

Due Process Mechanisms And The Realization Of Public Sector Goals In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: Evidence From Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT: The world over, it is the constitutional responsibility of governments to provide social and economic security for their citizens. In particular, most governments have realized that social security is a critical milestone in their growth, sustenance and global recognition. Consequently, this study is poised to explore the extent to which due process policy has brought about transparency and meritocracy in the Nigerian Public sector. To attain this aim, the theoretical framework of analysis used for this study is the structural-functional theory, tracing its root to Talcott Parsons (1976). The methodology guiding the study is survey design as the study relied on both primary and secondary sources for data generation. However, the result of the study indicated that due process is observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among students, academic and non-academic staff. Based on the finding, the researchers recommended that: Universities should establish clear and comprehensive policies and procedures that promote due process in decision-making. These policies should cover areas such as admissions, faculty appointments, promotions, research funding, and financial management. This encourages Universities to focus on outcomes and results and also investing in faculty development programs to enhance teaching and research capabilities. A well-trained and motivated faculty contributes to the overall success of the University.

Keywords: Due Process Policy; Transparency; Meritocracy; Nigerian Public Sector; Social Security; Public Administration.

Introduction

The Nigerian government introduced the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU), also known as the Due Process Office, to address corruption and improve transparency and accountability in public procurement and project execution. The office was formally established in 2003 under the leadership of the Senior Special Assistant to the President and was designed to ensure compliance with procurement guidelines and proper implementation of government projects (Ezekwesili, 2003). According to Anyafo (2015), the major objective of the unit was to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the procurement of public projects and services.

Nigeria has continued to experience several economic challenges such as inflation, unemployment, food shortages, stagnant growth, and external debt (Aguolu, 2017). Ekpo (2016) noted that these challenges are linked to factors such as political instability, inadequate infrastructure, poor policy implementation, overdependence on oil, and corruption. Corruption has significantly weakened public institutions and hindered national development. Obasanjo (2004) observed that corruption became institutionalized in Nigeria before 1999, leading to the decline of public institutions and the subversion of due process and democratic values.

Due process therefore emerged as a mechanism for ensuring openness, accountability, and transparency in government activities and contract awards (Ezekwesili, 2004). It emphasizes adherence to established procedures and competitive bidding in public procurement (Obasanjo, 2003). In Nigerian universities, due process involves the fair and transparent application of rules and regulations in administration, admissions, examinations, promotions, and conflict resolution (Bassey, 2016). According to Olarewaju (2019), due process promotes fairness, equity, accountability, and effective conflict resolution within universities. It also helps maintain academic standards and public confidence in tertiary institutions. It is against this background that this paper examined the impact of due process in the actualization of public sector objectives in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this paper is to ascertain the impact of due process in the actualization of public sector objectives in Nigeria. The specific objective of this study was to:

- Ascertain if due process is still been observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU).

Research Question

This research question below guided the study;

- To what extent is due process observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic, non-academic staff and students?

Research Hypothesis

To come out with a reliable result, the hypothesis below was formulated for the study;

- Ho: Due process is not observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic, non-academic staff and students.

Hi: Due process is still observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic, non-academic staff and students.

Scope of Study

The scope is on the impact of due process on the actualization of public sector objectives in Nigeria with emphasis on the Academics, Students and Non-Teaching Staff of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. The geographical area of Igbariam in particular Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University in Anambra state was the focus. The motive behind this study is to ascertain the extent of due process in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University.

Conceptual Framework

Due Process Mechanism

Due process has become the adopted tool for the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU) which is the unit tasked with implementing Nigeria's Public Procurement Reform Programme. The BMPIU was established by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2001 in fulfillment of his tenacious commitment to ensuring transparency and accountability in the Management of Nigerians Public Resources (Oribuyaku, 2005).

A diagnostic study conducted in 2001 into the state of Federal Government Public Procurement revealed that Nigeria may have lost several hundreds of Billions of Naira over the last two decades because of flagrant abuse of procedures for award of public contracts, inflation of contract costs, lack of transparency, competence – based competition and merit as the fundamental criteria for award of public contracts. The findings of the study made it imperative that the country urgently needed to reform the procurement system if Nigeria is to reduce the large scale corruption of waste that had reduced the efficiency of her public sector. The vision of the BMPIU was to help move Nigeria to a level where public procurement is governed by the principles of Integrity, transparency, competence and competitiveness as National Ethos. The mission of the BMPIU was to use the Due Process Policy to reestablish and sustain an open, transparent and competitive Federal Procurement system that is integrity-driven, uphold spending within Budget limits and ensures speedy implementation of projects in other to achieve value-for-money outcomes without sacrificing quality and standards (BMPIU white paper, 2011).

Over the years, the public procurement system in Nigeria has been grossly abused leading to huge losses of resources. In a bid to sanitize the system, the Federal Government set up a Due Process Unit under the presidency to undertake the reform (BMPIU, 2015). Due Process is defined as a policy for ensuring strict compliance with openness, competition and cost accuracy rules and procedures that should guide contract award (BMPIU 2015). Due process implies that governmental activities and businesses should be carried out openly, economically and transparently without favouritism and corruptible tendencies (Ezekwesili, 2015). Literature on Due Process is scanty especially as it applies to the public service in Nigeria. The concept Of Due Process has been described as the legal requirement that the state must respect all of the legal rights that are owned to a person.

Actualization of Public Sector Objectives in Nigeria

The actualization of public sector objectives in Nigeria remains a critical issue in governance and national development. The public sector is primarily established to provide essential services, ensure equitable distribution of resources, maintain law and order, and promote socio-economic development. However, the achievement of these objectives has been challenged by several institutional, administrative, and political factors. Despite these challenges, the Nigerian public sector continues to play a significant role in national transformation through policy implementation, infrastructure development, public service delivery, and economic regulation. Public sector objectives in Nigeria are fundamentally geared toward promoting the welfare of citizens through efficient service delivery, transparency, accountability, and sustainable development. According to Adamolekun (2002), the public sector serves as

an instrument through which government policies and programmes are executed to achieve societal goals. These objectives include the provision of education, healthcare, security, transportation, employment opportunities, and economic stability.

The actualization of these objectives depends largely on the effectiveness and efficiency of public institutions. Effective public administration ensures that government policies are translated into tangible benefits for citizens. In Nigeria, several reforms have been introduced to improve public sector performance, including civil service reforms, monetization policies, privatization, and due process mechanisms. The introduction of the Due Process Policy under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo was aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, and prudent management of public resources (Bureau of Public Procurement [BPP], 2007). One major factor influencing the realization of public sector objectives in Nigeria is good governance. Good governance entails accountability, transparency, rule of law, responsiveness, and effective public participation in governance processes. According to the World Bank (1992), good governance is essential for efficient public sector management and sustainable development. Where good governance principles are absent, corruption, inefficiency, and mismanagement tend to hinder the achievement of public sector goals.

Corruption remains one of the greatest obstacles to the actualization of public sector objectives in Nigeria. Corrupt practices such as embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, and contract inflation divert public resources away from developmental projects and reduce the quality of service delivery. Transparency International (2021) noted that corruption significantly weakens institutional capacity and public trust in government institutions. Consequently, funds meant for infrastructure, healthcare, education, and other developmental projects are often mismanaged. Another important determinant is human resource capacity within the public sector. Skilled and motivated personnel are essential for effective policy implementation and service delivery. Armstrong (2009) argued that organizational performance largely depends on the quality, competence, and commitment of its workforce. In Nigeria, inadequate training, poor remuneration, and political interference often affect the productivity of public servants. Therefore, continuous capacity building and merit-based recruitment are necessary for improving institutional efficiency.

Due Process and the Actualization of Public Sector Objectives

According to Ezekwesili (2004), due process was introduced to promote fiscal discipline, transparency, accountability, and public trust in governance by correcting irregularities in public procurement and contract administration. The policy was designed to ensure competitive bidding, value for money, participation of competent contractors, and adherence to procurement standards and regulations. It also established guidelines for public sector procurement and mechanisms for monitoring and reporting unethical practices.

Wahab (2006) noted that the due process policy was supported by procurement legislation to institutionalize transparency, reduce corruption, and align Nigeria's procurement system with global standards. The legislation also aimed at promoting competition, supporting local industries, reducing the cost of governance, and ensuring proper regulation of contract awards. Among its provisions were restrictions on mobilization fees and the establishment of the Federal Public Procurement Bureau to supervise procurement processes.

The Due Process Policy has also contributed significantly to cost reduction and accountability in government spending. According to *This Day Newspaper* (July 13, 2004), the policy saved Nigeria over ₦102 billion within two years through the reduction of inflated contract costs. Similarly, the BMPIU White Paper (2001) reported that over ₦137 billion was saved through due process mechanisms, while several contracts that violated procurement procedures were cancelled and re-awarded based on transparency, competition, and accountability standards. The policy has therefore improved fiscal management, public confidence, and efficiency in the utilization of government resources.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of analysis used for this study is the structural-functionalist theory. The structural-functional theory is a perspective in sociology that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. It asserts that our lives are guided by social structures which are relatively stable patterns of social behavior. Social structures give shape to our lives- for example, in families, the community, and through religious organizations.

Tenets of the theory

However, structural –functionalism, tracing its root to Talcott Parsons (1976), believed in the existence in the political system of four basic functions; adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance (Varma, 2000).

The structural- functional analysis revolves around certain concepts- more important of them being the concepts of functions and structures (Varma, 2000). Function is generally defined as the objective consequence(s) of a pattern of action for the system (in this case social or political) in which it occurs (Young, 1968). Varma (1965) stresses that structural-functionalism revolves around two main concepts-functionalism and structures, on the basis of which three questions could be posed:

1. What basic functions are fulfilled in any given political systems?
2. By what structure?
3. Under which conditions?

Functions have been defined by Robert Merton (1966) as those observed consequence which make for the adoption and adjustment of a given system. Varma (1965) notes that while functions deal with the consequence-involving objectives, as well as processes of

patterns of actions, structures refers to the arrangements within the system which performs the functions. The basic assumption of the structural functional framework is that all systems have structures which can be identified and these structures perform functions within the system necessary for its existence.

Thus, while functions deal with the consequences- involving objectives as well as processes of patterns of actions, structures refer to those arrangements within the system which perform the functions. However, structural functionalism assumes that a society is a system of interrelated parts and subsystems which function or engage in activities that promote the survival of the whole system (Harper, 1989). Mack and Bradford (1979) in Harper (1989), assert that there are five functional requisites which are;

1. The replacement of individuals (by reproduction or recruitment)
2. Socialization (enabling individuals to participate)
3. The production of goods and services (hence, an economy)
4. The provision of social order (hence, a political system)
5. The maintenance of common symbols, values and motivations (hence, culture).

Therefore, the basic assumption of this analysis is that all systems have structure which is identifiable and that the parts of these structures perform functions within the system and which derive meaning only from the working of the system.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The structural functionalism theory was adopted as the framework for analyzing due process and accountability in the public sector. According to Varma (2000), every society is made up of structures that perform specific functions necessary for the survival and stability of the system. In this study, these structures include departments within the university system, government ministries, parastatals, contractors, and other agencies involved in public administration and contract execution. For these structures to remain relevant, they must effectively perform their assigned responsibilities in line with societal expectations.

The theory further explains that corruption and inefficiency in public institutions necessitated the establishment of the Due Process Policy to ensure accountability, transparency, and proper performance of institutional functions. Due process therefore serves as a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating how public institutions discharge their duties.

According to Talcott Parsons (1976), every political system performs four major functions: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and pattern maintenance. Structural functionalism therefore emphasizes the relationship between institutional structures and the functions they perform in achieving government objectives (Eminue, 2001). The study applies this theory by arguing that when government agencies and related institutions adhere to due process principles and established rules, corruption and irregularities in public contract administration can be minimized.

Methodology

This paper employed a descriptive survey research design in which questionnaires are administered on Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Academics, Students and Non-teaching Staff of the University. The area of this study was Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU), Igbariam campus. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, formerly known as Anambra State University, is a state-owned university in Nigeria. The population of this study comprised of all students and staff of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam campus. The population of study is 75,700 and this figure was from the office of the school registrar (2022/2023 session).

Population Distribution for the Academic, Non-Teaching and the Students

Table 1:

Categories	No.
Academic Staff	2,500
Non-Teaching Staff	2,500
Students	70,700
Total	75,700

In order for the researchers to be able to control the large and the entire population of this study, a sample was drawn. In determining the sample size for the research work, the Taro Yamani (1967) formula was adopted; a simple random sampling procedure was adopted in choosing the population of the study as it involves Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam campus which is the area under the research study, hence indicate a heterogeneous population). The sample size was four hundred (400) for Academic, Non-teaching and the students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam campus the study area. The sample size for this study was determined statistically using the Taro Yamane's (1967) formula. The formula is given as:

Which is,
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where N = Population of the study

n = sample size

e = margin of error

I= Unit (a constant value)

e = 0.05

Since the population of the study = 75,700

Substituting for n (sample size), it becomes

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{75,700}{(1 + 75,700 (0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{75,700}{(1 + 75,700 (0.025)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{75,700}{75,701 (0.025)^2}$$

$$= 399.9 = 400 \text{ (Approximately).}$$

Data for the study were collected through both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained using structured questionnaires and in-depth interview guides designed in line with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was divided into sections to obtain respondents' socio-demographic information and relevant responses from staff and students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. The researchers worked with two research assistants who were properly briefed on the administration of the questionnaire to ensure clarity and efficiency. The instrument was face and content validated by three Professors from the Faculty of Social Sciences of the university to ensure that the questionnaire measured what it was intended to measure. To ensure reliability, the test-retest technique was adopted. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher and the assistants, and all 400 copies were retrieved. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages, and charts, while regression analysis was used to test the research questions and hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter covers the presentation of data as well as its analysis. The data obtained for the study were mainly through the use of questionnaires, observations and interview which were designed to assess, "The Impact of Due Process in the Actualization of Public Sector Objectives in Nigeria: A Study of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus".

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 17-50 years	280	68.3	70.0	70.0
Valid 51-70 years	120	29.3	30.0	100.0
Total	400	97.6	100.0	
Missing System	10	2.4		
Total	410	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

In classifying the respondents by their age distribution in the above table, it was gathered that 280 (68.3%) were 17-50 years and 120 (29.3%) were 51-70 years.

Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Sex

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid FEMALE	310	78.3	70.0	70.0
Valid MALE	90	21.3	30.0	100.0
Total	400	97.6	100.0	
Missing System	10	2.4		
Total	410	100.0		

Source:Field Survey, 2023.

The table above shows that 310 of the respondents which is 78.3% were females, while 90 of the respondents amounting to 21.3% were males. This result automatically x-rays that there were more females than males in the field than male participants.

Data on Variables of Subjects’ under Investigation

Research Question: To what extent is due process observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic and non-academic staff? The questionnaire items for this section are 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The responses to research question one is presented in table 4

Table 4: Respondents mean and standard deviation scores on extent due process is observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic and non-academic staff.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1.	Due process policy has brought about meritocracy in recruitment in selected Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic, non-academic staff and the students?	400	3.00	1.675	True
2.	Laws and procedures reign supreme in selected in the University?	400	3.40	.491	True
3.	Due process has affected the appointment pattern in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU)?	400	3.09	.995	True
4.	Due process has affected preferential treatment in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU)?	400	4.00	1.551	True
5.	Due Process has impacted on embezzlement tendency in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU)?	400	3.76	1.627	True

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The result in table 3 shows that the respondents agreed with the items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as to the extent due process is observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic and non-academic staff which means that every members of the participants was strongly behind the above notions.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses testing involves a set rules that leads to a decision in the acceptance or rejection of a given phenomenon. The tool that is used here is Chi-square (χ^2). Chi-square is a method that measures the discrepancies existing between the observed and expected frequencies.

Hypotheses:

Ho Due process is not observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic and non-academic staff.

Hi Due process is still observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic and non-academic staff.

Using the information gotten from question 1,2,3,4 and 5 the hypotheses were tested.

Hypothesis and table 5

Chi-Square Tests 1

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1511.265 ^a	40	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1172.519	40	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	71.445	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	400		

a. 12 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.84. (Computation from SPSS 23 Analysis).

From the table above, the result showed that due process is observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic, non-academic staff; as well as the students. $V(1, 40) = 1511.265$, If p value < is less than 0.05, you reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternate hypotheses. It is based on that decision rule that we accepted that due process is observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic, non-academic staff; as well as the students.

Discussion on Finding

Based on the result of the tested hypothesis, the finding below was generated:

- Due process is observed in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) among academic, non-academic staff and the Students. It was based on this that Omhenka (2021), argues that due process upholds the rule of law by ensuring that government actions and decisions are in line with constitutional provisions, statutory laws, and regulations. It emphasizes the importance of following legal procedures, respecting individuals' rights, and providing fair and unbiased treatment to all stakeholders involved in public sector activities.

Conclusion

Following the data gathered and analysed, the study came to the conclusion that:

The majority of respondents believed that in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU), Igbariam campus, Academic, Non-academic staff and Students adhere to due process. Also, according to the majority of respondents, the importance of due process in preserving government funds for the public sector is very high and the majority of respondents believed that due process would reduce corruption in Nigeria's public sector especially in the University system.

Recommendation

Based on the finding above, the researchers recommended that:

- Universities should establish clear and comprehensive policies and procedures that promote due process in decision-making. These policies should cover areas such as admissions, faculty appointments, promotions, research funding, and financial management.

Contribution to Knowledge

Studies of due process have until now mainly stressed on legal, managerial, financial and technical dimensions of public accountability. Few studies have addressed public accountability issues of governances in regards to due process. Secondly, this study is of immense help to the policy makers in government of today to be able to know, understand and assert the adequate role of the due process as a key to public accountability in substance of our present democracy.

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