

# The effect of procurement practices on public procurement performance in Botswana

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## **Abstract:**

*The purpose of the research was to examine the effect of procurement practices on public procurement performance in public institutions in Botswana. The specific objectives of the study were: to examine the effect of e-procurement on public procurement performance, to assess the effect of procurement risk management on public procurement performance, to determine the effect of evaluation practice on public procurement performance, and to assess the effect of supplier management practice on public procurement performance of public institutions in Botswana. The study was conducted in Gaborone, Botswana in all public institutions in the 2022/2023 financial year. The study used a descriptive research design with a population of 95 respondents. The Cronbach's Alpha Model was used to conduct the reliability test which was in the range of 0.580 and 0.965. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 29. The research findings indicated that the performance of public procurement was adversely impacted by indicators of procurement practices ( $t=1.614$   $p<0.110$ ) in public institutions in Botswana. More specifically, e-procurement ( $t= 2.912$ ,  $p< 0.005$ ), procurement risk management ( $t=2.389$ ,  $p< 0.019$ ), evaluation practice ( $t=0.966$ ,  $p< 0.0337$ ) and supplier management practice ( $t= -0.253$ ,  $p<0.019$ ) significantly affected public procurement performance. The research concludes that for Botswana to achieve a more efficient public procurement performance, there is need for consistent adoption of e-procurement, procurement risk management, evaluation practice, and supplier management practice as critical procurement practices.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Public procurement refers to the acquisition of products, commodities, and services by government agencies with monies obtained from the public, whether under formal contract or not. The government procures, hires, or obtains publicly required commodities, construction work, or services through any contractual means. It also includes situations in which government funds are utilized to buy goods, services, or works without the government's involvement (Uyarra, et al.2020). The yearly global public procurement budget, for example, exceeds US\$16 trillion. 16 countries spend over \$11 trillion out of a total of \$14 trillion (Rennan, 2021). Each year more than a dozen countries spend over \$200 billion on goods and services from China, the United States, and a dozen other countries. Japan, Germany, India, and France are among the countries represented, descending from highest to lowest (Hughes, Morrison & Ruwanpura, 2019).

Due to the dynamics of change in technology in procurement in the United States, public procurement is encountered with the difficulty of gaining benefits from data and analytics (Alhola, et al. 2019). Balancing outsourcing with the preservation of high-quality domestic capacity in the United Kingdom, as well as establishing measures for effective supplier interaction (Hoekman & Sanfilippo, 2018). These problems are compounded in Sub-Saharan Africa's procurement processes. Procurement fraud, for example, costs the Kenyan government an estimated 30% of its revenue (Adjei-Bamfo & Maloreh Nyamekye, 2019). In South Africa, corruption in government contracts has long been a source of concern, and it has hampered public procurement. Major roadblocks continue in Botswana, including a lack of competency in subnational institutions, information management constraints, and tenderer screening delays, to mention a few (Basheka, 2017).

### **Problem Statement**

In 2014, Botswana's Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board dramatically raised its committees' thresholds with the goal of focusing more on its responsibilities of prescribing standards, training, capacity building, compliance, and performance monitoring. After this, there were challenges encountered such as lack of capacity in terms of procurement competency and knowledge, non-availability of a support structure like procurement units, no clear scheme of service and job profiles for the procurement cadre. Over the past several years, the Government of Botswana (GoB) emphasized on the need to strengthen procurement performance in the country and made budgetary allocations to strengthen the procurement profession to improve public service delivery and improve lives of its citizens (Sikazwe and Hasan, 2016). In terms of capacity building Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board used an informal approach in its initial years that was workshop based. In 2011/12, 2013/13, 2013/14 a total of 1642, 1713, 1840 employees were trained informally through workshops respectively. These were still below the figure of 2214 employees that were trained in 2010/2011. In terms of formal training, on 2014 statistics are available in which 146 employees were trained at Botswana Accounts College (PPADB, 2015). In 2014/15, only 26 employees were trained formally through Botswana Accounts College (PPADB, 2015).

In terms of compliance and performance monitoring of public institutions, the Public Procurement Body dismissed a significant portion of procurement requests placed before them for vetting and compliance. In 2011/12 4803 requests were approved out of 6487 that were submitted. In 2012/13 5964 of 7932 were approved while in 2013/14 4281 of 5340 requests were approved. In 2014/15 only 5340 of 5664 requests were approved (PPADB, 2015). Though efforts are being done to ensure that procurement practices are followed in executing procurement in various public institutions in Botswana, there have been challenges over the years. These challenges include deviations from the methods of procurement to the ones set in the public institutions' procurement plans, timelines not being adhered to in terms of tendering, no end of activity reports done for completed projects, non-publicizing of awards and non-availability of records/minutes for adjudication committees (PPADB, 2019). As a result of the identified deficiencies, research on the effect of procurement practices on public procurement performance is required in Botswana (Bothale, 2021).

### **The General Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to examine the effect of procurement practices on public procurement performance: The case of public institutions in Botswana.

### **The Specific Objectives of the Study**

- a) To examine the effect of e-procurement on public procurement performance in Botswana.
- b) To assess the effect of procurement risk management on public procurement performance in Botswana.
- c) To determine the effect of evaluation practice on public procurement performance in Botswana.
- d) To assess the effect of supplier management practice on public procurement performance in Botswana.

## **II. Literature Review**

**Disruptive Theory** - Barahona and Elizondo investigated the theory of disruptive innovation in 2012. According to the notion, e-procurement is a novel idea that must be improved on a regular basis. These innovations have an impact on conventional methods and techniques for procurement. It has a small and costly client base, as well as insufficient appeal throughout the initial steps of adoption, some acceptability as the system is implemented, new competitors as innovation progresses, and ongoing quality improvement to increase flexibility based on the requirements of users and stakeholders. The theory directly addresses the issue of e-procurement by justifying the essence of e-procurement in an organization. It also asserts that though e-procurement promises effectiveness to an organization's procurement performance, its adoption and implementation should be done gradually and conscientiously so that it can receive buy-in especially from those who will be using it.

**Agency theory** - The interplay between agents and principals is clarified by agency theory, but it also highlights a key fault in the relationship, perhaps contradictory goals and risk attitudes. According to Chaudhuri, Boer and Taran (2018), two issues develop as a result of this, purpose, conflict and knowledge asymmetry. This theory addresses the second independent variable of the study, that is, procurement risk management. The strength of this theory lies on the fact that it identifies the potential source of procurement risk as a relationship arising from two main actors, the principal and the agent, and that this risk may be due to asymmetry of information. Therefore, the theory asserts itself by giving guidance that procurement risk can firstly be avoided by ensuring the principal and the agent share the same information.

**Institutional theory** - The influence of external institutional variables on businesses, such as legal systems, governmental agencies, courts, and professions, as well as interest groups and public opinion, are covered by institutional theory. Lounsbury, Zhao, and Miller (2017) aver that the rules and standards created by institutions are accepted by various participants in a setting. One of institutional theory's advantages is its capacity to elucidate organizations' non-choice conduct, such as how they comply with standards without defying them and carry out public duties (Suddaby, 2015). This theory is relevant in addressing the third variable of the study which is evaluation practices. Procurement evaluation practices must be guided by some form of laws, rules and policies. As the theory asserts, the regulatory environment of an organization should address issues of compliance with set rules, desired values as well as shared beliefs and understanding. Effective procurement performance will not take place if there is no regulatory environment as guided by this theory.

**The Lean Supplier Competence Model** - The Lean supplier competency model is a technique that allows government agencies to conduct gap analyses and establish action plans to close the gap (Aamer, 2018). In order to promote Lean techniques like Kaizen, continuous improvement, the system evaluates suppliers based on five criteria. This theory is robust as it addresses supplier management practices by pointing out that suppliers need to be managed in a way that enhances leanness. It is because of this that the theory proposes a 5-point criterion of supplier management practices aimed at guiding those in charge of procurement on how to select ideal suppliers based on evaluation guided by supplier behaviour in terms of lean performance of the supplier.

### **III. Methodology**

**Research design** - A quantitative method was employed, and descriptive research design adopted. The target population was procurement managers in the 95 Public Institutions identified. A census approach was used in the study since the population was small and data was collected from all respondents.

**Location of study:** Gaborone, Botswana

**Target population:** 95 procurement managers in Public Institutions

**Data Collection:** A standardized closed ended questionnaire was used.

### **IV. Results**

#### **Response rate**

Questionnaires were sent to all the ninety-five (95) procurement managers with a total response of 100%, which was considered high and acceptable in the study.

#### **Pilot study**

In relation to the reliability test section, the alpha test was done to ascertain their reliability. The data findings show that the Cronbach alpha correlation coefficient value of the variables ranging between 0.580 and 0.965. The data findings indicate that the highest alpha value of 0.965 for procurement risk management and the least alpha value of 0.580 for evaluation practices. The research tool was found to be reliable.

#### **Background of Respondents**

**Level of Education** - It was found that 98.9% were university graduates while 1.1% had secondary school qualifications.

**Years of experience** - The respondents interviewed had between 10 and 31+ years' work experience. In terms of percentages, 74.7% (10 to 20 years work experience), 16.8% (21 to 30 years of work experience) and 8.4% (over 30 years work experience).

**Category of Public Institution** – The respondents were categorized in three entities, which are Ministries (18), Autonomous Bodies (12) and Parastatals (65). In terms of percentages, 18.9% were Ministries, 12.6% being Autonomous Bodies and 68.4%.

#### **Procurement practices – e-procurement**

The research aimed at evaluating the effect of e-procurement on public procurement performance. The respondents were expected to indicate the level of these practices within their departments and the results were as follows: use of e-advertising to reach a wider range of potential suppliers (mean 2.7158, SD 1.53445), use of e-bidding to make work easy to both sellers and bidders (mean 2.0105, SD 1.33285), use of e-evaluation by the institution makes realistic for suppliers to get timely and appropriate feedback (mean 1.9684, SD 1.38727), use of e-auction to provide suppliers with competitive prices (mean 1.6737, SD 1.27531), use of e-content to share information with suppliers (mean 2.2316, SD 1.50497) use of e-catalogue during prequalification process (mean 1.7474, SD 1.37584). As shown from descriptive results, very few public institutions in Botswana utilize e-procurement systems. By allowing bid proposals to be filed electronically, electronic bid submission helps purchasing departments and their suppliers save time, resources, and money.

### **Procurement practices – procurement risk management**

The research sought to assess the effect of procurement risk management on public procurement performance. To achieve these, the respondents were expected to indicate the level of these practices within their departments and the results were as follows: use of procurement risk identification so that the risk can be managed to prevent it from becoming an issue during acquisition process (mean 3.4632, SD 1.20998), use of procurement risk appraisal when assessing the procurement visibility of the acquisition process (mean 3.3474, SD 1.18293), use of procurement risk mitigation to manage the identified risk during acquisition process of goods and services (mean 3.5684, SD 1.16375), use of procurement risk assessment to ensure the smooth and successful running of purchasing and supply operations (mean 3.5579, SD 1.24384), use of procurement risk treatment to control all the risk that will come when purchasing and supply operations is eliminated (mean 3.4737, SD 1.27865), procurement risk policies are used by the institution to guide the procurement professionals when performing purchasing and supply operations (mean 3.4421, SD 1.44189). The study results indicate that incorporation of procurement risk management into the supply chain is very low. According to Khan (2018), the idea of supply chain risk management (SCRM) was born out of the confluence of risk management and SCM to become a logical extension of SCM. The fundamental objective of SCRM is to locate (identify) potential risk sources and recommend appropriate mitigation strategies.

### **Procurement practices – evaluation practice**

The study sought to determine the effect of evaluation practice on public procurement performance. To achieve these, the respondents were expected to indicate the level of these practices within their departments and the results were as follows: before starting this stage, you will already have assessed and determined the successful tenderers at the selection stage (mean 2.1789, SD 1.61758), It is best practice for the procurement officer to notify the tenderers if the late tender has been accepted or rejected (mean 4.3579, SD 1.27926), the completed tender opening form must be retained and filed as part of the tender audit trail (mean 4.8000, SD 0.66204), the price/commercial evaluation of tenders should be completed by the procurement officer (mean 2.99579, SD 1.76801), the evaluation matrix is a tool that can be used to evaluate submitted bids and identify the one that provides the best value for money (mean 4.6842 SD 0.77546) In seeking clarification, all communications with tenderers must be properly recorded so that an audit trail is maintained (mean 4.8105, SD 0.60661). The results show that evaluation practice is utilized averagely in public institutions. Study results indicate that public procurement entities in Botswana tend to keep records of their communication with stakeholders that they engage. However, Amila (2022) contend that it is not the communication that is important, but what is being communicated. The success of the supply chain depends on effective communication, an area that needs the most improvement.

### **Procurement practices - supplier management**

The study sought to evaluate the effect of supplier management practice on public procurement performance. To achieve these, the respondents were expected to indicate the level of these practices within their departments and the results were as follows: use of supplier database to search for suppliers across multiple tiers (mean 4.2000, SD 1.19039), use of 10Cs in supply evaluations (mean 3.3474, SD 1.39733) apply value relationships management in managing the suppliers (mean 3.6000, SD 1.30791) use of key performance indicators as the basis of build good relationships (mean 3.8737, SD 1.15078) staff use procurement ethics in managing the good practice between the institution and suppliers (mean 4.3684, SD 0.97906), post contract activities is taken by the institution to improve better practices with suppliers (mean 4.1684, SD 1.06843). Results from the study indicate that on average, public sector institutions utilize supplier management practices. Kepher, Shalle & Oduma (2015) reiterate the importance of having a value-based relationship between suppliers and buyers in an e-procurement environment. To ensure that e-procurement runs smoothly, both buyers and sellers should have electronic access to one another's information as needed as this adds value to the relationship between buyers and suppliers. E-Tendering, E-Request for Quotations, E-Auctions, E-Catalogues, and E-Invoicing are some of the commonly used supplier management e-procurement methods used in procurement. E-Notice, E-Auction, E-Catalogue, E-Dossier, E-Submission, and E-Signatures are also included. All these electronic components of procurement add value to the process.

### **Multiple linear regression summary**

This section determines the presence of a relationship between the predictor variables and the covariate. The multiple linear regression and analysis of variance was utilized to evaluate the explanatory variable. The results were illustrated at table 17.

Regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.512 <sup>a</sup>	.262	.229	2.18251

Source Researcher (2022)

The multiple regression function is as per below:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4$$

Where:

Y = public procurement performance in Botswana

$\beta_0$  = Constant Term

$\beta_1$  = Beta coefficients

X1 = e-procurement

X2 = procurement risk management

X3 = evaluation practice

X4 = supplier management practice

Therefore  $Y = 2.326 + 0.103 X_1 + 0.107 X_2 + 0.062 X_3 + -0.15 X_4 \dots \dots \dots (2.3)$

The equation above reflects that holding the explanatory variables constant public procurement performance in public institutions in Botswana would be 2.326 units. These would result from lateral variables that are unrelated to this study's focus. While keeping all other variables fixed, the 0.103 rise in e-procurement has resulted in a noticeable improvement in public procurement performance. The model makes it evident that, with all other variables maintained constant, an improvement in public procurement performance would be explained by 0.107 units of procurement risk management. Additionally, if all other factors were unchanged, there would be an improvement in public procurement performance, which would be attributable to an increase in evaluation procedure of 0.062 units. On the contrary, there has been a significant difference in public procurement performance due to a -0.15 increase while maintaining the status quo.

The results of the regression study revealed a favourable link between e-procurement and public procurement performance. It indicated that e-procurement (t= 2.912, p<0.005) significantly affected public procurement performance in public institutions in Botswana. This suggested that the performance of public procurement in Botswana will be enhanced by the full implementation of e-procurement in public institutions. Additionally, it was suggested that procurement risk management (t= 2.389, p<0.19) strongly improved public procurement performance in public institutions. This positive association suggests that public institutions are better positioned to undertake procurement risk management. Furthermore, evaluation practice (t=0.966, P0.0337) Strongly affected the performance of public procurement in Botswana's public institutions. This meant that a solid evaluation practice tool would have a high likelihood of improving performance in public procurement, and the tool's linearity would also assist. However, supplier management practice (t= -0.253, p<0.019) averagely influenced the performance of public procurement in Botswana's public institutions. The findings suggest that public institutions in Botswana should introduce ways to improve on the performance on the supplier management practice.

**Multiple linear regression coefficients standardized and Unstandardized Coefficient**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.326	1.441		1.614	.110
	e_procurement_and_public_institutions	.103	.035	.294	2.912	.005
	procurement_risk_management_and_public_institutions	.107	.045	.300	2.389	.019
	evaluation_practice_and_public_institutions	.062	.064	.103	.966	.0337

supplier_management_practice_and_public_institutions	-0.15	.060	-.031	-.253	.0401
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Source: Researcher (2022)

### V. Summary of the Findings

The general objective of the study was to examine the effect of procurement practices on public procurement performance in Botswana. The findings are summarised as responses to the objectives of the study.

- a) Objective 1: To examine the effect of e-procurement on public procurement performance in Botswana and Research Question 1: What is the effect of e-procurement on public procurement performance in Botswana?

Findings indicated a positive statistically significant correlation between e-procurement and public procurement performance ( $r=0.401$   $p<0.000$ ). This implies that for public entities to enhance procurement performance, they ought to adopt e-procurement practices such as e-advertising, e-bidding, e-evaluation. E-advertising is touted by Vaiya (2012) as a robust means to reach more bidders; e-bidding will substantially reduce delays and paperwork as observed by Mutua & Moronge (2018); e-evaluation will help public enterprises to select effective suppliers (Ahmed & Tan, 2020; Vaiya, 2012).

- b) Objective 2: To assess the effect of procurement risk management on public procurement performance in Botswana and Research Question 2: What is the effect of procurement risk management on public procurement performance in Botswana?

Findings indicated a positive statistically significant correlation between procurement risk management and public procurement performance ( $r=0.437$   $p<0.000$ ). This implies that for public entities to enhance public procurement performance, they ought to adopt risk management practices such as risk identification, risk appraisal, risk mitigation, risk assessment and risk treatment. Risk assessment is paramount in procurement processes and is a circular process that involves risk identification (Sarawa & Masud, 2020), risk appraisal (Khan, 2018) and risk mitigation (Mazibuko, 2018).

- c) Objective 3: To determine the effect of evaluation practice on public procurement performance in Botswana and Question 3: What is the effect of evaluation practice on public procurement performance in Botswana?

Findings indicated a positive statistically significant correlation between evaluation practices and public procurement performance ( $r=0.213$   $p<0.38$ ). This implies that for public entities to enhance public procurement performance, they ought to adopt evaluation practises such as, notifying tenderers on status of their bids at tender opening, filing of tender documents for future use, procurement officers to complete price evaluation of tenders (Kannan, 2018), use the evaluation matrix when tendering (Moline & Coves, 2013) and all communication recorded with bidders for future audit trail (Amila, 2022)

- d) Objective 4: To assess the effect of supplier management practice on public procurement performance in Botswana and Question 4: What is the effect of supplier management practice on public procurement performance in Botswana?

Findings indicated a positive statistically significant correlation between supplier management practice and public procurement performance ( $r=0.294$   $p<0.04$ ). This implies that for public entities to enhance public procurement performance, they ought to adopt supplier management practices such as, the use of supplier database (Kepher, Shalle & Oduma), use of 10Cs in supplier evaluation (Cordell & Thompson, 2019), use key performance indicators and use procurement ethics (Kepher, Shalle & Oduma, 2015).

### VI. Conclusion

It can be concluded therefore from the summary of results above that the investigated e-procurement practices had a positive and significant relationship with procurement performance. In terms of e-procurement, adoption of e-advertising, e-bidding and e-evaluation will greatly impact on the procurement process of public entities.

Another area of that, which will greatly benefit procurement performance is risk management. To achieve this benefit, the procurement function should identify risks in the procurement process, appraise the risks using competent models such as the risk matrix, put in place risk mitigation strategies and continuously assess imminent risks in the procurement process.

Evaluation practices have great impact on procurement performance. Here, public sector entities need to develop evaluation criteria to select the most effective suppliers. These entities also need to evaluate prices so as

to make decisions that give value for money. Most often, public enterprises are not keen on pricing, and this results in those entities losing huge sums of money every year on the basis of poor evaluation of prices. Thirdly, public enterprises need to use competent evaluation tools to assess supplier. These include AHP or its variants ANP, Fuzzy AHP, and Fuzzy ANP discussed in the previous chapter. Lastly, communication is paramount in this stage. Open communication builds trust between public enterprises and suppliers.

The last practice that will benefit public enterprises greatly is supplier management. In this practice, public enterprises need to keep a database of suppliers from whom they can always request quotations from. This shortens the time of looking for suppliers afresh unless it involves items that have not been procured before. Supplier evaluation is also important in this stage. One common tool is Carter's 10Cs which can assess competency of a supplier. In this practice, value-based relationships need to be enhanced between public enterprises and suppliers within an e-procurement environment.

## **VII. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

Public institutions that have adopted e-procurement in Botswana should ensure that the system is working, available, reliable, and accessible to other stakeholders such as suppliers, simple to use and is secure. With this kind of a system, stakeholders will be motivated to use it, and this will enhance procurement performance.

Public institutions that have adopted e-procurement in Botswana should ensure that the system can aid them carry out risk management assessment of the procurement process. For example, the systems through points awarded on various aspects of risks to stakeholders should calculate the risks and even display them on a risk matrix with their magnitude and likelihood. This way, the institution will be able to mitigate against identified risks in the procurement process.

Public institutions that have adopted e-procurement in Botswana should ensure that the system can help them conduct evaluation of stakeholders. The system should easily accept points on different aspects and evaluate and return a grade for each stakeholder.

Public institutions that have adopted e-procurement in Botswana should ensure that the system helps them in supplier management. The system should have a database of suppliers, the products they supply, their locations, contacts among other aspects that may enable effective supplier management.

## **VIII. Suggestion for further studies**

This study focused on the effect of procurement practices on public procurement performance in Botswana. Future studies could be undertaken as follows:

Effect of procurement practices on private procurement performance in Botswana. This study will showcase procurement practices in the private sector, and this may be used as a benchmark for public sector.

Factors affecting adoption of e-procurement adoption in public sector institutions. This study will help understand why other public sector institutions are reluctant to adopt e-procurement.

Challenges encountered in use of e-procurement systems. This study will help understand challenges that public institutions that have already adopted e-procurement are facing so that pragmatic solutions to the challenges can be proffered.

The effect of moderating and mediating variables of e-procurement, evaluation practice, procurement risk management, supplier management practice on public procurement performance.

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