

Headteachers Induction on Public Procurement Regulations and their Implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the influence of Headteachers induction on public procurement regulations and their implementation in public secondary schools in Migwani District, Kenya. The study objective sought to determine whether the information provided during the induction on public procurement regulations was sufficient enough to influence headteachers' effective implementation of public procurement regulations in their schools. This study is based on Social and Economic Organization theory (bureaucracy) by Max Weber (Max 1947). The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The target population consisted of 29 public secondary schools which consisted of headteachers. Two public secondary schools out of the 29 public secondary schools were used for pilot study. The sample size was 27 public secondary schools. Census was used to select a sample of 27 headteachers. The study used questionnaires as a tool for data collection. The instrument validity was tested by a pilot study. A test-retest technique was used to ascertain instrument reliability. From the findings, it was found that at least thirty-four-point eight percent (34.8%) of the headteachers which was below average said that the information given during induction training was sufficient while majority of the headteachers which was sixty-two-point two percent said that the information given during induction was not sufficient. The study concluded that comprehensive induction programs are essential for preparing headteachers to implement public procurement regulations. The study recommended that Headteachers in public secondary schools should be inducted immediately after appointment to headship positions.

INTRODUCTION

Public procurement is a vital component of government operations worldwide. They enable the acquisition of goods, services, and infrastructure necessary for the delivery of public services. Effective public procurement systems are essential for promoting transparency, ensuring accountability and maximizing value for money in the use of public resources (World Bank, 2016). The implementation of robust procurement regulations is crucial for preventing corruption, fostering fair competition, and improving the efficiency of public expenditure (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019).

Induction programs serve as a critical entry point for headteachers. They provide them with the foundational knowledge required to manage school operations. These include being well versed with procurement processes. Effective induction is essential for ensuring that headteachers are well-prepared to implement public procurement regulations. This involves detailed procedures and compliance requirements (Mukasa, 2016). Inadequate training during induction can lead to significant challenges, such as non-compliance with procurement laws, mismanagement of funds, and overall inefficiency in the use of public resources (Musa, 2018).

The induction of headteachers on public procurement regulations in Kenya underscores a critical step in enhancing governance within the educational sector. Headteachers are the key managers of school resources. They play a pivotal role in the procurement process at the institutional level. Training these educational leaders in procurement regulations aligns with broader governance reforms and international best practices, which emphasize capacity building as a means to improve public sector management (OECD, 2019).

Globally, many countries face similar challenges in implementing public procurement regulations. This is

particularly so in sectors like education, where resources are often decentralized to local institutions (Transparency International, 2020). Issues such as limited institutional capacity, lack of awareness and resistance to change are common barriers. However, empowering local leaders, including headteachers, through targeted training can significantly enhance the implementation of procurement regulations. This ensures that public funds are used effectively and ethically (Transparency International, 2020).

Regionally, the induction of headteachers on public procurement regulations, is highly relevant to the South African context. In South Africa, schools are often decentralized. They are often managed at the provincial or even local level, with headteachers playing a key role in the administration of school funds, including procurement activities. However, the lack of proper training and understanding of procurement laws among school leaders has sometimes led to mismanagement of funds, procurement irregularities, and even corruption (Department of Basic Education, 2020).

To address these issues, South Africa has increasingly recognized the importance of capacity building among public officials, including headteachers. Initiatives aimed at training school administrators in procurement practices have been launched in various provinces. They focus on improving compliance with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), which govern public procurement at different levels of government (National Treasury, 2021).

The focus on training headteachers in South Africa is part of a broader strategy to enhance governance in the education sector. By ensuring that school leaders are well-versed in procurement regulations, the government aims to reduce instances of financial mismanagement and corruption, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of resource use in schools (Department of Basic Education, 2020). This approach also aligns with South Africa's broader public sector reforms, which emphasize the importance of accountability, transparency, and the responsible management of public resources.

In the East African region, public procurement has increasingly become a focal point of governance reforms. Many countries within the East African Region have been striving to enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency in the use of public funds. The East African Community (EAC) has recognized the significance of harmonizing public procurement systems across member states. They aim at promoting regional integration and economic development through improved governance practices (EAC, 2020).

Kenya has taken notable strides in reforming its public procurement system, particularly within the education sector. The induction of headteachers on public procurement regulations is part of a broader effort by the Kenyan government to decentralize procurement responsibilities while ensuring that local education leaders are well-equipped to manage these processes effectively. This initiative is reflective of a growing regional trend where countries are increasingly focusing on capacity building at the local level to improve the implementation of public procurement laws (African Development Bank, 2019).

Kenya's approach aligns with efforts seen in neighboring countries, such as Uganda and Tanzania, where public procurement reforms have similarly emphasized the importance of training and empowering local officials. For instance, Uganda has made significant progress in implementing e-procurement systems, which are designed to enhance transparency and reduce corruption. Similarly, Tanzania has focused on training public officials at the district level to improve compliance with procurement regulations (Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, 2019).

Public procurement in Kenya is governed by the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act (PPADA) of 2015. It outlines the legal framework for the procurement of goods, services, and works by public entities. The Act emphasizes principles of fairness, transparency, and competition, with a particular focus on preventing corruption and ensuring value for money (National Treasury, 2021). Within the education sector, headteachers are often tasked with implementing these regulations at the school level, making their understanding and application of the law crucial for effective governance (Wambua, 2020).

The induction of headteachers in Kenya is particularly significant in the context of the country's education sector. This is because the management of resources is crucial for achieving educational outcomes. Schools in Kenya

often face challenges related to the mismanagement of funds and procurement inefficiencies. This can hinder the delivery of quality education. By providing headteachers with the necessary knowledge and tools to navigate public procurement regulations, Kenya is addressing a critical gap in the governance of its education sector, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes and more effective use of public resources (National Treasury, 2021). This initiative also reflects a broader regional recognition that improving public procurement practices is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to education, good governance, and institutional capacity. As countries in East Africa continue to reform their procurement systems, Kenya's experience in training headteachers could serve as a valuable model for similar initiatives across the region.

The initiative in Kenya to induct headteachers on public procurement regulations is part of a broader global trend toward strengthening governance in public procurement. It highlights the importance of integrating procurement education into the professional development of public sector leaders. By equipping headteachers with the necessary skills to manage procurement processes, Kenya is not only improving governance within its education sector but also contributing to the global effort to enhance public sector accountability and transparency (World Bank, 2016).

Statement of the problem

The implementation of public procurement regulations within the education sector in Kenya is crucial for ensuring transparency, accountability, and the effective use of resources. However, there is a concern that the induction programs designed for headteachers may not be adequately preparing them to fully understand and apply these regulations. The effectiveness of headteachers in implementing public procurement regulations in Migwani District is of particular concern. This is due to the region's socio-economic challenges and limited access to resources. According to Wambua (2020) headteachers in rural districts like Migwani often face additional barriers, such as a lack of continuous professional development opportunities and minimal support from higher authorities. This context makes the adequacy of induction programs even more critical, as headteachers in these areas must be well-prepared to navigate procurement challenges with limited external assistance. This potential gap in training could lead to issues such as non-compliance, mismanagement of funds, and inefficiencies in procurement processes within schools. This study was carried to investigate the adequacy of the induction process and its impact on the effective implementation of public procurement regulations by headteachers in Kenyan schools.

Study objective

This study was guided by the following study objective;

To determine whether the information provided during the induction on public procurement regulations was sufficient enough to influence for headteachers effective implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools in Migwani District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public procurement is a fundamental aspect of governance. It is crucial for the effective delivery of public services and the management of public resources. Globally, governments have recognized the importance of establishing robust procurement systems to enhance transparency, accountability, and value for money (World Bank, 2016). The education sector is a significant recipient of public funds and is no exception. Headteachers, as key administrators within schools, play a vital role in ensuring that procurement activities are conducted in line with established regulations. The effectiveness of these activities is closely tied to the quality of training and induction that headteachers receive (OECD, 2019).

Across the world, the induction and continuous professional development of public sector officials, including school administrators, have been identified as critical to the successful implementation of procurement regulations. The World Bank (2016) emphasizes that training programs aimed at enhancing the procurement capacities of public officials are essential for minimizing corruption and inefficiencies in public spending. In

many countries, especially in the Global South, capacity-building initiatives have been increasingly prioritized as part of broader public sector reforms (Ameyaw et al., 2012).

Thus, the implementation of public procurement regulations in educational institutions is a critical aspect of ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective use of public resources. In many developing countries, Kenya included, the management of public funds within the education sector often falls on the shoulders of headteachers, who play a pivotal role in overseeing procurement activities at the school level. The effectiveness of this oversight is largely dependent on the adequacy of training provided during their induction, which aims to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate complex procurement regulations (Ameyaw et al., 2012).

Studies have shown that the success of public procurement in schools is heavily reliant on the capacity of headteachers to understand and apply procurement laws. Ameyaw et al. (2012) highlighted that in many African countries, the lack of proper training for school administrators has resulted in widespread procurement challenges, including delays, inflated costs, and corrupt practices. This underscores the need for comprehensive induction programs that not only cover the legal aspects of procurement but also practical guidelines on how to execute these regulations effectively.

Researches have pointed out the challenges associated with implementation of public procurement regulations in Kenya. Wambua (2020) noted that in many rural districts of Kenya, including Migwani, headteachers often receive limited training on public procurement regulations. This limitation is compounded by factors such as inadequate resources, lack of access to updated training materials and insufficient follow-up support, which collectively hinder the effectiveness of the induction process.

Musa (2018) found that even when induction programs are available, they may not adequately address the specific needs of headteachers. This is particularly so in terms of practical application of procurement laws in real-world scenarios. The study highlighted that many headteachers struggle with the technical aspects of procurement, such as tendering processes and contract management, due to the insufficient depth of training provided during induction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive survey design. The design typically involves the use of structured questionnaires or interviews to collect data, which can then be analyzed to identify patterns, trends, or correlations within the population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). This study targeted twenty-nine (29) public secondary school headteachers in secondary school within Migwani District which had been registered with the Ministry of Education. A sample of 27 headteacher was selected. Mulusa (1990) states that in small population of thirty (30) cases or less it is possible to leave out one or two cases which would not make much difference to the resources and time. Hence in this study twenty-seven (27) schools were chosen using census since the population is minimal. The study used a questionnaire as a tool for data collection. Instrument validity was enhanced by ensuring that the tools were content valid. Expert opinion was also enhanced through the involvement of the researcher's supervisors, as experts, who helped to assess the validity of the instruments. Instrument validity was also enhanced during a pilot study which was conducted within schools which did not participate in the main study. The study used test-retest technique to ascertain instrument reliability. This was done by administering the same instrument twice to the same group of respondents after which a time lapse of one week between the first and the second test was allowed. The scores from both testing periods were then correlated using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient formula. Data analysis of responses from open ended items and closed ended items was analysed and presented using frequency distribution tables Qualitative data generated from open ended questions was categorised based on themes according to the research objectives and reported in a narrative form.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This study sought to establish whether the information provided during induction training was sufficient enough

to influence the implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools. The findings are as indicated in table 1

Table 1: Establishment of whether information given during induction was sufficient

	Frequency	percent
Sufficient	8	34.8
Not sufficient	15	65.2
	23	100.00

The findings in table 1 indicated that at least thirty four point eight percent (34.8%) of the headteachers said that the information given during induction was sufficient while majority of the headteachers which was sixty two point two percent indicated that the information given was not sufficient.

The study then sought to establish whether the headteachers had attended any in-service course after induction. The responses from open ended questions indicated that most of the headteachers said that they had attended an in-service course and the course took them two weeks. The course was supposed to sensitize them on public procurement regulations.

The study also sought to establish whether the course had an impact on implementation of public procurement regulations. The responses from open ended items as given by some respondents indicated that the courses created awareness on the procedures to be followed when implementing public procurement regulations. Other respondents said that they were able to identify and follow the laid down procedures. They also said that they were assisted to comply with laid down procedures and also provided with enough information on how to form the various committees charged with procurement roles and how to make them operational.

Discussion of research results

This study found in table 1 that at least 34.8% of the headteachers said that the information was sufficient. However, majority of the headteachers 62.2% indicated that the information given was not sufficient. This implies that although inducted, the information given during induction was not sufficient and this could impact on effective implementation of the public procurement regulations either positively or negatively. The adverse effects of non-exposure to public procurement regulations could translate to single sourcing for goods and services hence compromising the credibility of public procurement regulations.

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These findings concurs with Ng'ang'a, (2016) who noted *that* Professional development and training continue to be critical for educational administrators to stay current with trends and changes in education.

Ngari and Wambugu (2020) emphasizes on the importance of comprehensive induction programs for headteachers and educational administrators, particularly with regard to procurement and governance. They argue that headteachers require training not only in the legal aspects of procurement but also in practical implementation strategies.

These finding also concurs with Mugo and Njuguna (2017) who noted that training continues to be recognized as essential for the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for school leadership. They also assert that headteacher training enhances task accomplishment and improves overall school performance. Owino and Gikandi (2021) concur by saying that the need for headteachers and educational leaders to possess three critical skills—technical, human, and conceptual—remains relevant in modern leadership theory. They confirm that headteachers need these skills to navigate the complexities of school administration effectively. Therefore, Secondary school headteachers need to involve various groups of people in decision making especially the ad hoc tender committees in order to improve efficiency in distribution of learning materials and provision of facilities. The procurement of goods and services in schools should ensure acquisition of school facilities and resources in a competitive manner. Since some headteachers had attended in-service courses on implementation of public procurement regulations, they were supposed to induct the teachers in their respective schools when appointed in respective ad hoc committee to undertake procurement roles.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that induction programs are essential for preparing headteachers to implement public procurement regulations. However, there are significant gaps in the training provided, particularly in rural areas like Migwani District. These gaps can lead to issues such as non-compliance, inefficiencies, and potential misuse of public funds. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that the current induction programs are sufficient to equip headteachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively manage procurement processes in their schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that Headteachers in public secondary schools should be inducted immediately after appointment to headship positions. Induction period for all those involved in procurement roles to be extended in order to enhance the coverage of what is required in procurement regulations.

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