

IMPACT OF GEOPOLITICAL CRISES IN THE MIDDLE EAST ON PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCY IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A REVIEW-BASED ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of geopolitical crises in the Middle East, with emphasis on Iran-related tensions, on procurement efficiency in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The study adopts a review-based research design, relying on existing literature, policy documents, and empirical studies on procurement, international trade disruptions, inflation, and higher education financing. Findings reveal that Middle East crises indirectly affect procurement through rising inflation, exchange rate volatility, increased logistics costs, and global supply chain disruptions. These factors reduce the purchasing power of tertiary institutions, delay project execution, and weaken procurement planning and implementation. The study concludes that Nigerian tertiary institutions are highly vulnerable to external geopolitical shocks due to overdependence on imported goods and weak local production capacity. It recommends strengthening local procurement capacity, improving budgetary flexibility, and enhancing strategic procurement planning to mitigate external shocks.

Keywords: Inflation, Middle East, Procurement, Tertiary Education,

1.0 Introduction

Procurement plays a central role in the effective functioning of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It involves the systematic process of acquiring goods, works, and services required for teaching, research, administration, and infrastructural development. These include laboratory equipment, ICT infrastructure, furniture, library resources, vehicles, and construction materials. In Nigerian universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, procurement is not only an administrative function but also a critical determinant of institutional performance, academic quality, and research output. The procurement system in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions is guided by the Public Procurement Act (2007), which emphasizes transparency, accountability, competition, and value for money. Despite this legal framework, procurement processes are often influenced by broader economic and global forces beyond institutional control. In recent years, global geopolitical instability has increasingly become a major factor shaping procurement outcomes in developing countries, including Nigeria.

One of the most significant global regions affecting international economic stability is the Middle East, particularly due to ongoing tensions involving Iran and other regional actors. The Middle East is strategically important because it controls a large proportion of global oil supply and key maritime trade routes such as the Strait of Hormuz. Any conflict or instability in this region tends to trigger fluctuations in global oil prices, transportation costs, and international market confidence. These disruptions often extend beyond the region, affecting both developed and developing economies. For Nigeria, which is heavily dependent on imported goods for its education sector, the implications are substantial. Tertiary institutions rely extensively on foreign suppliers for advanced laboratory equipment, engineering tools, medical training resources, and digital technologies. Consequently, any increase in global prices, shipping costs, or supply chain disruptions directly affects procurement planning and execution in these institutions.

The Middle East crisis has also contributed to inflationary pressures and exchange rate volatility in the global economy. Since Nigeria imports a significant proportion of its educational infrastructure materials, fluctuations in foreign exchange rates increase procurement costs and reduce the purchasing power of institutional budgets. This situation often results in delayed projects, incomplete procurement plans, and reduced quality of acquired goods and services. Procurement in Nigerian tertiary institutions is challenged by weak domestic production capacity. The absence of strong local manufacturing industries for educational and scientific equipment increases dependence on foreign markets, making procurement systems highly vulnerable to external shocks. As a result, geopolitical crises such as those in the Middle East indirectly shape the efficiency and effectiveness of procurement operations in Nigerian higher education institutions. This study is therefore important because it situates procurement challenges within the broader context of global geopolitical instability. By focusing on the Middle East crisis, particularly Iran-related tensions, the study provides insight into how external economic shocks influence procurement performance in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Understanding these relationships is essential for developing more resilient procurement systems capable of

withstanding global uncertainties. Ultimately, the study contributes to policy discussions on improving procurement efficiency in Nigerian higher education by highlighting the need for strategic planning, diversification of supply sources, and stronger local production capacity.

2.0 Conceptual Terms

2.1 Conceptual tertiary institutions

Tertiary institutions as centres of higher learning that offer specialized academic and vocational programmes designed to prepare individuals for professional careers and leadership roles in society (Ezeani 2016). Tertiary education is the level of learning after secondary school where individuals acquire specialized knowledge and skills for careers, research, and personal development. Tertiary education is the level of learning that comes after secondary school. It includes universities, polytechnics, colleges, and other institutions where people gain specialized knowledge, skills, and qualifications in a particular field. Unlike basic schooling, tertiary education focuses on preparing learners for a career, critical thinking, research, and personal growth (Ogunode, 2026).. The objectives of Tertiary Education includes;

1. To equip students with practical and theoretical skills they need for their chosen careers. It's not just about reading books; it's about learning how to apply knowledge in real-life situations. For example, engineers learn to build, doctors learn to treat, and teachers learn to inspire.
2. To train students to think deeply and analyze situations critically. This means not just accepting information, but questioning it, evaluating evidence, and making informed decisions skills you'll use every day, both at work and in life.
3. To shape character, values, and ethics. It encourages students to become responsible citizens who can make moral decisions, respect diversity, and contribute positively to society.
4. To foster research, creativity, and innovation, helping students and faculty to find solutions to societal problems, improve technology, and advance knowledge.
5. To prepares graduates to serve society and contribute to national development. By producing skilled professionals, innovators, and leaders, tertiary institutions help build stronger communities and a more prosperous nation (Ogunode, 2026).

2.2 Conceptual of Procurement

Procurement refers to the process through which organizations acquire goods, works, and services from external sources in order to carry out their operations effectively. In the context of Nigerian public institutions, procurement involves all activities related to sourcing, purchasing, contracting, and managing supplies in line with established regulations. Bureau of Public Procurement defines procurement as the process of acquiring goods, works, or services using public funds under regulated procedures to ensure transparency and accountability. In Nigerian tertiary institutions,

procurement is governed primarily by the Public Procurement Act (2007), which provides a legal framework for ensuring that acquisitions are carried out in a transparent, competitive, and cost-effective manner.

Features of Procurement in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Procurement in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is characterized by several key features derived from the Public Procurement Act and institutional practices:

Transparency and Accountability

Procurement processes must be open and verifiable to ensure that public funds are properly utilized. The system emphasizes due process to prevent corruption and mismanagement.

Competitiveness

Contracts are awarded through competitive bidding processes to ensure fairness and equal opportunity for suppliers.

Value for Money

Procurement decisions are guided by the principle of achieving optimal value for money, balancing cost, quality, and efficiency.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

All procurement activities must comply strictly with the Public Procurement Act (2007) and guidelines issued by regulatory bodies.

Standardized Procedures

Procurement follows defined stages such as needs identification, advertisement, bidding, evaluation, and contract award.

Professionalism and Integrity

Procurement units are expected to operate with ethical standards and professional competence in managing contracts and suppliers.

Functions of Procurement Unit in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

The procurement unit is a central administrative unit responsible for managing all procurement-related activities in tertiary institutions. Its functions include:

Tender Processing and Evaluation

The unit organizes bidding processes, evaluates submitted bids, and ensures that only qualified contractors are selected.

Procurement Planning and Certification

It ensures that procurement activities align with institutional budgets and plans, and certifies all procurement transactions before execution.

Compliance with Procurement Laws

The unit ensures strict adherence to the Public Procurement Act and institutional guidelines in all procurement processes.

Secretariat Services to Tenders Board

It serves as the secretariat for procurement committees such as the Tenders Board and Procurement Planning Committee.

Liaison with Regulatory Agencies

The unit interacts with regulatory bodies such as the Bureau of Public Procurement for approvals and compliance monitoring.

Acquisition of Goods, Works, and Services

Procurement units handle the purchase of infrastructure, laboratory equipment, ICT tools, vehicles, and other institutional needs.

Ensuring Due Process and Value for Money

The unit ensures that procurement activities are conducted efficiently, economically, and transparently to achieve value for money.

Record Keeping and Documentation

It maintains procurement records, contract documents, and supplier databases for accountability and auditing purposes.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopts a systematic review-based research design. A review model is appropriate because the study does not collect primary data but synthesizes existing scholarly works, institutional reports, and policy documents.

Data Sources

Data were obtained from: Peer-reviewed journal articles on procurement and education financing; Government policy documents such as the Public Procurement Act (2007); Reports from international economic and development organizations and Empirical studies on inflation, exchange rate volatility, and supply chain disruptions

Inclusion Criteria

The study included literature that focused on: Procurement in Nigerian tertiary institutions; Global geopolitical crises and economic impacts; Inflation, logistics, and exchange rate effects on public institutions and Higher education funding and infrastructure development

Analytical Approach

The study employed thematic content analysis, where findings from literature were grouped into key themes such as: Cost escalation, Supply chain disruption, Budget constraints, Exchange rate instability and Procurement planning inefficiencies. These themes were synthesized to explain the relationship between Middle East crises and procurement performance in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

4.0 Result Effects of Middle East Crisis (with Focus on Iran) on Procurement of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

The Middle East crisis, particularly tensions involving Iran and its wider geopolitical environment, has created indirect but significant disruptions in global economic systems. Since Nigerian tertiary institutions rely heavily on imported goods for teaching, research, and infrastructure development, procurement activities are strongly affected through inflation, supply chain instability, exchange rate volatility, and rising logistics costs. These effects are transmitted through global markets rather than direct political involvement, yet they substantially weaken procurement efficiency in Nigerian universities.

Increase in Cost of Imported Educational and Research Equipment

The Middle East crisis has contributed to global inflation, especially through fluctuations in oil prices and production instability. Because many educational and research materials used in Nigerian tertiary institutions such as laboratory equipment, engineering tools, ICT infrastructure, and medical devices are imported, rising global costs directly affect procurement budgets. Institutions are forced to either reduce quantities, delay purchases, or settle for lower-quality alternatives due to insufficient funds. Empirical studies confirm that geopolitical conflicts increase inflationary pressure on public procurement systems in developing countries, thereby raising the cost of project delivery in tertiary institutions (Maduekeh & Obinwa, 2022). Dickson, (2026) observed that the conflict has greatly impacted the procurement of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, ultimately leading to an increase in the cost of imported educational and research

equipment. This crisis has resulted in strained diplomatic relationships and trade restrictions between Nigeria and Iran, making it difficult for Nigerian institutions to obtain necessary equipment through imports. As a result, institutions have been forced to seek alternative, often more expensive, sources for this equipment, leading to a significant increase in costs. The crisis according to Kasimu, Lawan, Pajo, and Okoh. (2026) has also disrupted global supply chains, making it increasingly difficult to obtain specific equipment for educational and research purposes. This has further added to the cost of importing such equipment for Nigerian institutions.

Disruption of Global Supply Chains and Delivery Delays

The Middle East remains a strategic hub for global shipping routes, especially through the Strait of Hormuz. Any conflict involving Iran or its allies often creates uncertainty in oil transport and international logistics networks. This disruption extends delivery timelines for goods shipped to Africa, including Nigeria. In tertiary institutions, procurement of laboratory consumables, ICT equipment, and construction materials is frequently delayed, leading to stalled academic projects and prolonged infrastructural development. Research has shown that instability in global supply chains significantly affects procurement performance and timely project execution in Nigerian public institutions (Maduekeh & Obinwa, 2022). Suleiman, & Gladstone, (2026) submitted that the crisis has led to disruptions in global supply chains and caused significant delays in the delivery of goods and services. This has been particularly detrimental to the procurement process of Nigerian tertiary institutions, as they heavily rely on international suppliers for a wide range of products and materials. With the conflict in the Middle East, many suppliers have been unable to meet their contractual obligations, resulting in significant delays and shortages for procurement in Nigeria. This has not only caused logistical challenges but has also resulted in increased costs and decreased efficiency in the procurement process (Ogunode, 2026). The disruption of global supply chains has also affected the quality and availability of goods and services, further hindering the procurement process for tertiary institutions in Nigeria

Rising Transportation and Logistics Costs

Another major effect of the crisis is the increase in transportation and freight costs due to rising global fuel prices. Since shipping and air freight charges are directly tied to crude oil prices, instability in the Middle East leads to higher logistics expenses worldwide. Nigerian tertiary institutions, which depend on imported academic and infrastructural materials, experience increased procurement costs. As a result, procurement units are forced to prioritize only essential purchases, reduce shipment volumes, or delay procurement plans. Studies indicate that logistics cost escalation is a major factor limiting efficient procurement in public sector institutions in Nigeria (Oyeleye et al., 2024). The crisis has had a significant impact on the procurement process of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Due to the instability and disruptions caused by the crisis, the procurement of necessary goods and resources has become increasingly difficult and costly (Dickson, 2026). This has not only affected the financial stability of these institutions, but also led to rising transportation and logistics costs. The constant fluctuation of commodity prices,

import and export restrictions, and supply chain disruptions have all contributed to the increase in transportation and logistics costs. With limited access to necessary goods and resources, tertiary institutions in Nigeria are forced to pay higher prices and face delays in receiving these items and struggling to maintain their operations. This is an ongoing issue that is directly linked to the Middle East Crisis and its impact on the procurement process in Nigeria's tertiary institutions (Ogunode, 2026)

Budgetary Constraints and Reduced Procurement Capacity

Inflation triggered by global crises reduces the purchasing power of allocated institutional budgets. Although tertiary institutions in Nigeria receive government funding, rising costs of goods and services mean that planned procurement activities often exceed available financial resources. This leads to partial implementation of procurement plans, abandonment of capital projects, and reliance on emergency procurement procedures. Financial distress in tertiary education has been widely linked to poor procurement execution and reduced institutional performance (Oyeleye et al., 2024). Due to the instability and conflicts in the region, there has been a disruption in the global supply chain, leading to budgetary constraints and ultimately reduced procurement capacity for Nigerian institutions (Kasimu, Lawan, Pajo, Okoh, 2026a). The Nation (2026) opined that this has had a direct effect on the availability and cost of imported goods and services, which are essential for the smooth operation of tertiary institutions in the country. The increased risk and uncertainty in the region have also made it difficult for Nigerian institutions to establish and maintain long-term partnerships and contracts with suppliers in the Middle East. The Middle East Crisis has also resulted in a decrease in foreign investment and aid, which has affected the overall economic stability of Nigeria. This has further reduced the budget and resources available for procurement in tertiary institutions (Ogunode, Ukozor, Ayoko, & Devi, 2026).

Exchange Rate Volatility and Foreign Currency Scarcity

Procurement in Nigerian tertiary institutions is heavily dependent on foreign exchange because most high-value goods are imported. The Middle East crisis contributes to global economic uncertainty, which affects investor confidence and increases pressure on developing-country currencies, including the Nigerian naira (Suleiman, & Gladstone, 2026). As exchange rates fluctuate, procurement costs become unpredictable and often exceed budget projections. Institutions also face difficulty accessing foreign currency through official channels, leading to procurement delays and reliance on parallel market rates. This instability significantly undermines procurement planning and financial management in universities. This crisis has resulted in exchange rate volatility and foreign currency scarcity, making it increasingly difficult for these institutions to acquire necessary goods and services. Many tertiary institutions in Nigeria are facing challenges in maintaining their operations and providing quality education to their students. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East, particularly with Iran, has disrupted trade and led to fluctuations in exchange rates and availability of foreign currency. This has not only affected

procurement processes, but has also had a ripple effect on the overall economy of Nigeria (Ogunode, Ayoko, Ukozor & Devi, 2026).

Uncertainty in Procurement Planning and Contract Execution

Geopolitical instability creates uncertainty in global pricing, supplier reliability, and delivery timelines. For procurement units in Nigerian tertiary institutions, this makes planning difficult because contract prices may change unexpectedly, and suppliers may fail to meet delivery schedules. Consequently, procurement plans are frequently revised, and some contracts are abandoned midway due to cost escalation or supply disruptions. Studies on procurement systems in Nigerian tertiary institutions show that external economic shocks significantly reduce the efficiency of procurement planning and project execution (Ogunode et al., 2023). The crisis according to Vanguard. (2026) has brought about various challenges for procurement in Nigeria, including disruptions in supply chains, rising costs, and increased risk levels. Impacts of the Middle East crisis on procurement in Nigeria is the disruption of supply chains. This has been caused by the political instability in the region, which has led to the disruption of trade routes and reduced availability of goods. Procuring necessary goods and services has become a complex and challenging process for tertiary institutions in Nigeria. With the disruption of supply chains, suppliers have been forced to find alternative routes and methods to deliver goods to Nigeria, resulting in higher transportation costs. The weakening of the Nigerian currency due to the crisis has led to an increase in the cost of imported goods and services, further driving up the overall costs of procurement (Unachukwu & Anukam, 2026). The uncertainty brought about by the Middle East crisis has made it challenging for tertiary institutions in Nigeria to plan their procurement processes effectively. The unpredictable nature of the crisis makes it difficult to forecast future events and their impact on procurement. This, in turn, has led to delays in procurement planning, which ultimately affects the timely execution of contracts (Kasimu, Lawan, Pajo, Okoh, 2026a).

4.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that geopolitical crises in the Middle East, particularly those involving Iran, have indirect but significant effects on procurement efficiency in Nigerian tertiary institutions. These effects manifest through increased cost of imported goods, disruption of global supply chains, rising logistics expenses, and exchange rate instability. Consequently, procurement units face difficulties in planning, budgeting, and executing institutional projects effectively. The overdependence of Nigerian tertiary institutions on imported goods further worsens their vulnerability to external shocks.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1) Strengthening Local Production Capacity

Government and institutions should invest in local manufacturing of laboratory equipment, ICT tools, and construction materials to reduce import dependence.

2) Improved Procurement Planning and Forecasting

Tertiary institutions should adopt advanced procurement planning systems that factor in global economic risks and inflation trends.

3) Flexible Budgeting Systems

Government funding frameworks should allow for inflation-adjusted procurement budgets to accommodate global price fluctuations.

4) Enhanced Foreign Exchange Management

Policies should be implemented to ensure easier access to foreign exchange for educational procurement purposes.

5) Strategic Procurement Training

Procurement officers should be trained on global supply chain risk management and international market dynamics.

6) Diversification of Supply Sources

Institutions should diversify suppliers across multiple regions to reduce dependence on unstable geopolitical zones.

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