Influence of Community Pressure on Principals’ Compliance with Procurement Regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County, Kenya

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Abstract
Public procurement has become an issue of public attention and debate, and has been subjected to reforms, restructuring, rules and regulations. Most of developing countries have undertaken strategies to reform their procurement systems. Compliance with public procurement regulations in Kenya continues to be low in public entities despite efforts made by the Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA) to put in place measures to improve compliance. The study sought to analyse the influence of community pressure on Principals’ compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County. The study employed positivism research paradigm and a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population for the study was all the 132 public secondary schools in Embu County consisting of 132 principals, 132 deputy principals, 132 bursars, 1320 suppliers and 660 procurement committee. A sample size of 98 public secondary schools was determined by the Kothari (2013) formula for calculating small sample sizes. A sample of 490 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling by picking 1 principal, 1 deputy principal, 1 bursar, and 1 members of procurement committee and suppliers in each of the 98 secondary schools. Primary data was collected using questionnaires which were pretested for reliability and validity to determine their suitability for use in the study. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and results presented using charts and tables. Inferential statistics, correlation, multiple regression analysis were used establish the nature and magnitude of the relationships between the variables and to test the hypothesized relationships. Out of the 490 questionnaires administered three hundred and ninety five (395) were returned representing 80.6% response rate. The study indicates that majority of the respondents disagreed that community pressure influenced principals’ compliance with procurement regulations in secondary schools with an aggregate mean score of 2.85 and a standard deviation of 1.237. The null hypothesis
tested was that there is no significant influence of community pressure on Principals' compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County. Inferential statistics showed that the coefficient of determination was significant with a value of 0.339 and \( p = 0.000 \). The t-statistic and corresponding \( p \)-value were 10.336 and 0.000 respectively. Therefore, at \( P < 0.005 \) level of significance the null hypothesis \( (H_0) \) is rejected and accepts the alternate hypotheses \( (H_a) \) implying that there is a significant influence of community pressure on Principals' compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County. It therefore, means that when the principals are able to manage the pressures exerted by the community then there are higher chances of the principal to be compliant with the procurement regulations. On the basis of these statistics, the study concludes that there is significant positive relationship between management of community pressure and compliance with procurement regulations. The study concluded that the principals do not succumb to the community pressure to bend the procurement regulations in the public secondary schools to favour suppliers rather they adhere to the guidelines. The suppliers to the schools also induce unethical practices like corrupting the school tendering committee members and therefore strong enforcements of laws should be implemented. The study recommends that there should be strict compliance with government regulations on public procurement since this will assist in checking procurement committee performance in public secondary schools. All schools procurement committee members should strictly adhere to procurement ethics to avoid conflict of interest in procurement matters as this can compromise procurement committee performance in public secondary schools.

**Key Words:** Public Procurement, Community Pressure, Compliance, Public Secondary Schools, Procurement Regulations

**Introduction**

Public procurement has become an issue of public attention and debate, and has been subjected to reforms, restructuring, rules and regulations in the whole world. Most of developing countries have undertaken strategies to reform their procurement system (Letshaba, 2019; Owuor, Otieno, Obura & Kobiero, 2015). The public procurement systems are obviously difficult and dynamic and this is due to variety of objectives that require to be achieved by the procurement. For example; the fundamental intention of public procurement is to serve the public through political purpose and society which is different from private procurement whose primary aim is the profit centric (Ndumbi & Okello, 2015). Public sectors are struggling to achieve their best value for money for the public which encompasses public interest, satisfaction, transparency, honest, justice and equity. Compliance with procurement regulations for procurement entities is significant in achieving public procurement goals and objectives (Naluyaga, 2019). Several developing countries have introduced procurement reforms which involve procurement laws and regulations due to inadequate regulatory compliance (Onyinkwa, 2014).

Over the past decades, public procurement has gained much attention amongst developing countries. Procurement budgets in developing countries account for about 20 per cent of government expenditure globally and many governments have embarked on reforms in their procurement systems to streamline and harmonize legal and institutional framework (Mlinga, 2009). In developing countries, public procurement is increasingly recognized as essential for service delivery (Basheka...
& Bisangabasaija, 2010), and it accounts for a high proportion of total expenditure. For instance, public procurement accounts for 60% in Kenya (Akech, 2005), 58% in Angola, 40% in Malawi and 70% of Uganda’s public spending (Wittig, 2003; Government of Uganda, 2006) as cited in Basheka and Bisangabasaija (2010). This is very high when compared with a global average of 12-20% (Frøystad, Heggstad & Fjeldstad, 2010). Due to the colossal amount of money involved in government procurement and the fact that such money comes from the public, there is need for accountability and transparency (Hui, Othman, Normah, Rahman & Haron, 2019).

Thai (2001) noted that by 2003, all the East African Countries, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania had enacted government procurement codes as Acts of Parliament and have been implemented. In Uganda, a new law to regulate public procurement was introduced in the year 2002 (Tukamuhabwa, 2012). The new procurement law was introduced to not only bring coherence and uniformity in public procurement but also to improve efficiency, transparency and accountability and value for money in procurements. It also eliminates corruption and allows for fair competition (Government of Uganda [GOU], 2003).

According to Kenyanya, Francis and Onyango (2011), Kenya has undergone significant development in the past three decades. This started with a system with no regulations in the 1960s to the introduction of the Procurement Regulations of 2006 that brought new standards for public procurement in Kenya. Many studies were carried out on procurement before the Public Procurement and Disposal Regulations of 2006 to evaluate the efficiency of the procurement process in existence at the time (Kipchilat, 2016). The major findings of the studies (Kenyanya et al., 2011; Kipchilat, 2016; Njenga, 2016) were that public procurement was not operating efficiently and that the state was losing a lot of money through shoddy deals. They established that legal and regulatory framework in public secondary schools in Kenya had added some strength to the public procurement system however some weaknesses still exist in the framework.

According to Transparency International (2006), corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. Raymond (2018) stated that procurement related corruption tends to be a serious problem in developing countries rather than in developed countries. Developing counties such as Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Kenya and Venezuela were identified as having high levels of corruption. As stated by Hui et al; (2019), public procurement corruption could threaten legitimacy and as such, the policies and procedures should be created to curb any possible corruption activities and enhance transparency, accountability and integrity. Citing The New Vision (2005), Obanda (2010) indicated that the Executive Director of the PPDA asserted that the government of Uganda would save 330 billion Uganda shillings by eliminating losses incurred through corruption in public procurement. It was further stressed that corruption is because the law has many loopholes and the prescribed practices are laxly or impractical to enforce. Compliance and establishment of clear rules and regulations complemented by substantial and effectively enforced penalties, applied by public administrations and courts, are considered the most effective deterrents to bribery and corruption in public procurement (Obanda, 2010; OECD, 2007). This study sought to analyse the influence of community pressure on Principals’ compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County.
Statement of the Problem

Compliance with public procurement regulations in Kenya continue to be low in public entities despite efforts by the Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA) to put in place measures to improve compliance (PPOA, 2007). Mulwa, Kalai and Migosi (2013) similarly found out in their study on determinants of implementation of public procurement regulations by head teachers in public secondary schools in Migwani District, that there is low level of compliance in the implementation of public procurement regulations.

Procurement in secondary schools in Embu is supposed to be carried out by the authorized procurement body as per the guidelines from PPOA and the Ministry of Education., in collaboration with the schools BOG, PTA, the schools’ principals and other stakeholders to ensure that there is transparency in the process. However most of the time this does not happen and thus there have been cases where some of the stakeholders in the schools in the County and more so the parents, have been known to be involved in outcries regarding the utilization of the resources in these schools.

Compliance levels continue to be low in public entities in Kenya despite efforts by the Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA) to put in place measures to improve compliance (PPOA 2007). The procurement regulations law aim was to promote fairness, transparency and non-discrimination in procurement in public institutions for instance secondary school setting with the main aim of ensuring efficient use of public funds. Procurement audits carried out revealed non – compliance with procurement regulations in public secondary schools. In Embu County, it has been noted that school tendering committees distort the Regulations to restrict the participation of interested suppliers in procurement, or still direct the outcome of others and thus the non-adherence level to procurement regulation remains at 60% (County Audit Report, 2016). Despite, the enactment of the new constitution which has helped to strengthen and promote values enshrined in procurement, devolution of funds and services hence making it possible for closer monitoring of this function, there have been multiple disciplinary cases and interdictions of secondary schools principals in Embu due to procurement related matters. This study therefore sought to analyse the influence of community pressure on Principals’ compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County.

Literature Review

Ntayi, Byabashaija, Eyaa, Ngoma, and Muliira (2010) sought to explain the unethical behavior of public procurement officers using social cohesion, group think and ethical attitudes and established that these variables considerably contribute to explain the unethical procurement behavior of procurement officers in Uganda. Basheka and Mugabira (2008) measured professionalism variables and their implication to procurement outcomes in Uganda’s public sector. National Integrity Baseline Surveys (2002, 2004, and 2006) have been conducted with the aim to establish the most corrupt central government ministry or local governments, sectors and ministries.

In Africa, as in other parts of the world, there is a lot of mismanagement in the public procurement process, which ultimately prevents value for money from being obtained from the purchased goods,
works, and services (Sarawa & Māsud, 2019). Also, Morakinyo et al. (2020) argued that politician interference affects the effective implementation of Public Procurement Policy in Kaduna State, Nigeria. While, in the same vein Chikwere, Simon, Dzandu & Dza (2019) argued that politicians occasionally interfere with the budget allocation and implementation of organizations’ procurement plans. The study went further by saying that politicians normally ensure that certain projects that have political benefits are allocated sufficient funds and implemented in strategic political locations. Adjepong and Anane (2022) claimed that political interference influenced procurement planning at Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana, by ensuring that the procurement projects are carried out at a time when politicians are likely to benefit from the procurement. According to Myeza et al. (2021) political interference has an impact on public procurement violations in South Africa and prevents the procuring entities from achieving their intended goals.

Ombuki, Arasa, Ngugi and Muhwezi (2014) studied the environmental factors influencing procurement regulations compliance. The study adopted Ex-post facto survey design. The simple random sampling was used to draw the sample size of study. Questionnaires and depth interview were utilized to collect the data. The data collected analysed by descriptive and inferential statistical. The study found that environmental factors (community interest and physical location of the organization) have greater influence to procurement regulatory compliance.

Wanyonyi and Muturi (2015) assert that ethical behaviour supports openness, accountability, reduces the cost of managing risks and enhance trust in public administration. Moreover, ethical behaviour in public procurement encompasses expenditure of public money, and is subject to public scrutiny. It requires that public officials should always behave ethically, fairly and should avoid conflict of interest in their business undertakings. Findings from this study indicated that the institutions conform to the expected standards of integrity, uprightness and honesty. This study was hinged on institutional theory.

Sutinen and Kuperan (2015) propounded the socio-economic theory of compliance by integrating economic theory with theories from psychology and sociology to account for moral obligation and social influence as determinants of individuals’ decisions on compliance. According to Lisa (2010) psychological perspectives provide a basis for the success or failure of organizational compliance. Wilmshurst and Frost (2000) also added that the legitimacy theory postulates that the organization is responsible to disclose its practices to the stakeholders, especially to the public and justify its existence within the boundaries of society. This theory, which focuses on the relationship and interaction between an organization and the society, provides a sufficient and superior lens for understanding government procurement system (Hui et al., 2019). From this theory, the perceived legitimacy of public procurement rules has been identified as one of the antecedents of public procurement compliance behavior. This theory is relevant to the study in that it addresses leaders’ roles in change management and efficiency in resource utilization. The theory also explains the importance of principals as managers of political dynamics and pressure that they encounter in institutional management and infusing ethical values in procurement process it can lead to improvement in procurement performance.
Research Methodology

This study sought to analyse the influence of community pressure on Principals’ compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County. The philosophical foundation of the study was positivism research paradigm, and a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population for the study was all the 132 public secondary schools in Embu County representing the unit of analysis. The unit of observation consisted of 132 principals, 132 deputy principals, 132 bursars, 1320 suppliers and 660 procurement committee members. A sample size of 98 public secondary schools was determined by the Kothari (2013) formula for calculating small sample sizes. A sample of 490 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling by picking 1 Principal, 1 Deputy Principal, 1 Bursar, and 1 member of procurement committee and suppliers in each of the 98 secondary schools. The respondents included principals, deputy principals, bursars, members of procurement committee and suppliers. Primary data was collected using questionnaires which were pretested for reliability and validity to determine their suitability for use in the study. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and results presented using charts and tables. Inferential statistics, correlation, multiple regression analysis were used to establish the nature and magnitude of the relationships between the variables and to test the hypothesized relationships.

Findings of the Study

This study sought to analyse the influence of community pressure on Principals compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County. Results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Management of Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There exists a lot of favouritism in the procurement of goods in education sector</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have been denied many chances of procurement of certain resources due to nepotism</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is payment of bribes or commission to procurement committee in charge of procurement process in our school</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement policies are on tendering are supervised by state auditing authorities in public schools</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement procedures on tendering are supervised by state auditing authorities in public schools</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some procurement staff vary certain criteria in favour of a preferred supplier in procurement decision making</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Officials who have access to very confidential and or market sensitive information use it to the benefit some bidders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16.3%</th>
<th>15.3%</th>
<th>17.3%</th>
<th>44.9%</th>
<th>6.1%</th>
<th>3.09</th>
<th>1.223</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Criminal sanctions apply to officials insider information to the benefit of their preferred bidders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>21.2%</th>
<th>26.3%</th>
<th>18.2%</th>
<th>23.2%</th>
<th>11.1%</th>
<th>2.77</th>
<th>1.319</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Aggregate Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>19.3%</th>
<th>24.8%</th>
<th>16.3%</th>
<th>30.7%</th>
<th>9.0%</th>
<th>2.85</th>
<th>1.237</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The study findings shows that majority of the respondents disagreed that community pressure influenced principals’ compliance with procurement regulations in secondary schools with an aggregate mean score of 2.85 and a standard deviation of 1.237. The findings imply that the principals do not succumb to the community pressure to bend the procurement regulations in the public secondary schools. As stated by Hui et al (2019), public procurement corruption could threaten legitimacy and as such, the policies and procedures should be created to curb any possible corruption activities and enhance transparency, accountability and integrity.

The statements “Procurement policies are on tendering are supervised by state auditing authorities in public schools and Procurement procedures on tendering are supervised by state auditing authorities in public schools had the highest mean score of 3.31 while the statement there is payment of bribes or commission to procurement committee in charge of procurement process in our school had the lowest mean score of 2.19 and a standard deviation of 1.222. Results are in contrast with those of Sarawa and Ma’sud (2019) who asserted that there is a lot of mismanagement in the public procurement process, which ultimately prevents value from being obtained from the purchased goods, works, and services. Also, Morakinyo et al. (2020) argued that politician interference affects the effective implementation of Public Procurement Policy in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Bivariate analysis was carried out through cross tabulation to find out the relationship between management of community pressure and Principals’ Compliance with Procurement Regulations in public secondary schools). The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Cross tabulation between Compliance and management of community Pressure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management of community pressure</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>198</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>X2=7.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>(p=0.008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study findings reveals that management of community pressure was found to be statistically significant with principals’ compliance with procurement regulations (P=0.008). The findings imply that those Principals that are able to manage the pressures exerted by members of the community had higher chances of being compliant with the procurement regulations. Results are in line with Ombuki, Arasa, Ngugi & Muhwezi (2014) who found out that environmental factors have greater influence to procurement regulatory compliance.
Through regression analysis, the study tested the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of community pressure on Principals’ compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted in which principals’ compliance was regressed against community pressure. The findings of this test were interpreted using the R², F-statistic, T-test statistics and the P-values. The model summary results were as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.516a</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td>0.263</td>
<td>0.52855</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), Management of community

According to the model summary output in Table 3, the variables were significantly correlated where R (coefficient of correlation) was a positive correlation of 0.516 indicating that management of community was strongly related to principal’s compliance with procurement regulations. The study findings imply that management of community had a strong and positive relationship with compliance with procurement regulations. The study findings show that management of community explains only 26.6% variation in compliance with procurement regulations. From the model summary the adjusted R² was 0.263 this indicates that management of community explains 26.3% of variations in principal’s compliance with procurement regulations. Results are in support of Myeza et al. (2021) who asserted that political interference has an impact on public procurement violations in South Africa and prevents the procuring entities from achieving their intended goals.

**Table 4: ANOVA for Management of Community Pressure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Regression</td>
<td>29.847</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.847</td>
<td>106.837</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>82.413</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>0.279</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112.26</td>
<td>296</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Dependent Variable: Compliance
b Predictors: (Constant), Management of community

From table 4, it is clear that the model is significant in predicting how management of community determines principal’s compliance with procurement regulations. The regression model achieved a high degree of fit as reflected by an R² of 0.266 (F = 106.837; P = 0.000 < 0.05). The relationship was significant at critical value (0.05) since the reported p-value (0.000) was less than the critical value. This means that the measures of management of community were significant at 95% confidence level which support previous findings from correlation analysis, which reported that there was a significant correlation among the variables (r = 0.516). Thus, it was important to test the significance of the predictor to determine its effect on compliance.
Table 5: Regression Coefficients for Management of Community Pressure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of community</td>
<td>0.339</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Dependent Variable: Compliance

Table 5 indicates that the coefficient of determination was significant with a value of 0.339 and p = 0.000. This indicates that a unit increase in management of community pressure would result in 33.9% increase in principal’s compliance with procurement regulations value in a direct relationship between management of community pressure and compliance with procurement regulations in public Secondary Schools in Embu County. The t-statistic and corresponding p-value were 10.336 and 0.000 respectively. Therefore, at P < 0.005 level of significance the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and accepts the alternate hypotheses (H₁) implying that there is a significant influence of community pressure on Principals’ compliance with procurement regulations in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County. It therefore means that when the principals are able to manage the pressures exerted by the community then there are higher chances of the principal to be compliant with the procurement regulations. On the basis of these statistics, the study concludes that there is significant positive relationship between management of community and compliance with procurement regulations. As stated by Hui et al; (2019), public procurement corruption could threaten legitimacy and as such, the policies and procedures should be created to curb any possible corruption activities and enhance transparency, accountability and integrity.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the principals do not succumb to the community pressure to bend the procurement regulations in the public secondary schools to favour suppliers rather they adhere to the guidelines. The suppliers to the schools also induce unethical practices like corrupting the school tendering committee members and therefore strong enforcements of laws should be implemented. The study concluded that professional training of procurement committee members in procurement process has a significant bearing on procurement performance in public secondary schools and strict adherence to procurement ethics can really boost procurement committee performance in public secondary schools. This is well articulated in the findings which showed that the principals managed the pressures from the community, technical experts and the religious sponsors to enhance compliance by ensuring that there is no collusion in the procurement process, eliminating issues of conflict of interest and enhancing confidentiality.

Recommendations

The study findings recommend that there should be strict compliance with government regulations on public procurement since this will assist in checking procurement committee performance in public secondary schools. All schools procurement committee members should strictly adhere to procurement ethics to avoid conflict of interest in procurement matters as this can compromise procurement committee performance in public secondary schools.
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