



PROCUREMENT BEST PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN TANZANIA: EXPERIENCE FROM HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the contribution of procurement best practices on performance of public higher learning institutions in Tanzania. Specifically, the study intended to determine the contribution of procurement planning, monitoring and staff training on performance of public higher learning institutions. The study adopted descriptive research design and a multistage random sampling procedure was used to form strata of six higher learning institutions. Purposively, the study identified staff directly linked to procurement and Slovin's formula was used to obtain a sample of 80 respondents. Conveniently, data was collected from a sample of 65 respondents. Questionnaire, interview and documentary review were used to obtain data relating to the specific objectives of the study. Findings revealed that, monitoring procurement activities, staff training and procurement planning were significant at $P \leq 0.05$ to performance. The study concluded that monitoring procurement activities, staff training and procurement planning are essential for public institutions performance. Above all, the study recommended on the need of public institutions to institute effective procurement plans, manage and monitor procurement activities and consider continuous training to procurement practitioners to enhance best performance.

Key words: Procurement, Best practices, Performance, Public Institutions, HEIs

Paper type: Research paper

Type of Review: Peer Review

1. INTRODUCTION

Public procurement is an important area that is linked to overall performance of firms and has turned best practices vital for organisation success (Kipkemoi, 2017, Kilonzo 2014). It is an area that accounts a high proportion of total expenditure of about 70% of the budget and that adds value (Kipkemoi, 2017; Wambui, 2015; Makabira and Waiganjo, 2014; Froystad *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, it's an area that requires public institutions to assess not only the effectiveness of the institution's job, but also honesty of its staff (Cascarino and Esch, 2013). It lead to a great pressure to achieve financial savings through efficient and coordinated service delivery via adopting best practices (Kipkemoi, 2017; Kakwezi and Nyeko, 2013;

Mshamu, 2013). Procurement practices are areas which require more perfection to further contribute procurement performance, thus public institutions should choose and adopt practices that are more likely to improve institutions performance (Kipkemoi, 2017). Institutions implementing best practices aims to prevent discrepancies realised in contract award, reduce cost and improve relationship with existing suppliers (Nyakundi, 2018).

Better operations in public institutions mainly depends on procurement plan since it's a tool that assist in implementing the budget prepared by user department with the aim of avoiding expenditures which were not planned for (Odero and Shitseswa, 2017). Institutions that internalizes and adheres to procurement plan have a great possibility of reducing costs, enhance good relationship with stakeholders, enhance best service delivery, improve its operation and archive best procurement performance (Odero and Shitseswa, 2017; Basheka, *et al.*, 2015). But poor planning has become a great challenge when implementing procurement process and this is due to preparations of unrealistic budgets and inadequate skills of staffs executing the plan (Mamiro, 2010). Monitoring procurement activities such as evaluating internal controls, performing a risk assessment and compliance checklist is an essential part of the management of an institution that requires great attention to ensure that loopholes for fraud and corruption are easily identified and mitigated (Westin, 2017). Procurement practitioners can positively or negatively affect performance which requires public institutions to conduct extensive training and provide incentive for them as performance is an outcome of purchasing effectively and efficiently (Kipkemoi, 2017). Thus, best practices should be anchored by well trained professionals that can monitor procurement activities to assure consistency, reduce cost and have better customer service level (Chong and Ooi, 2008).

Best practices aim to promote effective management of procurement functions with the purpose of integrating efficiency by decreasing cost, improving quality and ensure time delivery (Coggburn, 2017). It enables public institutions to achieve strategic goals economically, efficiently and effectively (Luketero, 2016). As a result, public institutions are currently harmonizing best practices such as complying with procurement plans; training procurement professionals, adhere to procurement procedures and better allocation of resources with the institution strategies to achieve best performance (Schonbegger, 2017; Kilonzo, 2014; Moncska, *et al.*, 2010).

Poor procurement performance hinders growth of institutions as it creates delays in delivery and increases delivery of low-quality goods (Gordon and Murray, 2009). Therefore, existing problems in public procurement provides sound reasons for analysing the performance of public procurement operation in public institutions. Procurement best practices are important to eradicate unethical behavior and improving procurement performance. Thus, public institutions should focus on how to enhance procurement performance to achieve financial savings through efficient and coordinated service delivery (Kipkemoi, 2017; Kakwezi and Nyeko, 2013; Mshamu, 2013). Procurement best practices are influenced mainly by institution's policies and procedures that are determined by the management and always are in the planning stages of the procurement process (Krippner, 2015). Best practices helps an institution to archive it's procurement objectives such as supplies of right quality, right quantity, delivered at right time and are from the right source (Akumuntu, 2019).

Best practices are essential for competitiveness of procurement function in any organisation. Basing on this view, the overall procurement depends on the effective procurement system in serving the organisation (Matto, 2017). Despite this fact, the failure to establish effective procurement practices has led to irregular and biased decisions that have brought consequences to every entity. The procuring entities need to have coherent methods of practicing effective procurement in institutions such as local

government which has never been as sound as it is now (Masiko, 2013). In this case, delaying will worsen the already deteriorating performance, loss of professionals, and local government authorities will continue incurring unnecessary costs (Swinder and Seshadri, 2015). This is due to the fact that, an organisation which do not have an effective procurement practices in their processes, procedures, and plans experience lower performance, higher customer dissatisfaction and employee turnover, (Amaratunga and Baldry, 2014). In this case therefore, if procurement process not well managed, the organisation's procurement as a whole will lose focus leading to ineffectiveness that will expose the organisation risks (Weele, 2016).

The effort made by the government of Tanzania to improve procurement best practices is reform of the public procurement Acts of 2011 and regulations of 2013 and 2016 which has put forward several issues that will impact on the improved procurement best practices. Also the government of Tanzania has formed the PPPD board which is dealing with the formulation of the policies and procedures that will lead to procurement best practices. The board of procurement and supplies in collaboration with PPRA has made seminars and training in order to improve procurement best practices which are conducted every year and the participant are all members from procuring entities that are government organisation, private and even the individual persons. Yet the annual procurement performance reports from public procurement regulatory authority and controller (PPRA) and auditor general (CAG) has shown some lures on performance of public procurement which reported poor planning of procurement and mismanaged contracts in public sector. Therefore, this study addresses the contribution of best practices in public procurement to the performance of public sector with selected higher learning institutions in Tanzania.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Agency theory

The agency theory describes the relationship between the principal and the agent in agreement whereby the principal employs the agent to conduct certain services on his behalf by delegating a certain decision-making power (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). In the theory of agency, the agent's objectives and interests conflict with each other, leading in problems with agencies (Leepsa and Panda, 2017). Therefore, principal seeks to address the agency issue by establishing a mechanism to align the interests of agents with the Principals (Health and Norman, 2004). For public institutions, Procurement Management Unit (PMU) plays the agent role for the government (principal) and adherence to rules and regulation by procurement officers which is the result of the principal - agent problem (Awino and Getuno, 2014). In this study, agency theory was useful in explaining relationship that exists between principal (government) and public institutions (agents) under the power entrusted to them through employment contracts in compliance with Public procurement legal framework. The principal (government) puts rules and regulation, provides training to ensure uniformity by public institution (agents) in carrying out procurement activities. The agents plan procurement of items, look for better sources of supply to ensure a better service delivery as required by the government. Theory also shows how the principal (government) is affected by performances of public institutions (agents) in the areas of decision-making.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design because of its ability to report the reality without any influence and with the help of survey and enquiries make it easier to obtain data that meets research objectives. Data were obtained from six higher learning institutions to include both colleges and universities since the chosen areas provided an excellent opportunity for comparing performance and obtaining views on the contribution of best practices to performance of public institution. For instance PPRA report of 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 showed higher learning institution and their compliance were Moshi Cooperative University (81.6%), Mkwawa University College of Education (86%), National

institute of Transport (72%), College of Business Education (95.8%), and Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology (44.5%). Targeted population constituted a number of 100 staff from six (6) higher learning institution both colleges and universities to include Procurement management unit, internal auditors and accountants as were directly or indirectly linked into daily procurement operation were able to provide appropriate data in relation to the specific objectives of the study (Field visit, 2019). The sample size used was 80 respondents who were determined through Slovin’s formula.

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2) \tag{1}$$

Where:

n = number of respondents

N = total population of procurement management unit, internal auditors and accountant

e = margin of error which was 5% (0.05)

$$n = 100 / (1 + 100(0.05^2))$$

$$n = 80$$

In addition stratified proportionate stratified sampling was used to obtain a sample size from chosen area since the targeted population had the same characteristics. Strata sample size was determined by the following equation.

$$n_h = (N_h / N) \times n \tag{2}$$

Whereby:

n_h – is sample size for stratum h

N_h – is population size for the stratum h

N - is total population size

n - is total sample size

Table 1 : Distribution of sample size

SNo.	Institution	Respondents						Total	
		PMU		Accounts		Internal Auditors		T _{Nh}	T _{nh}
		N _h	n _h	N _h	n _h	N _h	n _h		
1.	Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU)	04	03	13	11	04	03	21	17
2.	College of Business Education	05	04	09	07	05	04	19	15
3.	Mkwawa University College of Education	05	04	08	07	03	02	16	13
4.	Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy	05	04	07	06	03	02	15	12
5.	Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology	04	03	06	05	03	02	13	10
6.	National Institute of Transport	04	03	08	07	04	03	16	13
	Total							100	80

Where:

N_h– Population for stratum, n_h– Sample size for stratum, T_{Nh} – Total population for stratum, T_{nh}- Total sample size for stratum.

A multi stage stratified random sampling procedures was employed to form strata of six higher learning institutions out of 32 in Tanzania. Purposively sampling method was used in selection of staff directly linked to procurement and capable of offering required information relating to procurement best practices. Slovin’s formula was used to obtain a sample of 80 respondents and stratified proportionate random sampling procedure helped in obtaining a sample size for each institution. Conveniently, study acquired 65 respondents to answer associated questions per study objectives. Structured questionnaires were prepared and administered to collect data from targeted population. Interview checklist was prepared to obtain data from four heads of procurement management unit to obtain additional information to complement study findings. PPRAs reports of 2014/2015, 2015/2016, 2017/2018, PPA 2011 and its regulations, and other scholar reports were reviewed to obtain secondary data relating to best practices and performance of public institution which supports study findings. Content analysis was used to analyses qualitative data to obtain theme, and concepts relevant to the study. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze quantitative data in terms of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Multinomial logistic regression was used to analyse the influence of procurement planning, staff training and procurement monitoring on performance of public institution since it permits each category of dependent variable to be compared with a reference category. MLR was also preferred since the study had nominal response variables that have more than two categories of dependent variable option to include quality service, time delivery and cost reduction. Moreover, there was no multicollinearity between the independent variables (procurement planning, staff training and procurement monitoring) since VIF = 1.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on research objective. The results presents the descriptive statistics and model used to test the hypothesis predicted in this study.

4.1. The influence of best practices to performance of public institutions

Descriptive statistics shows that monitoring procurement activities enhanced performance at $4.00 \leq \text{Mean} \leq 4.20$ with overall mean of 4.07. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Influence of monitoring procurement activities to performance of public institutions (n= 65)

Best practices variables	SD%	D%	MA%	A%	SA%	Mean	Std. Deviation
Monitoring procurement activities	3.1	3.1	16.9	43.1	33.8	4.02	0.960
Adhering to procurement planning	1.5	6.2	7.7	40.0	44.6	4.20	0.939
Staff training	1.5	7.7	18.5	33.8	38.5	4.00	1.016
Overall Mean						4.07	

SD= strongly agree, D = Disagree, MA= Moderate agree, A = Agree and SA = strongly agree

4.1.1 Staff training and performance of Public institution

The findings on Table 2 showed that 1.5% of respondents strongly disagreed training to have any impact on institutional performance, 7.7% disagreed, 8.5% moderately agreed, 33.8% agreed and 38.5% strongly agreed that training contributes to performance of the public institution. The response on staff training and performance led to a Mean =4.00 and standard deviation = 1.016. The response from respondents indicates that staff training has a great contribution towards institutional performance. Seleim (2007) also argued that staff training is a main component in improving institutional performance as training allows employees to master understanding, abilities and confidence that allows them to fulfill their procurement

tasks. Moreover, Chong and Ooi (2008) contended that with well trained professionals the more likely an institution reduces cost, assure consistency into procurement activities and have better customer service. Furthermore, Boyan (2003) revealed that, by training procurement participants enhances institution reputation for efficiency and quality services. The findings from interview made with head of procurement management unit confirmed the same after commenting that:

"...In our institution, there is a tendency for the provision of regular training. This is possible because we have specific budget for training staff both long term and short term with the aim of gaining knowledge, skills, which impacts performance. For example, currently about 6 staff went for long term training and others gets to short term training such PPRA training to build our capacity..." (Interview, field data, 24/04/2019).

In contrary, one of the interviewee from MNMA had this to say:

"...in our institution, we have a budget on short-term training but not long-term training. However, an employee is allowed to go once he/ she is prepared financially for the particular training. Our tender board and we, procurement management unit are normally taken for training several times to keep ourselves updated with legislation aiming to achieve better performance..." (Interview, field data, 21/06/2019).

The findings implied that to great extent staff training influences performance of public institutions. Moreover, by training procurement participants, they gain new knowledge, skills, and experiences, which in return enhance procurement performance. Therefore, training should be the focus of public institution to meet procurement-desired goals.

4.1.2 Monitoring procurement activities and performance

The findings in Table 2 portrayed that monitoring procurement activities on performance of public institution had a Mean = 4.02 and standard deviation = 0.960. It was revealed that 33.8% of respondents strongly agreed that monitoring procurement activities contributes to performance, 43.1% agreed 16.9% moderately agreed, 3.1% disagreed and 3.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed that monitoring procurement activities has no contribution toward performance. The response indicates that, to a great extent institution attains better performance through monitoring its procurement activities such as monitoring its internal controls, compliance checklist and risk assessment. This can be evidenced by (Chong and Ooi, 2008) who argued that with controlled procurement process, the easier it would be for institutions to reduce their inventories, have better customer service and reduce cost, which significantly increase institutions performance. The findings implied that, institutions that make continuously an assessment into their procurement activities won't fall prey to unnecessary cost and unethical practices which eventually establishes ethical culture that leads to attainment of best performance.

4.1.3 Procurement planning and performance

Adhering to procurement planning and performance of public institution had positive influence on performance of public institution with Mean = 4.20 and standard deviation = 0.939 where 1.5% of respondent strongly disagreed that procurement planning has no any contribution towards institution performance, 6.2% disagreed, 7.7% moderately agreed. In addition, 40% agreed that procurement planning contributes toward institution performance and 44.6% strongly agreed that procurement planning contributes to performance as presented in Table 2. The findings indicated that, to great extent procurement planning influences performance of public institution as majority of the respondents (84.6%) agreed. Basheka *et al.*, (2015) supports the findings by showing that procurement planning contributes to success of institution operation, improves service delivery, and helps in achieving maximum value for expenditures on services to be delivered. Masanja and Mgawe (2018) also supports the findings by demonstrating that, institutions should give priority on procurement planning as it facilitate resource

utilization and ensures time delivery or completion of the projects. Moreover, Karanja and Kiarie (2015) found a positive and significant relationship between procurement plan and performance of an

institution. Thus, the study findings implied that adherence to procurement plan is best mechanism towards procurement performance since the plan determines procurement needs, timing of their acquisition, and the budget required for particular item thus unnecessary cost are eliminated and timely delivery of service are observed.

Theoretically, the study findings relate to agency theory since the theory relies more on monitoring procurement activities to achieve best procurement performance. In agency theory, the principal provides training programs to the agent to ensure uniformity in handling procurement functions and meet performance standards by public institution (Yukins, 2010). The agent plan procurement of items, look for better source of supply to improve procurement performance since it guarantees quality service, reduce cost and improve time delivery.

4.2 Multinomial logistic regression for procurement best practices and performance of public institution

Multinomial logistic regression was used to test the influence of independent variables to performance for public institution since it permits each category of dependent variable to be compared with a reference category.

Table 3: Model fitting information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	Df	Sig
Intercept only	128.520			
Final	27.932	100.589	62	0.001

In model fitting information, Chi-Square statistics was done to establish the -2log likelihood against the model with a purpose of establishing fitness of the model and whether the model improves the study ability to predict the outcome at selected probability level. Table 4 shows the results of the model as it was compared to explanatory variable to see whether model is significantly fit. The result shows that the model P-value is 0.001, which is less than P-value (0.05) which implies that model is significant and good for this study.

Table 4: Goodness-of-Fit

Model	Chi-Square	Df	Sig
Pearson	25.390	60	1.000
Deviance	25.970	60	1.000

Goodness of fit was done to test whether the observed data were consistent with the model. Assumption is that when significant P-value is greater than the P-value 0.05 means the modal is relevant for analysis. When the significant P-value is less than P-value 0.05 means the model do not fit the observed data. Table 4 presents the Pearson Chi-Square statistics with significant P-value = 1.000 which is greater than P-value 0.05 implying that modal adequately fit the observed data.

Table 5: Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	0.787
Nagelkerke	0.906
McFadden	0.761

In Pseudo R-Square, Cox and Snell, Nagelkerke and McFadden was computed to show how much best practices influenced the performance of public institution. Table 5 shows the Nagelkerke of 0.906 meaning that the predictor variables highly influenced performance of public institution by 90.6% at 95% significant level. The study results implied that, procurement best practices enhances procurement performance largely.

Table 6: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results for the Best Practices and Performance

Most performance indicator influence by doing public procurement audit		β	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.
Time delivery	Intercept	2.138	2.344	.832	1	0.362
	[Monitoring procurement activities=4]	7.380	3.396	4.721	1	0.030*
	[Supplier relationship management=4]	17.558	8.052	4.755	1	0.029*
Quality	[Green procurement=4]	-14.238	5.978	5.673	1	0.017*
	Intercept	3.671	2.265	2.626	1	0.105
	[Monitoring procurement activities=3]	7.351	3.431	4.589	1	0.032*
	[Staff training=4]	8.659	4.056	4.556	1	0.033*
	[Procurement planning=4]	-7.146	3.489	4.194	1	0.041*

Note: The reference category = cost, Statistically Significant at *(5%), Number of observations = 65, (-) = Negative relationship, (+) = Positive relationship, Pseudo - R² = Cox and Snell = 0.787; Nagelkerke = 0.906 and McFadden = 0.761, LR Chi-Square =100.589; Probability sig = 0.001 and Log Likelihood = 128.520

Table 6 shows results on MLR results on independent variables and performance of public institution whereby monitoring procurement practices, supplier relationship management, green procurement, staff training and procurement planning were found significant at P = 0.05.

Ho: Monitoring procurement activities has no significant influence on performance of public institutions

Monitoring procurement activities had a positive and significant relationship to time delivery at significant level of 5%. This implies that as public institution increases its monitoring to procurement activities it is likely to increase timely delivery of service at (7.380) compared to cost where other factors remain constant. The modal results shows that institution is going to experience a high performance with respect to time delivery compared to procurement cost. The reason behind is that, by making a follow up on procurement activities it ensures each activity is conducted on time resulting to a good performance for the procurement unit. Similarly, Chandra (2008) had the same observation that, monitoring procurement activities influences level of implementation success in terms of time and cost.

Monitoring procurement activities was positive and significant related to quality at 5% significant level. The findings shows that by increasing the rate on monitoring procurement activities the more likely for quality services increases compared to cost involved where other factors remain constant. The model indicates that the more procurement activities are monitored the more institutions are able to improve performance on quality services by (7.351) compared to cost. Chong and Ooi (2008) had similar observation that through a close follow up into procurement activities quality of service is improved. The situation could be because when monitoring procurement activities is done then, the focus is on the

implementers of the procurement process that they meet desired results rather than the cost involved in monitoring them. Thus, monitoring procurement activities helps to gain better performance in terms of quality of services offered compared to the cost involved in procurement activities.

Ho: Staff training has no significant influence on performance of public institution

Staff training was positive and significant related to quality at 5% level. This implies that conducting training to procurement staff would likely affect performance in terms of quality compared to cost. The model result indicates that the more training is made to the staff the more institution would obtain the best result in terms of quality at (8.659) rather than the cost which is the reference factor where other factors remain constant. Conducting professional training enable practitioners to be updated with the current requirements, gain new knowledge and build capacity which would likely affect the quality of the process, staff and material they purchase. Seleim (2007) and Boyan (2003) support the findings by showing that staff training is the instrument for improving procurement performance that enhances institution's reputation for efficiency and quality of service.

Ho: Procurement planning has no significant influence on performance of public institution

Planning procurement activities had a negative and significant relationship to quality at significant level of 5%. This implies that with effective procurement plan the more likely an institution influences cost reduction rather than quality where other factors remain constant. The MNL results indicate that with procurement planning an institution influences quality decrease by 7.146. Findings is supported by Kennard (2006) who revealed that with effective procurement plan there is great possibility of reducing cost while enhancing stakeholder relationship and gain best procurement performance.

4.5.1 Hypothesis test

Basing on Multinomial logistic regression results (p-values) showed significant influence. Null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between best practices and performance was rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted. The findings implied that there is significant relationship between best practices and performance of public institution. Similarly, Kilonzo (2014) had the same observation that, there is significant relationship between best practices and performance.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff training enhances procurement performance as it keeps the procurement practitioners updated on what is prevailing in procurement functions, build capacity resulting to better performance. Moreover, staff training creates more awareness on the right practices in their daily routine and consequences of not adhering to such practices which will enhance institution performance. Monitoring procurement activities helps in improving procurement performance since corrective measures will be taken as early as possible to resolve existing circumstances which are likely to affect performance.

The study recommends that public institutions should consider training procurement personnel in all areas related to the best practices. The trainings should be touching areas that would affect positively performance of public institution such as how to negotiate, manage the contract, develop supplier and retain them. On the other hand, public institutions should have enough budgets to support short and long-term training for best institutional performance. Public institution should consider monitoring procurement activities especially in areas of high risks and adopt appropriate measures that would prevent unethical practices to attain the best performance. The study also recommends public institution

to plan effectively their procurements activities and adhere to their plan to achieve value for money and hence best performance.

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