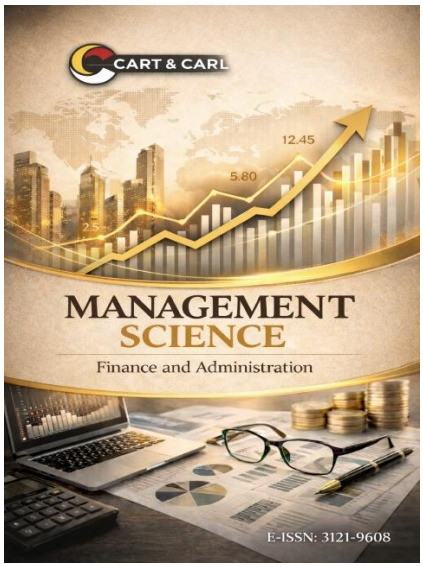
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Contract Management and Project Delivery Success of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between contract management and project delivery success in the Bayelsa State public service. The study adopted a correlational research design; and the study population consisted of one hundred and forty- seven (147) ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) operating in Bayelsa State. The sample size of 107 was determined using the formula suggested by Yamane (1967). The purposive sampling was used to select two principal procurement officers from each of the MDAs operating in Bayelsa State making a total of two hundred and fourteen (214) respondents. However, one hundred and ninety-seven (197) respondents were retrieved and used for analysis. The Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to analyze data retrieved from respondents with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. The results indicated that contract management has a moderate and strong positive and significant relationship with the measures of project delivery success (reduced cost project delivery, time bound project delivery and high- quality project delivery) in the Bayelsa State public service. Therefore, we concluded that the MDAs in Bayelsa State should adopt contract management in order to maintain project delivery success in the procurement processes. It was recommended that the MDAs should give emphasis to exploiting contract management practices for better project performance as effective enforcement of procurement regulations will enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in project delivery.

Keywords: Contract Management, High- quality Project Delivery, Project Delivery Success, Reduced Cost Delivery, Time bound Project Delivery

Introduction

In the public sector, contract management acts as a pivotal tool for managing the intricate dynamics between government agencies and external parties to guarantee value for money (VM) services (Anaba et al., 2024; Hassan & Omwenga, 2023). Conforming to various contract management approaches played a role in influencing both the quality of materials acquired and how efficiently organizations execute their projects (Hong & Kwon, 2018). Contract management occupies a strategic place in public administration, as it provides the structure for orchestrating contractual obligations, tracking their performance, controlling costs, managing risks and ensuring agreed upon deliverables are achieved within agreed upon time and quality requirements. Administration of these agreements is crucial to ensure transparency, financial accountability, and operational effectiveness for achieving organizational goals (Rajeev, 2023; Thiyagu & Sathieshkumar, 2023). While these management practices are of immense importance in achieving long-term success and minimizing financial losses, MDAs in Bayelsa State often face significant challenges in their implementation, thereby affecting project performance (Musau & Chege, 2025). The operational challenges, including poor monitoring mechanisms and administrative inefficiencies, can hinder the attainment of the quality infrastructure and service provision goals (Mkasinyagaize, 2026; Musau & Chege, 2025).

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The process of contract management is not only about procurement and contract award. It encompasses the processes involved in a contract before, during and after the execution, such as contract planning; defining clear contract specifications; identifying contract risks; coordinating with contractors; tracking contract milestones; verifying completed work; managing payments; documenting variations; and assessing final outcomes (Huddleston & Eom, 2019; Peters, Stewart, & Weese, 2019). These activities are intertwined. Ambiguous contractual conditions can lead to misunderstandings when implementing, and insufficient monitoring can leave deviations from the contract specifications unnoticed. Likewise, the delay in certification of final work or inadequate communication among project participants may interfere with implementation plans. Contract management should therefore be considered as a management process that a public institution carries out continuously to ensure that contractual performance matches project goals. According to Obayi, Koh, Oglethorpe, and Ebrahimi (2017), the implementation of contract management within an organization has the potential to improve various aspects of its operations, including its influence, supplier relationships, product quality, efficiency, flexibility, and overall productivity. Contract administration is an important aspect that contributes to successful outcomes in the procurement processes of public sector organizations (Waigwa & Njeru, 2016).

Successful delivery of the project is also a critical measure of the effectiveness of public sector management. It reflects the extent of a project to achieve its objectives and generate required outputs within agreed time, cost and quality criteria. In UK, Fapo' hunda and Stephenson (2015) conducted a study and found that disagreement regarding cost, time, and value for the projects' objectives would affect some projects. The process of assessing how efficiently and effectively activities were carried out within the project was known as project performance measurement (Dainty, Cheng & Moore, 2019). While these three dimensions are common in their use when assessing a project for delivery, they are not the only ones that can form part of the criteria for success; other measures of project success can include compliance with contractual specifications, functionality of completed facilities, stakeholder satisfaction and the delivery of the intended public value. Effective project delivery requires careful planning, efficient resource management, and adept problem-solving skills from experienced project professionals. If the project is finished on budget but does not have the required technical specifications, it is not considered a complete success. Similarly, a technically adequate project that is not completed by the time it is supposed to be finished may negatively impact on public service delivery. Project success is used to assess a project based on key performance indicators to know if it is successful or not. Project success can only be judged by both performance in project implementation and by how well the finished product meets the project's goals.

Scholars are of the view that contract management practices predict project delivery success and this view instigated previous studies that sought to explain the connection between contract management and project delivery success. For instance, Gatsinzi, and Nnamdi (2024) evaluated the effect of procurement contract planning, negotiation and execution on the performance. Mbaya and Ndolo (2024) assessed the effects of contract management practices on performance of market development projects. Openji and Osoro (2024) aimed to investigate the process of projects contract management and performance of water contract. Therefore, this study aims to empirically examine the relationship between contract management (planning, monitoring, and dispute resolution) and project delivery success in the State of Bayelsa (Hassan and Omwenga 2023).

Specific objectives were to:

i Assesses the relationship between contract management practice and reduced project delivery cost of MDAs in Bayelsa State.
ii Examine the relationship between contract management practice and time bound project delivery of MDAs in Bayelsa State.
iii Investigate the relationship between contract management practice and high-quality project delivery of MDAs in Bayelsa State.

The study aimed to offer a blueprint for improving the governance of public contracts and public funds, thereby mitigating the threats of substandard performance (Musau & Chege, 2025). In addition, the findings of this study suggested possible policy recommendations to enhance public infrastructure procurement by addressing specific administrative shortcomings that lead to cost overruns and delays in infrastructure construction (Changalima et al., 2022; Osifo et al., 2025). The study identified these systemic obstacles and lays a crucial foundation for understanding how accountability in institutions is linked to the effective implementation of government interventions. Finally, this study contributed to the vast body of knowledge on procurement-performance linkages as it brings about a gap in empirical studies related to contractual oversight

in the context of Bayelsa State (Ackah & Sekyi-Ansah, 2026; Chege & Musau, 2025).

Contract Management Practice

According to Hutchison et al. (2018), contracts are agreements that parties enter into voluntarily and that are intended to create legally binding commitments. As described by Kolani and Miroga (2019), contract management is the systematic practice of enforcing contract terms and ensuring the correct, timely fulfilment of obligations by all involved parties. Njoki et al. (2021) note that contract management is a crucial component of public procurement processes because it promotes transparency, accountability, and fair treatment of contracts across different government levels. By managing contracts, the project manager and the supply chain can clarify expectations, coordinate stakeholders, logistics support, and procurement arrangements, and reduce in most cases, eliminate commercial ambiguity. This transparency lowers the likelihood of disputes and strengthens project and supply chain performance. Effective contract management also includes assessing vendor performance against established contract terms to support the successful completion of projects. Successful and efficient contract management practices meet the needs of the organization's stakeholders, create optimal conditions and value in relation to the scarce allocation of taxpayers' resources, commonly referred to as best value for money, and ensure the prudent and effective availability of funds (Oluka & Basheka, 2014). In today's business environment, where organizations are narrowing their supplier pool, overseeing a single supplier contract requires strategic decision-making, since the supplier becomes the sole source for the products or services necessary for the organization's operations (Hugos, 2012). The central objective of contract management is to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources while minimizing waste, inefficiency, maladministration, and corruption (Odulana & Oyewobi, 2019). Indicators of contract administration include clearly stated expectations, specifying scope and deliverables, preparing detailed timelines for each contract milestone, planning budget allocations, and anticipating risk (Hackett & Statham, 2016). Managing contract conflict entails risk management, where users and suppliers work together to identify possible conflicts or performance barriers so that they can be addressed and mitigated (Davison & Wright 2004) as cited in Hassan and Omwenga (2023). An effective contract monitoring process involves training staff in contract monitoring, establishing clear written policies and procedures, maintaining organized contract files, making payments based on satisfactory performance, requiring regular programmatic reports from the vendor, conducting on-site monitoring, applying incentives and consequences for poor performance, providing access to records and the right to audit, and following closeout procedures. Project delivery success encompasses the full lifecycle of a building facility, a project, or other project types from conception to completion (Design- Build Institute of America, 2018). A project is considered successful if it is completed within budget, meets quality requirements, stays on schedule, and is carried out safely. Project delivery success (PDS) results from project implementation processes and can be summarized as 'doing the project right.' Consequently, project success is linked to project performance. According to (Ogunsanya, 2018), performance is the level of achievement of an endeavor or effort, and it relates to the predetermined goals or aims that form the project parameters. According to PMI (2017), project delivery performance refers to the extent to which a project is delivered and completed effectively and efficiently within the limits of time, budget, quality, scope, and other key performance indicators, in order to achieve the project's intended aims. Project performance is demonstrated through the main criteria that indicate whether the project is successful or not—namely, the project's scope, time, cost, and quality (Zhang et al., 2024). It reflects the efficiency and effectiveness of project delivery, and a successful project will meet the expectations of its stakeholders. Ogunsanya (2018) states that, from a project management standpoint, project success is defined as the degree to which a project can satisfy the needs and expectations of its stakeholders. Project Delivery Success (PDS), therefore, is a subset of overall project success. Accordingly, this study used reduced cost project delivery, time bound project delivery, and high-quality project delivery as measures of project delivery success (Figure 1).

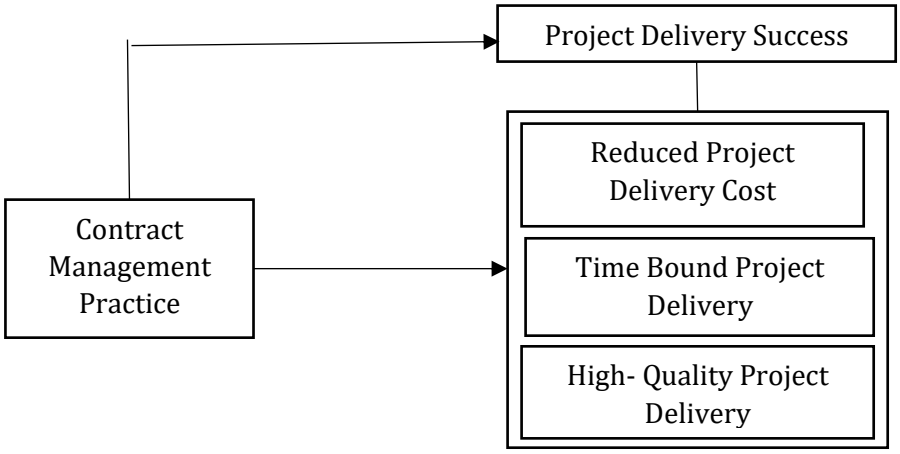


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Reduced Cost Project Delivery: As Lucey (1996), cited in Akeem (2017), explains, reduced cost is a notion aimed at lowering costs from a previously accepted norm or standard without diminishing the effectiveness or performance of the project or services. According to Asaolu and Nassar (2007), reduced cost is a planned and positive approach to improving efficiency. It can be understood in various ways, including increased productivity and reduced waste. It involves real and sustained reductions in the unit cost of goods or services provided, without negatively affecting suitability for the intended use and without reducing product quality. The goal of cost reduction is to determine whether savings in the cost of materials, labour, and overheads can be achieved at all. Cost reduction may be directed toward lowering the expected cost level—bringing the cost below the current budgeted or standard level—through actions such as purchasing new equipment, changing the working methods, and so forth (Isoghom & Worgu, 2025).

Time bound Project Delivery: Timely delivery, meaning the successful completion of a project within a pre-determined timeframe, is regarded as the ultimate measure of success. Anbari (2003) considers the timely delivery of a project to reflect the contractor's ability to accomplish the major goals of the project within the established project time. The time required to carry out project tasks from the commencement of work on site to the delivery of the project is referred to as project duration. A project may be deemed successful when it is completed within budget, on schedule, in line with specifications, and in line with stakeholder satisfaction (Johnson & Babu, 2018). Time is becoming increasingly important for firms because it is frequently used as a key benchmark for both project performance and project organization efficiency. For any project, one of the most critical determinants of its success is the time factor.

Timely completion is a critical factor in project delivery, and it cannot be compromised, because it shapes a general perception of the expected progress of the project and reduces delays during implementation. Projects therefore need to be scheduled within fixed timeframes, each with a distinct start and end date. The better time is managed, the more efficient the project will be, provided that all other processes remain unchanged (PMI, 2017). High-Quality Project Delivery: ISO 9000 (2015) describes quality as the totality of characteristics of an entity that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Sahil and Samiksha (2020) define quality as the extent to which a set of inherent characteristics meets requirements. Quality is a fundamental element of a successful organization. In the context of Quality, both processes and results are important. A strong process yields a strong product, and a good product is produced through a good process. Project quality includes the processes and activities required to establish quality policies, objectives, and responsibilities for a project so that it will meet the needs for which it was created. Being able to consistently and reliably achieve client satisfaction is closely linked to the quality of the project, and implementing a quality management system is a key tool. Consequently, having accurate and clearly defined requirements is the only route to determining whether the product achieves high quality and value for project stakeholders. Empirical Review The study by Songa and Akumuntu (2024) examined the relationship between contract management practices and public procurement performance in MINEDUC from 2020 to 2022. The study population comprised 212 MINEDUC employees. A simple random sampling approach was used to select the respondents. The Taro Yamane formula was then applied

to compute a sample size of 128. Data were gathered using questionnaire administration and documentary research methods. The findings indicated that the effective probabilities of contract negotiation, contract execution, and contract monitoring and evaluation for MINEDUC in the long run are all below 10%. Mbaya and Ndolo (2024) assessed how contract management practices affect the performance of market development projects in Meru County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The respondents were 410 officials directly involved in project implementation, selected through simple random sampling. Descriptive and inferential statistics were both used to analyze data collected from the questionnaires in order to draw meaningful conclusions. The regression model coefficients suggested a weak effect of contract management that was not statistically significant. In addition, Openji and Osoro (2024) sought to investigate the relationship between contract management and the performance of water contracts in Baringo County, Kenya. The study used a descriptive research design and employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population consisted of 200 respondents who were managers of water projects in Baringo County. Purposive random sampling was applied in this study. This study was conducted as a census survey.

The study used both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires as its data collection method. Structured questionnaires were employed to obtain primary data. Secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, Ministry of Water publications within the County, and relevant publications in reviewed journals. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical analysis was conducted using analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-tests, Pearson correlation, p-values, and the coefficient of determination. The findings of the study confirm the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Shadrack et al. (2024) examined the effect of procurement contract administration on the quality achievement of force account (FA) construction projects in Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. It involved 318 respondents, and the data were analyzed by implementing partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that the factors of risk management, relationship management, dispute management, and monitoring and control are positive and significant in explaining the quality achievement of FA construction projects. Notably, risk management is the factor most likely to predict the quality achievement of FA construction projects. It was concluded that the quality achievement of FA construction projects is strongly influenced by procurement contract administration.

Theoretical Foundation

This study is grounded in principal-agent theory. Principal-agent theory is an agency theory proposed by American economists Michael Jensen and William Meckling in 1976 (Jensen & Meckling, 1976), addressing situations in which the principal can require the agent to undertake activities for the principal's benefit, though not necessarily for the agent's. The theory depicts the relationship between a contractor or supplier and the buyer (principal) acting as an agent (Maiga et al., 2016). Agency theory is important for understanding and managing relationships between principals and agents, or between principals and agents acting on their behalf, across different contexts, including corporate governance, agency contracts, and agency partnerships. Williamson (2013) argues that contract management problems arise from the relationships in which a principal (contracting government) contracts with an agent (vendor) to produce goods and services in which the agent has expertise. The principal seeks to ensure that the agent does not exploit its information advantage by establishing appropriate contracts, providing incentives, and requiring that the agent performs what is stipulated in the contract. Nonetheless, several rather stringent conditions must be satisfied to enable a strong and effective market. In this study, the theory is applied by showing that involving key actors in the contract management and procurement process—for example, suppliers, employees, and potentially external experts—can lead to improved and more sustainable procurement performance. According to principal-agent theory, governments and contractors must share the same objectives. Involving stakeholders in the contract development and implementation process helps to draw on a range of perspectives, local perceptions, and procurement success commitment from ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). In view of the foregoing, the study's null hypotheses were developed based on the specific objectives;

H_{01}: Contract management practice does not significantly relate with reduced project delivery cost of MDAs in Bayelsa State.

H_{02}: Contract management practice does not significantly relate with time bound project delivery of MDAs in Bayelsa State.

H_{03}: Contract management practice does not significantly relate with high-quality project delivery of MDAs in Bayelsa State.

Materials and Methods

The correlational research design was used for testing the nature of relationship between variables. The research used in this study is survey method and data type is cross sectional data, which is taken at one point in time. The survey method is selected for this study because the aim of the study can be well measured in order to reach a logical conclusion. The study population for this study comprised 147 MDAs in the public service of Bayelsa State. The sample size of 107 was determined using the formula suggested by Yamane (1967). Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents who had enough knowledge of procurement procedures and project implementation. This approach ensured that only individuals with direct involvement in public procurement activities participated in the study, thereby enhancing the relevance and reliability of the data collected. Hence, two principal procurement officers from each of the MDAs operating in Bayelsa State were selected as respondents for the study, making a total of two hundred and fourteen (214) respondents. The primary data were collected using the questionnaire. The questionnaire was deemed suitable because it is easy to be administered, it is not too expensive and can be used for the collection of a large amount of data. In addition, they also provide the possible anonymity of respondent, and no interviewer bias when handled properly. The questionnaire was designed using a multiple items measurement scale. The study instrument was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, and the reliability of the instrument was examined by conducting a Cronbach alpha reliability test. A threshold of 0.70 established by Nunally (1978) was adopted in determining the reliability of the research instrument. In addition, the three hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's correlation coefficient (rho) with a significance level of 0.05, all analyses were conducted using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 26.0.

Results and Discussion

The findings for this investigation are reported in this section of the study. From the total of 214 copies administered, only 197 copies were identified as substantial and suitable for the research. Presented in Table 1 is the result for the reliability test for the instrument of the variables.

Table 1: Result for reliability test

Variables	Items	Coefficients
Contract Management	4	0.897
Reduced Cost Project Delivery	4	0.950
Time- bound Project Delivery	4	0.922
High- quality Project Delivery	4	0.898

Source: SPSS Output from Survey Research

The reliability analysis of the research instrument is shown in Table 1. As shown in the Table, all the variables in the study have high Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients that surpass the minimum acceptable level (0.70) set by Nunually (1978). The implication is that, if this study is carried out again in a similar context the results will be similar to the results in this study. Table 2 illustrates the result for the univariate data analysis on the predictor variable properties and dimensions.

Table 2: Data Distribution for Contract Management Practices

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Contract Management	We manage contracts fairly and justly.	197	3.9442	.65616
	We regularly monitor and evaluate contracts to ensure timely delivery of projects.	197	4.3350	.84482
	We consult our legal team before signing contracts.	197	4.3350	1.09705
	We promptly resolve disputes arising from the contract.	197	3.9442	.65616
	Valid N (listwise)	197		

Source: Research Data (2026)

Analysis on the data distribution for the properties of contract management, reveals that the participants identify the indicators of contract management as true, and as characterizing the behaviour of the organisation. From the analysis, it is revealed that participants affirm to these indicators as reflecting notable practices and functions within the public organisation. The result affirms to contract management (x = 4.1396 and SD = 0.72812). The result from the analysis indicates that contract management can be considered the reality of the MDAs, and as factor that indicate the nature of procurement practices within the organisations. Presented in Table 3 is the data distribution for the properties and measures of project delivery success.

Table 3: Data Distribution for Project Delivery Success

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reduced Cost Project Delivery	Our procurement cost has reduced	197	3.9442	0.65616
	We offer prices as low or lower than our competitors.	197	3.9086	0.77708
	Our overhead cost has reduced.	197	3.8731	0.58827
	Our transportation cost has reduced.	197	4.3706	0.85102
Time Bound Project Delivery	Our institution can quickly complete project to meet customer's needs.	197	4.3706	1.10183
	Our institution has an outstanding time delivery record to our customers	197	3.9797	.68482
	We are able to reduced development lead time	197	3.9086	.77708
	We have an effective time management practice	197	3.8731	.58827
High Quality Project Delivery	We offer projects of high quality to our partners	197	4.2995	.83706
	We are able to compete based on quality.	197	4.3350	1.09705
	We offer projects that are durable.	197	4.0152	.71054
	We always comply with all quality standards	197	3.9797	.82659
	Valid N (listwise)	197		

Source: Research Data (2026)

The result for the analysis on the properties of project delivery success, indicates that participants consider the indicators as true and as characterizing the MDAs in Bayelsa State. The related features or attributes of project delivery success are shown to be evident and as true in terms of the behaviour of the MDAs. From the analysis, it is shown that reduced cost project delivery (x = 4.0241 and SD = 0.67649), time bound project delivery (x = 4.0330 and SD = 0.73030) and high-quality project delivery () x = 4.1574 and SD = 0.76930), are all demonstrated to be characteristics of the MDAs in Bayelsa State. The result offers a position that clarifies on the capacity of the related organisations; demonstrating the extent to which these organisations demonstrate competence in their handling and completion of project goals, particularly project delivery.

The test for the role of contract management in the outcome of project delivery success is carried out in this section. Table 4 presents a Spearman correlation matrix examining the relationships between contract management practice and project delivery success in terms of reduced project cost, time bound project delivery and high- quality project delivery of MDAs in Bayelsa State. The results show strong, positive and statistically significant correlations between contract management practice and the measures of the criterion variables. Contract management practice exhibits a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.532$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) with reduced project delivery cost, indicating that effective contract management practice is associated with project delivery success in terms of reduced project delivery cost. Similarly, contract management practice demonstrates a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.583$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) with time bound project delivery, indicating that good management of contract corresponds to improved project delivery outcomes in terms of time bound project delivery. Additionally, contract management practice shows a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.896$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) with high-quality project delivery, highlighting the importance of effectively adhering to quality standards

to influence positive project delivery outcomes in terms of high- quality project delivery. The low p-values indicate that the observed associations are unlikely to have occurred by chance, affirming the reliability of the positive correlations observed between contract management and the different aspects of project delivery success.

Table 4: Contract Management and Project Delivery Success

			Contract Management	Reduced Cost Project Delivery	Time Bound Project Delivery	High-Quality Project Delivery
Spearman's rho	Contract Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.532**	.583**	.896**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	197	197	197	197
	Reduced Cost Project Delivery	Correlation Coefficient	.532**	1.000	.369**	.713**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.	.000	.000
		N	197	197	197	197
	Time Bound Project Delivery	Correlation Coefficient	.583**	.369**	1.000	.783**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.000	.	.000
		N	197	197	197	197
	High-Quality Project Delivery	Correlation Coefficient	.896**	.713**	.783**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	.000	.
		N	197	197	197	197

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion of Findings

The relationship between contract management and project delivery success is observed to be significant. Specifically, contract management is found to significantly improve the outcomes of cost reduction project delivery, time-bound project delivery, and high-quality project delivery. Contract management forms an essential component of public procurement practices because it entails shaping relationships and platforms through which the views of suppliers are incorporated by ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) into their procurement processes. The study further established that the relationship between contract management and indicators of project delivery success (cost reduction project delivery, time-bound project delivery, and high-quality project delivery) was moderate and very strong positive, with correlation coefficients of 0.532, 0.583, and 0.896, respectively, at a probability level below the stated alpha value of 0.05 (p= 0.000< 0.05), as presented in table 4 above. The results therefore indicate a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between contract management and cost reduction project delivery among government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Bayelsa State. This implies that stronger contract management practices are associated with higher project delivery success for MDAs in Bayelsa State. The findings of this study align with those of earlier research. In particular, they corroborate the findings of Songa and Akumuntu (2024), who reported that public procurement performance is explained by effective processes of contract negotiation, contract execution, contract monitoring, and evaluation. Contract management is crucial for lowering costs and improving procurement performance within organizations. Without proper contract management, savings are significantly reduced and customers experience frustration. This suggests that contract management practices enable both parties to a contract to meet their respective obligations as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to achieve the business and operational objectives required under the contract and, notably, to deliver value for money. Cost reduction is a critical element of supply chain management. By understanding supply chain costs, implementing cost reduction strategies, and assessing performance, organizations can strengthen their bottom line, increase profitability, and obtain a competitive advantage. Similarly, the results of the statistical analyses showed that contract management practices have a moderate, positive, and statistically significant association with

time-bound project delivery. These findings support the view that successful and efficient contract management practices are those that meet the needs of the organization's stakeholders, including achieving optimum conditions and value in relation to the allocation of scarce taxpayers' resources, otherwise termed best value for money, and ensuring the rational and efficient availability of funds (Oluka & Basheka, 2014). The current findings also support the results of Mbaya and Ndolo (2024), which found a positive relationship between contract management and the performance of market development projects, and those of Openji and Osoro (2024), which reported that projects' contract management is strongly correlated with projects' performance.

Inadequate lead times can reduce visibility and lead to overstocking, stock-outs, and additional delivery costs for express deliveries meant to overcome these problems. Lead time is a key metric for assessing the supply chain. Extended lead times can increase inventory levels, which may raise costs and lower productivity. Safety stock is a buffer inventory that organizations keep on hand to meet customer demand even when delays occur in the supply chain. Maintaining excessive safety inventory can also immobilize capital and increase storage costs; therefore, companies should work to keep their inventory levels as low as possible. Hence, MDAs that do not deliver as required in the contract lose future business due to a consistent pattern of project delivery failure, and consequently they may miss opportunities for contract renewals. Analysis of the results showed a very strong, statistically significant relationship between contract management practices and high-quality project delivery. These findings are consistent with those of Shadrack, et al., (2024), which indicate that the quality of construction projects is strongly influenced by procurement contract administration. Based on the evidence provided, it is affirmed that projects can be implemented at a high, preferred rate and that the likelihood of creating value in terms of value for money is realized, contract variations are handled in a specific and agreed manner, and the probability of new risks emerging during project implementation is reduced. Project implementation is often and routinely carried out to confirm that suppliers deliver goods and services according to the schedule and in line with the procurement plan, and that quality is achieved, especially in contracts that are the highest risk or most complex. Products, services, and public works are delivered and accepted once they satisfy the acceptance criteria defined during contract development and set out in the specifications, scope of works, or terms of reference. Payments are made, and the amounts paid correspond to work that has been fully and adequately implemented. Meanwhile, problems arising during contract execution are addressed promptly and effectively, which usually reduces the tension between MDAs and contractors and thereby improves project performance. These findings provide a sound basis for rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, contract management must be emphasized at every point of project delivery success in government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs).

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Based on the results obtained from the empirical tests and the discussion of findings above, the study concluded that contract management actions are essential for governing the buyer–supplier relationship. Contract management strengthens partners' commitment to success and ensures shared responsibility for the outcome of decisions.

This is crucial for achieving healthy exchanges between MDAs and their suppliers, bridging differences and strengthening a common voice to market realities that boost the profitability of MDAs, minimise risks (due to giving accurate information) and improve efficiency and effectiveness (contributing to a project delivery success in terms of reduced project delivery cost, time-bound project delivery and high-quality project delivery of the MDAs in Bayelsa State) of the MDAs. Therefore, it is recommended that the MDAs should give emphasis to exploiting contract management practices for better project performance. This can be done through use of appropriate validation and certification tools, optimizing the contract identification process with multiple suppliers, minimizing legal service costs, avoiding unanticipated service renewals, tracking key project milestones, and taking advantage of automated functionality and alerts. Effective enforcement of procurement regulations will enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in project delivery. Government agencies should keep track of contractor performance based on timely delivery and quality standards.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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