

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROCUREMENT METHODS AND PERFORMANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING ON PUBLIC PROCUREMENT: A CROSS SECTIONAL SURVEY.

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Abstract

Background

This study aims to establish the relationship between Procurement methods and the performance of the Ministry of Finance and Planning on Public Procurement.

Methodology

The cross-sectional survey study was conducted whereby data were obtained through questionnaires administered to (120) respondents and involved a sample size of (100). The study focused on senior officers, junior officers, and other supportive staff. Data on various social demographic and work-related characteristics were collected and analyzed in two ways, one using content analysis from qualitative information, which was given by participants, and the other way by quantitative analysis for quantitative data such as age, sex, and employment duration in years.

Results

57% of respondents were male, while, 43% were female, the study found that Procurement methods have a significant impact on facilitating Public Procurement processes, whereby 58% of respondents admit that Procurement methods to a large extent affect either negatively or positively the Public Procurement process, meanwhile 7% of respondent reported that Procurement process to have low extent in affecting Public Procurement process. Being conversant with the Procurement method instead of conducted purchases, not only fosters decision-making but also eliminates unnecessary delays in Procurement decision-making.

Conclusion

The procurement process is still a problem in most Public and non-Public Organizations in South Sudan. Further efforts in solving problems associated with the Procurement process in our Institutions should focus on regular training on how to keep records moreover ensuring staff are aware of ICT and use in E-procurement.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Finance and Planning as well as other government Procurement Departments should continue improving the reduction in quality complaints, by preparing clear specifications, evaluating bidders according to the bid document set criteria, putting in place a competence inspection team, installing effective inventory management and consistent product quality and conducting market assessment to achieve right price.

Keywords: Relationship, Procurement Methods, Performance, Ministry Of Finance and Planning, Public Procurement.

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Background of the study

Procurement processes entail various functions that move far beyond the traditional perception that Procurement's main role is acquiring works or services

from outside sources for replenishing organizational needs (Malinga 2007). PP&DA Act, (2018), describes Procurement as the acquisition or purchase, rental, lease, hire, purchase, license, tenancy, franchise, concession, Public or private partnership, or any other contractual

means of any type of supplies, work, or services by or on behalf of a Government Institution.

Although Procurement processes have been followed as per existing laws and regulations still there are many challenges to overcome and address for improving this portion of factors influence. In this phenomenon, issues for challenges affecting Public procurement processes for the Government in South Sudan have not been addressed. Public Procurement Unit Report, 2022.

As reported by South Sudan's Anti-Corruption Commission, the public procurement process lacks effectiveness and transparency as more than a third of companies expect to give gifts and other irregular payments to government officials to obtain public contracts. Public officials often influence procurement proceedings, suggesting high rates of favoritism in the sector.

Given that, this study was focused on investigating the relationship between the Procurement processes and the performance of the Ministry of Finance and Planning in South Sudan and filling these gaps with specific attention given to Government Ministries and related entities taking Public Procurement Unit at the Ministry of Finance and Planning, as the case study.

Methodology

Research Design:

According to Kothari (2004), a research design is the plan and structure of investigating so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions. A research design functions as the research blueprint for the measurement and analysis of data (Creswell, 2003). The design is used for analyzing the major part of the research project such as the samples, measurement of variables, treatments or controls, and methods of assignment work, all these elements endeavor to address the key research questions.

Target Populations:

A population is the total collection of elements about which inferences are made and refers to all possible cases, which are of interest for a study Goertz (2006). The target population for this study is (120) staff of the Public Procurement Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and other Government Procurement Departments. The study focused on senior offices, junior officers, and other Supportive staff/End users for the department as the unit of investigation of this study. The senior level was (11), the middle level (was 21) and the lower management level was (88) making a total of (120).

Sources of Data:

In the course of the conductivity of this Research work, two types of data will be collected. The nature of each of these types is briefly described below.

Primary Data:

Data were collected through the administration of questionnaires, observation, and the holding of personal interviews which are instruments of the survey method research.

Secondary Data:

Secondary sources comprise existing literature: materials in libraries, archives, Public offices, and the Internet together with this vital data, the following sources were employed by the researcher, textbooks, journals, magazines, the internet, and unpublished articles.

Sampling Design and Sample Size:

According to Wikipedia (2013), sampling is concerned with a subset of individuals from within a statistical population to estimate characteristics of the whole population. Each observation measures one or more properties (such as weight, location, color, etc.) of observable bodies distinguished as independent objects or individuals.

Sampling Procedure:

The ultimate test of a sampling design is how well it represents the characteristics of the population it purports to. The reason for sampling in this study is to lower cost, accessibility of the study population, and the greater speed of data collection, Kothari (2004). Stratified random sampling has been used where the sample size of 50% was taken from each of the three categories (strata) of the population. Stratified random samplings were used because they ensure a greater statistical efficiency, and reduce sampling error. Kothari (2004), supports random sampling as it satisfies the law of statistical regularity, "if a sample is chosen at random, on average it has the same characteristics and composition as the population".

Sample Size:

A sample size of (120) of the population was taken to give a total sample of (100) staff of the Public Procurement Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and other Government Procurement Departments. This is informed by the principle that if the elements of a population are quite similar, only a small sample is necessary to accurately portray the characteristics of interest.

Cooper and Schindler (2010) argue that, for any valid and reliable study to be carried out, its sample size shouldn't be less than 30% of its population. As it stands, the sample

size of this study was 50% of the population involved in the study; hence fulfilling their argumentations. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents.

Table 1: Sample Size:

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage (%)	Sampling Design	Data Collection Tool
1 Senior /Principal Management	11	9	9	Simple random	Questionnaire
2 Middle Management	21	18	18	Simple random and purposive	Questionnaire
3 Lower-Cadre Management	88	73	73	Simple random and purposive	Questionnaire
Total	120	100	100		

Source: Researcher, (2023)

Data Collection Methods:

The overall aim of the study was to establish the factors affecting Public Procurement processes in Government Ministries and related entities with a specific focus on the Procurement Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and other Government Procurement Departments. The vast majority of data collected was therefore mainly in nature, with questionnaires being the main tools for data collection, the use of questionnaires for primary data collection has been supported by many scholars including Mugenda (1999).

A pilot test was conducted using questionnaires and administered to respondents from Government Ministries with a main focus on the Procurement Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Planning, and other Government Procurement Departments. The proposed questionnaires were given enabling the collection of desired information.

Data Collection Instruments:

This research used participants' self-administered Questionnaires as the main data collection tool. According to Mugenda (1999), a questionnaire is easier to administer, less costly, and ensures greater depth of response. A questionnaire also helps capture factual information effectively. For this study, the questionnaire was used apart from mainly for economical and appropriateness reasons were easier due to its merits including flexibility as a data collection tool.

Pre-testing (Data Reliability and Validity).

Reliability of Data:

According to Joppe (2000), reliability is defined as "the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable".

In most cases, the reliability of research instruments concerns the extent to which the instrument yields the same result or repeated trials. According to Carmines & Zeller (1990), there will generally be a good deal of consistency in the results of quality instruments gathered at different times. The tendency towards consistency found in repeated measurements is referred to as reliability.

Validity of Data:

According to Mugenda (1999), validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. It is a degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data represent the phenomenon under study. Given establishing the content validity of the examined factors to be analyzed, this study recognized the overall content that accurately represented the information as per the data collection tool applicable. By applying the method, the study obtained the required information for the study.

Procedure for Data Collection:

Data was collected using a questionnaire which was first tested for reliability, especially spelling and grammar. The data was collected using a research assistant as the main researcher did not have ample time. The questionnaires

were distributed to all staff present and given three hours to fill out the questionnaires. They were then collected and sorted out. The questionnaires were then handed over to the main researcher for data interpretation.

Data Analysis:

According to Kombo and Tromp (2011), the data analysis procedure includes the process of packaging the collected information putting it in order, and structuring its main components in a way that the findings can be easily and also effectively communicated. After the fieldwork was done before analysis, all the questionnaires were checked for reliability and verification. Editing, coding, and tabulation were carried out.

Data analysis on this report was done by using SPSS software version 22. Descriptive statistics were done and the results were presented in numbers, percentages, or proportions. Further findings were also presented in tables, figures, and charts. Data collection was analyzed both qualitatively (using content analysis) and quantitatively (descriptive statistics analysis). The collected data was summarized, coded, and analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Frequency distribution and percentages have been used to describe major variables. Qualitative data from questionnaires was analyzed using content analysis (by analyzing [texts](#) regarding [authenticity](#) or [meaning](#) from

respondents' responses in regards to "Who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect?").

Results

During data collection, (120) questionnaires were distributed to the Public Procurement Unit at the Ministry of Finance and Planning. Out of (120) questionnaires, that were given out, (100) 84% were successfully filled in and handed over to the researcher. The response rate obtained in this study is considered to be very good in conducting research.

By the above response received respondents rate, it is evidently that by scholars it favors the intended target population. This report presents a discussion of results from data analysis regarding challenges affecting Public Procurement processes at Government Ministries and related entities. Furthermore, background information and other findings were presented and discussed under five main sections namely Procurement method, Training, Record Keeping, Ethical and ICT Usage or in other terms E-Procurement applications.

Response Rate Category:

The response rate obtained in this study is categorized into three cadres of Procurement officers as demonstrated in Table 2

Table 2: Category for Response Rate:

Category		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1.	Senior/Principal Management	8	8
2.	Middle Management	21	21
3.	Lower Management	71	71
Total		100	100

Source: Researcher, (2016)

Table 3: Social Demographic Characteristics of Study Population:

Variable	Attribute	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender Respondents	Male	57	57
	Female	43	43
	Total	100	100
Age of Respondents (Years)	20 -30	14	14
	31- 40	50	50
	41-50	29	29
	51-60	7	7
	Total	100	100
Duration of working	6 Months -1 year	14	14
	2 years - 3 years	22	22
	More than 3 years	64	64
	Total	100	100

Source: Researcher, (2023)

In regards to category of lower Manager’s respondent, the results in Table 2 shows that (21) 21% of respondents were Middle officers, meanwhile for Senior and Principal officers were (8) 8% and low Managers /Supporting Staff respondent were (71) 71%. The mentioned results depict that Lower Management officers who in most cases are involved in preparation of Procurement related documents dominate this study.

Background Information:

This study-reviewed respondent’s background information in lieu to social demographic characteristics, which included gender, age and employment duration for each respondent being working with PPU. The results were summarized and presented as follows:

Gender of Respondents:

Based on various factors such as job descriptions, in many incidents gender difference normally describes unlikely opinions about pertaining matter. The research wants to find out the views of different genders who responded to this study. In regards to gender respondents, the results in Table 3 show that 57% of respondents were male, meanwhile 43% were female. The mentioned results portray that more males have been involved hence dominating this study.

Age of Respondents:

Respondent age is a crucial factor in research as mature people normally present more diverse opinions than young ones due to experience accumulated during their careers. In this aspect the researcher works out in determining the age factor, the results in Table 3 exhibit age discrepancy in regards to the respondent staff, the outcome demonstrates that 14% of the respondents were between (23) to (30) years, 50% were aged between (31) to (40), whereby 29% were between (41) to (50) years of age and 7% of respondent ware between (51) to (60) years of age. In this analysis the majority of the respondents were (31) years and above, in normal circumstances apart from maturity, this age is acknowledged to be the prime age in professionalism whereby concerned respondents are assumed to accumulate vast experiences in the Procurement field, in this aspect, we can assent that this study has been appraised with matured and experienced respondents.

Procurement Method:

The objective of the study was to find out the relationship between the procurement method and the performance of the Ministry of Finance and Planning on Public Procurement and how the Procurement method affects the Public Procurement process at PPU. Procurement methods for Government Ministries and related entities involve: - International Competitive Tendering, National Competitive Tendering, Selective Tendering, and Single Source Procurement. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents obtaining information on how Procurement

methods affect the Procurement process. Likewise, the scale questions were used for respondents to identify how the Procurement method affects the Procurement process

in the context of either agreement or disagreement with this topic. The findings related to the Procurement method are clearly demonstrated in Table 4.

Procurement methods and organizational performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)					
Procurement methods	1.227	.540		2.272	.029
1	.581	.100	.563	4.249	.000

Dependent Variable: Performance

According to the findings, there is a moderate relationship between procurement methods and performance at 0.581.

Discussion

Procurement methods were one of the specific objectives of this study, the study worked out to establish if this factor had a relationship and effects on Procurement processes. Through responses from the study population, this study revealed that the Procurement method has significant effects in regards to Public Procurement processes in Government Ministries and related entities. Furthermore, the results indicate that if there are good Procurement methods usually help to have a good Public Procurement process and if bad Procurement methods are used it directly affects the Public Procurement process. It has been found that although the Public Procurement Act defines Procurement methods for the type, magnitude, and circumstance of Procurements, Procurement entities are not only confirmed to competitive tendering methods but are also allowed for the selection of other defined methods in case the described process through competitive tendering is not of the economic and efficient manner, but due to rigid rules regulating Public Procurement the defined approach sometimes use to complicate the matter for the reasons such as failure of concluding due to avoidance of accountability for decision reached.

Given that, this study asserts that Procurement methods are momentous in affecting Public Procurement processes. The majority of respondents 43% in this segment think that Procurement methods to a large extent affect negatively the Public Procurement process especially if this involves some obstacles such as a long process, The findings of this study relate to previous findings through literature review whereby Musanzikwa (2013), in his study, emphasized for continuous improvements for procurement processes including procurement methods for elimination of all possible

shortfalls given improving Procurement related functions.

Conclusion

The procurement process is still a problem in most Public and non-Public Organizations in South Sudan. Further efforts in solving problems associated with the Procurement process in our Institutions should focus on regular training on how to keep records moreover ensuring staff are aware of ICT and use in E-procurement.

The findings of this study suggest that the Public Procurement process is directly related to limitations such as lack of frequency in training, methods used, ICT usage, record keeping, and ethical issues. Further emphasis should be placed on improving these factors as an intervention for enhancing a better and easier Procurement process. Strategies for minimizing factors affecting Public Procurements should involve improving ethical issues and making sure the availability of computers and proper skills for modern record keeping and enhancement of ICT applications for Procurement-related functions for all Procurement Departments' staff.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Finance and Planning as well as other government Procurement Departments should continue improving the reduction in quality complaints, by preparing clear specifications, evaluating bidders according to the bid document set criteria, putting in place a competence inspection team, installing effective inventory management and consistent product quality and conducting market assessment to achieve right price.

The researcher also recommends that Procurement plans should be prepared on time with complete information by the end users. In addition, other government Procurement Departments especially Organized Forces Institutions

shall also minimize urgent/unplanned or emergency requisitions to strengthen and ensure the successful implementation of their institutional plan and to achieve their institutional goals and objectives. The procurement plan must be fully integrated with the strategic plan and budget of the Public administration. A procurement plan is specifically designed to assure that funds are available for Procurement, that the proper method of Procurement is undertaken, and that the type of contract chosen will be suitable for the particular procurement of goods, works, or services.

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List of Abbreviations

CAG: Controller and Auditor General
CTB: Central Tender Board
FIDIC: International Federation of Consulting Engineers
GN: Government Notice
GNP: Gross National Product
GPSA: Government Procurement Services Agency
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
ISO: International organization for standard
PE: Procuring Entity
PPU: Public Procurement Unit
PPRA: Public Procurement Regulatory Authority

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Conflict of interest

The author had no conflict of interest.

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