

# Construction Management Practices and Procurement Standards in the Upgrade of Health Centres in Bunyoro Sub-Region. A Case of Ministry of Health Uganda.

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## Abstract

Successful completion of projects in the construction industry remains a difficult task at all levels. However, the members involved in the construction team are sometimes constrained because the projects are influenced by several factors that differ, which range from internal to external factors. This study evaluated the delays in upgrading of health centers from level II to III in Bunyoro Sub-Region a Government of Uganda project. Quantitative approach with descriptive and correlational research designs were adopted in this research paper. Data was collected from 99 respondents using a questionnaire and a check list, whereas sampling was both purposive and snow ball.

A high level of contract planning and procurement standards with aggregate mean 3.17 suggested that contract Pan 1.83 and contract monitoring and procurement standards with aggregate mean 2.15 indicted a low level of performance. This study found out a weak positive relationship between construction management practices and procurement standards in the upgrade of health centers by Ministry of Health in Bunyoro sub region with ( $r = 0.489$ ,  $p = 0.0000 < 0.05$ ). The findings suggested that when construction management practices contract planning, implementation and monitoring are put in place, procurement standards will improve. This further suggests that procurement standards should be followed to the latter to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and environmental standards are achieved.

**Keywords:** Contract planning, Contract implementation, Contract monitoring, procurement standards, contract management

## Introduction

Completion of projects in the construction industry remains a difficult task at all levels (Musarat & Ahad, 2016). However, the members involved in the construction team are sometimes constrained because the projects are influenced by several factors that differ, which range from internal to external factors (Adeleke *et al*, 2017). The research paper found out that Project's failure to perform mostly is a result of inadequate construction management practices and adherence to procurement standards. Muhwezi & Musiime, (2020) this eventually cause loss and misery to parties involved in contract management as reaffirmed by project management institute (PMI, 2020). Accordingly projects most times suffer from initial stage due to lack of competitive supply, effectiveness and environmental sustainability (Ekins & Zenghelis, 2021). During the implementation process this in turn affect the quality of the final product and the intended objectives end up not being achieved as cited by independent evaluation group (IEG, 2012). Therefore, it is always a huge price to both parties involved, which are sometimes factors beyond the control

of the project team resulting from both internal and external factors whereas, project success can also depend on Social, Political and Economic factors (Sudhakar, 2016).

Globally construction management practices and adherence to procurement standards has remained the biggest challenge during execution of public construction projects (Asiedu & Adaku, 2019). According to Zain *et al*, (2021) they all suggest that there have been inadequate construction management practices by both the stake holders which has led to inadequate construction management practices in public construction projects as witnessed by Ogunde *et al*,(2017) that procurement standards have remained a big challenge in public procurements .

In the context of Africa, construction management practices of public projects and adherence to procurement standards has been dismal as according to Komakech (2016), though previous studies have highlighted this problem but it has

persisted. This was also echoed by Mue (2015) stating that the main causes of inadequate construction management practices and lack of adherence to procurement standards in public construction projects has been a result of among others issues related to contracts planning, contracts implementation and contract monitoring. Khalid, (2019) indicated that there are delays in payments and over budgeting despite accomplishments in project management in public construction projects.

East Africa alone, it has not been different as witnessed by Islam and Trigunarsyah, (2017) that construction delay is one of the basic constrains in achieving project objectives in developing countries. Substantial increase of stalled projects has increased due to inadequate construction management practices such as good contracts planning, contracts implementation and contracts monitoring among others (Waiswa, 2018). In Tanzania, studies indicate that in the year 2015 and 2016 the performance of construction building projects was at 16.8% and 13% respectively which indicates the decline in performance and there is a likelihood of it growing further as echoed by Kimei, (2019). Kikwasi, ( 2013) found out in his study that, there has been high training of technical personnel's in regard to construction management practices and adherence to procurement standards in Kenya, still some public construction projects have not been able to meet their objectives Dunama *et al*, (2012) also agreed to the same. In Uganda, as indicated by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development MoFPED, (2019) trillions of shillings have been spent on Government projects, services and goods with an intention of ensuring the government fulfills its mandate of serving its citizens which accounts for 60% of central government budget.

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development MoFPED, (2021) Government of Uganda through ministry of health planned to upgrade 315 health centres ii's to iii's by the end of financial year 2020 to 2022 and contracts were awarded to different companies to be implemented country wide. Where, four (4) construction projects of upgrading health centres in Bunyoro Sub-region were awarded to Gilal Contractors and suppliers Ltd, to a tune of 2 billion shillings in Financial Year 2018/2019 to be completed in 2020. However, in a periodical publication by Monitor, (2021), New vision, (2021) all indicated that projects had stalled and further indicated that out of four (4) construction projects which were awarded to Gilal Contractors and Suppliers Ltd, in Buliisa district out of two the one in Butiaba Health centre had submerged in water, the other one in Avogera Health centre the contract was terminated and was completed by another contractor works at 90% since it had never been commissioned. The one in Masindi district at Katesenywa health centre, the project was at 95% had already be commissioned while in Hoima it was at 88%. could this have been the state of affairs elsewhere.

Therefore, this research seeks to evaluate the construction management practices and procurement standards in the upgrade of health centres construction projects a case of Ministry of Health in Bunyoro Sub-region Uganda under Uganda intergovernmental fiscal transfer program Ministry of Health projects

## Methods and Materials

Quantitative approaches with descriptive and correlational research designs were adopted for the study. Data was collected from 99 respondents using a questionnaire and a check list, whereas sampling was both purposive and snow ball.

## Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Contract planning**

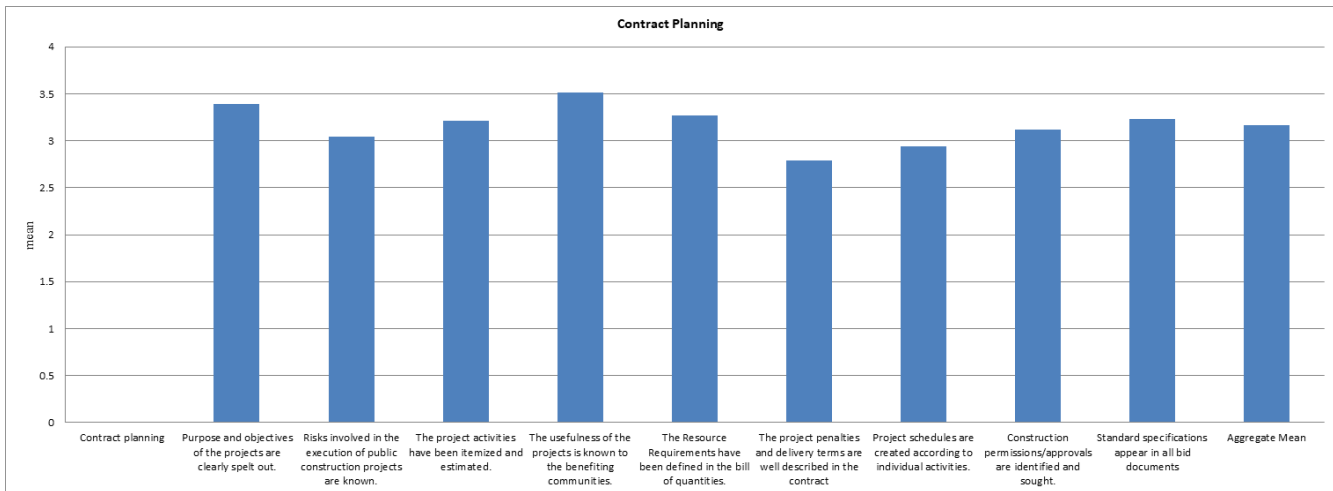
<b>Responses</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Purpose and objectives of the projects are clearly spelt out.	3.39
Risks involved in the execution of public construction projects are known.	3.04
The project activities have been itemized and estimated.	3.21
The usefulness of the projects is known to the benefiting communities.	3.51
The Resource Requirements have been defined in the bill of quantities.	3.27
The project penalties and delivery terms are well described in the contract	2.79
Project schedules are created according to individual activities.	2.94
Construction permissions/approvals are identified and sought.	3.12
Standard specifications appear in all bid documents	3.23
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>	<b>3.17</b>

Source; secondary data from the field

**Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high.**

Quantitative data showed that the contract planning was done well with over all mean of 3.17. This was validated by data from qualitative, where respondents said that contract planning enabled proper budgeting and costing of projects, and developed community confidence in the country's health sector through involving the benefiting community in all steps of management.

Johnson, (2019) urges that any good contract is established on a profound relationship between the client and the contractor. It involves agreed terms and conditions in the contract. The major aim is ensuring that the goals and the objectives of the contract are achieved in line with the issues of value for money being considered. To achieve this, clients and contractors should have proper planning scheduled to base on during implementation and tools for monitoring the project success at all stages. In agreement with this view, the research revealed that purpose and objectives of the projects are clearly spelt out with mean of 3.27 which is interpreted as very high. The response of participants also revealed that standard specifications appear in all bid documents with mean of 3.23 and other terms like schedules and terms of delivery scored high with mean of 3.23 and 2.79 respectively. Good contract planning leads to achieving high levels of construction management practices. This was acknowledged in the responses of participants on qualitative question where 4% of respondents said that good contracts planning leads identifying suitable company to implement the project.



Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high

Figure 1: Contract Planning

Table 2:Contract implementation

Responses	Mean
Pre-construction activities include (financial, contractual, and interconnection) before the physical construction of the project.	1.77
Contract projects are executed according to the plan.	1.09
Changes or variations are made as needed.	1.91
Project schedule interconnections have been realized.	1.38
Drawings, bills of quantities are present at site at all times.	2.35
Project commissioning leading to facility/community project operation has been achieved.	2.27
Payments to contractors and suppliers is done in time	2.04
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>	<b>1.83</b>

Source; secondary data from the field

Even though contract planning was done well, with a mean of 3.17, contract implementation of Ministry of Health projects in Bunyoro sub-region was particularly low with an aggregate mean of 1.83; this implies that the contract was not implemented as planned. The findings revealed that the low mean on project schedule realization of a mean of 1.38, and very low mean on contract execution according to plan of a mean of 1.09. This coupled with other factors highlighted in the table above affected the outcome of the construction management practice in the Ministry of Health projects. Failure to implement the contract as planned and without following due processes other indicators could not be achieved as evidenced with low or moderate mean.

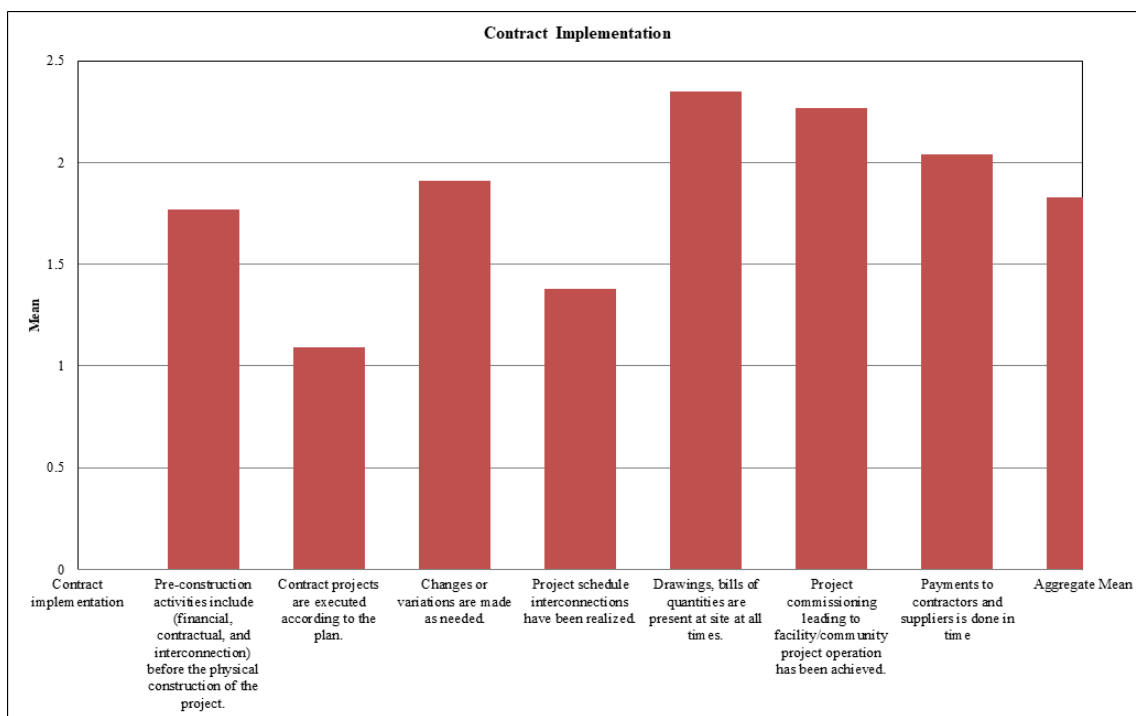
Contract implementation of Ministry of Health projects in Bunyoro sub-region was particularly low with an aggregate mean of 1.83. This implies that the contract was not implemented as planned. The findings revealed that the low mean on project schedule realization of a mean of 1.38, and very low mean on contract execution according to plan of a mean of 1.09.

This coupled with other factors highlighted in the table above affected the outcome of the construction management practices in the Ministry of Health projects. Failure to implement the contract as it is and

without following due processes that lead to wastage of resources and delivery of what was not planned hence led to violation of contractual obligation.

It should be noted that services that were supposed to be received by the beneficiaries have not yet been received because the projects was not implemented as planned, project schedules were not realised and one project was abandoned. This was contrary to Callistus *et al*, (2018), who suggested that during implementation of any project, contracting companies should at all times check if contractual obligations are being met in terms of scope, time, quality and cost to achieve the intended objectives of the project.

Almeida *et al*, (2019) suggested that during the implementation of any project, achieving its objectives may be hindered by many aspects but not limited to contract managers in experience for not focusing the worth coming issues that may cause the client not being able to adhere to terms of the contract agreement such as poor designs, lack of financial and man power capacity by the contractor. In agreement with Ramlee *et al*, (2016)respondents highlighted that project was awarded to contractors without financial and technical capacity, contractor failed to implement advises by the technical personnel. This could have explained the low mean of 1.83 of contrast implementation in Ministry of Health projects.



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Figure 2:Contract Implementation

Table 3:Contract monitoring

Responses	Mean
The written contract monitoring procedure is important on construction site.	2.19
Items billed in the contract are purchased by the contractor as per terms of reference.	1.94
Contract implementation schedule is clearly shown.	2.24
Contracts are completed on schedule and within the original approval budget.	2.07
Items purchased are of quality and quantity as specified in the contract.	2.28
Frequent site meetings by stakeholders lead to success of the project.	2.17
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>	<b>2.15</b>

Source; secondary data from the field

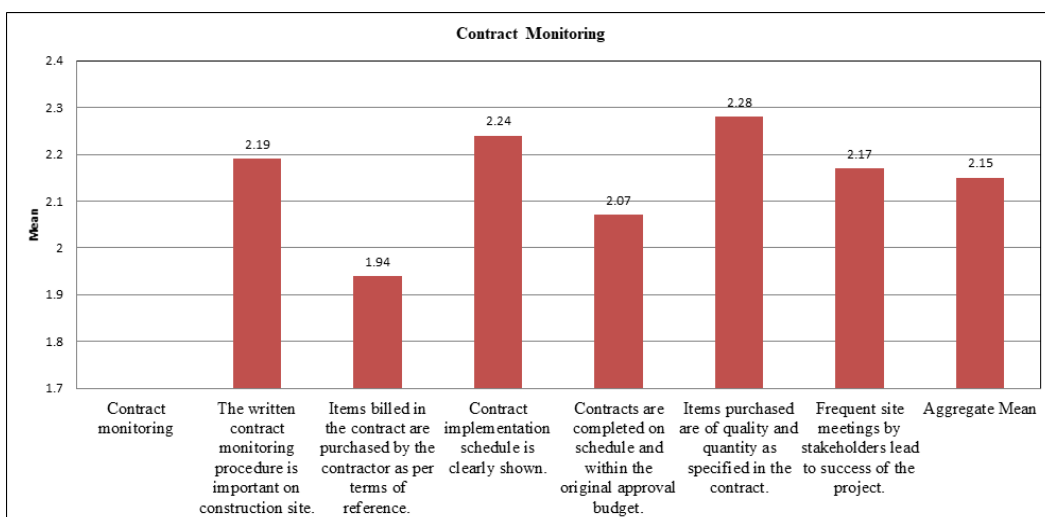
Contract monitoring in the construction management of Ministry of Health projects in Bunyoro sub region was also low. The findings revealed low levels of contract monitoring with aggregate mean of 2.15 which is an indicator of low levels of construction management. Even though the findings were good for contract planning, the monitoring scored low which affected the outcome of the project.

The participants further revealed in qualitative data that contractor took long to come to the site, he left the work to be done by casual workers, three of the opinion leaders and two of health management committee members revealed that there was no monitoring tools to use in monitoring. They added that even when poor quality materials were procured, they had nowhere to report because they were not involved. May be the budget for monitoring remained in Kampala said one of the leaders in project area. This could explain why only one project out of four has been completed after 3 years and yet they were supposed to be completed in 6 months and why one project of Bulisa District was taken away from the original contractor to another to complete it.

The qualitative data is in agreement with quantitative data that revealed that site meetings had low mean of 2.17 which implies that site meetings were not frequently carried out which means that decision on performance were not made and even those that were made remotely were not implemented because they were not communicated. This was contrary to Almeida *et al*, (2019) who suggests that a good contract established on a profound relationship between the client and the contractor. To achieve this, clients and contractors should have proper planning scheduled to base on during implementation and tools for monitoring the project success at all stages.

Nanthagopan *et al*, (2018) argued the client should at all times create and maintain an understanding and good communication by

ensuring there is timely and proper system of managing problems which may arise during the construction of the project. This was anchored by Almeida *et al*, (2019) whose argument was, to achieve objectives of any project there should be best management practices which among others include proper planning, implementation and monitoring. The study findings were contrary to what other scholar like Nanthagopan *et al*, (2018) discussed about proper systems of managing the problems.



Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high

Figure 3: Contract Monitoring



**Procurement standards;**

Objective two examined the levels of procurement standards in Ministry of Health projects Bunyoro region-Uganda. This objective was assessed on basis of competitiveness, effectiveness and environmental sustainability.

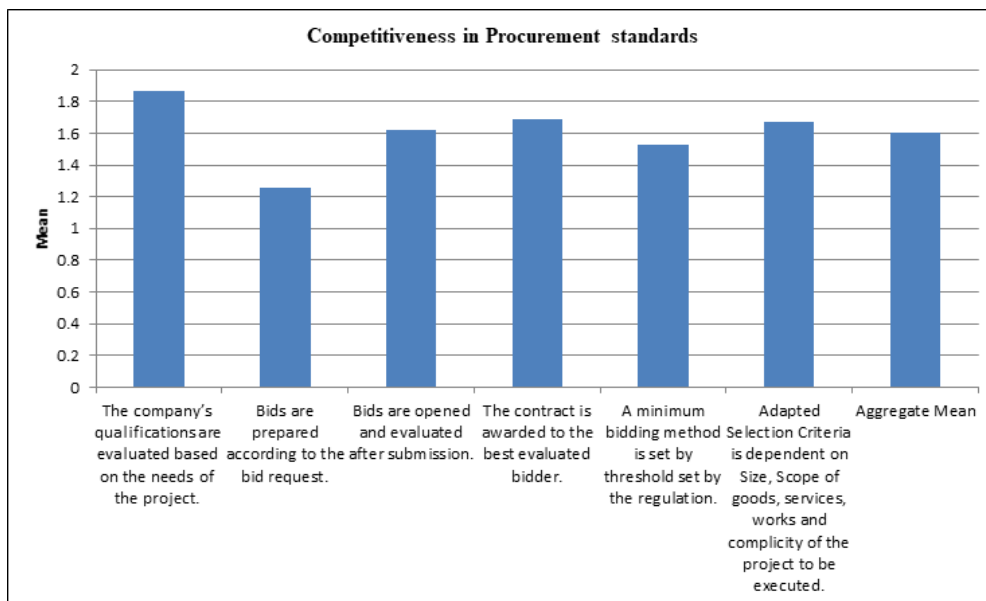
The finding showed aggregate mean of 1.68 which is considered very low adherence to standard as indicated in the tables.

**Table 4: Competitiveness in Procurement standards**

Particulars	Mean
The company’s qualifications are evaluated based on the needs of the project.	1.87
Bids are prepared according to the bid request.	1.26
Bids are opened and evaluated after submission.	1.62
The contract is awarded to the best evaluated bidder.	1.69
A minimum bidding method is set by threshold set by the regulation.	1.53
Adapted Selection Criteria is dependent on Size, Scope of goods, services, works and complicity of the project to be executed.	1.67
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>	<b>1.60</b>

Source; secondary data from the field

The finding revealed that competitive procurement process of Ministry of Health projects had a mean of 1.60 which is considered to be low in the study. This implies that the contract awarding did not follow SOPs as it is stipulated in PPD Act. This was affirmed by one of respondent who said that the ministry followed cabinet decision to use hybrid process of getting contractor which is not provided for in PPDA act of 2006.



Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high

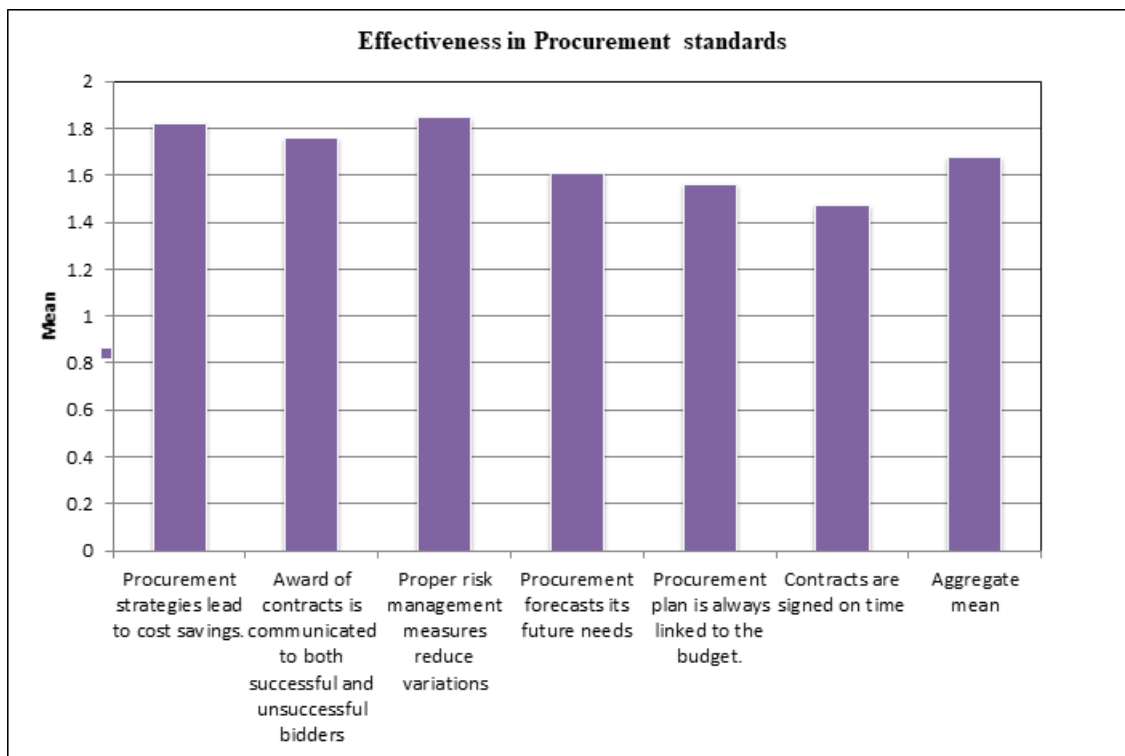
**Figure 4: Competitiveness**

**Table 5: Effectiveness in Procurement standards**

Particulars	Mean
Procurement strategies lead to cost savings.	1.82
Award of contracts is communicated to both successful and unsuccessful bidders	1.76
Proper risk management measures reduce variations	1.85
Procurement forecasts its future needs	1.61
Procurement plan is always linked to the budget.	1.56
Contracts are signed on time	1.47
<b>Aggregate mean</b>	<b>1.68</b>

Source; secondary data from the field

The findings also revealed that effectiveness in procurement standards had a mean of 1.68 which is considered in this study as low. This implies that the activities were not completed in time and the value of money was not reflected.



Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high

**Figure 5: Effectiveness in procurement standard**

**Table 6: Environmental sustainability in Procurement standards**

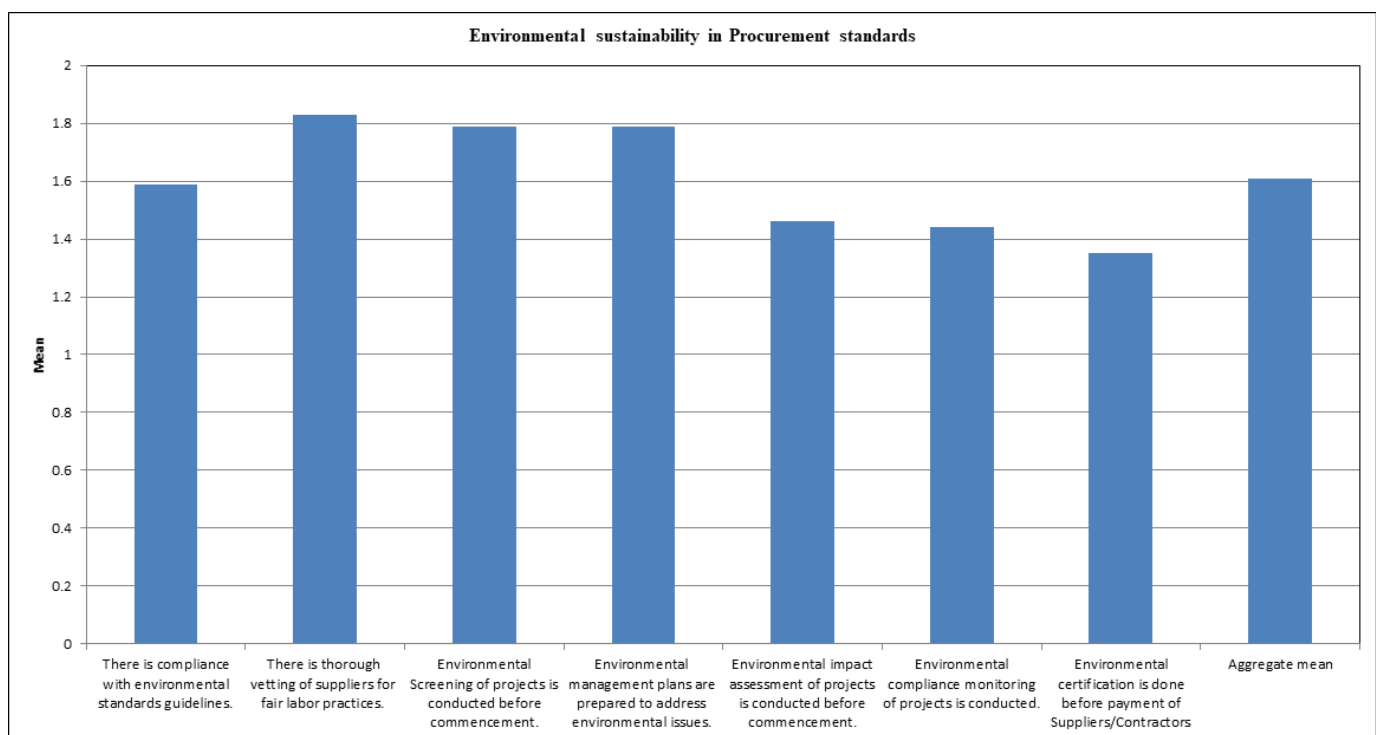
Particulars	Mean
There is compliance with environmental standards guidelines.	1.59



There is thorough vetting of suppliers for fair labor practices.	1.83
Environmental Screening of projects is conducted before commencement.	1.79
Environmental management plans are prepared to address environmental issues.	1.79
Environmental impact assessment of projects is conducted before commencement.	1.46
Environmental compliance monitoring of projects is conducted.	1.44
Environmental certification is done before payment of Suppliers/Contractors	1.35
<b>Aggregate mean</b>	<b>1.61</b>

Source; secondary data from the field

The findings further revealed very low adherence to environmental sustainability in the Ministry of Health projects in Bunyoro Sub region with a mean of 1.63 which was considered very low, this could explain why one project in Buliisa sub-merged in waters of Lake Albert.



Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high

Figure 6: Environmental Sustainability

### Relationship between Construction Management Practices and Procurement Standards

Objective three of the study was to establish the relationship between construction management practices and procurement standards in the upgrade of health centers Ministry health Bunyoro sub region construction projects. The objective was analysed using Pearson’s correlation.

Table 7: Construction Management Practices and Procurement Standards

Description	Measure
Pearson Correlation (r)	0.489**
P-Value	.0058

Coefficient of determination	0.176
N	99
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).	

Source: Primary data (2022)

Table 7 indicates that there is a weak positive relationship between construction management practices and procurement standards with ( $r = 0.0489$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Muhwezi *et al.*, (2020) covered effectiveness in procurement and suggested all procures should be followed to dot if results are to be seen. This paper in its findings suggests that if construction management practices improved, procurement standards will equally improve in the upgrade of health centre construction projects in Bunyoro Sub region. Coefficient of determination also shows a significant positive relationship of 0.176. The value of  $= 0.176$  implies that construction management practices accounts for 17.6% of the variation in the procurement standards in Ministry of health projects in Bunyoro sub-region. Therefore 82.4% of the variation procurement standards can be explained by other factors not covered by this paper.

**Table 8: Competitiveness**

Particulars	Mean
Was the contractor sourced by the centre or local authority	3.00
Was the right procurement method used to source the contractor?	2.00
Were the successful and un successful bidders notified	1.00
Was bid opening done as per schedule	1.67
Was the right procurement method used to source the contractor?	1.00
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>	<b>1.60</b>

Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high.

**Table 9: Effectiveness**

Particulars	Mean
Are certificates of completion been issued	1.67
Were the projects completed within the budget cost?	1
Were the projects completed within the time schedule	1
Was supervision and monitoring done promptly by Ministry and Local authority	2.33
Were the site meetings held often as per schedule	2
Was due diligence conducted before award of the contract	2.33
Project schedule	3
Were the projects completed within the time schedule	1
Quality assurance plan	1
Risk management plan	1
Were the monitoring tools available for supervision?	1
Were the building plans have sufficient information necessary to execute the projects	2
Has the project been commissioned	3
Did the launch of the project take place before commencement	3
Was the commencement order issued	3

Did contract agreement signing take place before launching	2
Aggregate mean	1.9
Aggregate Mean	1.64

Source; secondary data from the field

Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high.

Table 10: Environmental Sustainability

Particulars	Mean
Was environmental impact assessment carried out	1.82
Was the environmental management plan in place	1.76
<b>Aggregate mean</b>	<b>1.68</b>

Legend: 1.00 -1.75= very low, 1.76-2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.25 = High 3.26 – 4.00= Very high.

It was found that in Masindi, Bulisa and Hoima, the contractor was sourced by both the center and the local authority, evidenced with a mean of 3.0 in Table 8. The right procurement method was not used to source the contractor; this had been already revealed by the overall low grand mean of 1.64. Therefore, both the competitiveness, effectiveness, and environmental sustainability was not achieved in time in both sites as evidenced with low mean of 1.6, 1.64 and 1.68 respectively.

Bassa *et al.*, (2019) indicates when designs are not followed the final product presents irregular results, this paper found out there was lack of consistency, the project implementation plan did not cater for the Project schedule, Quality assurance plan, and Risk management plan evidence low performance Abdulkareem *et al.*, (2020) suggest if proper project planning was done the above would have been achieved. In Hoima and Masindi, environmental impact assessment was carried out while in Bulisa there was no evidence that could have resulted to why the building submerged in water as well as evidenced with low environmental sustainability aggregate mean of 1.68. Ekins *et al.*, (2021) environmental sustainability can produce tremendous results if proper consideration is given, this can easily be witnessed by low mean which was obtained when insufficient consideration was not given in the results of this paper. In both the three districts, monitoring tools were not available for supervision, the building plans had insufficient information necessary to execute the projects, some of the projects that were completed were not within the time schedule, in both districts, the projects were not completed within the budget, the environmental management plan was not in place, the projects had not been commissioned, bid opening was done as per schedule, the contractor accepted the offer, the commencement order was issued, the contract agreement signing took place before launching, the payments to contractor did not come in time, contract planning was done well but it was equally dependent on other factors which eventually affected the overall performance. Zain *et al.*, (2021) discovered that a single success of an element amongst many of them may not lead to the overall performance as it appeared in the results of this research paper.

## Conclusion

The focus was on construction management practices and procurement standards in the upgrade of health Centres in Bunyoro Sub-Region, to examine the influence of construction management practices in the upgrade of health centres in Bunyoro sub-region, to determine the influence of procurement standards in the upgrade of health centres in Bunyoro sub-region, establishing the relationship between construction management practices and procurement standards in the upgrade of health centres in Bunyoro sub-region and to analyze the acquired data. A high level of contract planning and procurement standards with

aggregate mean 3.17 was achieved this suggested that contract planning and procurement standards influenced the upgrade of health centre construction projects in Bunyoro sub-region whereas contract implementation and procurement standards aggregate mean 1.83 and contract monitoring and procurement standards with aggregate mean 2.15 indicted a low level of performance. We found out a weak positive relationship between construction management practices and procurement standards in the upgrade of health centers by Ministry of Health in Bunyoro sub region with ( $r = 0.489$ ,  $p = 0.0000 < 0.05$ ). Government under the ministry of Health should monitor and take corrective actions on all the projects of upgrading the health centers in Bunyoro sub-region, the procurement standards should be followed to the latter to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and environmental standards are achieved

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