

Investigating Factors Affecting E-Government Procurement (E-GP) Acceptance Decision Among Nigerian Small And Medium Enterprises

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Abstract: Adopting e-Government Procurement in public contract has been advanced by scholar as a positive way of increasing SMEs access to public procurement market because it guarantees swift access to information, transparency in public procurement proceedings and removes bureaucratic bottleneck associated with government contracts. However, acceptance of the automated system of procurement by SMEs has been reported low in literature. This present study investigates three of the major factors that affect SMEs acceptance of e-Government Procurement in Nigeria. Data were collected using questionnaire from 200 SMEs owners and managers who were conveniently selected. Multiple regressions were used in analysing the data. The empirical findings indicate that cultural, security as well as legal factor affect SMEs acceptance of e-GP with cultural factor being the most significant predictor of e-GP acceptance decision.

The study recommends that government must embark on massive enlightenment campaign to create awareness on the benefits of adoption of e-Government Procurement to all stakeholders particularly SMEs owners, ensure that the system is structured in a way that it will guarantee security and confidentiality of information and that relevant legal backing is given to the process.

Keywords: e- Government Procurement, SMEs, Acceptance decision, Pre-adoption survey, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the basic objectives of public procurement is to obtain the best value for money in the most efficient and effective ways while ensuring that the process is carried out in a manner which promotes competition, economy, transparency and accountability. However, efficient public procurement management has been a herculean task particularly in the developing country where procurement tendering process is characterized by high level corruption couple with external interferences.

Corruption, which is feeding fat on lack of transparency, competition and accountability has not only resulted into waste of public funds, it has also denied Small and Medium Enterprises who are considered the engine room of economic development the benefit of participating in Public contract. According to Wekesa, Namusonge and Nambusa (2016), the advent of corruption in public contracting led to distortion of

fair competition, waste of scarce resources and neglect of basic needs and services, perpetuating poverty. The most frequent argument for small firms is that they are a source of job creations (Ogechukwu 2011) and that there are various economic benefits to be derived when government buys from SMEs. (Zheng, Walker and Harland, 2006). This is because SMEs are able to adapt and change quickly and tend to be closer to their customers. (Pep rah, Mensah and Akosah (2016). According to SMEDAN/NBS (2013) Small businesses are categorized into micro ,small & and medium enterprises with micro units defined as any organization that have less than 10 employees and N5million asset, while small enterprises are units having between 10-49 employees and above N5million but less than 50Million in asset. Medium enterprises are defined to have between 50-199 employees and above N50million and less than N500 million in assets. While corruption is detrimental to business for all types of company-

large and small, multinational and local- it poses particular problem for smaller firms. (UNIDO/UNODC, 2007).

Public procurement is the acquisition by any means of goods, works or services by the government (PPA, 2007). It involves the process of soliciting for tenders, submission and opening of bids received, examination and evaluation, award and project implementations. Literature is replete with evidences that opening of public procurement market to small businesses is one of the best ways to enhance their growth. The advantages derivable from the mutual relationship between public procurement and small businesses have also been advanced by scholars. (Zeng et al 2016; Ebig and Ghas, 2016). However, SMES are usually reluctant to sell to government (Olusegun and Akinbode, 2016; MacManus, 1991). The reasons adduced for this low morale of SMEs ranges from lack of transparency to information obscurity and from disproportionate eligibility criteria to bureaucratic nature of public procurement. (Kaspar & Puddephatt, 2016; Akenronye & Aju, 2013; Olusegun & Akinbode, 2016).

There have been advocacy for adoption of e-procurement in public contract as a way of eliminating barriers that SMEs face in public procurement. Wekesa, Namusonge and Nambusa (2016) underscore the importance of e-procurement when they averred that in order to meet today's operating challenges, regional and local government are turning to ICT to enhance the services for residents, businesses and improve internal efficiencies by lowering cost and increasing productivity. However, findings such as that by Gunasekanran et al, (2009); Angeles & Nath, (2007) have revealed poor acceptance level of the e-Government Procurement (e-GP) particularly by small firms who ordinarily should embrace the system.

Studies have shown poor acceptance in some countries where e-procurement has been adopted. However, to the best of our knowledge no empirical study has been carried out on factors that may affect SMEs acceptance of e-GP decision in Nigeria. This may be partly because the country is yet to fully embrace the technology based system. This study seeks to bridge the gap that exists. Though e-GP is beneficial, it would be wrong to assume that it will be generally accepted here in Nigeria Hence, the need to investigate if these same factors that affect other countries could affect Nigerian SMEs decision to accept e-GP. This will assist the Nigerian government on the steps to take in ensuring effective take up of the project.

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to empirically investigate the factors affecting e-Government Procurement acceptance decision by Nigerian SMEs.

a. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To identify factors that affect e-GP acceptance decision by SMEs
- ✓ To assess the relationship between these factors which are security, legal, and cultural and SMEs acceptance decision of e-GP system.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of e-Government procurement acceptance decision by SMEs has been extensively discussed in literatures. Scholars have also argued that to provide values of electronic business, it must be accepted by a wide variety of companies, large, small, rich or poor, automation focuses and automation illiterate. (Ferguson, 1995. and Grandona & Parson, 2004). This review covers the definition and benefits of e-Government procurement, empirical studies and the conceptual framework adopted for the study.

A. DEFINITION AND BENEFIT OF E-GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

E-Procurement has been defined in various ways. For instance E- Procurement according to Presutti (2003) is an information technology –based procuring system that lies at the input end of the supply chain. In the view of World Bank (2003), E-GP is the use of Information & Communications Technology (especially the Internet) by governments in conducting their procurement relationships with suppliers for the acquisition of goods, works, and consultancy services required by the public sector. Hassan et.al. (2014) opined that e-procurement has been changing the way organizations acquire goods or services. Eadie et al., (2007) argued that an organization which uses e-procurement enjoys the advantage of price reduction in tendering and that since it is easier to communicate requirements in a quicker more accessible manner, it will result in a better understanding of requirement and due compliance. For Small firms, online publications of tender notices in a centralized web portal allow suppliers to search and locate tender opportunities with minimal effort. e-GP systems have the facility to alert suppliers to particular opportunities advertised (ADB, 2013).

B. EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Azanlerigu and Akay (2015), carried out a study on the prospects and challenges of e-procurement in some selected Public Institutions in Ghana. The study revealed that employee competency, inadequate technological infrastructure and security of procurement transaction data were challenges to e-procurement adoptions in organization under review.

Similarly, Eadie, Perera and Heaney (2010) while identifying e-Procurement drivers and barriers for UK Construction organizations and ranking of these from the perspective of Quantity Surveyors revealed that the most important drivers for UK Quantity Surveying firm is Process, Transaction and Administration cost savings with "increased Quantity though increased accuracy (elimination of errors through computer use) and "convenience of archiving completed work" ranking second; while most important barriers for UK Quantity Surveyors firms are 'Prevention of tampering with documents –changes, followed by "Insufficient assessment of systems prior to installation and confidentiality of information-unauthorized viewing.

Yusoff et al.,(2011) in their study of Electronic Government procurement adoption Behaviour amongst Malaysian SMEs investigated the relationship between a

model of e-procurement adoption behaviour and level of government e-procurement adoption amongst SMEs in Malaysia revealed that a positive relationship exist between all dimensions in “power” and level of e-procurement adoption among SME. The study also revealed that there exists a positive and significant difference between “trust” and e-procurement adoption among SME. This means that, the high (low) level of “trust” will determine the high (low) e-procurement adoption amongst SMEs and also, there is a positive relationship between all dimensions in “value” and e-procurement adoption amongst SMEs.

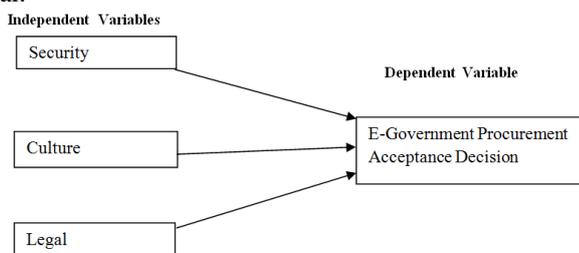
Using a qualitative case-study approach, Rahim (2008) identified two sets of factors that affect acceptance of e-procurement systems in Australian City Council. The first set of factors include system usefulness, ease of use, system reliability ,employee training and employee involvement, and the second set consists of council’s senior management support and support received from the vendor of the e-procurement system.

Korir, Afande and Maina (2015) in their study of constraints to effective implementation of e-procurement in the public sector in Kenya Government ministries revealed that lack of legal framework and budgetary support are the major constraints to e-procurement implementation.

Aduwo et al.,(2016) , in their study of barriers to the uptake of e-procurement in the Nigerian building industry discovered that the two factors with the most significant adverse effect on the uptake of e-procurement were the high investment cost, and lack of technical expertise required in setting up e-Procurement and processes. They further revealed that the lack of top management support, lack of evidence of benefits and Technical, infrastructure political and cultural issues are three strongest predictors of low uptake of e-procurement by consulting firms and consultants in Nigeria Building Industry.

C. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the above literature review, different factors affecting e-Government Procurement acceptance decision have been identified. They include Security, infrastructure, legal, compatibility, cost, culture amongst others. However, for the purpose of this study, three out of the major factors were studied. They are: Security, Infrastructure, Culture and Legal.



Source: Authors, 2016

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

a. SECURITY OF DATA

According to webopedia, in the computer industry, the term security refers to techniques for ensuring that data stored

in a computer cannot be read or compromised by any individuals without authorization. It involves prevention of unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, inspection, recording or destruction of information.

The e-Procurement involves movement of Tenderers information online. The risk of tampering with Tenderers confidential information, unauthorized viewing of information, data transmission to the wrong recipient as well as partial data display is becoming a stumbling block to acceptance of e-Government procurement. According to Yen and Ng (2002) cited in Azanleguri and Akay (2015) both buyer and seller firms sees lack of adequate security measures to protect data as one the major setbacks in the implementation of the automated system. Similarly, Sheng (2002) argued that security is a major concerns especially in the context of electronic payments. He further stressed that the capability of any system to provide secure data transfer was regarded as a major criterion for both existing and potential users of e-procurement.

We therefore proposed our first hypothesis that:

H_{01} : Security of data does not significantly affect SMEs acceptance of e-GP.

H_1 : Security of data significantly affect SMEs acceptance of e-GP.

b. CULTURE

Issues of cultural barriers in e-Government procurement acceptance and adoption is cantered around lack of flexibility of use, complicated procedures and extended relationships, lack of technical expertise, resistance to change as well as Bureaucratic dysfunctional ties as identified in literature. (Davila, Gupta and Palmer, 2003).

Eadie et al (2007) revealed that cultural factors such as resistance to change, lack of leadership and lack of widely accepted solution impede e-procurement acceptance decision as responsible for the low implementation of the internet based procurement system in the USA. This findings by Eadie et al., (2007) concurred with the findings of Tas and Grunber that revealed that culture is a leading factor influencing implementation and adoption of e-procurement system and that cultural specification significantly influence e-procurement. Similarly, Davila, Gupta and Palmer (2003) argued that resistance to change, lack of a widely accepted solution and lack of leadership which are cultural, are some of the biggest barriers to introduction of e-procurement within the public sector.

We therefore proposed our second hypothesis that:

H_{02} : Culture does not significantly affect SMEs acceptance of e-GP.

H_2 : Culture significantly influence e-GP acceptance decision by SMEs

c. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Legal framework is a basis of any business transaction whether in Public sector or private businesses. It defines the obligations and responsibilities of the partners transacting business with the objectives of fulfilling each other’s desired goals. (Azanlerigu and Akay, 2015). For e-Government

procurement to be adopted it must have legal backing. For SMEs, the issue of enforceability of electronic contracts, clarity of sender and tenderers information, proof of intent that is electronic signature requirement and the different national approaches to e-Government procurement needs to be addressed to guarantee their full acceptance of the automated system. This thought was captured by Kheng and Al-Hawandeh (2002) when they surmised that the laws governing B2B commerce, crossing over to e-procurement, are still undeveloped. They further expressed that questions concerning the legality and force of e-mail contracts, role of electronic signatures, and application of copyright laws to electronically copied documents are still unresolved.

The existing legal framework on Public Procurement in Nigeria did not cover the aspect of e-Government procurement transaction. The Public Procurement Act, (PPA) 2007 provides that a procuring entity (PE) that wishes to procure goods, works or services must do so by soliciting for bids by way of advertisement in at least two National Newspapers, public procurement journal, PE's website and notice board. Even though the law recognizes the internet as a mode of passing information on public contract, it does not explicitly make provision for submission of bids online. Tender documents are expected to be submitted and dropped in a tampered –proof box. The weakness in this frame work therefore may inhibit the adoption and growth of e-procurement initiatives.

Even though much has been achieved since the promulgation of the PPA, 2007, there is still need for a reform and full implementation of the provision of the law. One of the things to be done is to legalise the adoption and use of e-procurement in every government contract. Until this is done, the acceptance rate and full migration from manual/traditional way of carrying out procurement exercise to a computer –based system will still be a mirage. Absence of e-procurement specific laws and regulations has been identified as one of the biggest hurdles in SMEs adoption of e-procurement in developing countries. (Altayyar and Kerridge, 2016).

We therefore propose our third hypothesis that:

H₀₃. Legal framework has no significant relationship with SMEs e-PG acceptance decision

H₃. Legal framework has a significant relationship with SMEs e-Procurement acceptance decision

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted quantitative research approach. The respondents include SMEs owners and managers who were conveniently selected for the study. The study was carried out in Computer Village, Ikeja of Lagos Nigeria. Lagos State was classified by SMEDAN as ICT sector. Computer Village Ikeja is a market with high concentration of small business owners whose major line of business is Information and Computer related items. Data was collected using structured questionnaire. The respondents were asked to rank their acceptance with statements on factors that affect their e-procurement acceptance decision based on a five point Likert scale (5= strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3=Indifferent, 2= Disagree and 1=strongly disagree). The Likert scale was adopted

because it appears to be the most preferred scale when studying human perception and behaviour (Sanders et al., 2009).

The measurement scales used in the questionnaire for the study were obtained from literature particularly the study conducted by Eadie, Perera and Heaney (2010) on identification of e-procurement drivers and barriers for UK Construction Organizations. Out of the 200 questionnaires distributed to respondents, only 119 were considered usable. This gives a response rate of 59.5%. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated with a view to ascertain the reliability of the five-point scale which has been used in the survey. According to Hair et al., (2010) reliability of a study tool is the degree to which the measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results. In this case, the reliability test measures the internal consistency among the factors affecting SMEs e-procurement acceptance decision.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented in this chapter. The mean scores and Cronbach Alpha of the items measured are shown in Table I. All the coefficients of the variables were above 0.5 indicating that the five point scale measurement was reliable at the 5% significance level.

	Mean	Std. Dev	Cronbach Alpha
Cultural factors			
Lack of Flexibility affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.61	.585	
Complicated Process affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.55	.607	0.76
Lack of Sufficient Technical Knowledge affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.50	.595	
Bureaucratic Nature of e-Procurement affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.59	.574	
Security factors			
Unwarranted Tampering of Document affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.55	.516	
Lack of Confidentiality affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.69	.500	0.69
Partial Data Display affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.66	.477	
Data Going to Wrong Destination affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.75	.436	
Legal factors			
Uncertainty about the Enforceability of electronic contract affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.80	.403	
Different national approach to e-procurement affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.82	.383	

Lack of clarity of sender affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.84	.368	0.63
Issue of electronic signature affect e-GP acceptance decision	4.91	.291	

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Results

A. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis was carried out to ascertain the correlation between the variables. The analysis of the correlation is presented in Table II. The findings revealed that there is positive correlation between culture and e-GP Acceptance decision as shown by a correlation figure of 0.623 (p<0.01). It was also clear that there is a positive correlation between Security and e-GP Acceptance decision with a correlation figure of 0.617; (p<0.01) and that Legal factor has a positive correlation with e-GP Acceptance decision with a correlation figure of 0.292 (p<0.01). In general, the analysis revealed that all the three factors i.e. Security, Legal and Culture are positive correlated and significant to e-GP Acceptance decision.

		1	2	3	4
e-Government Acceptance decision	Pearson Cor.	1			
	Sig.(2-tailed) N	119			
Cultural Factors	Pearson Cor.	.992**	1		
	Sig.(2-tailed) N	.000 119	.000 119		
Security Factors	Pearson Cor.	.617**	.623**	1	
	Sig.(2-tailed) N	.000 119	.000 119	.000 119	
Legal Factors	Pearson Cor.	.292**	.302**	.517**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed) N	.001 119	.001 119	.000 119	.000 119

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

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

B. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

In order to ascertain the relationship that exist between the dependent variable which is e-GP Acceptance decision and the independent variables which are culture, security and Legal, a multiple regression analysis was undertaken. The researchers used SPSS 20.0 to compute the measurements of the multiple regressions used for the study. Table III shows ANOVA Table, while Table IV shows the Regression coefficient.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	28.146	3	9.382	2278.359	.000 ^b
Residual	.474	115	.004		
Total	28.620	118			

a. Dependent Variable: Adoption of e-Government Procurement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Legal Factors, Cultural Factors, Security Factors

R = 0.992^a, R²=983, Adj. R²= .983

Table 3: ANOVA

As shown in Table III above, it was revealed that all the three independent variables tested in the study explain 98% of the e-GP acceptance decision of SMEs as represented by the

adjusted R². This means that other factors affecting e-GP acceptance decisions which were not part of what was studied in this research work contribute only 2% of the e-GP Acceptance decisions. However, combination of the independent variables tested in the study were significant and affect e-GP Acceptance decision. This is evidently supported by the P-values which are less than 0.05. Further investigation on the impact of the other factors which contribute to e-GP not included in this study is necessary for effective implementation the e-Government procurement system.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.037	.118		.312	.755
1 Cultural Factors	1.003	.016	.991	64.639	.000
Security Factors	.008	.024	.005	.315	.753
Legal Factors	-.020	.028	-.010	-.716	.476

a. Dependent Variable: Adoption of e-Government Procurement

R=.992, R²=.983, SE=.064; (F-test = 2278.40, p<0.05)

Table 4: Regression Coefficient

The regression equation: Y = β₀ + β₁ X₁ + β₂ X₂ + β₃ X₃ becomes Y= 0.037 + 1.003 X₁ + 0.008X₂ -0.20X₃ where X₁ = Culture, X₂= Security and X₃ = Legal. β₁- Coefficient are = 0,1,2,3.

The analysis of the Regression Coefficient as shown in Table IV, established that considering all the three factors (culture, security and legal) constant at zero, acceptance of e-GP will be 0.37. The findings also revealed that all the other independence variables at zero, a unit increase in cultural factor will lead to 1.003 increase in e-GP Acceptance decision; a unit increase in security factor will lead to .008 increase in e-GP Acceptance decision and a unit increase in legal factor will lead to -020 decrease in e-GP Acceptance decision. This clearly show that e-GP acceptance decision of SMEs is mostly affected by culture followed by lack of security while it is least affected by absence of legal backing. This study supports the findings of Tas and Grunber (2008) that revealed that culture is a leading factor influencing implementation and adoption of e-procurement system and that cultural specification significantly influence e-Procurement.

In this study, three hypotheses were postulated. The first hypothesis postulated that cultural factor has no significant effect on e-GP acceptance decision of SMEs. However, the result of the simple regression as shown in Table V revealed that cultural factor has Ftest value of 6922.6 and p-value of 0.00. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Meaning that, cultural factor has significant effect on e-GP acceptance decision. This findings is in concurrence with the findings by Tas and Grunber (2008) that revealed that culture is a leading factor influencing implementation and adoption of e-procurement system and that cultural specification significantly influence e-procurement as well as buttressed the argument of Davila, Gupta and Palmer (2003) that resistance to change which is cultural is a stumbling block to e-procurement implementation.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	28.144	1	28.144	6922.582	.000 ^b
Residual	.476	117	.004		

	Total	28.620	118			
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a. *Dependent Variable: Adoption of e-Government Procurement*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Factors*

c. $R = 0.992$; $R^2 = 0.983$; $Adj. R = .983$

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.025	.055		-.453	.652
Cultural Factors	1.004	.012	.992	83.202	.000

a. *Dependent Variable: Adoption of e-Government Procurement*

Table 5: Simple Regression Analysis of the Effect of Cultural Factors on e-GP Acceptance Decision

The second hypothesis postulated that security factor does not affect e-GP acceptance decision. From the result of the simple regression as shown in Table VI it was discovered that security factor has Ftest value of = 72.09 and p-value of 0.00. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Meaning that, security factor has significant effect on e-GP acceptance decision. This findings is in concurrence with the findings by Eadie, Perera and Heaney (2010) which revealed that ‘Prevention of tampering with documents – changes, followed by “Insufficient assessment of systems prior to installation and confidentiality of information-unauthorized viewing are major factors affecting UK consultants acceptance of e-GP.

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	10.912	1	10.912	72.094	.000 ^b
Residual	17.708	117	.151		
Total	28.620	118			

a. *Dependent Variable: Adoption of e-Government Procurement*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Security Factors*

c. $R = 0.617$; $R^2 = 0.381$; $Adj. R = .376$

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.451	.483		.935	.352
Security Factors	.877	.103	.617	8.491	.000

a. *Dependent Variable: Adoption of e-Government Procurement*

Table 6: Simple Regression Analysis of the Effect of Security Factors on e-GP Acceptance Decision

The third hypothesis postulated that legal factor does not affect e-GP acceptance decision. The result of the simple regression as shown in Table VII revealed that legal factor has Ftest value of 10.887 and p-value of 0.0015. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Meaning that, legal factor has significant effect on e-GP acceptance decision. This finding is in concurrence with the findings by Korir, Afande and Maina (2015) which revealed that lack of legal

framework and budgetary support are the major constraints to e-procurement implementation.

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2.436	1	2.436	10.887	.001 ^b
Residual	26.183	117	.224		
Total	28.620	118			

a. *Dependent Variable: Adoption of e-Government Procurement*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Legal Factors*

c. $R = 0.292$; $R^2 = 0.85$; $Adj. R = .077$

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.751	.846		2.071	.041
Legal Factors	.575	.174	.292	3.299	.001

a. *Dependent Variable: Adoption of e-Government Procurement*

Table 7: Simple Regression Analysis of the Effect of Legal Factors on e-GP Acceptance Decision

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study set out to investigate the factors that could affect SMEs e-GP acceptance decision in Nigeria. The objective of the study was to empirically examine the effect of culture, security and legal framework on e-GP acceptance decision. The present study has established the facts that lack of flexibility, complicated process which are culturally related; unwarranted tampering of document, lack of confidentiality, partial data display which are security issues as well as uncertainty about the enforceability, different national approach and issue of electronic signature which are legal issues could affect SMEs acceptance decision of e-GP. In essence, the findings revealed that culture, security and legal framework affect e-GP acceptance decision and that cultural factors are the most predictor of e-GP acceptance decision of SMEs in Nigeria.

B. CONCLUSION

Adoption of e-Government Procurement has been seen as having the potential of increasing SMEs access to public contracts because it guarantees swift access to information, transparency in public procurement proceedings, less paper work among others. This study concludes that though, e-GP is beneficial particularly for SMEs, its acceptance can be hampered by factors such as lack of supporting legal backing, insecurity of tenderers information as well as cultural imbalances as its relate to Information technology. Nigeria Government is currently making effort to fully embrace e-GP

system. However, it is important that these issues of culture, security and legal framework associated with e-GP are properly looked into and addressed before committing efforts and energy to the implementation of the automation system.

C. RECOMMENDATION

In view of the findings of this study, the followings are recommended:

- ✓ There is need for the government to embark on massive enlightenment campaign to create awareness on the benefits of adoption of e-Government Procurement to all stakeholders particularly SMEs owners. This will address the issue of resistance to change which is a major issue as far as cultural limitations in e-GP acceptance is concerned
- ✓ There is also need to address the issue of lack of legal framework backing e-GP in government contracting. This will require reforming the existing legal framework guiding public procurement in Nigeria most importantly the Public Procurement Act, 2007 to accommodate e-tendering as well as other features of e-GP as practiced in some developed world.
- ✓ It is also important that the automated system is well designed in a manner that it will be user friendly, and that issues of partial data display, tampering of tenderers confidential information are properly addressed. There must be a way to ensure that unwarranted tampering of information is made impossible and where such is practically impossible, violators are easily detected and prevented electronically.

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