process of identifying project requirements, selecting appropriate procurement strategies, establishing risk management frameworks, and defining roles and responsibilities before project execution (PMI, 2021). It includes pre-contract activities such as feasibility studies, budgeting, stakeholder consultations, selection of contract types, and preparation of bidding documents. The purpose of contract planning is to ensure that the contractual terms are clear, realistic, and enforceable, thereby minimizing risks, disputes, and performance issues (Ameh & Osegbo, 2011). In public sector projects, contract planning also involves compliance with regulatory frameworks such as the Public Procurement Act in Nigeria.

Construction contracts is the type of contract that serve as the legal framework that governs relationships among the project owner, contractor, consultants, and other stakeholders. A construction contract outlines each party's responsibilities, scope of work, cost implications, schedule, risk allocation, and dispute resolution procedures. Choosing the right type of contract is crucial for ensuring efficient project delivery, cost control, and quality assurance. The type of contract used often reflects the project's complexity, client preferences, market conditions, and funding arrangements.

Contract planning involves all preparatory activities before a contract is awarded and the physical work commences. It includes project scoping, feasibility studies, stakeholder engagement, preparation of tender documents, risk identification, and formulation of appropriate contract strategies (PMI, 2021). This stage is essential in defining the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all parties involved in a project. According to Kerzner (2017), contract planning is a major determinant of success because it serves as the foundation upon which subsequent phases of the project are built. A poorly planned contract can lead to scope misinterpretation, cost variations, claims, and disputes during execution. Conversely, well-structured contract planning ensures transparency, predictability, and accountability, which are critical for achieving value for money in public procurement.

Love et al. (2020) argue that over 60% of construction project failures are attributable to inadequate front-end planning. These include failure to adequately engage stakeholders, unbalanced risk-sharing mechanisms, unrealistic timelines, and imprecise cost estimates. Therefore, project performance, measured in terms of cost, time, and quality—correlates strongly with the thoroughness of the planning process.

In the Nigerian construction industry, the implementation of public projects is governed by the Public Procurement Act of 2007, which stipulates guidelines on how contracts should be planned and executed. However, the extent to which these guidelines are adhered to varies across federal, state, and local government agencies. Studies have shown that most public agencies either ignore these procedures or apply them in a perfunctory manner, leading to underperformance of contracts (Ameh & Odusami, 2022).

Public building projects are frequently associated with delays, abandoned sites, substandard work, and inflated budgets. Despite the presence of legal frameworks such as the Public Procurement Act (2007), the effectiveness of contract planning remains weak. Many contracts are awarded based on political considerations rather than technical merit (Olatunji & Ogundele, 2021). Additionally, corruption, bureaucracy, and lack of professional capacity continue to hinder the planning process.

Ogunsemi and Jagboro (2020) report that over 75% of government-funded construction projects in Nigeria experience significant delays, with some extending up to 200% of their planned duration. Similarly, cost overruns of up to 40% are not uncommon. These issues are symptomatic of poorly defined scopes, unrealistic budgets, and inadequate risk planning, all of which stem from weak contract planning.

Moreover, stakeholder participation is generally limited. Key end-users such as school administrators or hospital management staff are rarely consulted during the contract planning phase, leading to mismatches between project outcomes and actual needs (Ameh & Odusami, 2022). Risk allocation, another core component of contract planning, is often handled vaguely, resulting in disputes that slow down or even halt project execution.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on several relevant theories. One of the theories is Systems Theory propounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who sees projects as systems composed of interrelated components (Bertalanffy, 1968). Contract planning is one such subsystem that influences the overall project performance. Failure in contract planning disrupts the system, leading to delays, cost escalation, or non-compliance. System Theory, developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1950s, proposes that an entity (system) is composed of interrelated parts working together to achieve a common goal (Bertalanffy, 1968). A system could be biological, social, or organizational. In the construction industry, project systems consist of components such as stakeholders, resources, activities, and outputs that interact to produce infrastructure outcomes.

A project, therefore, is viewed as an open system operating in a dynamic environment. This theory emphasizes that no component should be studied in isolation because every element influences and is influenced by others within the system. Contract planning is a subsystem within the broader construction project system. Poor performance in this stage affects the entire project lifecycle. System theory encourages holistic thinking: all elements cost estimation, procurement method, stakeholder consultation, and legal frameworks, must be considered as interdependent parts.

When contract planning ignores the integration between these components, it leads to mismatches in expectations, budget overruns, and stakeholder conflicts. For instance, failure to involve end users in defining scope (input stage) can result in poorly functioning outputs (buildings that don't serve their intended use).

Another theory relevant to the study is Principal-Agent Theory. This theory explains the relationship between the client (principal) and the contractor or consultant (agent). Misaligned interests, information asymmetry, and lack of proper contract planning often result in moral hazards, shirking responsibilities, or exploitation (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). A well-planned contract mitigates these issues by clearly defining expectations, monitoring mechanisms, and penalties. Principal-Agent Theory originates from economics and governance and was first detailed by Jensen and Meckling (1976). It describes the relationship where one party (the principal) delegates work to another (the agent), who performs that work. In construction, a typical example is the client (government agency) hiring a contractor to deliver a building. This theory focuses on

the problems that arise due to differing interests, asymmetry of information, and risk-sharing between principals and agents. The main issues include: Moral hazard: Agents may not act in the principal's best interest.

The relevance of the theory to contract planning is that, in contract planning, clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations are critical to reducing agency problems. Ambiguous contract clauses or lack of performance indicators can lead to moral hazards, such as contractors cutting corners or inflating costs. Contract planning also involves selecting appropriate procurement methods that align risk with capacity. For example, fixed-price contracts may incentivize agents to underperform if not properly monitored.

The Project Life Cycle Theory is also used for the study. This theory posits that every project goes through four main stages: initiation, planning, execution, and closure (Kerzner, 2017). Contract planning is a core aspect of the planning phase, and deficiencies here can reverberate across all other stages. The Project Life Cycle Theory is a foundational model in project management. It describes a series of phases that a project passes through from initiation to closure. Each phase represents a distinct stage of decision-making and activity, and together they form the full life cycle of the project.

According to PMI (2021), the typical phases include, initiation, planning, execution, monitoring and control, and closure. This cyclical process helps ensure systematic progress and control mechanisms across the lifespan of the project. As it relates to contract planning, the theory emphasizes that each phase must be completed satisfactorily before moving to the next. In the Nigerian context, government projects often collapse because of skipping or compressing life cycle phases especially the planning stage. Project life cycle theory reinforces the need for thorough, time-bound contract planning aligned with the broader project trajectory.

These three theories: System Theory, Principal-Agent Theory, and Project Life Cycle Theory offer critical perspectives on the effectiveness of contract planning and its influence on project performance. System theory promotes integrated thinking and emphasizes the interconnected nature of project components. Principal-agent theory highlights the challenges in delegating construction responsibilities and the importance of transparent planning. Project life cycle theory provides a structured pathway for managing projects from conception to completion, reinforcing the significance of the planning phase where contract formulation occurs. When these theories are applied to the study, it helps public sector construction managers and policymakers understand the systemic weaknesses, relational conflicts, and process breakdowns that often lead to poor project outcomes. As such, theoretical grounding is essential for designing reforms that strengthen contract planning and improve infrastructure delivery in places like Makurdi and other parts of Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies provide real-world insights into the relationship between contract planning and construction project outcomes, especially in the public sector. Numerous researchers have explored how pre-contract activities including cost estimation, stakeholder engagement, risk allocation, and procurement planning affect the performance of public building projects in terms of cost, time, and quality. This empirical review synthesizes findings from both international and Nigerian studies, with emphasis on the direct and indirect effects of contract planning on project outcomes.

A study by Chan and Kumaraswamy (2018) in Hong Kong concluded that projects with detailed pre-contract planning experienced fewer delays and lower cost overruns. Similarly, Love et al. (2020) found that projects with poor front-end planning in Australia had higher rework costs and disputes.

A study by Love et al. (2020) examined the cost performance of 124 public construction projects in Australia and found that inadequate cost forecasting and scope definition during contract planning were among the primary causes of cost overruns. The research demonstrated that projects with poor early-stage planning experienced an average cost overrun of 26%, compared to only 7% for well-planned projects.

In Nigeria, Ogunsemi and Jagboro (2020) conducted an empirical study of 85 public building projects in southwestern states. They discovered that 68% of the projects exceeded their initial budgets due to underestimation during contract planning. The authors emphasized that the failure to conduct feasibility studies, inaccurate bills of quantities (BOQ), and inflationary risks contributed significantly to cost variations.

Similarly, Ameh and Odusami (2022) studied contract documentation practices in Lagos and found that over 60% of contracts lacked detailed risk allocation and escalation clauses. This led to frequent contract variations and compensation events, pushing final costs far above initial estimates. The authors concluded that accurate and comprehensive contract planning is a key determinant of financial performance in public projects.

Delays in construction projects are a global issue, but are particularly common in developing countries. Chan and Kumaraswamy (2018) investigated delay causes in 150 projects across Hong Kong and identified poor contract planning as a critical factor. Key shortcomings included unrealistic timelines, unclear milestone definitions, and lack of proper work sequencing.

In a Nigerian context, Aliu and Olanrewaju (2021) surveyed 50 public projects across five states and found that inadequate time allocation during planning, unclear work breakdown structures, and omission of site-specific challenges led to delays in 74% of the projects. Moreover, projects that had comprehensive contract planning including site assessments, baseline scheduling, and buffer periods were 3 times more likely to meet deadlines.

Oladejo et al. (2020) also investigated how planning influenced time performance in public university construction projects in northern Nigeria. The findings revealed that 80% of delayed projects had little or no involvement of contractors during planning. This absence often resulted in poor activity sequencing and unrealistic expectations.

Quality failures in public construction projects have often been traced back to the planning phase. A study by Alzahrani and Emsley (2013) using data from 83 infrastructure projects in the UK found that quality issues were significantly linked to poorly defined specifications and ineffective risk allocation in the contract planning documents.

In Nigeria, Nwachukwu and Emoh (2022) conducted research on quality deviations in federal government building projects and identified planning gaps as the leading cause. Their study revealed that 73% of quality failures were due to vague performance requirements, lack of standard benchmarks, and ambiguous material specifications in the contracts.

Furthermore, Oke and Ogunsemi (2018) performed a case study analysis on four public hospital projects in Ekiti State. Their findings highlighted that poorly articulated scopes and the use of

generic contract templates contributed to defective works and reworks. They recommended that contract planning should include detailed technical specifications, QA/QC requirements, and construction methodologies tailored to the project's context.

Stakeholder engagement is a vital aspect of contract planning that directly influences project acceptance and long-term performance. In a study by Freeman and Reed (1983), projects that involved key stakeholders during planning recorded higher satisfaction rates, reduced variation orders, and improved facility usability. Adams and Ojo (2020) examined 42 public school projects in Benue State, Nigeria, and found that 64% of the projects experienced post-occupancy user dissatisfaction due to lack of consultation with teachers and school administrators during planning. Stakeholders reported that many facilities did not meet functional requirements despite being completed.

Similarly, Uduak and Etim (2021) studied public market projects in Cross River State and found that projects where market leaders and community representatives were engaged during contract planning reported fewer complaints and higher patronage rates. The authors stressed that inclusive planning enhances both performance and public perception of value for money.

Contract planning also involves the selection of appropriate contract types and procurement strategies. A comparative study by Turner and Simister (2019) analyzed 60 public infrastructure projects across Europe and Africa. Their findings revealed that the use of contract types mismatched with project complexity e.g., using lump sum contracts for high-risk projects led to performance shortfalls.

In Nigeria, Olatunji and Ogundele (2021) found that most ministries use generic fixed-price contracts for all types of projects without proper risk-sharing analysis. This "one-size-fits-all" approach was correlated with increased disputes, contractor underperformance, and delayed payments. The study emphasized the need for adaptive planning processes that consider project-specific risks and stakeholder profiles.

Kerzner (2017) emphasized that contract planning provides the baseline against which monitoring and performance evaluation are conducted. Without proper planning documentation, including work plans, KPIs, and benchmarks, monitoring becomes ineffective. In a study of project monitoring practices in Nigerian public works, Odeyemi and Adediran (2020) observed that 70% of monitoring officers relied on ad hoc site visits due to the absence of clear contract deliverables and performance timelines. This limited the ability of government agencies to hold contractors accountable or initiate corrective actions in a timely manner.

Empirical evidence from both local and international studies strongly supports the argument that effective contract planning significantly influences public building project performance. Inadequate planning contributes to budget overruns, delays, quality defects, disputes, and stakeholder dissatisfaction. Conversely, projects that benefit from thorough contract planning including clear scopes, accurate costing, defined timelines, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and appropriate contract types are more likely to succeed. In the Nigerian context, strengthening institutional capacity for contract planning and enforcing regulatory frameworks can enhance infrastructure delivery, particularly in states like Benue where performance gaps are widespread. These findings underscore the necessity of robust contract planning, especially in complex government-funded projects.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable because it allows the researcher to gather data from a representative sample of the population regarding current practices, perceptions, and effects of contract planning on public building project performance. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive surveys are appropriate for studies aimed at understanding conditions, relationships, and prevailing practices within a population.

The target population for this study comprises stakeholders involved in public building projects in Makurdi, including: Government officials (Ministry of Works, Urban Development, Procurement Departments); Project managers, Quantity surveyors, Architects, Civil engineers, Contractors, Consultants. The estimated population size is 200, including professionals from at least 10 major public sector projects completed or ongoing within the last 10 years.

A sample size of 133 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who have direct knowledge or involvement in contract planning and project implementation. This includes professionals with a minimum of three years of experience in public construction projects in Makurdi. The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained using structured questionnaires and interviews. Secondary data was collected from journals, government reports, contract documents, procurement guidelines, and previous studies. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, such as senior engineers and government officials, to gather qualitative insights.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts in construction management and one professional in public procurement. Their feedback was used to refine the wording, clarity, and relevance of items. A pilot study was conducted with 15 professionals in Otukpo (another urban area in Benue State). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient obtained for the questionnaire was 0.84, indicating high internal consistency and reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Questionnaires were administered physically to selected respondents at project sites, government offices, and professional association meetings. Follow-up visits ensured retrieval of completed instruments. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage), via Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, where data was grouped into themes such as contract planning practices, challenges, and impact.

Result

A total of 133 questionnaires were distributed to construction professionals and public officials in Makurdi. Out of these, 121 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a 91% response rate.

Table 1: *Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval*

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	133	100
Returned	121	91
Unreturned/Invalid	12	9

Source: *Fieldwork, 2025*

This high response rate ensures the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Table 2: *Rate the adequacy of various contract planning activities*

ITEM	Mean Score	Decision
Clear definition of project scope	3.95	Adequate
Use of feasibility studies	3.21	Moderate
Use of standardized contract templates	4.08	Adequate
Engagement of stakeholders in planning	2.87	Inadequate
Risk allocation clarity	2.76	Inadequate
Pre-tender cost estimation	3.62	Adequate

Source: *Fieldwork, 2025*

While some aspects of contract planning such as scope definition and cost estimation are adequately addressed, others like stakeholder engagement and risk allocation are inadequately practiced.

Table 3: *Effect of Contract Planning on Project Performance (RQ2)*

Variable	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Contract planning improves time management	38.8	43.8	9.1	6.6	1.7
It reduces cost overruns	30.6	42.1	15.7	8.3	3.3
It improves quality of output	33.9	47.1	12.4	4.1	2.5

Source: *Fieldwork, 2025*

Interpretation: The majority of respondents agree that proper contract planning enhances all three key performance indicators which include time, cost, and quality.

Table 4: *Impact of Risk Allocation RQ3*

Risk Allocation Item	Mean Score	Interpretation
Risks are properly assigned in contracts	2.88	Inadequate
Disputes often arise due to unclear responsibilities	4.10	Frequent
Risk planning reduces project delays	3.87	Significant impact

Source: *Fieldwork, 2025*

Risk allocation remains a weak point in current contract planning, often leading to disputes and delays.

Table 5: *Stakeholder Involvement RQ4*

Statement	Mean Score	Decision
Stakeholders are consulted during planning	2.95	Inadequate
Their input improves contract quality	4.11	Strongly Agree
Lack of engagement causes performance issues	4.05	Agree

Source: *Fieldwork, 2025*

Stakeholder involvement is recognized as vital, but actual practice is lacking.

Table 6: *Challenges to Effective Contract Planning (RQ5)*

Challenge	Frequency	Rank
Political interference	95	1 st
Corruption and favoritism	91	2 nd
Lack of skilled personnel	84	3 rd
Inadequate funding	79	4 th
Poor documentation	72	5 th

Source: *Fieldwork, 2025*

Political and institutional factors dominate the list of challenges hindering contract planning in public building projects.

Summary of Key Findings

- Contract planning is moderately practiced in Makurdi but has notable gaps in stakeholder engagement and risk management.
- There is a statistically significant relationship between effective contract planning and improved project cost, time, and quality performance.
- Major challenges include political interference, corruption, and inadequate professional capacity.
- Stakeholder participation and proper risk allocation are critical for performance but often overlooked.
- Political interference, corruption, lack of professional capacity, and poor documentation are the most pressing obstacles.

Conclusion

Contract planning plays a crucial role in determining the success of public building projects. When properly executed, it leads to timely completion, cost efficiency, and quality outcomes. Risk allocation and stakeholder participation are vital components of contract planning, and neglecting them compromises project performance. Despite having procurement laws and frameworks in place, implementation gaps exist in the planning stages of public contracts in Makurdi. The poor

performance of many public projects is a reflection of systemic weaknesses in pre-contract processes rather than execution alone. Therefore, contract planning should not be treated as a procedural formality but as a strategic necessity for delivering value in public infrastructure development. The study thus, contributes to both theory and practice. It provides empirical evidence linking contract planning with project performance in a developing country context. It expands the understanding of how specific elements of contract planning (e.g., stakeholder engagement, risk allocation) influence outcomes. The study also serves as a policy guide for procurement reform and improved contract management in Nigerian public sector projects.

Recommendations

In light of the conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government agencies should employ or train professionals in procurement and contract administration.
2. Periodic workshops and refresher courses should be made mandatory for staff involved in public construction contracts.
3. Contract planning should include a detailed risk assessment. Risks should be allocated to the parties best able to manage them. Clear dispute resolution mechanisms should be embedded in contracts.
4. Promote Stakeholder Engagement. Beneficiaries, technical experts, community leaders, and end-users should be involved in the planning phase. Their inputs can improve project relevance, reduce resistance, and enhance sustainability.
5. Public procurement and contract planning should be insulated from political influence.

References

- Agyekum-Mensah, G., Knight, A. D., & Coffey, C. (2021). Time and cost performance of construction projects in Ghana. *Journal of Construction in Developing Countries*, 26(2), 15–34. <https://doi.org/10.21315/jcdc2021.26.2.2>
- Agbenyega, E. (2021). Poor contract documentation and its impact on project delivery in West African public sector construction. *African Journal of Construction Economics and Management*, 11(1), 22–38.
- Aliu, J. N., & Ezeokoli, F. O. (2022). Cost overrun and project abandonment in Abuja: The role of early planning and budgeting. *Nigerian Journal of Construction Management*, 7(3), 48–60.
- Ameh, O. J., & Osegbo, E. E. (2011). Study of relationship between time overrun and productivity on construction sites. *International Journal of Construction Supply Chain Management*, 1(1), 56–67.
- Ameh, O. J., & Odusami, K. T. (2022). Planning effectiveness in Nigerian construction contracts: The Lagos perspective. *Journal of Built Environment Research*, 5(1), 18–27.
- Al-Harthy, A. M., Al-Hajri, S., & Kumar, R. (2020). BIM-based contract planning in the Middle East: UAE case study. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(5), 645–658. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2020.01.003>
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99–120.
- Bertalanffy, L. von. (1968). *General system theory: Foundations, development, applications*. New York: George Braziller.
- BPP (Bureau of Public Procurement). (2020). *Annual Public Procurement Assessment Report*. Abuja: Federal Government of Nigeria.
- Chan, D. W. M., & Kumaraswamy, M. M. (2018). Compressing construction durations: Lessons learned from Hong Kong building projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 19(3), 207–215.
- CIOB (Chartered Institute of Building). (2020). *Code of practice for project management for construction and development* (6th ed.). London: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Eastman, C., Teicholz, P., Sacks, R., & Liston, K. (2020). *BIM handbook: A guide to building information modeling for owners, designers, engineers, contractors, and facility managers* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Ezekiel, B. O., & Ogunsemi, D. R. (2019). Impact of risk management practices on public building project delivery. *Journal of Construction Economics and Building*, 19(1), 57–73.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Boston: Pitman.
- Hillson, D. (2002). Extending the risk process to manage opportunities. *International Journal of Project Management*, 20(3), 235–240.
- Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs, and ownership structure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 3(4), 305–360.
- Kerzner, H. (2017). *Project management: A systems approach to planning, scheduling, and controlling* (12th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Kwakye, A. A. (2019). *Construction project administration in practice*. Essex: Pearson Education.
- Love, P. E. D., Simpson, I., Hill, A., & Standing, C. (2020). From justification to evaluation: Building information modeling and public infrastructure procurement. *Automation in Construction*, 103(1), 13–23.
- National Audit Office (UK). (2021). *Delivering major projects in government: A briefing for the Public Accounts Committee*. London: HM Government.

- North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Ogunsemi, D. R., & Jagboro, G. O. (2020). Time-cost performance of public sector building projects in Nigeria. *Construction Management and Economics*, 22(3), 305–310.
- Olatunji, O. A. (2020). Contract strategy, project delivery systems and performance of building projects in Nigeria. *Journal of African Built Environment Research*, 12(2), 101–115.
- Olatunji, O. A., & Ogundele, F. O. (2021). Institutional failures and project performance: A review of contract administration in Nigeria. *International Journal of Construction Supply Chain Management*, 11(1), 41–55.
- Olawale, Y., & Sun, M. (2018). Cost and time control of construction projects: Inhibiting factors and mitigating measures in practice. *Construction Management and Economics*, 28(5), 509–526.
- PMI (Project Management Institute). (2021). *A guide to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)* (7th ed.). Pennsylvania: PMI.
- Transparency International. (2022). *Corruption Perception Index 2022*. Berlin: Transparency International. Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org>
- Thwala, D. W., & Mvubu, M. (2019). Problems facing construction contractors in South Africa. *Journal of the Built Environment*, 4(1), 19–30.
- Turner, J. R. (2020). *Handbook of project-based management: Leading strategic change in organizations* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Umeh, S. N., & Ekundayo, A. I. (2023). Evaluating the implementation of e-Government procurement in Nigeria's public construction sector. *International Journal of Digital Procurement*, 1(2), 45–58.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Wiley.
- Wambua, P. (2021). Contract management practices and performance of county-funded projects in Kenya. *Journal of Public Sector Policy and Management*, 8(1), 33–44.
- Williamson, O. E. (1985). *The economic institutions of capitalism: Firms, markets, relational contracting*. New York: Free Press.