

# Internal Factors affecting Procurement Practices in Public Secondary Schools in Bungoma County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** This study was set to investigate the internal factors that influence procurement procedures in public secondary schools in Bungoma County. The study was guided by the following specific objective; to establish the effect ICT adoption on procurement process in public secondary schools in Bungoma County. The study was guided by the path goal leadership theory which postulates that. The theory is based on the premise that an employee's perception of expectancies between his effort and performance is greatly affected by a leader's behavior. The leaders helped group members in attaining rewards by clarifying the paths to goals and removing obstacles to performance. The study employed a descriptive research design. The target population was 62 schools which is 30% of 206 public secondary schools in the County. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires and interview schedules and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study was significant in the sense that, it has provided information that may enhance sound procurement procedures in public institutions and particularly secondary schools. This study was also added to the existing reservoir of knowledge in the area of public procurement.

**Keywords:** Public Secondary Schools, Procurement Practices, procurement process, Bungoma County.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that in order to compete and survive, Lloyd (2004) defines procurement methods and procedures as the guidelines for or means of acquisition of appropriate goods and/or services at the best possible cost to meet the needs of the organization in terms of quality, quantity, time, and location. Thus, procurement methods and procedures must be appropriate to prevailing circumstances. According to Erridge, Fee, and McIlroy (2001) every organization that purchases goods or services must have effective standard procurement procedures, the methods they use to acquire those things required for an organization to provide goods/services to its clients. These procedures should cover all aspects of the procurement cycle, including the selection of the supplier, contract negotiations, order placement and payment and should ensure appropriate service delivery. Procurement is a very important part of efficient management of resource and is it critical for all levels of academic institutions. Public procurement is meant to buy and produce goods and services that should benefit citizens directly or indirectly. However the advent of corruption in public contracting leads to distortion of fair competition, waste of scarce resources and neglect of basic needs and services, perpetuating poverty. The value of the procurement contracts coupled with obscure procurement procedures for award of contracts, is conducive for corruption to thrive. Indeed, procurement is the main contributor to corruption in the whole world. Thus, practices such as the award of contracts or tenders on the basis of political, economic or social connections and bribery have been reported throughout the world. One of the basic rules of procurement is that in the end, it is important to think in terms of the total cost of ownership. This includes not only the purchase price, but also time and resources that are expended in the pursuit of the ownership. By understanding the steps involved with procurement, it is possible to get a better understanding of the real cost involved with attaining any good or service Edler & Georghiou, (2007) Many public procurement activities suffer

from neglect, lack of direction, poor co-ordination, lack of open competition and transparency, differing levels of corruption and most importantly not having a cadre of trained and qualified procurement specialists, who are competent to conduct and manage such procurements, in a professional, timely and cost effective manner. Inflexible and bureaucratic systems of procurement contribute to unacceptable contract delays, increased costs and the potential for manipulation. Contract awards and lack of fair competition, all of which create the perception in the population at large, that public expenditure is slow, ineffective, expensive and often corrupt. Kabaj (2003) observes that an efficient public procurement system is vital to the advancement of African countries and is a concrete expression of their national commitments to making the best possible use of public resources. On the other hand, Kakwezi and Nyeko (2010) argues that the procurement departments of public entities in Uganda are faced with the problem of not having enough information about the procurement procedure, its inputs, outputs, resource consumption and results, and are therefore unable to determine their efficiency and effectiveness. This implies that such a problem requires establishment of clear procurement procedures and performance standards. Ngatara and Ayuma (2016) admit that the evaluation or measurement of procurement performance remains a major challenge for procurement departments. He asserts that, firms concentrate on analyzing their own internal trends and in the process fail to portray the true picture of how rate in terms of performance. Information is critical to an effective and efficient procurement process, on the other hand financing is the engine that drives it. In the case of Kenya for example, ensuring adequate financing for the procurement of pharmaceuticals remains an important part of medicines procurement. Pharmacists involved in hospital procurement of medicines, whether directly or indirectly, must be knowledgeable about medicines as well as the interacting issues and the many stakeholders who can potentially affect the process or who may have legal responsibility. Public procurement has, for long, been overshadowed with inefficiency, corruption and disregard of fundamental “value for money” considerations. This has adversely impacted the rate and quality of progress in realizing the objectives of national development, especially in developing and transition countries. Transparent management is another concept, which is closely related to accountability and Kenya leaves a lot to be desired in this facet. The idea behind transparency is that by actively disclosing information on how decisions are made, as well as measures of performance, we can improve public deliberation, reinforce accountability and inform citizen choice. In addition, transparency helps to document and disseminate information on the scope and consequences of corruption, information which can help build support for anti-corruption programmes and target enforcement efforts. It was in the light of postulations that the researcher intendeds to critically examine the factors that influence the procurement procedures in public secondary schools.

### ***Statement of the problem***

The importance of sound financial management in public institutions has become the concern of every stakeholder. Kabaj (2003) argued that the failure to pay adequate attention to the proper management of public resources and the importance of establishing regulatory frameworks as a means of enhancing investor confidence were the major culprits, in addition to the devastating effects of bribery and corruption on the productive use of resources. Despite government concentrated efforts in reforming procurement systems, there is still problems attributable to huge losses in improper procurement to the tune of Kshs 30 billion and public procurement therefore requires a tight or water proof system to be followed and adopted. Market dynamics have created challenges for many public organizations and some of the key challenges affecting public organizations include the emergence of the global economy advancement in the technology, increased societal demands, organizational scrutiny by pressure groups and more so the heightened media attention that is critical of government inefficiencies in service delivery. Public procurement systems are central to the effectiveness of development expenditure. Budgets get translated into services largely through the governments’ purchases of goods, services and works. The education sector has been facing problems in its dealings with the public institution in that the tendering process has failed to uphold the provisions of the procurement process. Furthermore, there has been increasing awareness of the need to empower procurement personnel in all public institutions with the necessary skills and knowledge required for them to carry out procurement in the most effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way. However, despite all the efforts and availability of the necessary skills most Kenyan schools have been having challenges in the area of procurement. This study aimed at evaluating the internal factors that affect procurement process in public secondary schools in Bungoma County.

### ***General objective***

The general objective of the study was to analyze the internal factors affecting procurement processes in public secondary schools in Bungoma County.

### *Specific objectives*

To establish the effect ICT adoption on procurement process in public secondary schools in Bungoma County.

### *Research Question*

What is the role ICT adoption on procurement processes in public secondary schools in Bungoma County?

## **2. ICT ADOPTION**

Government officials and elected leaders have increasingly come to realize that public agencies must utilize ICT in order to enhance the procurement processes in the public sector. Faced with tight budgets and a retiring workforce, today's government agencies are operating in an environment defined by the need to 'do more with less'. Public authorities are expected to provide excellent service to their constituents in an effective and transparent manner, all the while working under constant resource constraints by adopting ICT. In order to meet today's operating challenges, regional and local governments are turning to ICT to enhance the services for residents, businesses and visitors, and improve internal efficiencies by lowering costs and increasing productivity. Public authorities are implementing scalable communication infrastructures to promote economic development, attract new businesses and residents, and above all, provide excellent service to constituents (Contini & Lanzara, 2009). From a business perspective, implementing scalable communication infrastructures such as wide area networks (WANs) accommodates the various types of services government agencies require on a day to day basis, including provision of broadband internet access for online services and internal collaboration, handling administrative data.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a case study research design to investigate on the internal factors affecting the procurement process in public secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. The case study design was preferred because it involved in-depth study and detailed description of a single entity, situation or phenomenon or a small group. A case study involved manipulation of the variables or the subjects and describing the outcome. The research was suitable for the study because the researcher was interested in establishing and analyzing the effects of internal processes on the procurement processes in public secondary schools in Bungoma County. The findings of the study were general to large population. The study was mainly quantitative but only quantitative approaches were sought to clarify certain aspects of the phenomena. For instance, the effects of ICT adoption on procurement processes in public secondary schools in Bungoma County in relation to classes of institutions as level of education. The study was conducted in Bungoma County targeting Principals, Deputy Principals and bursars in public secondary schools and the county education audit officer as its population. 62 public secondary schools were selected from a population of 206 Public secondary schools. The study was concerned with public secondary schools in Bungoma County in of Western region of Kenya. The researcher found simple random sampling the ideal method to use as it gave every unit an equal probability of being selected to in the population. The researcher selected 62 schools which is 30% of 206 public secondary schools in the County. A total of 62 bursars and 62 deputy principals were purposively factored into the sample observe a sample of 30% is representative of the population to be studied constitutes a sample.

### *Data Collection Methods*

The data collection instrument was questionnaires. The questionnaires were more efficient, less expensive and did not require official permit for collection of data from a sample. Questionnaires were also of particular importance in collecting information about a population in the fields of education and social sciences. They were used to collect information that was not directly observable since they, among other things, enquire about feelings, motivation, attitude, accomplishment, as well as an individual's experiences. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were used. Primary source included information from the principals, deputy principals, and the bursars while the secondary sources included information from documented records from different offices.

### *Data Analysis and reporting*

The data collected in this study was qualitative and to a small extent quantitative. The raw data was categorized through coding and tabulation. Editing was done to improve the quality of data coding. Descriptive statistics was used. Descriptive statistics included the use of frequency tables, percentages, means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics used particularly where the Likert scale was involved.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### ICT adoption

Adoption of ICT varies among different officers in different centres with different work experience. Those principals with the work experience of 6-15 years tend to impress the idea of ICT adoption in procurement processes as shown in Figure as they have a frequency of almost 12.5 amongst them

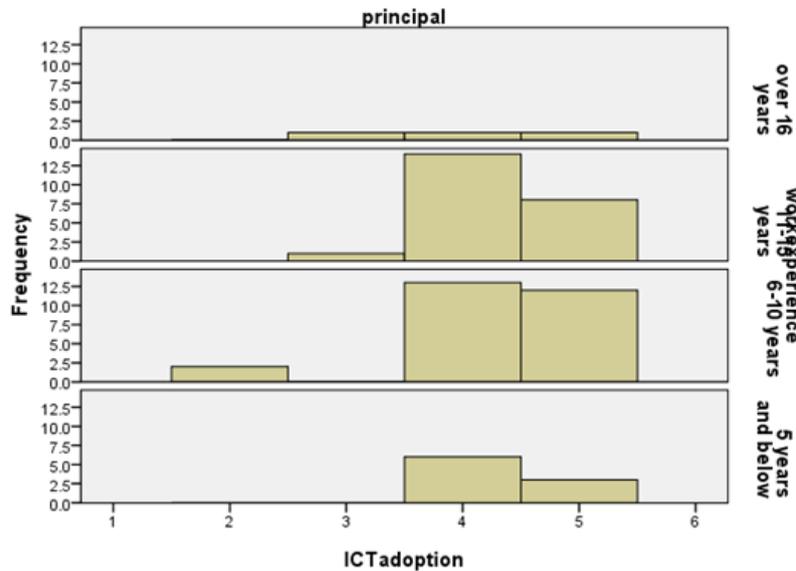


Figure 1: Principals view on ICT adoption

Deputy principals tend to almost unconditionally impress the ICT adoption in procurement processes. These could be due to the fact that they would like to do every procurement process over board as they are chairmen in their respective schools for tendering committees. This is shown in Figure as the frequency ranges up to almost 30 respondents either agree or strongly agree. Their work experience ranges from 6-10 years as they (deputies) rarely spent more than 10 years in the same position

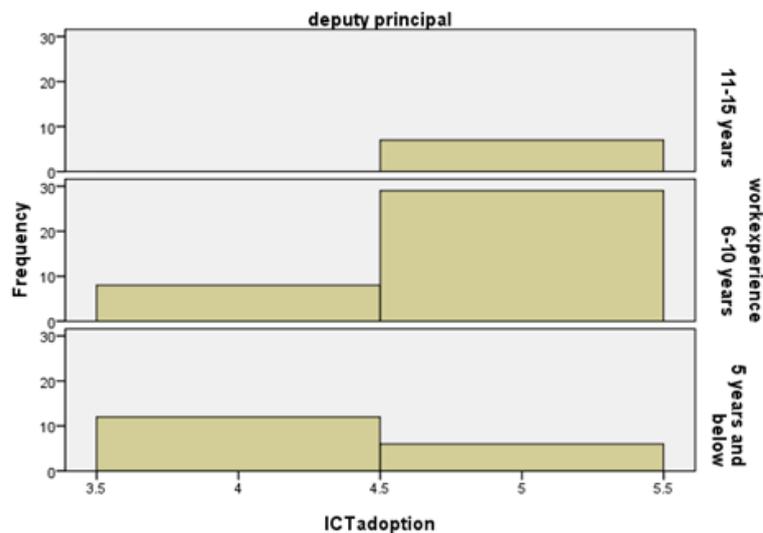
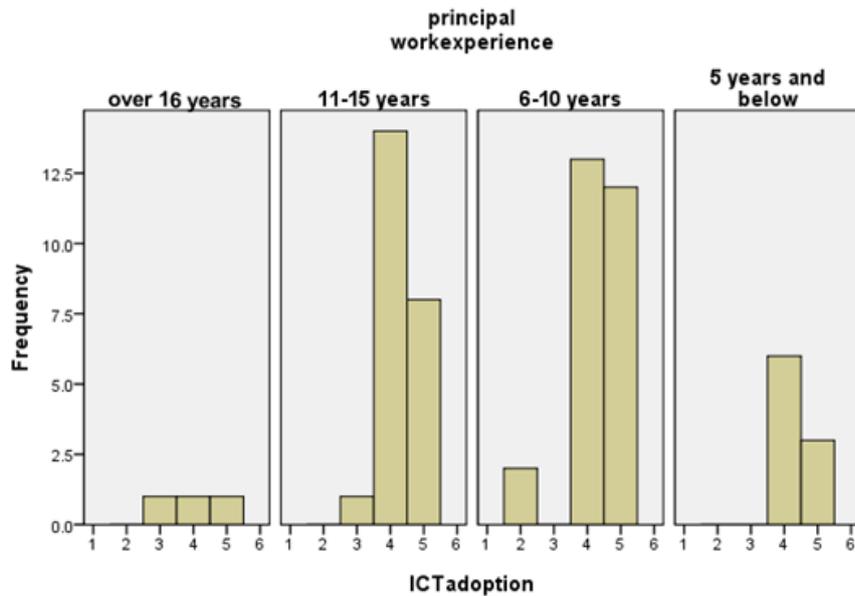


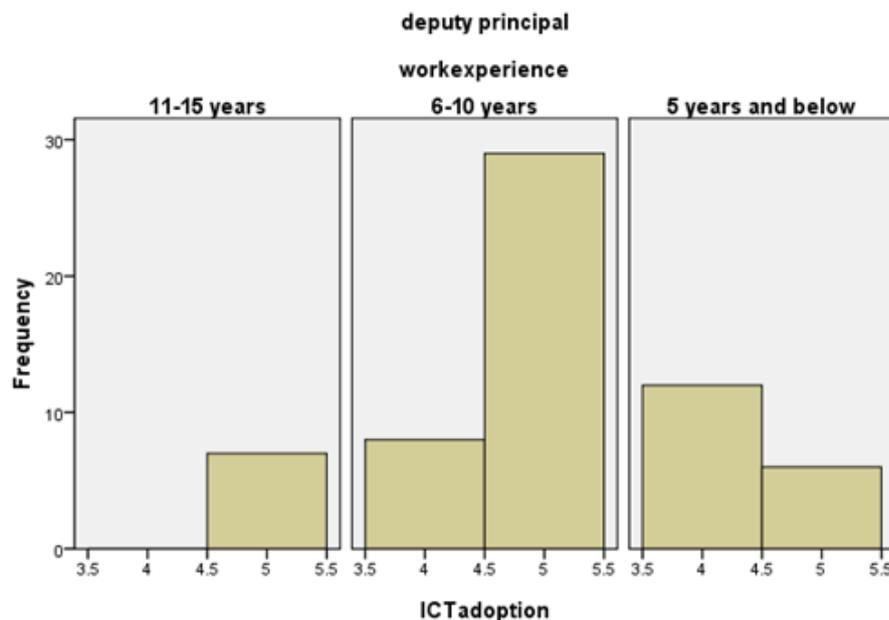
Figure 2: Deputy Principals stake on ICT adoption

Bursars likewise impress ICT adoption depending on their work experience. Those who have worked for more than 11 years believe that ICT improves procurement processes in their respective schools while those with less work experience tend to resist the adoption of ICT in procurement processes.



**Figure 3. Principals experience with ICT adoption**

Officers, principal with different work experience to resist the general adoption of ICT in procurement. These officers either strongly disagree or agree altogether. This could be due to the fear of the ICT exposes the perceived thus that are committed in the procurement processes



**Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.: Deputy Principals experience with ICT adoption**

Deputy Principals with different work experience also see the adoption of ICT in an issue that is not necessary. This could lead to the concept of the general phobia that ICT will enhance transparency hence the marked resistance. This leaves the adoption of ICT in procurement in a delicate position hence the respective chairman of different institutions have openly resisted its adoption. Most of the bursars in secondary schools are of 11-15 years of work experience. These impress the adoption of ICT in procurement process in their respective schools. On the other hand, young officers in the cadre seem to resist the adoption of ICT in their respective institutions. ICT adoption varies among principals who have attained different levels of education. Those with a basic degree tend to impress ICT adoption as they either strongly agree or simply agree compared to those who have college training. Mark you, majority of these principals fall in this category of graduate degree holders. The trend is also strongly held by their deputies who also seem to process graduate qualifications as they also strongly support the adoption of ICT in procurement processes. The bulk of bursars have college level of

education and they are seen to agree to impress ICT adoption in procurement. Those with higher level of qualifications are seen to resist the adoption of ICT in procurement in schools. This could be due to their desire to hide malpractices that they are involved in during procurement of goods and services in schools. Principals in sub-county schools seem to impress the adoption of ICT in procurement of goods and services in schools In Bungoma County. This is almost 50% of the principals which may be driven by the low level of resources which are supposed to be managed adequately without misappropriation. While these in county and National Schools tend to be reluctant to adopt ICT all together. The trend is the same among their deputies and bursars in their respective schools. Different classes or institution have different perceptions about ICT adoption in procurement. National schools tend to agree with adoption of ICT in procurement. This could be due to the caliber of the parents that they interact with who are well versed with procurement procedures. Those county and sub county schools are unwilling to adopt ICT in their respective stations'. All in all, the adoption of ICT in secondary schools in Bungoma County is the backbone of procurement and responsible resource management priority. That ICT adoption in procurement will improve efficiency and curb wastage in terms of misappropriation of few available resources.

### ***ICT and cost of procurement***

Majority of the principals with graduate level of education agree that ICT adoption affects the cost of procurement that more than 50% of these principals feel that the adoption of ICT lowers the cost of procurement as this will reduce the paper work that in most cases consume some considerable amount of money. These is also the trend for their deputies and bursars who have at least acquired college education.

## **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The objective was to establish the effect of ICT adoption on procurement processes in Bungoma County and the findings largely indicated that the ICT adoption greatly affects the procurement processes in public secondary schools in Bungoma County. The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study: The analysis of study that ICT adoption in public secondary schools in Bungoma County is long overdue as it had a percentage rate of 92% of all the respondents who answered the questionnaires. It was also established that most of the respondent seem to fear the adoption of ICT in procurement in public secondary school. This is at the rate of 70% of the respondent who resist the adoption of ICT again 30% who impress ICT adoption. The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study: ICT adoption has an extremely big effect on procurement processes in public secondary schools that ICT has drastically improved procurement processes hence the need to introduce and uphold electronic procurement in secondary schools to it more effective and efficient.

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