

Investigating the challenges (gaps) that hamper the achievement of effective procurement systems to achieve an excellent quality service

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Abstract

This research examines the impediments and challenges that undermine the realisation of efficient procurement systems to deliver high-quality services within Ghana's public sector. The study seeks to identify and analyse the existing gaps in the procurement processes, focusing on understanding the factors hindering the attainment of excellence in service delivery. A comprehensive investigation encompassing qualitative and quantitative research methodologies aims to shed light on the intricacies surrounding procurement practices in the Ghanaian Public Sector.

The research will explore critical dimensions such as regulatory frameworks, institutional capacities, stakeholder engagements, and technological advancements to uncover the multifaceted challenges contributing to the shortcomings of procurement systems. By gaining insights into these challenges, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to enhance and streamline the procurement processes. Ultimately, this research aspires to improve public service quality in Ghana by addressing the identified challenges in the procurement domain.

Key Words: Procurement Systems | Achieving Quality Service | Public Sector Procurement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the role of procurement systems in the public sector has garnered increasing attention as governments strive to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the delivery of services. The Republic of Ghana, like many nations, has recognised the pivotal role that effective procurement plays in achieving excellence in service delivery. However, despite the acknowledgement of its importance, the public sector in Ghana faces numerous challenges and gaps that hinder the realisation of optimal procurement outcomes.

This investigation delves into the intricacies surrounding the procurement processes within the public sector of Ghana, with a specific focus on understanding the impediments that impede the achievement of high-quality services. Procurement, as a critical component of public administration, serves as the gateway through which public resources are acquired, allocated, and managed. Therefore, any deficiencies in the procurement system directly impact the ability of the public sector to deliver services efficiently and with the desired level of quality.

As we embark on this exploration, our goal is to identify, analyse, and comprehend the challenges that create gaps in the procurement systems of Ghana's public sector. By unravelling these challenges, we aim to contribute valuable insights that can inform policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders in devising strategic interventions to fortify the procurement landscape. Through a comprehensive examination of the prevailing issues, we seek to pave the way for the formulation of targeted solutions that will ultimately lead to an enhanced and effective public procurement system, ensuring the delivery of excellent quality services to the citizens of Ghana.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Procurement systems play a pivotal role in ensuring the efficient allocation of resources and the delivery of quality services in the public sector. In the context of Ghana, the effectiveness of procurement systems directly influences the government's ability to provide excellent services to its citizens. This literature review aims to explore and analyse the challenges or gaps that hinder the achievement of effective procurement systems in the Ghanaian public sector, focusing on their impact on service quality.

2.1 Procurement Systems in the Public Sector

Like many others, Ghana's public sector relies on procurement systems to acquire goods, services, and works. Efficient procurement processes are essential for achieving transparency, fairness, and value for money. Existing literature emphasises the importance of well-functioning procurement systems in promoting accountability and ensuring that public resources are utilised optimally.

Quality Service Delivery in the Public Sector: Quality service delivery is a critical aspect of public administration, and it is directly linked to citizens' satisfaction and trust in government institutions. Effective procurement systems contribute to the timely and cost-effective acquisition of goods and services, ultimately impacting the quality of services the public sector provides.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Due to the significant impact of procurement in organizations there is the need to improve procurement in the public sector. Accordingly, this study applies the kaizen Continuous Improvement model which is the best Japanese thinking and management system practices dedicated to the improvement of productivity, efficiency, quality and, in general business excellence. Karkoszka and Honorowicz (2009) asserts that 'it is not only used in management field but also in the everyday life in Japan through gradual means and continues progress, increase of value, intensification and improvement'. They revealed that the application process of Kaizen Method basically consists of definition of the improvement area; analysis and selection of the key problem; identification of the cause of improvement; planning the remedial centre measures; implementation of the improving project; measuring, analysing and comparison of the results; and standardization. They further stated that process of kaizen idea application is closed in PDCA cycle, where:

- a. Plan (P) refers to establishing the aim for improvement.
- b. Do (D) is connected with implementing the plan.
- c. Check (C) defines determining whether the implementation has brought the planned improvement.
- d. Act (A) characterizes standardizing as the preventing recurrence of the original problem or setting goals for the new improvement.

2.2 Quality Service and Service Delivery

Lewis and Booms (1983) defines Quality Service as a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations". Customer satisfaction with a service can be defined by comparing perceptions of service received with expectations of service desired. When expectations are exceeded, the service is perceived to be of **exceptional quality** and it is considered **unacceptable** when expectations are not met. But it is considered **satisfactory** when expectations are confirmed by perceived service. Parasuraman et al., (1985) explained that it is more difficult for the consumer to evaluate goods quality than quality. They maintained that quality evaluations are not made solely on the outcome of a service but involve evaluations of the service delivery process".

Parasuraman et al. (1988); Zeithaml et al. (1993) and Maass (2012) identified five dimensions by which customers use to judge service quality.

- a. **Reliability:** The ability to perform a service as promised.
- b. **Responsiveness:** Willingness to help customers promptly. Example: avoiding keeping customers waiting for no apparent reason.
- c. **Assurance:** This relates to knowledge, courtesy, trust and confidence possessed by employees.
- d. **Empathy:** The ability of employees to understand customers' feelings and take the necessary steps to care for them. Includes, approachability, sensitivity and efforts to understand customer's needs. Ability to be approachable.
- e. **Tangibles:** It relate to things that can clearly be seen to exist such as equipment, employees, buildings, communication materials, and others.

They also identified gaps in service quality and strategies of closing those them. They describe gaps as "Gap Model of Service Quality" which refers to the discrepancies or gaps between customer expectations and perceptions of the service as it is actually delivered. It

relates to the various factors that hampers the achievement of satisfactory service quality. They include the following:

GAP 1- Listening / Market Research Gap: Discrepancy between customer expectations and management's perceptions of these expectations. This is as a result of management's lack of full understanding about how customers formulate their expectations. Strategies for closing this gap includes improving market research and ensuring better communication between management and contact employees. Management and employees must also ensure that customers' expectations are attentively listened and critically assessed in multiple ways through marketing research and upward communication before the service is provided.

GAP 2 – Design and Standard Gap: This gap arises as a result inability of management to use the right service design and standards to effectively formulate target level of service quality and translate them into workable specifications. This may result from management's lack of commitment to service quality. Setting goals and policies as well as standardizing service delivery tasks can close this gap.

Gap 3: The Service Performance Gap: This gap refers to discrepancies between customer-driven service design and standards and actual service delivery. It relates to management inability to deliver the actual service to meet the specification set by itself or the service organisation not delivering to service standards as designed. This may arise as a result of lack of teamwork among service employees, poor selection of personnel, inadequate training and inappropriate job designs. To lose the gap, management must align their human resource strategies to recruit or hire qualified and experienced best job candidates, develop and retain the best people.

Gap 4: The Communication Gap: This gap relates to discrepancies between service delivery and external communications in the form of exaggerated promises and lack of information provided to contact or front-line employees through advertising, pricing, and other forms of tangible communications. Management must integrate service marketing communication to ensure that everything and everyone that sends a message or signal about the service does so in a manner that is consistent with what customers expect and what is actually delivered.

GAP 5 – Customer Satisfaction Gap: The gap between customer expectations and perceptions. Customer satisfaction is dependent on minimizing gaps 1 through 4 that are associated with the delivery of the service.

2.3 Challenges in Ghana's Public Procurement Systems

Legal and Regulatory Framework: Scholars have highlighted challenges related to Ghana's legal and regulatory framework governing public procurement. Inconsistencies, ambiguities, or gaps in legislation may hinder the smooth operation of procurement processes.

Capacity and Skills: The literature indicates that inadequate human resource capacity and skills within procurement units in the public sector pose significant challenges. Insufficient training and expertise can lead to errors, delays, and suboptimal decision-making.

Corruption and Lack of Transparency: Corruption remains a pervasive global public procurement issue. Research suggests that corruption and a lack of transparency can undermine the effectiveness of procurement processes, leading to biased decision-making and compromised service quality.

Technology Adoption: The slow adoption of modern technologies in public procurement has been identified as a challenge. Integrating e-procurement systems and digital platforms is crucial for enhancing efficiency, reducing corruption risks, and improving overall procurement outcomes.

2.4 Impact on Service Quality

The identified challenges in Ghana's public procurement systems directly affect service quality. Delays, inefficiencies, and corruption can lead to substandard service delivery, eroding public trust and satisfaction. Understanding these challenges is essential for policymakers and practitioners seeking to improve procurement systems and enhance service quality in the public sector.

This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges hindering effective procurement systems in Ghana's public sector. Addressing these

challenges is imperative for improving the quality of services delivered to citizens. Future research should delve deeper into specific interventions and strategies that can be employed to overcome these obstacles, ultimately contributing to the advancement of public procurement practices in Ghana.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is describe as the process used in collecting information and data for the purpose of making business decisions. The methodology may include publication research, interviews, surveys and other research techniques, and could include both present and historical information. (BusinessDictionary.com, 2016). This discusses the techniques used in conducting the research. These include the research design, population, sampling size, method and procedure, sources of data and data collection instruments such as questionnaire, interviews and observation.

3.1 Study Area

Sarandakos (1993) defines study site of any research work as the area/place (town, community, organization, school, market and many more where the primary data for the study is collected. The study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of procurement systems in achieving quality service in the public sector where some selected public institutions were used as the case study area. The institutions include Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana Irrigation Authority (GIDA), Lands Commission (Survey and Mapping Division), Management Development and Productivity Institute (MDPI), and the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO).

3.2 Research Design

Oppenheim (1992) asserts that 'the basic plan or strategy, and logic behind any research is the Research Design. Research design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research work - the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs, and methods of assignment - work together to try to address the central research questions (Trochim, 2006; Nantege, 2011). Research process however addresses data collection instruments, methods, and procedures. It provides detailed explanations to each of the methods employed and how the methods adopted are used to address the aims, objectives and research questions (Manchi, 2014).

The study was carried out mainly using quantitative approach of research. This helps to establish a clear and objective orientation, a vigorous, disciplined and systematic procedure, and a reality bound methodology. It also enable researchers to arrive at a theory that is free from vague and speculative thoughts about reality assumptions (Stergios1991; Vlahos, 1984; Nantege, 2011).

3.3 Population of the Study

According to Cardwell (1999) population refers to 'a group of people who are the focus of a research study and to which the results would apply'. The population of the study were sample of officers from various departments of the selected institutions that plays a significance role in procurement activities. Both sexes, thus male and female employees would be considered for the study because the findings are to be representative of the organization's gender diversity. The reason for choosing these institutions was to help the researcher solicit views from public officers in different entities on how the procurement activities are operationalized in achieving quality service in the public sector.

The target population included procurement practitioners, officers from stores, finance, audit, store officers, administration, IT and others. The target population under study was sixty (60) employees in the selected institutions.

3.4 Sampling Design and Procedure

Sekaran (2003) defined sampling as the process of choosing the research units of the target population, which are to be included in the study. Sampling techniques was used to determine the sample size. In other words, purposive sampling technique was adopted in conducting this study to gain an insight into the phenomena. According to Welman & Kruger (2005) purposive sampling is the most convenient collection of members of the population that are near and readily available for research purposes. The exact

sample size were fifty-one (51) from key functional areas within the institutions selected that plays a major role in procurement activities. They include staff of procurement unit, stores, finance, human resource, audit, IT, and general service / estates department.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

A research becomes stronger, more credible and represents a true picture when more than one data instrument is used (Patton, 2002). The research used both the primary and secondary data.

3.5.1 Primary Data

According to Sarantakos (2005), a questionnaire is a method of survey data collection in which information is gathered through oral or written questionnaires. Oral questioning is known as interviewing; written questioning is accomplished through questionnaires which are administered to the respondents by mail or handed to them personally by the researcher. A self-administered questionnaires were the main research instruments used to gather information from respondents within the sample frame in the research population. The questions were both closed and open ended questionnaires (structured and unstructured) used in collecting information from respondents. The open-ended questionnaire provided respondents room to formulate answers at their own convenience without feeling pressurized or coerced.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

The researcher also fell on journals, reports, manuals, and others to solicit information pertaining to the problem questions.

3.5.3 Administration of Questionnaire

In order to detect and eradicate potential vagueness and achieve a uniform response with the purpose of the study, the researcher prepared a preliminary questionnaire and pilot tested with five (5) respondents. Few questions were revised to improve the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. A complete set of questionnaires were administered in person to respondents in the various institutions with a help of known friends in each institution. Adequate time were allowed for respondents to conveniently respond to the questions and made them ready for collection.

3.6 Data Analysis

The completed and collected questionnaires were edited to ensure completeness, consistency and readability. They were then grouped in a format that ensured easy analysis. Quantifiable data from the questionnaires was coded into the software for analysis. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS V 20) and Microsoft Excel were then used to analyze the data because it was considered to be user-friendly. The data was interpreted and analyzed using frequency tables, percentages, pie charts, bar charts and other descriptive statistics methods. Respondents were required to provide answers by marking a number on a 5-point Likert Scale and others in order to make it easier for them. The five-point Likert scale scoring system formed the basis of calculating the mean score for each of the reasons; the relative rating of the factors by all respondents, was then obtained by comparing the individual mean score and the standard deviation for each criterion.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This presents the results of the data collected based on the sequence of information gathered from the survey questionnaire to accomplish the aim of the research. The primary aim was to assess the effectiveness of procurement systems in achieving quality service in the public sector of Ghana. The questionnaire was divided into eight main sections. Section 'A' concerns the demographic data of the respondents which include place of work, gender, position held by respondents, age, qualification and length of service held in respective institutions. Section 'B' also comprises the kind of procurement systems practiced by the selected institution being it centralized, decentralized or hybrid (both). Section 'C' focus on how institutions applies' the procurement principles for free and transparent operation in achieving value for money. Section 'D' also concerns how

institutions plan for their procurement activities or acquisitions and challenges confronting it.

Section ‘E’ and ‘F’ of the questionnaire relates to procurement monitoring and controls, and pertinent challenges affecting the overall procurement activities. Section ‘G’ concerns the procurement knowledge base of stakeholders and the overall effectiveness of the procurement processes towards service quality. The last section, which is ‘H’ also focused on procurement factors that helps to achieve service quality for maximum user/employee satisfaction and the link between procurement and service quality. Generally, a five-point and three point Likert Scale was used for the coding where appropriate, where: Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 3; and Strongly Agree = 5.

Percentages, Mean Scores, and Standard Deviation of the responses were used in interpreting views of the respondents. A criterion is considered significant if it had a mean of 3.5 or more based on the five-point Likert scale rating. Again where two or more criteria have the same mean, the one with the lowest standard deviation is assigned the highest significance ranking”. Standard deviation values of less than 1.0 shows uniformity in agreement among the respondents of the stated level of results (Ahadzie, 2007). Standard deviations greater than 1 predicts the level of inconsistencies in the responses.

A set of 10 of the survey questionnaires were distributed to staff of six distinct public institutions which were randomly selected. Out of the 60 survey questionnaires distributed, 51 were retrieved and adjudged responsive representing 85.0% response rate as displayed in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 : Institutions and Response Rate

Name of Institution	No. of Questionnaire Distributed	Retrieved Questionnaire	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Response Rate
GBC	10	8	15.7	15.7	85%
GIDA	10	8	15.7	31.4	
GSS	10	9	17.6	49.0	
Lands Commission	10	9	17.6	66.7	
MDPI	10	10	19.6	86.3	
NADMO	10	7	13.7	100.0	
Total	60	51	100.0		

Source: Field Data, 2016

4.1 Profile of Respondents

The background of the respondents were meant to ascertain their credibility and the answers provided. The personal data of the respondents gathered includes their age, place of work, department, position highest level of education, and length of service.

Table 4.2.a: Cross tabulation of Characteristics of Respondents

GENDER			DEPT			AGE			HIGHEST EDUCATION			LENGTH OF SERVICE		
NO.	No.	%	Name	No.	%	Range	No.	%	Qualification	No.	%	Range	No.	%
Male	33	64.7	Proc. Unit	19	37.3	20-30yrs	25	49.0	HND/DIP	6	11.8	1-5yrs	23	45.1
			Finance Dept.	12	23.5	31-40yrs	11	21.6	Degree	34	66.7	6-10yrs	14	27.5
			Stores	7	13.7	41-50yrs	10	19.6	Masters	11	21.6	11-20yrs	7	13.7
Female	18	35.3	Audit Unit	6	11.8	51 and above	5	9.8	-	-	-	>20yrs	7	13.7
			Admin.	4	7.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
			Tech. Unit	3	5.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	51	100.0	Total	51	100.0	Total	51	100.0	Total	51	100.0	Total	51	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2016

Table 4.2.b: **Workplace / Department Cross Tabulation**

INSTITUTION	Department						TOTAL
	PROCUREMENT UNIT	STORES	FINANCE	AUDIT UNIT	TECHNICAL	ADMIN.	
GBC	3	0	3	1	1	0	8
GIDA	3	2	1	1	0	1	8
GSS	4	2	1	1	0	1	9
Lands Comm.	5	2	1	0	1	0	9
MDPI	2	1	3	1	1	2	10
NADMO	2	0	3	2	0	0	7
Total	19	7	12	6	3	4	51

Source: Field Data, 2016

From Table 4.2.a above, it was revealed that majority of the respondents were males representing 64.7% whilst the females were 35.3%. Among the departments, most of the respondents were from the procurement units representing 37.3%. The finance department and the stores also had a response rate of 23.5% and 13.7% respectively. The audit unit had 11.8%, administration 7.8% and the technical unit which comprises staff from the general services and IT departments had the least response rate of 5.9%. The responses from these departments especially procurement units, finance, stores and the audit units were really relevant to the research work since they play a significant role in procurement operation through teamwork, monitoring and evaluation. Their background and knowledge made it easy to understand and respond simply to the information in the survey questionnaire to realize the aim of the research work.

Forty-nine percent (49%) of the respondents fell between the age brackets of 20-30 years followed by 31-40 years which attained a percentage of 21.6%. Respondents between the age brackets of 41-50 years also attained 19.6% whilst those with years 51 and above had the least percentage of 9.8%. This means that most of the respondents were between the ages of 20-50 years which are full of strength, experience and maturity. With regards to highest education attained by the respondents, it can be deduce from the table that majority of them were first degree holders which had 66.7% followed by holders of masters' degree which also had 21.6%. It was surprising to realize that just 11.8 percent of the respondents were HND and other diploma holders. These findings affirms that respondents were personnel with good educational background to give the right responses expected of them to realize the objectives of the research work.

The table also revealed that majority of the respondents representing 45.1% had spent not more than five years in their institutions followed by those spending between 6-10 years which represents 27.5%. Those who had stayed on the job from 10-20 years and above 20 years all attained 13.7% each. These give a clue that respondents had adequate knowledge and experience in their profession and high level of experience that makes responses from them more reliable and realistic for the study.

4.2 Procurement Challenges

Challenges confronting the achievement of successful procurement systems was one of the objectives of this research work. Therefore the section 'E' of the survey questionnaire contained issues regarding procurement challenges where views from respondents were seek. Questions asked under this section included whether institutions were utilizing their assets well or not. Respondents were also asked to identify factors that hinders the achievement of an effective procurement system. With utilization of assets, majority of the respondents were with the opinion that assets were highly utilized as displayed in table 4.9 below.

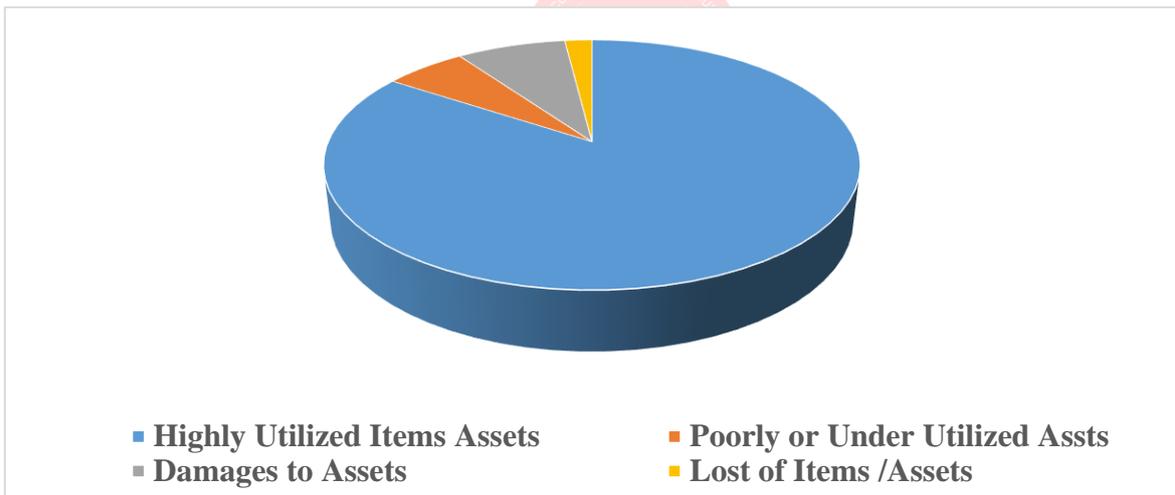
Table 4.9: Utilization of Procured Assets / Items

Nature of Use of Procured Items				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Highly Utilized of Assets	43	84.3	84.3	84.3
Poorly or Under Utilized of Assets	3	5.9	5.9	90.2
Damages of Assets	4	7.8	7.8	98.0
Lost of Items or Assets	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
TOTAL	51	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.2745			
Std. Deviation	.69508			
Variance	.483			
Range	3.00			

Source: Field Data, 2016

From table 4.9 above, 84.3% of the respondents were of the view that assets or procurement goods are highly utilized, 5.9% said they are poorly managed or utilized. Whilst 7.8% were of the view that most of the assets are not properly taken care of and therefore gets damaged, 2.0% of them revealed that items sometimes get lost. The mean score of the data indicates that there had been highly utilization of public assets or items and the standard deviation of 0.69505 suggest that there were uniformity in the responses. These responses are also displayed in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Utilization of Procured Assets / Items



Source: Field Data, 2016

Again, each respondent was asked to identify the three most challenging factors hindering the effectiveness of public procurement processes. Majority of the Respondents revealed that lack of funds was the most prevalent factor of procurement challenges which had 25.5% followed by conflict of interest with 22.9%. Poor team work was adjudged as the third challenging factor with 19.6%. Other challenges included long procurement processes (11.8%); political interferences (8.5%); lack of procurement personnel training (4.6%); Lack of Personnel (4.6%), Short bidding processes (1.3%) and poor records management (1.3%) in that order as displayed in table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10: General Challenges Affecting Procurement Processes

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	RANK
Conflict of Interest	35	22.9	22.9	22.9	2 nd
Lack of Funds	39	25.5	25.5	48.4	1 st
Poor Records Management	2	1.3	1.3	49.7	7 th
Political Interference	13	8.5	8.5	58.2	5 th
Short Bidding Periods	2	1.3	1.3	59.5	7 th
Lack of Procurement Personnel	7	4.6	4.6	64.1	6 th
Lack of Procurement Training	7	4.6	4.6	68.6	6 th
Long Procurement Processes	18	11.8	11.8	80.4	4 th
Poor Team Work	30	19.6	19.6	100.0	3 rd
Total	153	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field Data, 2016

The three most procurement challenges in respective institutions are also displayed in table 4.11a and 4.1.b below.

Table 4.11 a : CROSSTABULATION OF PROCUREMENT CHALLENGES FACING INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Conflict of Interest	Lack of Funds	Poor records Mgt.	Political Interferences	Short Bidding Periods	Lack of Qualified Staff	Lack of Procurement Training	Long Procurement Processes	Poor Team Work	TOTAL
GBC	6	6	0	2	0	1	2	4	3	24
GIDA	0	7	2	0	0	2	1	7	5	24
GSS	5	8	0	5	1	0	0	3	5	27
Lands Commission	9	4	0	4	0	0	1	1	8	27
MDPI	10	8	0	1	0	3	1	2	5	30
NADMO	5	6	0	1	1	1	2	1	4	21
TOTAL	35	39	2	13	2	7	7	18	30	153

Source: Field Data, 2016

Table 4.11b : **Cross Tabulation of Three Procurement Challenges facing respective Institutions**

INSTITUTION	THREE MOST PROCUREMENT CHALLENGES IN INTSTITUTIONS		
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
GBC	Conflict of Interest / Lack	Lack of Funds	Long Procurement Processes
GIDA	Lack of funds	Long Procurement Processes	Poor team Work
GSS	Lack of Funds	Conflict of Interest	Poor Team Work / Political Interference
Lands Commission	Conflict of Interest	Poor Team Work	Lack of funds /Political Interference
MDPI	Conflict of Interest	Lack of funds	Poor team Work
NADMO	Lack of Funds	Conflict of Interest	Poor Team Work

Source: Field Data, 2016

Cross tabulation of departments views on factors of procurement challenges are also displayed in table 4.11.c below.

Table 4.11.c : CROSS TABULATION OF DEPARTMENTAL VIEWS OF FACTORS OF PROCUREMENT CHALLENGES

DEPARTMENTS										TOTAL
	Conflict of Interest	Lack of Funds	Poor records Mgt.	Political Interference s	Short Bidding Periods	Lack of Qualified Staff	Lack of Procurement Training	Long Procurement Processes	Poor Team Work	
PROCUREMENT UNIT	12	16	1	8	0	3	3	2	12	57
STORES	3	7	0	2	1	2	2	0	4	21
FINANCE	10	8	1	2	1	1	1	5	7	36
AUDIT UNIT	5	2	0	1	0	1	1	5	3	18
TECHNICAL UNIT	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9
ADMINISTRATION	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	12
TOTAL	35	39	2	13	2	7	7	18	30	153

Source: Field Data, 2016

From Table 4.11a. and 4.11.b above, the respondents identified lack of funds as the major problem affecting procurement management in institutions. This could be the inability and delay on the part of the government to release budgetary allocation for procurement activities. Lack of funds which is major concern has the tendency of affecting the entire procurement processes which could lead to long-term issues that seriously affects organizations.

Conflict of interest which is also a situation in which a person or organization is involved in multiple interests, financial *interest*, or otherwise, one of which could possibly corrupt the motivation of the individual or organization or a situation in which someone who has to make a decision in an official capacity stands to profit personally from the decision. This could be interference from bosses, directors, and politicians who get themselves involve in procurement activities for selfish interest. This automatically affects the morale of procurement personnel and distort the procurement processes.

Procurement activities can never be achieved excellently when there is poor team work among colleagues. Working together as a team requires working cooperatively toward the overall goals of the team and company. Achieving a procurement objective with regards to specification drawing, contracting and contract management, receipt and distribution and others requires the support from user departments, management, directors and other stakeholders. When conflicting personalities have difficulty working together, the effectiveness of the team can suffer. Poor teamwork can create an atmosphere of confusion within the team, the department and the institution in general. Examples of poor teamwork across departments include the failure to share appropriate information in a timely manner and the inability to coordinate each other's needs and visions.

Overall, poor teamwork results from a lack of vision and a failure to communicate goals and expectations. Continual feedback related to individual and team accomplishments and effectiveness can help prevent poor teamwork and failure in a team environment. Strong leadership skills and the ability to manage conflict in a positive manner can help foster a productive team environment and corporate culture.

Respondents were also asked to propose possible solutions to the identified challenges of procurement processes. Some of their recommendations are captured in table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Respondents Proposed Recommendations for Procurement Challenges

S/N	Respondents Proposed Solutions
1.	There should be proper appropriation of Funds by government and heads of entities
2.	Needs of various units should be factored into the planning
3.	There should be clear limitation on boarder lines between Accounts and Procurement Unit
4.	Procurement should be involved in organizational budget to help procurement planning very easy
5.	Internal stakeholders should be trained in PPA and made aware that procurement duties is undertaken by procurement staff
6.	User department must be trained on specifications drawings
7.	Procurement Unit must liaise with users department for their necessary inputs on time
8.	Some funds should be set aside purposely for procurement of goods and services
9.	Quarterly budgetary releases should be timely
10.	All employee should participate in decision making and teamwork so that each department will know their needs
11.	Good teamwork, proper planning and liaising with donor partners for extra funding
12.	More funds must be available and more procurement personnel need to be recruited
13.	In order to prepare adequately, institutions need to buy in excess, so as to be able to provide and supply relief during disaster.
14.	There should be huge speculative buying to forestall days of shortage of relief items.
15.	Management must involve all directors when procurement planning is being done
16.	Huge speculative buying to forestall days of relief items shortage as in the case for NADMO operation
17.	Government should increase budget for goods and service since IGF is not sufficient.
18.	Segregation of duties and timely response to procurement processes

Source: Field Data, 2016

5.0 CONCLUSION

In the survey, respondents established that centralized procurement system is the most preferred and the one currently practiced in institutions. It also established that though there are internal existing structures that sees to the effectiveness and efficiency of procurement operations, challenges such as lack of funds, conflict of interest, poor team work, and other affects its effectiveness and efficiency. These challenges are contributing factors preventing institutions to achieve value for money and maximum quality service for users or employees satisfaction.

Some of the identified major challenges hindering procurement effectiveness include lack of funds, conflicts of interest, and poor team work. Long procurement processes, political interferences, lack of training, poor specifications, and others were also a major concern for respondent which needs serious attention. These challenges especially lack of funds prevents institution to be able to plan on time and adequately procure of goods and services for users.

It also causes delay for users department to receive goods on time towards the achievement of quality service for satisfaction. As a result of these challenges, achieving an excellent quality service has been somehow satisfactory. Therefore institutions are finding it difficult in achieving value for money for government monies spent.

The following suggested recommendations may go a long way to mitigate the challenges facing procurement operations to achieve the intended quality service when implemented by institutions in a timely manner. Heads of Entities must ensure that their procurement units are staff with more qualified, skilled and knowledgeable officers to manage procurement activities to achieve value for money and to reduce procurement weaknesses. In building a good spirit for team work, there should be effective communication, coordination and cooperation among the various units, division or department in institutions. This will help achieve departmental or functional objectives including procurement and the organization in general. It will also enable the procurement processes to be faster and help contracts awarded to be delivered in a timely manner.

The government must ensure that budgetary allocations or funds are readily and adequately available. They should be disbursed on time to respective institutions to implement their various procurement activities effectively and efficiently. Heads of Institutions must liaise with or solicit support from donor partners for funds projects since the monies disbursed from the government are insufficient. Top management and directors must exhibit total commitment for procurement processes to ensure that principles and policies for procurement operations and the procurement act are strictly adhered to. This will help realize the essence of procurement performance on quality service in institutions.

Management can also apply the Kaizen Continuous Improvement model which is the best Japanese thinking and management system practices to improve and make procurement operation more productive, efficient, quality and, in general business excellence. It is a gradual means and continues progress, increase of value, intensification and improvement. The application process of Kaizen Method basically consists of definition of the improvement area; analysis and selection of the key problem; identification of the cause of improvement; planning the remedial Centre measures; implementation of the improving project; measuring, analyzing and comparison of the results; and standardization. Therefore, management can apply the PDCA cycle by establishing and planning for implementing areas for improvement. They then check determining whether the implementation has brought the planned improvement. Finally they must act to set standards to prevent recurrence of the original problem or setting goals for the new improvement.

Finally, these should be proactive planning, identification of need and, sourcing, contracting and contract management that an organization need or may need to meet its strategic and commercial objectives.

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