

Factors Influencing Performance of Public Procurement Function in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya

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Abstract: Procurement performance and organization performance are intricately and inextricably intertwined. Procurement function uses the largest portion of an organizations budget. This is why it is important to maximize on effective and efficient management of the procurement function in an entity. In the public sector, procurement function is the main source of service delivery to the citizens of a country. Public procurement employees are entrusted with the public funds to purchase on behalf of the entities they are serving in. Despite Government efforts for improvement, public procurement is still marred by sub optimal works, inadequate quality of goods and services. Stakeholders complain about poor service delivery, allegations of mega corruptions, overpriced items just to mention but a few. The general objective of this study was to assess factors influencing procurement performance in Kenyan public sector with specific focus on the Trans-Nzoia County. The study sought to assess the extent to which planning, contract management, work environment and staff competence influence procurement performance. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population was all the 33 procurement employees comprising 28 employees and the 5 managers working in the procurement departments in Trans-Nzoia County. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and interview schedules for the managers. Both descriptive and inferential data analysis methods including frequencies, percentages, analysis of variance and regression were used. Data was presented using, tables and figures. The findings were analyzed based on the objectives of the study as explored. The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics using the statistical package for social scientist (SPSS) 20. Demographic indicators show that majority of the study participants are qualified and have attained education levels sufficient to influence favourably their comprehension of antecedents to effective management of the procurement function. Further findings on years of experience indicate that officers participating in the procurement function in the Trans-Nzoia County have long procurement experience. Overall procurement planning was most significant driver in procurement performance followed by staff competence, and contract management in that order. Work environment returned a negative influence. It is recommended that reforms in the Department be anchored by ensuring that procurement plans are prepared as per the set guidelines in the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act 2015 and should be strictly adhered to in order to obtain better performance in procurement in Trans-Nzoia County. Impulse buying and unplanned procurements should be highly discouraged. Continuous professional development and training of procurement staff should be sustained.

Keywords: Contract Management, Planning, Public Procurement, Staff Competence & Work Environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally public procurement is gaining prominence as a profession that plays a key role in the successful management of public resources, and a number of countries have become increasingly aware of the significance of procurement as an area vulnerable to mismanagement and corruption and have thus made an effort to integrate procurement into a more strategic view of government efforts. As part of the efforts to adopt a long term and strategic view of their procurement needs and management, most countries have resorted to using their annual procurement plans as a possible problem solver.

Besides the fiduciary obligation to deliver goods and services to the constituents of the particular government administration, public procurement addresses a wide range of objectives (Uyarra, 2009). It has been used by governments to achieve socio-economic objectives such as stimulating economic activity; protecting national industries from foreign competition; improving the competitiveness of certain industrial sectors; and remedying national disparities (Bolton, 2006).

Maskin, (2004) asserts that a uniform implementation approach to procurement is required. Government and private sector procurement suffers from fraud and similar issues; not often, but it does happen. Suppliers have been known to operate cartels (to restrict competition or drive up prices), and some suppliers and staff have, on occasion, committed fraud. That may include; falsifying invoices; business awarded unfairly in return for bribes or suppliers inflating prices in collusion with staff and/or competitors. Procurement performance and organization performance are intricately and inextricably intertwined. Procurement function uses the largest portion of an organizations budget. This is why it is important to maximize on effective and efficient management of the procurement function in an entity. In the public sector, procurement function is the main source of service delivery to the citizens of a country. Public procurement employees are entrusted with the public funds to purchase on behalf of the entities they are serving in. Public procurement is not only key to government service delivery but also a tool that can be used to drive economic development, yet constraints affect its performance. Procurement is perceived as prone to corruption; occasioning waste and affecting quality of service and life improving opportunities. There is need to reverse this trend and strive to achieve value for money win public confidence. Despite Government efforts to improve the procurement system, it is still marred by sub optimal works, inadequate quality of goods and services. Improper implementation of recommended performance standards results in unnecessarily high operation costs, uncoordinated business activities, inability to achieve domestic policy goals, and failure to attract and retain professionals. Suppliers complain about the capability of public sector buyers.

This study intended to make an in-depth assessment of factors affecting levels of procurement performance so as to improve productivity. There is growing demand from taxpayers for higher service levels. The study identified ways for enhanced procurement performance which, if implemented, can contribute to socio-economic benefits for the county, citizens, and Government. It is expected that from the findings of this study, that Trans-nzoia County could put in place appropriate measures to improve procurement performance levels. Government could benefit from enhanced value for money due to improved revenue collection which could be used to finance other sectors of the economy. This study could form a basis of reference for what needs to be researched further and throw light to the need for future research in procurement. Its recommendations could enable the public at large to benefit through responsive service delivery, if implemented.

Research Objectives:

The study was guided by the following research objectives:-

- i. To determine the effect of planning on public procurement Performance in Transzoia County
- ii. To determine the effect of contract management on public Procurement Performance in Transzoia County.
- iii. To find out the influence of work environment on public Procurement Performance in Transzoia County.
- iv. To find out the influence of staff competence on public Procurement Performance in Transzoia County.

The findings of this study will be useful to public procurement stakeholders, in strengthening the acquisition, implementation and integration of procurement practices in administration. The study findings will also inform government policy with regard to designing change to streamline the acquisition of goods and services in procuring entities as set by the Public Procurement Act of 2015.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework:

Transactional Cost Economics Theory:

Patrick, (2010) acknowledges that TCE was originally developed to help to determine the efficiency of governance structures. Firstly, because supplying public utility services typically requires large, durable investments in production and distribution facilities that are specialized to a particular market, the efficient governance of public utility transactions is

likely to require long-term contracts to avoid the hazards of repeated haggling over the terms of trade once those investments are in place (McCrudden, 2008). Finally, uncertainty about cost and demand conditions over such long horizons and the complexity of public utility services will leave long-term contracts for public utility services inevitably incomplete (Tukamuhabwa, 2012). Cronbach (2011) argues that the problems associated with contracting solutions in the types of environments encountered in public utility transactions are likely to be difficult to tackle. Procurement planning, contract management and staff competency in procurement and supply chain management in general face several challenges. To overcome the general inefficiencies in the governance structures and to safeguard long-term and costly contracts procurement performance needs to be greatly enhanced.

Conceptual Framework:

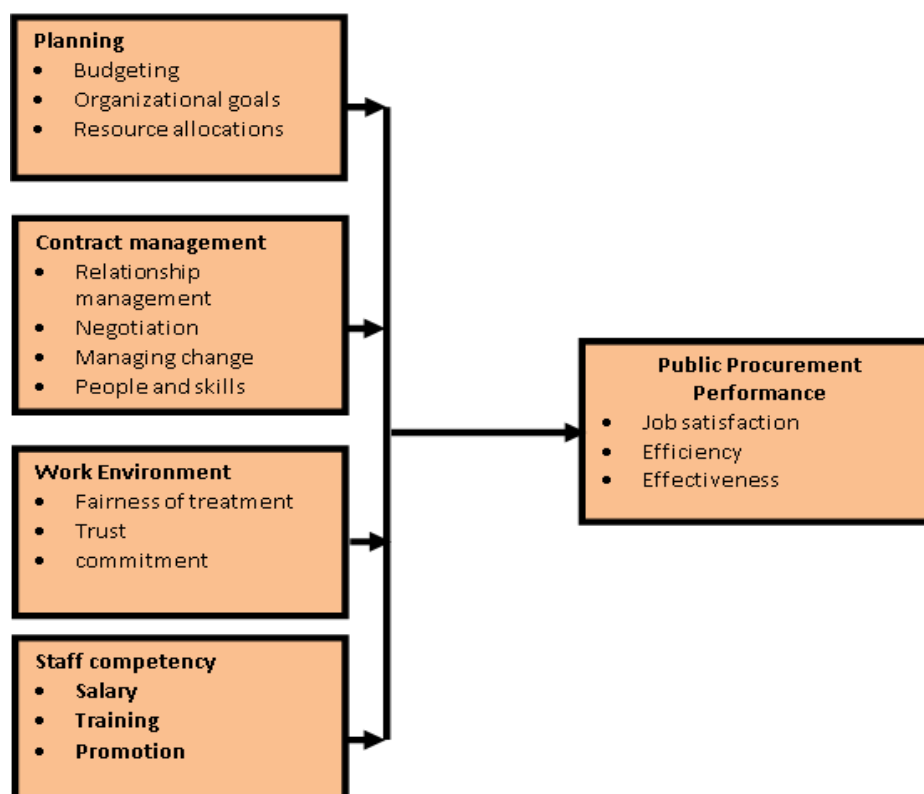


Figure 2.1: conceptual framework

According to Shiundu and Rotich (2014), evaluation or measurement of procurement performance has always been a vexing problem for procurement professionals. They explain two types of goals in the procurement system: non procurement goals and procurement goals. Procurement goals are primarily associated with quality, reduction of financial and technical risks, and protection over competition and integrity in the system. Non procurement goals usually involve the economic, social, and political goals within the system. Achieving efficiency in public procurement is an ambitious task, as procurement faces numerous challenges, especially due to the market structure, the legal framework and the political environment that procurers face. Procurement performance should be based on total cost, quality, and enhancement of competitiveness of suppliers using best procurement practice.

Procurement planning is one of the primary functions of procurement with a potential to contribute to the success of public institution's operations and improved service delivery. Agreeably Mamiro (2010) in his findings underscores these facts and concludes that one of the major setbacks in public procurement is poor procurement planning and management of the procurement process which include needs that are not well identified and estimated, unrealistic budgets and inadequacy of skills of procurement staff responsible for procurement. Similarly, procurement performance is not usually measured in most PE's as compared with the human resource and finance functions. Failure to establish performance of the procurement function can lead to irregular and biased decisions that have costly consequences to any public procuring entity.

Public procurement employees have to strive to achieve three competing demands of meeting commercial interests with key themes of value for money, economy, efficiency and effectiveness; the regulatory interests with key themes of competition, transparency, equality and compliance and the social interests whose key themes include public interest, employment concerns, social exclusion, economic development and environment policy. In an effort to attain these demands, organizations constantly look for employees who have skills necessary to deal with the wide variety of tasks faced by purchasing professionals.

Wanyonyi and Muturi (2015) in their study found that the main areas that were observed to be the key contributors to staff competence included the training of new employees in the procurement departments, enhancing team work of procurement staff, acquaintance of the procurement Act by the procurement team and employing qualified and competent personnel in the procurement departments among others. This study concurs with his findings pertaining to the significance of staff competency in enhancing procurement performance in public institutions.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The design enabled the researcher to collect data from a wide population in order to describe the nature of factors influencing public procurement performance in Trans-Nzoia County. The target population was all the 28 employees and the 5 managers working in the procurement departments in Trans-Nzoia County. The employees and managers were from the five constituencies: Cherangany, Kwanza, Saboti, Endebess and Kiminini. The study targeted this population because their contributions in the procurement department enable a clear assessment of the factors influencing procurement performance in Transnzoia County. Employees execute duties and responsibilities in the County while managers oversee the procurement activities.

The study used self-administered questionnaires and interview schedules. The questionnaires had both closed and open-ended questions.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate:

The sample size for the study was 33 employees working in Trans-nzoia County. Out of 33 respondents only 26 responded to the questionnaire. This represents a response rate of 78% which according to Hagger et al., (2003) a response rate of 50 percent, 60 percent or 75 percent is adequate to give the correct view for a study. The response rate is presented on Figure 4.1

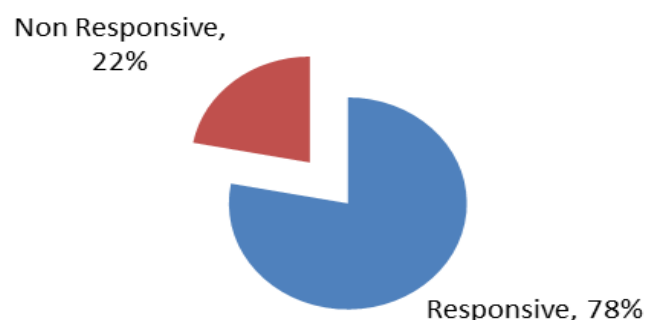


Figure 4.1: Response Rate

Demographic Information of Respondents:

The researcher used four demographic items in the questionnaire; gender, age, educational level, work experience and procurement (professional) experience. The respondent's responses are as below.

Respondent's Gender:

Table 4.1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	15	57.7
Female	11	42.3
Total	26	100.0

Tables 4.1 revealed that, majority (57.7%) of the respondents interviewed were male while 45% were female. This shows that there was a gender balance in the distribution of respondents hence the likelihood of getting balanced responses.

Respondent's Age:

The study sought to investigate the age distribution of the respondents with the aim of establishing whether the various age brackets were well represented. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.2: Age

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percent
18 - 25 Years	6	23.1
26 - 30 Years	2	7.7
31 - 35 Years	6	23.1
36 - 40 Years	5	19.2
41 - 50 Years	7	26.9
Total	26	100.0

Tables 4.3 revealed that, majority (26.9%) of the respondents were between 41 – 50 years while the minorities (7.7%) were between 26 – 30 years. Respondents of the age brackets between 18 – 25 years and 31 – 35 years were 23.1% in each age bracket while 19.2% of the respondents were between 36 – 40 years. This shows that the majority of the respondents were in their middle age and therefore in a better position to give reliable information. However, the age of the respondents might not influence the results of the study.

Respondent's Education Level:

Table 4.3: Education

Level	Frequency	Percent
Secondary	7	26.9
College/University	10	38.5
Vocational/Technical School	9	34.6
Total	26	100.0

The data in Table 4.3 shows that majority (38.5%) of the respondents had attained college or university level while the least (26.9%) were those with secondary level of education. Those with vocational or technical education were 34.6%. This shows that majority of the respondents had the required skills to perform their tasks well. Those with secondary level of education should be encouraged to further their studies.

Respondent's Work Experience:

Table 4.4: Work Experience

Period	Frequency	Percent
1 - 2 Years	4	15.4
3 - 5 Years	8	30.8
Above 5 Years	14	53.8
Total	26	100.0

Table 4.4 shows that the largest group of respondents, equivalent to 53.8%, had a work experience of above 5 years, while those with less than 2 years of work experience constituted 15.4% of employees. Those who had worked between 3 and 5 years were 30.8%. From these findings, it was evident that the study obtained responses from employees who had generally worked for reasonably enough duration to give dependable feedbacks.

Respondents Procurement Experience:

The researcher sought to establish the respondents who had worked under procurement/supply chain department.

Table 4.5: Procurement Experience

Period	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 Year	4	15.4
1 - 2 Years	4	15.4
3 - 5 Years	11	42.3
Above 5 Years	7	26.9
Total	26	100.0

Table 4.5 shows that majority (42.3%) of the respondents had worked under the procurement department for a period of 3 to 5 years while 15.4% had worked for a period between 1 to 2 years and less than 1 year each. 26.9% of the respondents had professional experience over 5 years. This showed that majority of the respondents had relevant knowledge in terms of procurement matter.

Effect of planning on public Procurement Performance in Transzoia:

Table 4.6: Meaning of Planning

Do you understand planning?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	88.5
No	3	11.5
Total	26	100.0

It is clear from table 4.6 that majority of the respondents (88.5%) knew what planning entails. This was attributed to activities they routinely undertook such as budgeting and resource allocation for various departments. 11.5% of the respondents did not know what planning is. Probably they thought it was a complex and specialised topic.

The respondents agreed that most of their procurement plans are done annually and for specific departments then they merged to form a master plan for the whole year.

Table 4.7: Planning and Procurement Performance

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our Planning on Budgeting has influence on procurement performance	26	4.08	.560
Our Planning on Team work has influence on procurement performance	26	2.08	.688
Our Planning on resource allocation has influence on procurement performance	26	3.69	.736
Mean	26	3.28	0.66

Table 4.7 indicates that the respondents agreed (4.08) that planning on budgeting influenced procurement performance while they disagreed (2.08) on planning on team work influenced procurement performance. They were undecided (3.69) on whether planning on resource allocation has influence on procurement in Trans-nzoia County.

Effect of contract management on Public Procurement Performance in TransNzoia:

Table 4.8: Meaning of Contract Management

Do you understand contract management?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	92.3
No	2	7.7
Total	26	100.0

Majority (92.3%) of the respondents understood what contract management is all about while 7.7% of the respondents did not as shown in table 4.8. This showed that most of the employees knew their duties and responsibilities.

Table 4.9: Contract Management and Procurement Performance

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our Contract management on terms of reference has influence on procurement performance	26	3.46	0.90
Our Contract management on mission statement has influence on procurement performance	26	1.85	0.54
Our Contract management on effectiveness and efficiency has influence on procurement performance	26	2.92	0.84
Mean	26	2.74	0.76

From table 4.9, it was evident that the respondents were neutral (3.46) on influence of contract management in terms of reference on procurement performance and strongly disagreed (1.85) on influence of contract management in mission statement on procurement performance while they disagreed (2.92) on the influence of contract management effectiveness and efficiency on procurement performance.

Influence of work environment on Public Procurement Performance in Transzoia

Table 4.10: Meaning of Work Environment

Do you understand work environment?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	96.2
No	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Table 4.10 indicated that majority of the respondents (96.2%) understand the meaning of work environment while 3.8% of the respondents (1) had no knowledge about work environment is all about. Most of the respondents commented positively about their working environment.

Table 4.11: Work Environment and Procurement Performance

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our work environment on fairness has an influence on procurement performance	26	4.00	.800
Our work environment on trust has an influence on procurement performance	26	2.08	.744
Our work environment on commitment has an influence on procurement performance	26	2.88	.952
Mean	26	2.99	0.83

Table 4.11 indicated that the respondents agreed (4.00) that work environment on fairness had an influence on procurement performance while they disagreed that work environment on trust had any influence on procurement performance and work environment on commitment had an influence on procurement performance with means of (2.08) and (2.88) respectively.

Influence of staff competence on Public Procurement Performance in Transzoia County:

Table 4.12: Meaning of Staff Competence

Do you understand staff competence?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	26	100.0
Total	26	100.0

All the respondents (100%) understood the meaning of employee competency as exhibited in table 4.12. They attributed to professional trainings by Kenya Institute of Supplies Management, academic qualifications and adherence to rules and regulations governing public entities.

Table 4.13: Staff Competence and Public Procurement Performance

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our staff competencies on salary influence on procurement performance	26	4.08	.796
Our staff competencies on training influence on procurement performance	26	2.77	1.583
Our staff competencies on promotion influence on procurement performance	26	2.69	1.225
Mean	26	3.18	1.20

Table 4.13 indicated that respondents agreed (4.08) that staff competencies on salary influenced procurement performance while they disagreed (2.77) on staff competencies on training influenced procurement performance and also on the staff competencies on promotion influenced procurement performance (2.69).

Procurement Performance:

Table 4.14: Meaning of Procurement Performance

Do you understand procurement performance	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	88.5
No	3	11.5
Total	26	100.0

Most of the respondents (88.5%) understood what procurement performance is about while 11.5% do not as shown in table 4.14. They attributed procurement performance to better relations between the procurement entity and suppliers, timely delivery of goods and services from suppliers, cost effectiveness and adherence to rules and regulations.

Table 4.15: Procurement Performance in Trans-nzoia County

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our procurement performance practices on job satisfaction influence on procurement performance	26	4.12	.909
Our procurement performance practices on efficiency influence on procurement performance	26	2.54	1.392
Our procurement performance practices on effectiveness influence on procurement performance	26	3.04	1.183
Mean	26	3.23	1.16

The respondents agreed (4.12) that procurement performance practices on job satisfaction influenced procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County while they were neutral (3.04) on procurement performance practices on effectiveness influenced procurement performance and they disagreed (2.54) on procurement performance practices on effectiveness influenced procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County as per table 4.15.

Regression Analysis:

Regression measures the amount of total variation in dependent variable due to independent variable. The value of R square in table 4.17 is 0.60. This value indicates that there is almost 60% variation in dependent variable (Procurement Performance) due to change in independent variables as shown in the table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.775 ^a	.600	.524	.33846

a. Predictors: (Constant), Contract Management, Staff Competency, Work Environment, Planning

b. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

From table 4.18, the ANOVA results predicted the dependent variable by illustrating how the regression best fits the model. The results showed that the significance probability value of $P=0.000$ of the regression model was less than the level of significance of 0.01 at 95% confidence levels indicating that the regression model was significant.

Table 4.18: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.611	4	.903	7.881	.000 ^b
	Residual	2.406	21	.115		
	Total	6.017	25			

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Contract Management, Staff Competency, Work Environment, Planning

The F critical at 5% level of significance was 2.84. Since F calculated (7.881) is greater than the F critical value of 2.84, this shows that the overall model was significant. From table 4.5 above, the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significance in predicting how contract management, staff competency, work environment and planning influence the procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County.

Table 4.19: Coefficient Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	2.809	.682		4.121	.000
	Work Environment	-.411	.116	-.492	-3.543	.002
	Staff Competency	.261	.147	.276	1.779	.090
	Planning	.337	.142	.370	2.371	.027
	Contract Management	.046	.129	.050	.361	.721

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

The established regression equation was;

$$Y = 2.809 - 0.411 X_1 + 0.261 X_2 + 0.337 X_3 + 0.046 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where

β is a correlation coefficient

Y= Procurement Performance

X_1 = Work Environment

X_2 = Staff Competence

X_3 = Planning

X_4 = Contract Management

ε = Error Term

From the regression equation above, taking all factors into account (contract management, staff competence, planning and work environment) at zero constant, procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County will be 2.809. The findings presented also showed that taking all other independent variables at constant, a unit increase in staff competence will lead to a 0.261 increase in the scores of procurement performance. The study also established that a unit increase in contract management while all other independent variables are constant, will lead to a 0.046 increase in procurement performance. In addition, the study found that an increase in work environment while all other independent variables are constant, will lead to 0.411 decrease in procurement performance. Lastly, the study found that an increase in planning while all other independent variables are constant, will lead to a 0.337 increase in procurement performance.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Demographic Information of the respondents:

The response rate was 78% which was significant. Majority of the respondents were male at 57.7% while 43.3% were female. It met the constitutional a third gender rule. Most (26.9%) of the respondents were between 41 – 50 years while the minorities (7.7%) were between 26 – 30 years. Respondents of the age brackets between 18 – 25 years and 31 – 35 years were 23.1% in each age bracket while 19.2% of the respondents were between 36 – 40 years. This shows that the majority of the respondents were in their middle age and therefore in a better position to give reliable information. 38.5% of the respondents had attained college or university level while the least (26.9%) were those with secondary level of education. Those with vocational or technical education were 34.6%. This showed that majority of the respondents had the required skills to perform their tasks well. Majority (26.9%) of the respondents had professional procurement experience over 5 years. This showed that majority of the respondents had relevant knowledge in terms of procurement functions.

Effect of planning on Public Procurement Performance in TransNzoia County:

The first objective of the study was to establish the effect of planning on public Procurement Performance in Trans-nzoia County. The respondents agreed that planning on budgeting influenced procurement performance while they disagreed on planning on team work influenced procurement performance. They were undecided on whether planning on resource allocation influence on procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County. Some of the respondents attributed this to lack of participation in preparing the procurement plans which proved to be important. The results agree with CIPS (2002) which states that it is important to involve as many people as possible from all departments for wider of the needs of each department.

From the regression model, a unit increase in planning will lead to a 0.337 increases in procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County. This implies that planning accounts for 33.7 % of variations in public procurement performance in Transnzoia. The findings also agree with Kennard (2006) indicating that procurement plan has the potential to cut costs, shorten timescales and enhance stakeholder relationships, reduce risks and improve overall performance. These findings also correspond with those of Basheka (2008) who found out that procurement planning is a primary function that sets the stage for subsequent procurement activities and a mistake in procurement planning has wide implications for procurement performance in TransNzoia.

The study further established that there were drawbacks facing planning. It included working on deadlocks, unclear objectives and goals, exaggerated budgets and a lot of tasks to be performed in a short duration. Mamiro (2010) agrees with these findings and concludes that one of the major setbacks in public procurement is poor planning and management of the procurement process which include needs that are not well defined and estimated, unrealistic budgets and inadequacy of the skills of staff responsible for procurement. Therefore, planning positively affect procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County.

Effect of contract management on Public Procurement Performance in TransNzoia county:

The second objective of the study was to establish the effect of contract management on public Procurement Performance in Transnzoia. The study indicated that the respondents were neutral on influence of contract management in terms of reference on procurement performance and strongly disagreed on influence of contract management in mission statement on procurement performance while they disagreed on influence of contract management effectiveness and efficiency on procurement performance.

From the regression model, the study also established that a unit increase in contract management while all other independent variables are constant, will lead to 0.046 increases in public procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County. This implied that contract management accounts for 4.6 % of variations in public procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County. Kiage (2013) agrees with the results that there is a positive relationship between contract management and procurement performance insinuating that contract management accounts for 23.3% of variance in procurement performance at the Ministry of Energy. Therefore, contract management positively affects public procurement performance in Transnzoia County.

Influence of work environment on Public Procurement Performance in Trans-nzoia:

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of work environment on public Procurement Performance in Trans-nzoia County. The study indicated that the respondents agreed on work environment on fairness had an influence on procurement performance while they disagreed on work environment on trust had an influence on procurement performance and work environment on commitment had an influence on procurement performance with respectively.

From the regression model, the study found that an increase in work environment while all other independent variables are constant, will lead to 0.411 decrease in procurement performance. Therefore, work environment negatively affects public procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County. While noting that work environment cannot be ignored, this may imply that pampering and too much comfort may not necessarily enhance procurement performance.

Influence of staff competence on Public Procurement Performance in Trans-nzoia:

The fourth objective of the study was to find out the influence of staff competence on Procurement Performance in Trans-nzoia County. The respondents agreed that procurement performance practices on job satisfaction influenced public procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County while they were neutral on procurement performance practices on effectiveness influenced procurement performance and they disagreed on procurement performance practices on effectiveness influenced public procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County.

From the regression model, it showed that taking all other independent variables at constant, a unit increase in staff competence will lead to a 0.261 increase in the scores of procurement performance. This implied that staff competence accounts for 26.1% of variations in public procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County. The findings concur with William (2009) that in a work context, individuals must possess a range of personal competencies along with task specific competencies to perform effectively and efficiently. Kiage (2013) recommended that procurement staff should possess sets of skills appropriate in procurement activities. Therefore, staff competencies positively affect public procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County.

Conclusion:

The study concluded that Overall procurement planning was the most significant driver in procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County followed by staff competency, and contract management, in that order. while work environment negatively affected public procurement performance in Trans-nzoia County.

Planning involves coordinating the financial and non-financial resources in advance for the purpose of utilizing them in the near future. Planning plays a crucial role in procurement performance. This is because goods and services need to be purchased at the right price, right time, right quantity, right quality and right supplier. Planning is also anchored the PPAD Act of 2015 which needs to be adhered to avoid legal hurdles.

Contract management is the process by which the buyer and seller (i.e the procurement function and the supplier) agrees on the implementation of agreed terms to offer a service or goods as stipulated. The minimum requirements of the contract must be met by both the supplier and the procurement function.

Staff competency entails the minimum requirements and conditions that one should have to perform or undertake a task. The procurement employees in Trans-nzoia County are well trained in procurement and most of them are registered members of Kenya Institute of Supplies Management. Staff competencies positively improve public procurement performance function in Transnzoia; hence there is the need to continuously train employees.

Recommendations:

In view of the research findings and taking cognizance of the need to anchor ongoing reforms in public procurement, the following recommendations are preferred.

The procurement plans should be prepared to as per the set guidelines in the Public Procurement And Asset Disposal Act 2015 and should be strictly adhered to obtain better performance in procurement in Trans-nzoia County. Impulse buying and unplanned procurements should be highly discouraged. The procurement staffs should be involved in budget preparation while user departments should prepare acquisition plans in advance.

Procurement professionals should subscribe to a certain level of training that is equal to the expected duties and responsibilities that one should be performing. They should do professional procurement examination offered by Kenya Institute of Supplies (KISM). Adequate resources should be provided annually for by the government continuous professional development of procurement staff.

In terms of contract management, the procurement function should share information on what is expected of the supplier from time to time. They should also be able to monitor the supplier and give feedback on the supplier performance. This is because the supplier performance affects public procurement performance. While appreciating that working environment is important too much emphasis should not be placed on it. Basic good work environment will do. It is important also to note that work environment should not be misconstrued to mean staff welfare and or remunerations

Suggested Areas for Further Research:

The researcher recommends further research to investigate the other factors such as legislations, patronage, integrity, procurement processes and governance that may affect procurement performance. Equally, further research should be carried out in other PEs to ascertain whether these findings are universal.

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