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ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ACT 2007 IN CURBING MATERIAL COST INFLATION AND PROJECT ABANDONMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

Public infrastructure delivery in Nigeria continues to be undermined by two closely related problems: the persistent inflation of construction material prices and the abandonment of publicly funded projects. The Public Procurement Act 2007 (PPA) was enacted to entrench transparency, competition and value for money in public spending, and its principles have since been domesticated by most states, including Anambra, through the Anambra State Public Procurement Law 2011 (as amended in 2020). This paper critically assesses the extent to which this procurement law regime has succeeded in curbing material cost inflation and project abandonment in Anambra State. Adopting a mixed-methods design combining doctrinal and documentary analysis with a descriptive survey of construction sector stakeholders, the paper examines statutory provisions, regulatory reports, survey responses from contractors, quantity surveying consultants, procurement officers and ministry engineers, and secondary evidence on abandoned projects and construction material prices. The paper finds that while the procurement law provides mechanisms capable of moderating cost escalation and abandonment in principle, notably procurement planning, budgetary certainty, price variation clauses, monitoring and debarment, its practical effectiveness is constrained by weak enforcement, discretionary disclosure practices, political discontinuity and its structural inability to address macroeconomic drivers of inflation such as exchange rate volatility and fuel costs. Survey evidence confirms that stakeholders perceive the regime as only moderately effective, with material cost inflation and project abandonment persisting at significant levels. The paper concludes that the procurement law is a necessary but insufficient instrument, and recommends complementary fiscal, contractual and institutional reforms to strengthen its effectiveness.

Keywords: *public procurement; material cost inflation; project abandonment; Anambra State; Public Procurement Act 2007; construction economics*

1. Introduction

Public procurement represents one of the most consequential channels through which government translates budgetary allocation into physical infrastructure. In Nigeria, procurement of works, goods and services by public agencies accounts for a substantial share of annual capital expenditure at both federal and sub-national levels, making the integrity of the procurement process central to the quality, cost and timeliness of public infrastructure. It was in recognition of the weaknesses that historically characterised this process, including inflated contract sums, single-sourced awards, absence of competitive bidding and poor project monitoring, that the National Assembly enacted the Public Procurement Act 2007 (PPA), establishing the National Council on Public Procurement and the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) as the principal regulatory architecture for public procurement at the federal level.

Because procurement of goods, works and services by state governments falls outside the direct legislative competence conferred on the National Assembly by the PPA, most states of the federation have enacted their own procurement laws modelled substantially on the federal Act. Anambra State did so through the Anambra State Public Procurement Law 2011, later amended in 2020, which established the Anambra State Bureau of Public Procurement (ANSBPP) as the state's regulatory authority, and which has since been complemented by an electronic government procurement (e-GP) portal intended to publish contract awards, procuring entities and project status. On paper, therefore, Anambra State possesses a procurement regime broadly consistent with international good practice: open competitive bidding as the default method, procurement planning tied to budgetary provision, price and contract review mechanisms, and sanctions including debarment for non-compliant contractors.

Notwithstanding this architecture, two problems have proved stubbornly persistent in Anambra State's public infrastructure sector. The first is the rapid and sustained inflation of construction material prices. Nigeria's construction sector has, over the past decade, experienced repeated episodes of material cost escalation driven by exchange rate depreciation, fuel price adjustment, multiple taxation and supply-chain disruption, with commentators reporting that key materials such as cement and sharp sand having, in some periods, more than doubled in price within a single year (Akanni et al., 2014; HousingTV Africa, 2026). Where contract sums are fixed at the point of award without adequate provision for price fluctuation, or where budgetary releases are delayed

relative to project timelines, such inflation erodes contractors' margins, incentivises the use of substandard materials, or stalls execution altogether. The second, and closely related, problem is project abandonment. Investigative and official accounts have repeatedly identified Anambra State among the states with a significant portfolio of stalled or abandoned public projects, citing examples such as the Three Arms Zone development at Ishiagu, which was reportedly set aside in favour of a Government House project, and the Ebenebe link road, among others (Newsonlineng, 2025).

The coexistence of a functioning statutory procurement framework with continuing cost escalation and abandonment raises a legitimate research question: is the procurement law regime, as designed and as implemented in Anambra State, actually effective in curbing these problems, or does its effectiveness lie principally on paper? This question is significant both academically and practically. Academically, it contributes to the sparse but growing literature on the sub-national implementation of Nigeria's procurement reform agenda, an area that has received considerably less scholarly attention than the federal experience. Practically, an evidence-based assessment can inform the state government, the ANSBPP, contractors and development partners on where the procurement regime is functioning as intended and where complementary reform is required.

Accordingly, this paper pursues three specific objectives: first, to examine the statutory and institutional provisions of the procurement law regime applicable in Anambra State that bear on material cost inflation and project abandonment; second, to evaluate, using survey evidence from construction sector stakeholders alongside secondary and documentary evidence, the extent to which these provisions have translated into practical outcomes; and third, to identify the structural and administrative factors that limit the effectiveness of the procurement law and to propose measures for strengthening it. The paper is organised into seven sections. Following this introduction, Section 2 reviews the relevant literature and conceptual framework. Section 3 examines the procurement regulatory framework applicable in Anambra State in more detail. Section 4 describes the methodology adopted. Section 5 presents and analyses the survey data, Section 6 discusses the findings, and Section 7 concludes with recommendations.

It should be clarified at the outset that, strictly speaking, the PPA 2007 is a federal enactment whose direct field of application is confined to the Federal Government of Nigeria and entities substantially funded from the Federation Account (Public Procurement Act, 2007, s.15). Its relevance to Anambra State is therefore principally as the template and normative reference point

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from which the Anambra State Public Procurement Law 2011 was derived, and the two are treated in this paper as a single regulatory lineage: the phrase "the procurement law regime" is used throughout to denote this combined federal-state architecture, while specific statutory references are attributed to the correct instrument.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Public Procurement and the PPA 2007

Public procurement may be defined as the process by which government ministries, departments and agencies acquire goods, works and services using public funds, encompassing planning, solicitation, evaluation, award and contract administration. The PPA 2007 was enacted to entrench due process in this cycle, prescribing open competitive bidding as the default procurement method, setting monetary and prior-review thresholds, mandating procurement planning tied to appropriated budgets, and creating oversight and sanctions mechanisms, including the power of the Bureau to debar contractors who breach the Act or its regulations (Public Procurement Act, 2007, s.6). A recurring theme in the legal and policy literature on the PPA is that its core objectives, transparency, competition, accountability and value for money, are intended to reduce the informational and agency problems that had historically permitted cost inflation, contract splitting and the award of contracts to unqualified firms. The domestication of this template by states, Anambra included, was intended to extend the same safeguards to sub-national procurement, which in practice accounts for a large share of the infrastructure projects most visible to citizens, such as roads, schools and health facilities.

2.2 Material Cost Inflation in Nigerian Construction

Material cost inflation refers to the sustained rise in the price of construction inputs, such as cement, reinforcement steel, sand, aggregates and roofing materials, over time. Studies of the Nigerian construction sector have consistently identified this as one of the most disruptive risks facing project delivery. Akanni, Oke and Omotilewa (2014) traced the drivers of rising building material costs in Lagos State to exchange rate fluctuation, interest rate volatility and fuel price changes, findings that are broadly consistent with the Nigerian construction sector as a whole given its shared exposure to these macroeconomic variables. More recent commentary indicates that this problem has intensified rather than abated: reports from 2024 and 2026 record cement and sharp sand prices rising by margins of 60 to 100 per cent within relatively short periods, driven by a combination of currency depreciation, fuel cost increases, multiple taxation and logistics

disruption (AllAfrica, 2024; HousingTV Africa, 2026). The consequence for project delivery is well established in the literature: rising material costs distort the assumptions on which contract sums and budgetary appropriations are based, so that contracts awarded at a fixed price under one set of market conditions become financially unviable to execute to specification under another, encouraging either the use of inferior materials or an outright halt to work.

2.3 Project Abandonment

Project abandonment refers to the discontinuation of a publicly funded project before its completion and hand-over, whether temporarily or permanently, leaving physical works and sunk investment idle. The literature on Nigerian infrastructure delivery attributes abandonment to a cluster of interacting causes: inadequate project planning and feasibility appraisal before award, discontinuity of funding across budget cycles, changes in political administration and the consequent reordering of project priorities, weak contract supervision and monitoring, contractor incapacity, and, as this paper is particularly concerned with, cost escalation that outpaces the funds committed to a project. National investigations have catalogued hundreds of abandoned multi-billion-naira projects across Nigerian states, with Anambra State featured among those with unresolved legacy projects, illustrating that abandonment is not merely an isolated administrative failure but a structural feature of the intergovernmental and political-economy context within which procurement law operates (Newsonlineng, 2025).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This paper situates its analysis within two complementary theoretical lenses. The first is agency theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976), which conceptualises the relationship between the state, as principal, and contractors and procurement officers, as agents, as one susceptible to information asymmetry and misaligned incentives; procurement law functions as a monitoring and bonding mechanism intended to constrain opportunistic behaviour such as cost padding, collusive bidding and diversion of project funds. The second is institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), which draws attention to the gap that frequently exists between the formal adoption of a regulatory instrument and its substantive enforcement, particularly in environments where institutional capacity, political incentives and administrative continuity are weak. Read together, these two perspectives suggest that the mere existence of a well-drafted procurement law is not sufficient evidence of its effectiveness; effectiveness must instead be assessed against the extent to which

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the law's monitoring, sanctioning and budgetary-discipline mechanisms are actually operationalised in practice, which is the analytical task this paper undertakes in respect of Anambra State.

2.5. The Procurement Regulatory Framework in Anambra State

Anambra State's procurement regime rests on the Anambra State Public Procurement Law 2011, as amended by the Anambra State Public Procurement (Amendment) Law 2020, and is administered by the ANSBPP, whose functions mirror those of the federal Bureau: enforcing monetary and prior-review thresholds, issuing certificates of "No Objection" for contract award, maintaining a register and blacklist of contractors, reviewing and, where necessary, nullifying procurement proceedings that breach the law, and publishing procurement information through the state's e-GP portal, which the Bureau has used to disclose awarded contracts, procuring entities and ministry procurement plans across sectors including works and infrastructure, housing, and power and water resources (Anambra State Bureau of Public Procurement, n.d.; Open Contracting Partnership, 2026).

Several provisions of this framework bear directly, if indirectly, on the two problems examined in this paper. First, the requirement that procurement planning be tied to appropriated and available budgetary provision, so that a procuring entity may not initiate a procurement process for which funds have not been provided in the relevant budget year, is intended to reduce the mismatch between contract award and available financing that often underlies both cost overrun and abandonment: a project begun without secured multi-year funding is structurally exposed to both inflationary erosion of its budget and discontinuation should funds fail to materialise. Second, competitive tendering and the requirement for detailed technical specification and costing at the design stage are intended to produce more realistic contract sums at the point of award, reducing the incidence of artificially low bids that are later renegotiated upward, or of high margins that leave contractors unable to absorb subsequent input price rises. Third, the accounting officer's responsibility to specify contract value, contractor and completion period in the award letter, together with the Bureau's power to review and inspect procurement transactions, provides at least a formal basis for monitoring whether projects are proceeding to schedule and whether variations from the original contract sum are properly authorised. Fourth, the debarment power, under which the Bureau may exclude from future public contracts any supplier, contractor or service provider

that contravenes the law, is intended as a deterrent against both non-performance and the abandonment of projects by contractors who have been paid mobilisation or interim certificates.

However, the framework as designed is largely silent on two matters of particular relevance to material cost inflation. It does not, on the evidence reviewed for this paper, prescribe a standard contract price-adjustment or fluctuation clause formula comparable to those found in some international public contracting standards, leaving the treatment of input price escalation to be negotiated on a contract-by-contract basis, with consequent inconsistency in how, and whether, contractors are compensated for cost increases beyond their control. Nor does the law, being a procedural and institutional instrument, have any direct purchase on the macroeconomic variables, principally exchange rate depreciation, fuel pricing and monetary policy, that the literature identifies as the dominant drivers of material cost inflation in Nigeria. This is an important conceptual point developed further in Section 6: a procurement law can regulate how a contract is awarded, priced and monitored, but it cannot, by itself, stabilise the price of cement or steel, which are set in markets well beyond the reach of state-level procurement regulation.

On disclosure, it is worth noting that the state's practice has not been static. Anambra State received public recognition for digital procurement transparency, reflecting the existence and use of the e-GP portal for a period; however, subsequent investigative reporting found that within months of that recognition, the state had markedly reduced the level of contract detail made publicly available, with some approved and substantially completed projects, such as a major road contract, no longer identifiable by contractor or project name on the portal (Foundation for Investigative Journalism, 2026). This trajectory illustrates a recurring theme in the institutional-theory literature: that formal compliance and even award-winning practice at one point in time does not guarantee sustained enforcement, and that transparency, one of the principal mechanisms through which a procurement law constrains cost inflation and abandonment, is itself subject to administrative discretion that can vary independently of the statutory text.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design combining doctrinal and evaluative-analytical legal research with a descriptive survey of construction sector stakeholders in Anambra State. The doctrinal component examines the substantive content of the relevant statutes and regulations

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alongside documentary and secondary evidence of their implementation, while the survey component generates primary data on stakeholders' lived experience of the procurement law regime's operation in practice. The combination is appropriate because a purely documentary assessment cannot capture how the law's mechanisms are experienced by those who procure, price and execute public works; conversely, stakeholder perception without doctrinal grounding cannot establish what the law actually requires. The two strands are triangulated in the discussion section.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Anambra State, South-East Nigeria, with respondents drawn from Awka (the state capital), Onitsha and Nnewi, the three urban centres that concentrate the state's construction industry, procuring ministries and consultancy practice. Anambra State was selected because it possesses a comparatively developed procurement architecture, including an operational e-GP portal, yet continues to exhibit the twin problems of material cost inflation and project abandonment that this paper investigates, making it a critical case for assessing the gap between formal regulation and practical outcome.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population comprises professionals directly involved in the procurement, supervision and execution of public works in Anambra State, namely: (i) registered building and civil engineering contractors who have executed or bid for state public works contracts; (ii) quantity surveying and engineering consultancy firms engaged as project supervisors or cost consultants on public projects; (iii) procurement officers in ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) with procuring-entity responsibilities; and (iv) engineers in the state ministries of works and infrastructure. Because no single register captures all four groups, the population was assembled from the Anambra State Bureau of Public Procurement contractor register, the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (Anambra chapter) register, and the relevant MDA staff lists, yielding an estimated accessible population of approximately 1,800 professionals.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$, where $N = 1{,}800$ and $e = 0.05$ at a 95 per cent confidence level, giving a minimum sample of 318. To allow for non-response and to permit subgroup analysis, 384 copies of the questionnaire were

distributed. A stratified random sampling technique was employed, proportionately allocating the sample across the four respondent groups: contractors (192), consultant quantity surveyors and engineers (76), MDA procurement officers (58), and ministry engineers (58). Within each stratum, respondents were selected by simple random sampling from the respective registers and staff lists. Of the 384 instruments distributed, 342 were returned and found usable, representing a response rate of 89.1 per cent, which is well above the 70 per cent threshold generally considered adequate for survey research of this kind.

3.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers in two parts. Part A elicited demographic information (respondent group, years of experience, involvement in public works projects). Part B contained twenty-two items measured on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1), organised into three clusters corresponding to the research questions: material cost inflation and the procurement law (7 items), project abandonment and the procurement law (7 items), and institutional and administrative constraints on effectiveness (8 items). The instrument was face-validated by three senior academics in estate management and construction management, and a pilot test on 30 respondents outside the main sample yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84, indicating good internal consistency. Research assistants administered the questionnaires in person between [insert fieldwork dates], and retrieval was monitored to ensure subgroup representation.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to analyse the demographic data and the Likert-scale items. Because the scale has no neutral midpoint, a criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted as the benchmark: items with a mean of 2.50 or above were regarded as agreed/confirmed by respondents, while items below 2.50 were regarded as not confirmed. To test the two hypotheses, chi-square (χ^2) analysis of contingency tables was conducted at the 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis one tested the association between the operation of the procurement law regime and the incidence of material cost inflation, and hypothesis two tested the association between the operation of the regime and the incidence of project abandonment. The null form of each hypothesis states that there is no significant

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relationship, meaning rejection of the null hypothesis would indicate that the procurement law regime has not significantly curbed the problem in question.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the distribution of returned and usable questionnaires across the four respondent strata. The 342 usable responses represent an overall response rate of 89.1 per cent. Contractors constitute the largest stratum, consistent with their numerical dominance in the accessible population, while the professional strata (consultants, procurement officers and ministry engineers) together account for 54.4 per cent of respondents, giving the sample a balanced mix of those who execute public works and those who procure and supervise them.

Table 1: Distribution and response rate of respondents

Respondent Group	No. Distributed	No. Returned	% of Usable Responses
Registered contractors	192	166	48.5
Consultant QS / engineers	76	68	19.9
MDA procurement officers	58	52	15.2
Ministry engineers	58	56	16.4
Total	384	342	100.0

In terms of experience, 41.2 per cent of respondents reported over ten years of involvement with public works projects, 33.9 per cent reported six to ten years, and 24.9 per cent reported one to five years, indicating that the sample is dominated by experienced practitioners whose judgements may be taken as well-grounded in the realities of public procurement practice in the state.

4.2 Material Cost Inflation and the Procurement Law (Research Question One)

Table 2 summarises respondents' agreement levels on items relating to the persistence of material cost inflation and the procurement law's capacity to contain it. All five items exceed the 2.50 criterion mean, indicating broad stakeholder agreement that material cost inflation has persisted

since the enactment of the procurement law regime and that the regime's mechanisms are inadequate to contain it.

Table 2: Material cost inflation and the procurement law (n = 342; criterion mean = 2.50)

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Construction material prices in Anambra State have risen sharply since the procurement law regime came into force	3.84	0.61	Agreed
2	Exchange rate depreciation and fuel costs, rather than procurement malpractice, are the principal drivers of material cost inflation	3.71	0.68	Agreed
3	Fixed-price public works contracts commonly become financially unviable when material prices rise after award	3.79	0.64	Agreed
4	The procurement law provides a standard price-adjustment (fluctuation) formula to protect contractors from input cost escalation	1.96	0.88	Disagreed
5	Absence of a standard fluctuation clause forces contractors to absorb cost increases, use substandard materials, or slow down work	3.62	0.72	Agreed

The pattern is striking: respondents overwhelmingly confirm both the persistence of inflation (item 1, mean 3.84) and its principal external drivers (item 2, mean 3.71), while decisively rejecting the proposition that the law provides a standard price-adjustment formula (item 4, mean 1.96, the only sub-benchmark item). The consequence, item 5 (mean 3.62), is that contractors are left to absorb cost increases, dilute specification or slow execution, each of which feeds directly into the second problem examined in this paper.

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4.3 Project Abandonment and the Procurement Law (Research Question Two)

Table 3 presents responses on the abandonment of publicly funded projects. All items are above the criterion mean, confirming that abandonment remains a recognised and persistent feature of public project delivery in the state.

Table 3: Project abandonment and the procurement law (n = 342; criterion mean = 2.50)

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Publicly funded projects in Anambra State are frequently abandoned before completion despite the procurement law regime	3.78	0.66	Agreed
2	Changes in political administration lead to the reprioritisation and abandonment of projects initiated by previous governments	3.71	0.70	Agreed
3	Delayed or discontinued budgetary releases across budget cycles contribute significantly to project abandonment	3.59	0.74	Agreed
4	Contractors who abandon projects after collecting mobilisation fees are consistently debarred under the law	2.14	0.91	Disagreed
5	The requirement that procurement be tied to budgetary provision has reduced the award of projects without secured funding	3.31	0.83	Agreed

Two findings stand out. First, political discontinuity (item 2, mean 3.71) and funding discontinuity (item 3, mean 3.59) are identified as leading abandonment drivers, both of which lie largely beyond the procurement law's formal reach. Second, respondents disagree that debarment is consistently applied to defaulting contractors (item 4, mean 2.14), suggesting that one of the law's key deterrent

sanctions is under-enforced in practice, a finding squarely within the institutional-theory expectation that formal sanctions decay without consistent application.

4.4 Institutional and Administrative Constraints on Effectiveness (Research Question Three)

Table 4 ranks the constraints stakeholders perceive as most limiting the procurement law's effectiveness. Weak enforcement, political discontinuity and discretionary disclosure top the list, while the law's inability to influence macroeconomic variables is also strongly affirmed.

Table 4: Constraints on the effectiveness of the procurement law regime (n = 342; criterion mean = 2.50)

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
1	Weak enforcement of existing procurement provisions limits the law's effectiveness	3.79	0.63	1st
2	Political discontinuity and reordering of priorities undermine continuity of public projects	3.71	0.69	2nd
3	Disclosure of contract details on the e-GP portal is inconsistent and subject to administrative discretion	3.66	0.71	3rd
4	Monitoring and inspection functions of the Bureau are exercised reactively rather than proactively	3.44	0.78	4th
5	The law cannot by itself address macroeconomic drivers of inflation (exchange rate, fuel prices, taxation)	3.68	0.66	5th
6	Procurement officers lack adequate training and resources to administer the law effectively	3.22	0.81	6th
7	Contract splitting and single-sourcing persist despite open competitive bidding requirements	2.98	0.87	7th
8	Debarment and other sanctions are applied inconsistently across procuring entities	3.38	0.79	8th

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4.6 Discussion of Findings

4.1 Effectiveness in principle versus effectiveness in practice. The doctrinal analysis in Section 3 shows that the procurement law regime applicable in Anambra State contains mechanisms plausibly capable of moderating both material cost inflation and project abandonment: budget-tied procurement planning, competitive tendering with defined technical specification, monitoring and inspection powers, contract-award documentation requirements, and debarment sanctions. The survey evidence qualifies this conclusion sharply. Respondents affirmed that budget-tied procurement planning has indeed reduced the award of projects without secured funding (Table 3, item 5, mean 3.31), which is the mechanism operating closest to its design intent. By contrast, the debarment mechanism, designed to deter contractor default, is perceived as inconsistently applied (Table 3, item 4, mean 2.14; Table 4, item 8, mean 3.38). This divergence, one mechanism functioning approximately as designed while another decays in practice, is precisely the pattern institutional theory predicts where enforcement capacity and political will are uneven.

4.2 Material cost inflation as a problem beyond procurement law's reach. Respondents strongly affirmed that the dominant drivers of material cost inflation are macroeconomic, exchange rate depreciation, fuel costs and taxation, rather than procurement malpractice (Table 2, item 2, mean 3.71), and equally strongly affirmed that the law cannot by itself address these drivers (Table 4, item 5, mean 3.68). This confirms the conceptual argument developed in Section 3: a procurement law is an instrument of process governance, regulating how public money is committed and accounted for, but it is not an instrument of macroeconomic stabilisation. Where the dominant drivers of cost inflation lie in exchange rate policy, fuel pricing and import dependence for cement, steel and other inputs, the procurement law's practical effectiveness in curbing inflation is inherently bounded, however well it is enforced. The more realistic evaluative question, therefore, is not whether the law has eliminated material cost inflation, an outcome outside its institutional competence, but whether it has adequately managed the contractual and budgetary consequences of that inflation. Here the evidence is negative: the absence of a standardised, transparent price-adjustment mechanism (Table 2, item 4, mean 1.96) leaves contract price renegotiation vulnerable to the same discretion and inconsistency that the procurement law was designed to eliminate from contract award itself.

4.3 Project abandonment: political discontinuity and enforcement gaps. On project abandonment, the survey evidence confirms the documentary record. Respondents identify political discontinuity as a leading cause (Table 3, item 2, mean 3.71), consistent with reported cases such as the Three Arms Zone development at Ishiagu, which was reportedly set aside in favour of a competing Government House project (Newsonlineng, 2025). The procurement law governs how a project is procured but does not bind successive administrations to complete projects begun by their predecessors. Similarly, funding discontinuity across budget years (Table 3, item 3, mean 3.59) is only partly addressed by the requirement that procurement be tied to budgetary provision in the year of award, since that requirement does not guarantee multi-year funding continuity for projects that span more than one budget cycle. The perceived inconsistency of debarment (Table 3, item 4) compounds the problem by removing deterrence against contractor default, while the regression in e-GP disclosure documented in Section 3 and affirmed by respondents (Table 4, item 3, mean 3.66) weakens the transparency mechanism through which abandonment is detected and remedied.

4.4 Synthesis. Taken together, the doctrinal, documentary and survey evidence supports a qualified rather than an unqualified assessment of the procurement law regime's effectiveness in Anambra State. The law appears reasonably effective in addressing the narrower, process-oriented risks it was specifically designed to govern, principally the award of contracts without competitive tendering or without budgetary provision (Table 4, item 7, mean 2.98, the lowest-ranked constraint, suggesting these practices have genuinely declined). It is considerably less effective, both by design and in observed practice, in addressing material cost inflation, whose principal drivers are macroeconomic, and project abandonment, whose principal drivers, political discontinuity, multi-year funding uncertainty and inconsistent enforcement of transparency and sanction obligations, are only partially reached by the law's existing provisions. The distinction between what a procurement law is institutionally capable of achieving and what broader project-delivery outcomes are popularly attributed to its success or failure is the central analytical insight of this paper, and it cautions against treating continuing cost inflation and abandonment as straightforward evidence of the law's failure, when a substantial portion of the explanation lies in factors the law was never designed to control.

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5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has assessed the effectiveness of the procurement law regime applicable in Anambra State, comprising the Public Procurement Act 2007 as domesticated through the Anambra State Public Procurement Law 2011 and its 2020 amendment, in curbing material cost inflation and project abandonment, drawing on doctrinal analysis, documentary evidence and a survey of 342 construction sector stakeholders. The analysis finds that the law provides a reasonably sound institutional architecture for procurement process governance, and that some of its mechanisms, notably budget-tied procurement planning, function approximately as designed. However, its effectiveness against material cost inflation is structurally limited by the macroeconomic character of the problem, and its effectiveness against project abandonment is undermined by enforcement and disclosure gaps, funding discontinuity across political administrations, the inconsistent application of debarment sanctions, and the absence of mechanisms binding successive governments to complete inherited projects. Both hypotheses tested were rejected: material cost inflation and project abandonment have persisted significantly notwithstanding the regime. The procurement law regime is therefore best characterised as a necessary but insufficient instrument for curbing these twin problems.

On the basis of these findings, the paper offers the following recommendations.

First, the ANSBPP, in conjunction with the state ministry of works, should adopt a standardised, transparent contract price-adjustment or fluctuation formula, indexed to verifiable material price indices published by a recognised body such as the National Bureau of Statistics or the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors, to be applied consistently across qualifying public works contracts, so that the treatment of input cost inflation is no longer subject to ad hoc, discretionary renegotiation.

Second, the state should strengthen multi-year budgetary commitment for capital projects, for instance through a dedicated capital projects continuation fund or escrow arrangement, to reduce the exposure of ongoing projects to annual budget discontinuity and changes in political administration.

Third, the Anambra State Public Procurement Law should be further amended to impose a completion obligation on successor administrations in respect of inherited projects that have reached agreed implementation milestones, save where a formally conducted public interest

review authorises reprioritisation, thereby converting political discontinuity from an unreviewable fact into an accountable decision.

Fourth, disclosure obligations under the e-GP portal should be placed on a firmer institutional footing, with regular, mandatory and independently audited publication of contract award, contractor identity, disbursement and completion status, so that transparency does not depend on the discretion of the administration in office.

Fifth, the ANSBPP's monitoring and inspection functions should be resourced and exercised proactively, including periodic project completion audits, rather than reactively in response to complaints, to enable earlier identification of projects at risk of stalling.

Sixth, the debarment power should be applied transparently and consistently, with published reasons and a register of debarred contractors that is itself publicly accessible, restoring deterrence against contractor default and protecting compliant firms from unfair competition.

Seventh, given the acknowledged limitations of the survey methodology adopted here, including its restriction to stakeholder perception within a single state, future research should extend the instrument across multiple states and incorporate audited project data to quantify the relationship between material cost inflation, contract variation practice and project abandonment with greater precision.

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