



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECTS OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PRACTICES ON PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE OF CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND PROJECTS IN KWALE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to determine the effect of public procurement practices on procurement performance of CDF projects in Kwale County government in Kenya. Procurement professionals have always walked on a tight rope in order to implement objectives and goals. Their ability to accomplish these procurement objectives and policies indicate that procurement officials are influenced by political, legal-internal and external factors. The tendering process can be a minefield of potential litigation without proper procedures and regulations, where contractors complain of the lack of a fair and consisted approach to tendering and accusation of favoritism and corruption. Public procurement is a major development mechanism, the potential which has not been fully designed in pursuit of value for money and efficiency in the use of public funds. The purpose is to support the attainment of high economic growth and ensure delivery of service. The reform strategy for economic development was not achieved without the participation of community in transparency and accountability in delivery of non-core public service. The study was based on procurement competencies, e-procurement, procurement ethics and supplier relationships as specific objectives. The study targeted 206 respondents from various departments and Kwale county residents. The study employed governance and performance theory, corporate culture theory and supply chain management theory. Descriptive research design was employed to formulate the best methodology to be used. A pilot study on the questionnaire was done in order to validate the questionnaire and correct any errors which may have been made. The sample size for the study was 136 derived using slovin formula. Secondary data was collected from both published and unpublished records. Data screening was done to identify any missing data and it will further be tested for reliability. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. Inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis was used for further analysis. Data was analyzed using statistical packaging social sciences software (SPSS) version 22 to find the relationships and averages of the data in addition to tabular presentations for understandable presentation. From the finding procurement staff competencies was believed to be a vital catalyst for the ethical conduct of the entire procurement staff in the counties. E-procurement is one of the procurement practices which includes activities such as e-ordering, e-sourcing and e-payment in the procurement practices horizon where the entire county should put more concentration during formulation. Basing on the results, it is recommended that, the county government should continue with such activities of providing adequate training and seminars to the staff to enhance their competencies. However based on the results other studies are recommended on procurement staff competencies which are viable for the research. The study recommends the county government to invest more in electronic procurement transformation to reduce cost and reduce time in procurement transactions which is big win for the counties all the county. The study recommends that county government leaders, managers and other corporate professional players have significant role of ensuring that they formulate viable procurement strategies and practices that initiate performance for the entire organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

Research Objectives

Specific Objectives

- To determine the effect of procurement staff competencies on procurement performance of CDF projects in Kwale County.

- To evaluate the effect of supplier relationships on performance of CDF projects in Kwale County.
- To analyze the effect of procurement ethics on procurement performance of CDF projects in Kwale County.
- To establish the effect of e-procurement on procurement performance of CDF projects in Kwale County.

Literature review

Theoretical Framework

Governance and Performance Theory

According to Kaufman (2010), Governance is the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. This includes the process by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced (the political dimension); the government's capacity to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies (the economic dimension); and the respect of citizens and the state for the country's institutions.

Corporate Culture Theory

Schein (2014) adopted the functionalism view and described culture as pattern of basic assumption invented, discovered, or developed by a given group of people that learn to cope with problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the current way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. This theory is relevant to the study as ethical practice leads to transparency and competition and how they influence procurement of goods and services in public sector. The underlying purposes and Procurement Laws and policies are to: Permit the continued development of procurement policies and practices; Provide for increased public confidence in the procedures followed in public procurement; Ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all persons who deal with the procurement system of the state; Provide increased economy in state procurement activities by fostering effective competition; and Provide safeguards for the maintenance of a procurement system of quality and integrity, State of Arkansas Procurement Act (2013).

Review of Literature Variables

Procurement Staff Competency

Capacity building is an investment in the future sustainability of the financial and governance system of a country. For better performance of the public sector, all countries need staff with the requisite knowledge, skills, behaviors and competencies to enable them to fulfil their policies and goals. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to strengthen capacity in the context of emerging economies aiming to deliver satisfactory services under financial constraints. Capacity development is the process by which individuals, organizations, Institutions and societies develop abilities to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives (Fassin, 2015).

E-Procurement

The procurement process has had many loopholes in the recent past due to the lengthy processes and lots of paperwork. The adoption of ICT application in the procurement process has reduced this through the online methods of carrying out the procurement process. The use of online forms, orders, emails, new software technologies in evaluating and making price comparisons has made this process efficient and at the same time will ensure transparency and accountability as well as reduction in errors and omissions (Caldwell and Davies, 2014). The adoption of these ICT applications has an overall impact

on the organization in that it will reduce costs within the procurement department as well as reduce errors in the procurement process thus ensuring maximum output of the organization at the lowest costs possible.

Supplier Relations

Buyer-supplier relationships in the supply chain are one of the most important elements of supply chain integration. Establishing and managing effective relationships at every link in the supply chain is becoming the prerequisite of business success. High volatility in the retail industry reflects rapid fluctuations in customer demand and unpredictable market trends. In addition, environmental diversity reveals uncertainty in the global business environment. Facing market volatility and diversity, organizations are encouraged to develop relatively flexible relationships with multiple channel partners to deal with unexpected market demands and thus reduce the dependence on the vendor (Fernadupulle, 2015). Supplier-buyer relationships have today become the backbones of economic activities in the modern world (Nagurney, 2010) and a focal point of organizational competitiveness, performance and long-term business success (Veludo et al. 2006). According to Gadde and Hakansson (2011), the competitiveness and profit-generating capacity of the individual firm is highly dependent on its ability to handle the supply side.

Procurement Ethics

UN Procurement Handbook (2016) indicates that there are two definitions of ethics as follows: The moral principles governing or influencing conduct and the branch of knowledge concerned with moral principles (The concise Oxford dictionary of current English). Ethics is the basis on which most of the procurement related principles, such as fairness, integrity, and transparency, are based. The handbook further states that Professional standards of ethical conduct, no matter what the organization, contain typical characteristics, including commitments to: behave honourably in all aspects of work and professional activity, conduct oneself in such a manner as to maintain trust and confidence in the integrity of the acquisition process, avoid clever practices intended to take undue advantage of others or the system and uphold the organization's standards and policies and all relevant legislation.

RESEARCH AND METHODS

Research Design

A research design constitutes the blue print for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Cooper and Schindler (2015) define research design as the plan and structure of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions. The intention of research is to gather data at a particular point in time and use it to describe the nature of existing conditions. This research problem was studied using a descriptive survey design to cover four main areas of the conceptual framework.

Target Population

Sekaran (2013) refers to population as the entire group of people or things of interest that the researcher aims to assess.

The target population comprised of respondents from procurement department, finance department, project management department and Kwale County suppliers. The target population was chosen from the departments because was easy to get data from the respondents. However, Kothari (2009) recommends that a sample size be as large as possible in order to reproduce salient characteristics of the accessible population to an acceptable level as well as to avoid sampling errors.

Table 3.1 Target Population

Categories	Target Population
Procurement department	23
Finance Department	37
Project Management department	19
Kwale County Suppliers	127
Total	206

Source, Kwale County, (2017)

Data Collection Instruments

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaires through drop and pick method.

Pilot Study

Questionnaire administration involved pre-contact with the respondents. In order to ensure content validity, the preliminary questionnaire will be pre-tested on a pilot set of respondent for comprehension, logic and relevance. Respondents in the pre- test will be drawn from county of Kwale staff and county residents, that is, 10% of the sample size as per recommendations by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) who observe that a successful pilot study used 1% to 10% of the actual sample size and this was similar to those in the actual survey in terms of background characteristics.

Data Processing, Analysis and Presentation

Data was analyzed using quantitative techniques. Inferential statistics included analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Pearson correlation and regression analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. These was used to establish the association among the study variables. Preliminary associations among the study variables was assessed using correlations which was tested at 95% confidence level (level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$) and 99 percent confidence level (level of significance, $\alpha=0.01$).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The study targeted 100 respondents out of 136 respondents as this sample size produced by Slovene's formula was sufficient. Overwhelmingly, 100 questionnaires were filled and got a 74% response. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) a response rate of 70% and above is good, reliable and representative as per Table 4.1 below.

Table 3.2 Questionnaire Response Rate

	Frequency	Percentage
Response	100	73.5%
Non- Respondents	36	26.5%
Total	100	100

Findings

Procurement Staff Competencies

Respondents were required to respond to set questions related to procurement staff competencies and give their opinions. The statement that there exist written policy on hiring project procurement staff based on their qualification had a mean score of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 1.171. The statement that there exist a training budget for the staff that has enhanced procurement performance had a mean score of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 1.365. The statement that the county has frequent training programs for the entire staff that greatly enhance procurement performance had a mean score of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 1.531.

Electronic Procurement

Respondents were required to respond to set questions related to e-procurement and give their opinions. The e-procurement has helped the county to save much from procurement activities. The statement that the county government has not invested much in e-tendering process that would make processes efficiency had a mean score of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 1.398. The statement that the Kwale county government is the overall best in the county when it comes to e-payment process to suppliers and contractors had a mean score of 4.33 and standard deviation of 1.407. The statement that e-procurement has reduced costs on procuring of activities had a mean score of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 1.161. The statement that the e-sourcing process has not been implemented well in the county due to resistance to change by the personnel had a mean score of 3.69 and a standard deviation of 1.376.

Procurement Ethics

Respondents were required to respond to set questions related to procurement ethics and give their opinions. The statement that the county conduct service level agreement when awarding contracts to contractors and supplier to ensure mechanism of delivery is achieved had a mean score of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 0.759. The statement that to what extent do those concerned with procurement processes in your institution subscribe and adhere to their professional codes of conduct had a mean score of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 1.403. The statement that there exists a written procurement code of ethics in the public procurement practice had a mean score of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.249. The statement that the county has a written down quality statement in the 4.07 and a standard deviation of 0.655.

Supplier Relationships

Respondents were required to respond to set questions related to supplier relations and give their opinions. The statement that the county select suppliers based on prices by comparison of different suppliers had a mean score of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 1.201. The statement that the county select suppliers through bidding process to evaluate and choose a few suppliers had a mean score of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 1.717. The county coordinates and develops suppliers based on mutual trust relationship had a mean score of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 1.692. The statement that there exists a written down policy on supplier evaluation in the public

procurement practices for the county had a mean score of 2.94 and standard deviation of 1.656.

Correlation and Regression Analysis

Coefficient of Correlation

The analysis indicates the coefficient of correlation, r equal to 0.982, .743, 0.940 and 0.342 for procurement staff competencies, e-procurement, procurement ethics and supplier relations respectively.

Table 3.3 Correlation of Coefficient

		Correlations				
	Procurement Performance	Procurement Staff Competencies	E-Procurement	Procurement Ethics	Supplier Relations	
Procurement Performance	1					
Procurement Staff Competencies	.982	1				
E-Procurement	.743	.741	1			
Procurement Ethics	.940	.963	.721	1		
Supplier Relations	.342	.366	.031	.478	1	

Table 3.4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.982 ^a	.965	.963	1.23329

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier Relations, E-Procurement, Procurement Staff Competencies, Procurement Ethics

Table 3.5 ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3940.016	985.004	647.603	.000 ^b
	Residual	144.494	1.521		
	Total	4084.510			

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier Relations, E-Procurement, Procurement Staff Competencies, Procurement-Ethics

This indicates positive relationship between the independent variable namely procurement staff competencies, e-procurement, procurement ethics and supplier relations and the dependent variable procurement performance. Robinson, (2014) notes that procurement performance is a significant factor that contributes to other variables in any given organization.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The model explains 96.5% of the variance (Adjusted R Square = 0.963) on procurement performance. Clearly, there are factors other than the four proposed in this model which can be used to predict procurement performance. However, this is still a good model as Cooper and Schinder, (2013) pointed out that as much as lower value R square 0.10-0.20 is acceptable in social science research. This means that 96.5% of the relationship is explained by the identified four factors namely procurement staff competence, e-procurement, procurement ethics and supplier relations. The rest 3.5% is explained by other factors in the procurement performance not studied in this research

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

F critical (value = 647.3) this shows that the overall model was significant. The significance is less than 0.05, thus indicating that the predictor variables (staff competency, e-procurement, procurement ethics and supplier relations) explain the variation in the dependent variable which is performance.

Multiple Regression

The findings presented shows that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in procurement staff

competencies will lead to a 0.800 increase in the scores of procurement staff competencies; a unit increase in e-procurement will lead to a 0.078 increase in procurement performance; a unit increase in procurement ethics will lead to a 0.198 increase in the scores of procurement performance; a unit increase in supplier relations will lead to a 0.024 increase in the score of procurement performance. This therefore implies that all the three variables have a positive relationship with supplier relation contributing most to the dependent variable. This therefore implies that all the four variables have a positive relationship with procurement performance with procurement staff competencies contributing most to the dependent variable. From the table we can see that the predictor variables of procurement staff competencies, e-procurement, procurement ethics and supplier relations got variable coefficients statistically significant since their p-values are less than the common alpha level of 0.05

The regression equation was

$$Y = 3.346 + 0.800X_1 + 0.078X_2 + 0.198X_3 + 0.024X_4$$

Where;

- Y = the dependent variable (Procurement Performance)
- X_1 = Procurement Staff Competencies

Table 3.6 Coefficient of Determination

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.346	2.776		1.205	.000
	Procurement StaffCompetencies	.800	.075	1.046	13.338	.000
	E-Procurement	.078	.065	.043	2.205	.001
	Procurement Ethics	.198	.172	.104	3.157	.000
	Supplier Relations	.024	.073	.010	2.324	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

- X_2 = E-Procurement
- X_3 = Procurement Ethics
- X_4 = Supplier Relations

Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendation

Summary of Findings: The study results revealed that CDF management in Kwale County hire procurement staff on competitive basis and those who have procurement operations experience. To maintain quality of work in the procurement department, CDF offers continuous training on e-procurement adoption systems to enhance efficiency of projects. On e-procurement, the study results revealed that county governments have not invested much in e-tendering process that would make processes efficient. The study however, established that CDF in Kwale County are embracing a mixture of both electronic and manual procurement processes. The study results revealed that CDF in Kwale County have a written procurement code of ethics of public procurement and further have a written down quality statement in public procurement. There exists a well elaborated and clear procurement ethics framework that ensures all staff and other key stakeholders abide to it. The study results revealed that there is a good relationship between the suppliers and CDFs in Kwale County. Further, the suppliers are selected through a bidding process to evaluate and choose a few suppliers. There exists a written down policy on supplier assessment to enhance best selection of suppliers for the county.

Conclusion

From the research findings, the study concluded all the independent variables studied have significant effect on logistics service delivery as indicated by the strong coefficient of correlation and a p-value which is less than 0.05. The overall effect of the analyzed factors was very high as indicated by the coefficient of determination. The overall P-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 (5%) is an indication of relevance of the studied variables, significant at the calculated 95% level of significance. This implies that the studied independent variables namely procurement staff competencies, e-procurement, procurement ethics and supplier relations have significant on factors influencing procurement performance of CDF in Kwale County.

Recommendation

The county government should continue with such activities of providing adequate training and seminars to the staff to enhance their competencies. However based on the results other studies are recommended on procurement staff competencies which are viable for the research. The activities are significant and contribute positively by 0.078 for each unit spent on these activities. The study county government should invest more in electronic procurement transformation to reduce cost and reduce time in procurement transactions which is big

win for the counties all the county. The county government should have well elaborated and clear procurement ethics framework that ensures all staff and other key stakeholders abide to it. The ethics framework helps the entire county government staff and other players in procurement to work within the regulations and being in a position to harmonize the best values that enhances procurement performance. Procurement leaders, managers and other policy makers should establish favorable relationships with their suppliers to ensure quality services and efficient processes. By having the right tools in place and practicing consistent communication, responsibility and patience, buy-side organizations to create more effective relationships with their suppliers, propelling efficient and well-run operations.

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