



## Regular Article

# The mediating effect of cross-functional coordination on the link between procurement interpersonal skills and user satisfaction in public procurement

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## ABSTRACT

The current study examines the relationship between interpersonal skills and user satisfaction that is mediated by the effect of cross-functional coordination. Data was collected by using a structured questionnaire administered to 177 heads of user departments in the selected Local Government Authorities in Tanzania. The results from Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling unveiled that interpersonal skills and user satisfaction are positively and significantly related ( $p < 0.001$ ). Also, interpersonal skills positively and significantly affect cross-functional coordination and cross-functional coordination relates positively and significantly to user satisfaction. On the other hand, cross-functional partially mediates the relationship between interpersonal skills and user satisfaction ( $p < 0.001$ ). Based on these findings, the study suggests that public procurement professionals require training to improve their interpersonal skills, foster cross-functional coordination and enhance satisfaction of user departments. Likewise, the coordination efforts between departments within a procuring entity are necessary for explaining the link between professional skills and satisfaction of user departments. Thus, the study emphasizes the joint agreements in procurement decisions among departments to enhance proper coordination and achieve organizational objectives.

## 1. Introduction

The increasing complexity, shifting user perceptions, demand for quality products, and evolving expectations have led procurement efforts to focus not only on cost reduction but also on enhancing user satisfaction. (Baldus & Hatton, 2020). The need for satisfying users has gained attention in both developed and developing countries, recognising the pivotal role that users play in contributing to organizational productivity outcomes (Gatobu, 2020). User satisfaction refers to the fulfilment of users' desires (requirements) resulting from post-purchase product evaluations. (Su et al., 2020), and it has become a critical metric in assessing procurement success. Therefore, satisfaction levels are achieved when the specific requirements of users are well understood in a timely processed and preferences are given to users within the organization (Pratamasyari & Mansyur, 2023). Measuring satisfaction within the procurement context has numerous challenging parameters. However, it has been acknowledged that achieving procurement objectives, particularly in terms of quality and timeliness, serves as a key indicator

of user satisfaction. (Odero & Ayub, 2017). Essentially, satisfaction in procurement perspectives is attained when procurement operations are effectively managed.

In Tanzania, numerous malpractices have been observed in achieving user satisfaction based on procurement processes. Some of the malpractices include late deliveries, poor product quality, and perceived incompetence among procurement professionals (CAG & National Audit Office of Tanzania (NAOT), 2020; Changalima et al., 2021; Matto, 2022; Mrope, 2018, pp. 30–50; Tinali, 2021). However, despite the observed malpractices, diverse perspectives on improving procurement operations for the sake of satisfying user departments have surfaced. Several Authors (Maagi & Mwakalobo, 2023, pp. 570–584; Mrope, 2018, pp. 30–50; Tinali, 2022) posit that satisfaction in the realm of procurement performance can be achieved when various factors are kept under consideration. Such factors include effective leveraging of technology (Tinali, 2021) and management of procurement operations with sound procurement planning (Changalima et al., 2021).

The Tanzanian government has undertaken several initiatives to

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