



INFLUENCE OF PROCUREMENT KNOWLEDGE ON ACCESS TO PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Government procurement regulations are instrumental to the public at large. Women, youth and the disabled are empowered to combat poverty through use of ethical means as supported by the Government. However, all over the world, challenges facing public procurement are less inclusion due to low number of people with disabilities (PwD) accessing government procurement opportunities. This study set out to ascertain effect of procurement knowledge on access to public procurement opportunities among PwDs suppliers in Kenya. A total of 77 respondents participated in the study. The chosen study location was Kakamega County, one of the devolved units in Kenya. The study used cross-sectional research design. Data for the study was collected using questionnaires. The findings showed that there was insufficient knowledge on procurement processes for PwDs and that having this knowledge was positively significant on access to public procurement opportunities. It recommended that the Government should encourage the use of practices and provision of information that can empower PwDs on access to Public procurement opportunities for the benefit of the marginalized segments of society.

Key Words: *People Living With Disabilities, Procurement Knowledge, Electronic Procurement Information, Access to Public Procurement Opportunities.*

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INTRODUCTION

PWDs face various challenges in enhancing their welfare, including in social, economic and political areas. They face barriers to social, economic and political development of PWDs manifested through limited access to education and its attainment, high unemployment and adverse working environment, exclusion in property ownership and business opportunities, unfavorable built environment, hostile transport facilities and behaviour, limited access to assistive devices, negative societal perceptions, retrogressive cultural attitudes and practices, stigma, limited access to justice, limited political representation, and constrained participation in sports and art.

Promoting equality of public procurement opportunity for and inclusion of people with disabilities is central to social and economic development, emergence from the global financial and economic crisis and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The International Labour Organization (2017) report calls for support by governments, social partners, and disabled peoples organizations in order to develop effective policies and programs to increase the access to procurement opportunities by women and men with disabilities. However, all over the world, challenges facing public procurement are always attracting attention from civil society, donors, politicians, practitioners, academicians and researchers due to low number of people with disabilities (PWDs) accessing government procurement opportunities ((Tibben & Astbrink 2012).

For the past two decades, considerable scholarly and applied research has been produced describing the barriers to competitive public procurement opportunities faced by people with disabilities, as well as information on successful evidence-based practices at the state and local level in helping them obtain public procurement opportunities. Despite substantial research, demonstration projects, multiple government efforts, and compelling

reasons for giving public procurement opportunities to PWDs of access to public procurement opportunities remain unacceptably low (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

Manuel and Lunder (2013) observe that inclusion of PWDs in the procurement process is realized through the establishment of government-wide and specific goals for the percentage of contracts and/or subcontracts awarded to small businesses for the benefit of the disadvantaged. Public procurement policies that enable partnerships with cooperatives of disabled persons have also proven an effective means for balancing support measures and self-determination of persons with disabilities (UN, 2014). In Germany, increasing the availability of accessible ICTs is considered a positive step in removing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating equitably in society (Hawkins 2011; Waddell 2009) and thus increasing digital inclusion.

Government procurement offers an exceptional and matchless route that is fast and direct to empower women, youth and the disabled and combat poverty. Public procurement accounts for over 30% of GDP in developing countries and some 10-15% of GDP in developed countries (UNDP, 2014). Marginal groups economic empowerment is a critical element for the business community and policymakers (Thevenon, Allart & Hovart, 2012).

Procurement of good, services and works is very important component of administration of a country's public resources which links the economic and social outcomes with fiscal system (Scrapper & Veiga Malta, 2011). Public procurement is viewed as an effective and competent way of entering into an agreement between the government and private companies (Schooner, 2012). Economically, Public procurement is very vital docket as it largely uses a big percentage of a country's funds (Schapper & Veiga Malta, 2011).

Public procurement has a huge impact on the economy of Kenya. For instance, independent

procurement review Kenya (IPRK, 2005) established that in the period between the years 2003 to the year 2004, the value of government procurement in Kenya has been growing in leaps and bounds. With constant growth of the GDP, the amount expended in government procurement continues to rise and in the year 2014, it is estimated to be about 30% of the Ksh. 1.6 trillion Kenyan National budget (Hansard, 2014) This huge amount if well managed could drive economic growth and could also, according to OECD (2006), spur entrepreneurship among the largely unemployed PWDs in developing nations through their access in public procurement.

Statement of the problem

In Kenya, according to Transparency international(2013), special groups(women, youth and people living with disabilities)constitute of over 85% of the entire population yet they contribute to less than 10% of public procurement involvement thus these hampers economic growth and achievement of vision 2030.Special groups have cited many of their problems to included capacity building, lack of access to credit, inadequate skills, poor information and inhibitive legal regulatory framework (Brinkerhoff, 2014). In spite of the legal, policy and institutional reforms undertaken so far in the public procurement sector in Kenya, people with disabilities suppliers still find it hard to effectively access procurement opportunities in public sector in Kenya.

Locally, there are Studies conducted accessibility public procurement opportunities in general. For instance, Gitari and Kabare (2014) analyzed the factors affecting access to procurement opportunities in public secondary schools by small and medium enterprises in Kenya. However, he did not address the factors affecting the Youth, women & persons with disabilities involvement in public procurement. Gatere and Shale (2014) investigated the challenges affecting the implementation of access to government procurement opportunities for Youth, women & persons with disabilities in Kenya: A case of Kakamega County Government.

They did not consider the challenges that persons with disabilities face in the process of accessing procurement opportunities which needs to be investigated. Researchers such as Kamau et al. (2014), Wambui (2014), Muraguri (2013) and Muthoni (2012) have dwelt on youths a lot leaving out women and PWDs on accessing government procurement opportunities. Nevertheless, local studies have ignored people with disabilities suppliers' opinion on what factors affect them in accessing public procurement opportunities especially in county governments. Previous studies have only focused in investigate factors of access to public procurement opportunities for youth and only collect opinions from government employees but not from them special group such as PWDs. Thus, this study fills the gap for having investigated on determinants of access to public procurement opportunities among people with disabilities suppliers in Kakamega County Government.

Study Objectives

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of procurement knowledge on access to procurement opportunities for People Living with Disabilities in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

As presented by Festinger in 1957, dissonance theory began by postulating that pairs of cognitions (elements of knowledge) can be relevant or irrelevant to one another. If two cognitions are relevant to one another, they are either consonant or dissonant. Two cognitions are consonant if one follows from the other, and they are dissonant if the obverse (opposite) of one cognition follows from the other. The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, motivates the person to reduce the dissonance and leads to avoidance of information likely to increase the dissonance. The greater the magnitude of the dissonance, the greater is the pressure to reduce dissonance.

The central proposition of Festinger's theory is that if a person holds two cognitions that are inconsistent with one another, he will experience the pressure of an aversive motivational state called cognitive dissonance, a pressure which he will seek to remove, among other ways, by altering one of the two dissonant cognitions (Bem, 1967, p. 183).

A cognition (also called a cognitive element) may be broadly defined as any belief, opinion, attitude, perception, or piece of knowledge about anything - about other persons, objects, issues, oneself, and so on (Aronson, 2004, p. 146; Littlejohn & Foss, 2005, p. 77; O'Keefe, 2002, p. 78). Littlejohn and Foss (2005) define a cognitive system as "a complex, interacting set of beliefs, attitudes, and values that affect and are affected by behavior" (p. 81). Festinger considered the need to avoid dissonance to be just as basic as the need for safety or the need to satisfy hunger (Griffin, 2006, p. 228).

Dissonance theory research concerns people's propensity to expose themselves selectively to information. As has been indicated, dissonance is an aversive motivational state, therefore people naturally attempt to avoid dissonance-arousing situations. That is to say, persons prefer to be exposed to information that is supportive of their current beliefs rather than to non-supportive information.

This theory was used in this study to justify the fact that many people living with disabilities tend to seek information from available media relating to procurement. These perceptions and attitudes influence their desire to participate in procurement practices in Kenya. However, information on procurement processes may not have been spelt out clearly and readily accessible due to the nature of and extent to which the country has adopted information specific messages to the vulnerable groups including the PWDs.

Procurement Knowledge and Access to Procurement opportunities

Kenya has implemented various reforms and initiatives at national and county levels to address the rights and needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). These range from policy and legal reforms and frameworks to programs, projects and activities that seek to mainstream disability and to offer support to PWDs. The policy frameworks targeting PWDs are anchored on the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) while at the regional level, there exist the Protocol (1998) to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1986) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as East Africa Community Policy on Persons with Disabilities (2008).

Procurement knowledge is focusing on fixing a specific issue. Procurement knowledge is related with current performance and progress of an employee (Miller, 2006). Procurement knowledge is anything offering learning experience (Paul & Anantharaman, 2003) Procurement knowledge helps employees is more specific with their job and organization and as a result increases employee job satisfaction and makes them work better. In today's business world, employee's skills which are necessary to do their job are only possible through procurement knowledge. Most of the companies train their employees in such a manner that would help them to sustain throughout their careers. This kind of procurement knowledge can lead to high levels of motivation and job satisfaction by the employees, who actually see the opportunity they are given (Chiaburu and Tekleab, 2005). Procurement knowledge in procurement is believed to promote policy compliance. Procurement knowledge can educate public buyers about policy expectations and raise awareness over what actions they should take to translate these same expectations into practice (Coggburn and Rahm, 2005; Mwakibinga and Buvik, 2013).

Governments can provide technical assistance and procurement knowledge services specific to Suppliers and/or women owned businesses

interested in participating in the procurement process. This could include managerial procurement knowledge, financial management, understanding the public procurement process, access contract opportunities, etc. This support can be provided independent of the actual tendering process or in tandem (Mwakibinga & Buvik, 2013). Technical assistance does not influence the cost competitiveness of the bidder – only supporting the bidder's ability to participate in the procurement process (Arrowsmith, 2010). However, as a disadvantage it can be ineffective in assisting Suppliers when governments do not have the necessary expertise due to lack of professionalization and/or systemization of the procurement process. Procurement knowledge, as opposed to technical assistance, can be used to teach many people at once, however a 'one size fits all' approach may not always be appropriate.

Access to Government Procurement Opportunities among people with disabilities

Government procurement can be a politically sensitive process. The size of Government bids coupled with the fact that it involves public funds means that the citizens of any country should share these bids equitably Benton et al (2014). The AGPO is a youth and women's procurement program which has its genesis in the pledge the Jubilee Party made to allocate the KShs. 6 billion that was meant for the presidential run-off to youth and women groups. The principles of Uwezo Fund are Representation, Accountability, Accessibility and spurring of economic growth. Representation, to ensure the inclusion of all Kenyans including women, youth, persons with disabilities elected parliamentary representatives and respective government officials SMEDA (2012). Accountability; to ensure government is held responsible to the citizens for its decisions and actions (Republic of

Kenya 2013). Accessibility: guaranteeing accessibility at the lowest level of engagement and for the largest category of recipients using a simple, structured and least cost approach. Economy: use of the best but least cost mechanism to achieve the desired objective.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the cross-sectional research design. The targeted population comprised of PWDs who were pre-qualified by the County Government of Kakamega as suppliers for various materials in the county. The sample for the study entailed some 77 respondents. This research adopted purposive sampling of the respondents. This ensured only the identified respondents with helpful information for the study would be used. Data was collected through questionnaires which were self-administered by the researcher. The questionnaires in usage for this research were of close-ended questions. The questionnaire was structured with likert scale to quantify the responses. A pilot study was conducted before the main study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) facilitated the data analysis.

RESULTS

The study involved 103 questionnaires being dispatched for data collection, 77 questionnaires were returned completely filled, representing a response rate of 74.75% which was good for generalizability of the research findings to a wider population.

Descriptive Results for Procurement Knowledge

These were summarized responses on whether procurement Knowledge influence on access to public procurement opportunities among PWDs. The descriptive results were presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Results for Procurement Knowledge

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
We have attended more than two procurement knowledge programmes on business skills that also sensitized us on AGPO.	13(16.9)	37(48.1)	10(13.0)	11(14.3)	6(7.7)	3.55	0.917
The procurement knowledge offered covered all the necessary skills of running successful tendering services	12(15.6)	36(46.8)	11(14.3)	10(13.0)	8(10.3)	3.52	0.921
The county provide special procurement knowledge for PWD on how to access procurement opportunities	13(16.9)	35(45.5)	10(13.0)	12(15.5)	7(9.1)	3.45	0.923
Procurement knowledge syllabus offered on procurement are adequate to assist me know how to do prequalification	11(14.3)	39(50.6)	9(11.7)	10(13.0)	8(10.4)	3.48	0.927
Due to procurement knowledge I have received I have no problem searching and applying for county tenders	12(15.6)	32(41.6)	12(15.5)	10(13.0)	11(14.3)	3.38	0.929

From table 1 above, most respondents agreed (48.1%) and strongly agreed (16.9%) that they have attended more than two procurement knowledge programs on business skills that also sensitized on AGPO; while 46.8% agreed that the procurement knowledge offered covered all the necessary skills of running successful tendering services, which has empowered them translating to increased access to public procurement opportunities with the county government.

More so, 45.5% and 16.9% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the county provide special procurement knowledge for PWD on how to access procurement opportunities; and 50.6% agreed that Procurement knowledge syllabus offered on procurement are adequate to assist them know how to do prequalification; thus

enabling them to successfully do procurement process with the county government translates to increased access to public procurement opportunities by the county government.

Lastly, most respondents agreed (41.6%) and strongly agreed (15.6%) that due to procurement knowledge they have received they have no problem searching and applying for county tenders. This successfully facilitated their access to public procurement opportunities.

Linear Regression Results for Procurement Knowledge

The regression analysis was also performed and results for model summary are as reported on table 2 below.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.676 ^a	.457	.449	.90463	.457	63.037	1	75	.000

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51.587	1	51.587	63.037	.000 ^a
	Residual	61.377	75	.818		
	Total	112.964	76			

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1	(Constant)	1.162	.304		3.826	.000
	Procurement knowledge	.756	.095	.676	7.940	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Access to public procurement opportunities

From table 2, the model summary showed that R² = 0.457; implying that 45.7% variations in the access to public procurement opportunities is explained by procurement knowledge while other factors not in the study model accounts for 54.3% of variation in access to public procurement opportunities. Further, coefficient analysis shows that procurement experience has positive significant influence on access to public procurement opportunities ($\beta = 0.756$ (0.095); at $p < .01$). This implies that a single improvement in effective procurement knowledge will lead to 0.756 unit increase in the access to public procurement opportunities. Therefore, the linear regression equation is;

$$(iii) y = 1.162 + 0.756X_3$$

Where;

y = Access to public procurement opportunities
Kakamega county government.

X₃ = procurement knowledge

The study hypothesis (H03) stated that procurement knowledge had no significant influence on access to public procurement opportunities. The regression results indicated that procurement knowledge significantly influence the access to public procurement opportunities ($\beta = 0.314$ (0.102) at $p < 0.05$). The hypothesis was,

therefore, rejected. The results indicate that that a unit increase in procurement knowledge will leads to 0.314 unit increase in the access to public procurement opportunities. This means that procurement knowledge accounted for 31.4% of access to procurement opportunities. The remaining percentage may have been explained by other factors which may not have formed part of this study.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study tested the influence of Procurement knowledge and access to public procurement opportunities among PWDs suppliers in Kakamega County Government. The results showed that procurement knowledge was instrumental hence it significantly influenced access to public procurement opportunities among PWDs suppliers in Kakamega County Government.

This study recommended that PWDs suppliers should engage in activities to enhance their visibility and that offer them procurement experience and knowledge to always stay informed and armed in their bid to access more public procurement opportunities. Organizations charged with the responsibility of facilitating such members of society should note that most of their target groups do not receive information appropriately and may be losing out on procurement opportunities.

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