



INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN WEST NILE SUB-REGION OF UGANDA

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Abstract:

The study aimed to establish how institutional culture affects performance in public procurement in tertiary institutions in West Nile sub-region of Uganda. A cross-sectional study design was used. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted in the study. This study targeted a sample of 122 respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to select amongst the user departments' staff. Purposive sampling was used to select the Accounting Officers and Contract Committee members. Quantitative data analysis mainly consisted of descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Spearman Rank Order Correlation). Findings revealed that there was a moderate positive correlation ($r_{ho} = .474$) between institutional culture and procurement performance. Thus, it was concluded that institutional culture significantly affected performance in public procurement in tertiary institutions in West Nile sub-region of Uganda. It is recommended that tertiary institutions in West Nile Sub-region of Uganda should focus on institutional culture to improve performance in public procurement.

Keywords: institutional culture, public procurement and performance

1. Introduction

This study investigated institutional culture and public procurement performance in tertiary institutions in West Nile sub-region of Uganda. This section presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of

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the study, research hypothesis, and significance of the study, justification of the study and scope of the study.

2. Background to the Study

Public procurement has a long history. Written on a red clay tablet, found in Syria, the earliest procurement order dates from between 2800 and 2400 BC. The order was for “50 jars of fragrant smooth oil for 600 small weight in grain” (Coe, 1989, p. 87). Other evidence of historical procurement includes the development of the silk trade between China and a Greek colony in 800 BC.

In the United States, according to Page (1980) as cited in Scott (2008), government procurement at the municipal level predates that of state and federal governments. In the settlements and colonies, printing was one of a few services contracted out by government. However, there were no professional procurement officials, the practice of procurement being older than the discipline. Goods and services needed by government were supplied by commissioners or commissaries who received a commission on what they bought for the militia or other administrative units. It was not until the late 1800s that state legislatures began to create boards or bureaus responsible for purchasing, but central purchasing was hardly a practice at that time. In 1810, Oklahoma was the first state government to create a board to procure centrally for all state departments and agencies (Page, 1980). Many local governments soon followed Oklahoma’s example, according to Arthur Thomas (1919) as cited in Scott (2008).

Since then, centralized purchasing has gradually become common in state and local governments. However, the centralization trend has been challenged in recent years. Many practitioners and researchers have contended that purchasing authority, especially in government, must be decentralized in order to provide support that is more responsive to end users, eliminate bureaucratic obstacles to programme accomplishment, improve inter-departmental coordination, and empower service delivery managers to procure what they need without impediment by a centralized organization.

In addition to centralized purchasing, there was movement toward adopting a uniform government procurement code. The American Law Institute and the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, with the endorsement of the American Bar Association, promulgated the “Uniform Commercial Code” (UCC) and completed it in the fall of 1951. Pennsylvania was the first state to enact the UCC; and by 1980, all states except Louisiana had adopted most provisions of the Uniform Code (Page, 1980). In 1979, the American Bar Association (ABA) issued The Model

Procurement Code “*after five years of intensive effort directed by a Coordinating Committee on a Model Procurement Code*” (American Bar Association, 2000, p. 101). In 2000, the ABA updated this publication and issued The 2000 Model Procurement Code for States and Local Governments.

At the federal level, the first purchasing action occurred in 1778 when the Continental Congress approved the appointment of purchasing commissionaires, whose purchasing work was compensated by two percent of the value of their disbursements in support of the Continental army. However, by the end of the year, as this arrangement led to excessive costs and possibilities of fraud, the purchasing officers were placed on salary. In 1792, the US Congress passed a purchasing-related Act that authorized the departments of War and Treasury to make purchases in the name of the United States. The first significant procurement, made in 1794, was for a group of six large frigates for the new US Navy. However, bad early experiences with this procurement procedure led to the 1795 passage of the first comprehensive procurement legislation, the Purveyor of Public Supplies Act, which became the basis for military procurement. Misconduct and abuses in federal procurement again led to an Act Concerning Public Contracts of 1808, prohibiting members of Congress from benefiting from government contracts and the Procurement Act of 1809, requiring competition in government procurement. Since then, a series of legislation and executive orders were passed or issued.

Currently, there are 50 states and over 83,000 local procurement entities and as each governmental unit enjoys its autonomy, it is impossible, as space would not be enough, to document various procurement laws and regulations in this article. In 1975, in a pioneering effort, the Council of State Governments published a report tabulating purchasing statutes and regulations of all states, major counties and cities.

Despite many government procurement reform efforts, it seems that all the public procurement problems prevalent over eighty years ago still exist today, and will persist. Managing procurements in the public sector has emerged as one of the most daunting challenges facing public managers today. Given the importance of public sector procurement, a greater application of theoretical perspectives and empirical research of organizations at the operational level is greatly needed (Brown, Potowski & Van Slyke, 2006). This study takes a step in that direction by examining the institutional culture of tertiary institutions and public procurement through the lens of institutional theory (Scott, 2008). Specifically, it applies the institutional frameworks of Scott (2005) to explore institutional causes of inter-organizational conflict and barriers to collaboration that may contribute to the public institutions, ‘smart buyer’ problem (Kettl, 1993).

2.1 Theoretical background

As cited by Defee et al (2010), good research should be grounded in theory (Mentzer et al, 2008). This study was guided by the institutional theory to explain how institutional culture affects public procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda. Institutional theory attempts to describe the deeper and more resilient aspects of how institutions are created, maintained, changed and dissolved (Scott, 2005; Scott, 2008); and deals with the pervasive influence of institutions on human behaviour including the processes by which structures such as rules, routines and norms guide social behavior.

Institutional theory is the traditional approach that is used to examine elements of public procurement (Obanda, 2010). There is no single and universally agreed definition of “institution” or “institutional theory”. According to Scott (2004), institutions are composed of cultural-cognitive and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, give meaning to life. Scott explains the three pillars of institutions as regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive. The regulatory pillar emphasizes the use of rules, laws and sanctions as enforcement mechanisms, with expedience as the basis for compliance. The normative pillar refers to norms (how things should be done) and values (the preferred or desirable), which are the social obligations being the basis of compliance. The cultural-cognitive pillar rests on shared understanding (common beliefs, symbols, etc.).

Institutional theory highlights the importance of the wider institutional environment as the ground in which organizations are rooted (Scott, 2005). The key idea behind institutionalization is that much organizational action reflects a pattern of doing things that evolves over time and becomes legitimated within an organization and an environment (Pfeffer, as cited in Eyaa & Oluka, 2011). Institutional theory (Scott, 2001) can be used to explain the problem of managing government procurement, conceptualized as the “smart buyer problem” by Kettl (1993). Kettl argues that, while embracing the market-based promises of procurement, governments have failed to develop the capacity to address even the most fundamental procurement questions, such as what to buy, who to buy from and what has to be bought. He suggests that the problem is partly attributable to institutional barriers in government agencies that prevent them from becoming learning organizations. This study explores the proposition that institutional culture within procuring organizations may contribute to this problem. Government institutions do not behave as a single buyer with clearly defined buying objectives. Multiple organizations, each shaped by institutional factors, lay claim to processes relating to Kettl’s smart buyer questions. As key organizational participants become aligned with their own regulative, normative, and socio-cognitive

institutional “pillars”, smart buying behaviour may become confounded by institutional factors and constraining organizational structures.

2.3 Conceptual background

Public procurement is the acquisition of goods, services and works by a procuring entity using public funds (World Bank, 1995). It is the process by which government departments or agencies purchase goods and services from the private sector. Public procurement as a function of government includes decisions about the services that will be delivered to local authorities and the communities they serve (Hughes, 2005). It is utilized not only to secure goods and services required by public sector organizations for their missions and to support services provided to taxpayers, but it is also used to implement national policies and to achieve social and other objectives (Thai, 2005). Depending on local laws, the relevant government officials will have to follow a set system for procurement. This system could cover the way they advertise for suppliers, the grounds on which they choose a supplier, and the way in which they measure and enforce the requirements they put on the supplier. The usual aims of such a system will be to take advantage of competition between suppliers and to reduce the risk of corruption.

Institutional culture refers the “way things are done” within an organization, specifically the traditions, customs, values, and shared understandings that underpin the decisions taken, the practices engaged in and those practices that are rewarded and supported (Lunenburg, 2011). It is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2011). In this study, institutional culture will be taken to refer to the management style, rules and policies.

According to Van Weele (2006), procurement performance is considered the result of two elements: procurement effectiveness and procurement efficiency. Performance provides the basis for an organization to assess how well it is progressing towards its predetermined objectives, identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses and decides on future initiatives with the goal of how to initiate performance improvements. This means that procurement performance is not an end in itself but a means to effective and efficient control and monitoring of the procurement function (Lardenoije, Van Raaij & Van Weele, 2005).

Procurement efficiency and procurement effectiveness represent different competences and capabilities for the procurement function. CIPS Australia (2005)

presents the differences between efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency reflects that the organization is “doing things right” whereas effectiveness relates to the organization “doing the right thing”. This means an organization can be effective and fail to be efficient, the challenge being to balance between the two. In this study, procurement performance will be measured using Van Weele’s (2006) definitions of procurement efficiency and procurement effectiveness.

2.4 Contextual background

In order to improve the management of public procurement, many countries have come up with procurement reforms. According to Arrowsmith and Trybus (2003), the last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed the start of the global evolution in public procurement. Nonetheless, Thai (2005) asserts that challenges in public procurement go beyond procurement regulations to include procurement process, methods, organizational structure and work force.

This assertion is supported by the African Peer Review Mechanism Country Review (APRM) Report on Uganda (2009), which asserts that non-compliance with the regulations is so high in Uganda. The same report estimates that more than UGX. 30 Billion (US Dollars 184) is lost every year due to non-compliance. De Boer and Telgen (1998), as cited by Gelderman et al (2006) explain that compliance is a problem not only in the third world countries but also evident in the countries in the European Union. Gelderman et al (2006) further advance reasons for non-compliance as explained by the tendency to avoid red tape involved in the procurement process.

In Uganda, the need for procurement reforms became urgent because of internal and external pressure given the fact that the Government was losing huge sums of money in poorly managed procurement processes that cost the taxpayer a lot of money. The procurement reforms that were recommended in 2001 in Uganda in the Country Procurement Assessment Report are: the abolition of the Central Tender Board; enactment of a Procurement Law (Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Act); establishment of a policy regulation body, the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Authority; establishment of Contract Committees and Procurement Units in procuring entities; harmonization of central and local government regulations; incorporation of procurement plans in sector investment programmes; preparation of standard bidding documents, establishment of a procurement cadre in the civil service and restoration of professionalism in the procurement function. All procurements and disposals handled by public procuring and disposing entities (PDEs) are governed by the regulations in the PPDA Act (2003). These regulations specify procurement and disposal procedures that have to be followed by all persons involved in procurement

and disposal processes in order to ensure fairness, transparency, competitiveness and non-discrimination to all potential providers of goods, services and works (PPDA Act, 2003). Local authorities and other government entities, such as parastatals, schools and universities, are by definition public entities. Currently, all procurements are undertaken by the public entities themselves, which has in turn created an extensive demand for high procurement performance in each public entity (Agaba & Shipman, 2006).

The Ugandan procurement regulations explicitly identify tertiary institutions as procurement entities. In these institutions, Accounting Officers are responsible for the procurement of goods, works and services. In the tertiary institutions in Uganda, the Principal is the Accounting Officer responsible for the entity. Other players are the Contract Committee, the Evaluation Committee (ad-hoc), Negotiation Committees (ad-hoc), Procurements and Disposal Units (PDUs) and the User Departments. All these play their independent roles to see to it that whatever is required, as planned, is procured in accordance with the PPDA Act to ensure value for money.

Concerns, however, have been raised relating to procurement performance in tertiary institutions. For example, in respect to Gulu University, the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (2011) revealed that seven cases representing 14% of the cases were contracted at sums that varied greatly from those indicated in the procurement plan for the year under review. The audit revealed six cases representing 12% of the sample were not on the procurement plan for the FY 2010/2011. There was a decline in performance (FY 2010/11, the high risk +medium risk was 96% by number and 99 % by value compared with FY 2007/08 at 77% by number and 81% by value). It was concluded that the entity's performance was very poor. Forty-nine cases, representing 99% by value, were in the high and medium risk categories. It is against this background that the researcher is interested in establishing how institutional culture affects performance in public procurement in tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda.

3. Statement of the Problem

The procurement function has become increasingly important over the past decades since purchasing and supply has become a major determinant of corporate success. The enactment of the Public Procurement and Disposal Act PPDA and the Regulations, as well as the establishment of a public procurement oversight authority, were some of the reforms meant to promote efficiency, effectiveness, good performance, and accountability in public procurement.

According to Victor (2012), procurement expenditure could be minimized through implementation of effective procurement practices. The procurement function usually takes large amounts of organizations' revenue; hence it is becoming an expensive undertaking for many organizations (Chan & Lee, 2003) and, if not properly carried out, it can lead to significant regret.

Regardless of the effort by the Uganda government to improve the performance of procurement entities, public procurement in government institutions is still marred by poor procurement performance. Failure to implement or delayed implementation of recommended performance standards has resulted in unnecessarily high operation costs and uncoordinated business activities, thus affecting the function's performance (PPDA, 2007). This study, therefore, specifically seeks to establish how institutional culture affects public procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda.

3.1 Objective and Hypothesis of the Study

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of institutional culture on the performance of procurement in tertiary institutions in West Nile sub-region of Uganda, and it was hunched, there is a significant effect of institutional culture on the performance of procurement in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda.

3.2 Justification for the Study

Poor procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region results into loss of taxpayers' money, inefficiency, lack of value for money in procured goods/services/works, and unreliability of goods and services and works. Yet no study had been conducted in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region to address the problem. Thus, this study was important in throwing light on the institutional culture in tertiary institutions in West the Nile sub-region of Uganda, which might be useful to rectify problems that were identified in order to improve procurement performance.

3.3 Scope of the study

The study was carried out in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda, which included Uganda College of Commerce Pakwach and National Teachers' College, Muni, in Arua. These were selected because they were the public tertiary institutions in the sub-region. The study concentrated on institutional culture and its effect on procurement performance. The research focused on a period of five years, 2010 to 2015, to obtain information about institutional culture and procurement

performance. This was because it is recommended that any research should obtain information of not less than five years to be authentic (Amin, 2005).

4. Literature Review

This section presents literature review. It is divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section presents the theoretical review. The second sub-section reviews literature institutional culture and the third sub-section handles literature on public procurement Performance.

4.1 Theoretical Review

Institutional theory focuses on the deeper and more buoyant aspects of social structure. It considers the processes by which structures, including schemes, rules, norms, and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour (Scott, as cited in Kenyakisa & Kiruja, 2015). Different components of institutional theory explain how these elements are created, diffused, adopted, and adapted over space and time; and how they fall into decline and disuse. Institutional theory states that organizations exist in an institutional environment, which defines and delimits its social reality (Scott, as cited in Kenyakisa & Kiruja, 2015). In the current study, the institutional theory therefore points out the need to focus on the institutional factors that could influence public procurement performance.

Institutional theory describes the effects of external institutional pressures on organizations and defines institutions as regulatory structures, government agencies, laws, courts, and professions, as well as interest groups and public opinion (Lowell, as cited in Makabira, 2014). The rules and norms set out by the institutions in an environment are endorsed by various actors. When speaking of actors and institutional environment in this research, reference is made to the norms represented by the actors in the environment and the pressure that these norms exert on other actors in the environment. A strength attributed to institutional theory is its ability to explain non-choice behaviour of organizations, how they conform to norms without questioning them and undertaking public function (Lowell, as cited in Makabira, 2014).

Institutional theory adopts a sociological perspective to explain organizational structures and behaviour (Dunn & Jones, 2010). It draws attention to the social and cultural factors that influence organizational decision-making and, in particular, how rationalized activities are adopted by organizations (Scott, 2001). Institutional theory is the traditional approach that is used to examine elements of public procurement (Obanda, 2010). Scott (2004) identifies three pillars of institutions as regulatory,

normative and cultural-cognitive. The regulatory pillar emphasizes the use of rules, laws and sanctions as enforcement mechanisms, with expedience as the basis for compliance. The normative pillar refers to norms and values with social obligation as the basis of compliance. The cultural-cognitive pillar rests on shared understanding on common beliefs, and symbols.

4.2 Institutional Culture

Organizational culture is the pattern of shared basic assumptions that have been learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 2004). These assumptions are said to be maintained in the continuous process of human interaction (attitudes and behaviour) as the right way in which things are done. Zhang (2010) also describes organizational culture as a mode, composed by some basic assumptions; and the assumptions are found and created gradually by a certain group in the process of exploring the method of adapting to the external environment and solving the internal interconnected system. Internal integration is the socialization of new members in the organizations, creating the new boundaries of the organization and the feeling of identity among personnel and commitment to the organization (Martins & Terblanche, 2003). External adaptation is also said to be the creation of competitive edge, making sense of the environment in terms of acceptable behaviour and social system stability. It is doubtful whether the tertiary institutions in West Nile sub-region have a culture of commitment to organization by the institutional members, the staff, whereby the employee put organizational interest first.

The definitions by Schein (2004) and Zhang (2010) offer both deeper basic assumption and faith that is shared by organizational members in explaining the purpose; and the environment of the organization itself. In addition, the assertions focus on internal integration and external adaptation of organizations which are the organizational culture attributes that define the performance of organizations.

Hui et al (2011) stipulate that efficient management is one of the most effective preventive mechanisms, for it promotes transparency and accountability, facilitates oversight and provides a good basis to prevent corruption. Rossi (2010) opines that formal controls must first be defined, agreed, and applied top-down internally within an organization if they are to be effective. An organization with a genuine commitment to legal compliance is evidenced by top management's dedication to ethical corporate behaviour (Krawiec, 2003). As cited in Heneghan and O'Donnell (2007), a compliance culture in an organization must start in the boardroom and should be reflected and evidenced in directors' own behaviors and attitudes. In a related argument, Obanda

(2010) stipulates that strong institutional support at top levels of government is needed by procurement personnel in order to promote integrity, monitor the public procurement process and apply procurement law appropriately. This study was to establish also if transparency and accountability, commitment to legal compliance and dedication to ethical corporate behaviour and attitude were aspects cherished in the tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-Region.

Due to regulatory reforms and changing community expectations, the role of culture in organizational compliance has gained momentum (Lisa, 2010). Basing on the competing values model (hierarchical culture), which involves enforcement of rules, conformity and attention to technical matters, individual conformity and compliance are achieved through enforcement of formerly stated rules and procedures (Zammuto & Krakower, as cited in Parker & Bradley, 2000). Although there is no single definition of culture, one can define it as 'the structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies, and practices of a particular group of people that provides them with a general design for living and patterns for interpreting behavior' (Rice, 2007). According to Lisa (2010), culture does not play a central role in the compliance process and associated outcomes. Basheka and Mugabira (2008) conducted a study on culture in Uganda's public sector and depicted culture as a hindrance to reforms. To the contrary, the researcher opines that the views of Lisa (2010) and Basheka and Mugabira (2008) must have been influenced by the study problems they identified and which caused them to undertake those studies. On the contrary, as they studied the positive culture in the organizations, it is possible that they could probably have discovered that anything good in those organizations they studied was because of the bit of good culture in them. They might not have been in the best positions since they embarked on the studies with biased and negative assumptions. Given the Ugandan predicament, one's mind can hardly be free of the Jews' philosophy – "can anything good come from Jerusalem"?

It is also contended that in a specific type of culture, characterized by specific values such as openness, trust and honesty (Arjoon, as cited in Lisa, 2010), employees are more likely to engage in compliance behaviours, which collectively will contribute to organizational compliance. Parker and Bradley (2000) further indicate that awareness of the nature of public organizational culture is vital in explaining and assessing the appropriateness and outcome of the current reform process. This applies to developing countries where waves of procurement reforms have resulted into the enactment of procurement rules and regulations. If culture in the public institutions was playing a significant role in propelling procurement, it should have been expected that the deficiencies arrayed by the PPDA Authority would have no space. Given the contrary,

the researcher is yet to find out if culture is playing any role in procurement in these tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda.

4.3 Public Procurement Performance

During the last two decades, public procurement has undergone profound changes. Policy makers, academics and practitioners alike share the broad view that public procurement has evolved from a clerical signoff-ridden set of activities to a strategic tool to enhance efficiency in public organizations, to regulate markets and promote sustainable development. Moreover, public procurement contracts represent a major share of any country's GDP and public expenditure budget. According to data published by the European Commission in its recent Evaluation Report (2011), public procurement in the EU accounted for EUR 2100 billion in 2009, or 19% of GDP. These levels of expenditure alone provide sound reasons for analyzing the performance of public procurement operations at all levels.

One definition of procurement is: the activity of assessing, buying and receiving goods, works and services. It is public whenever this process is performed by public organizations or whenever it is performed on their behalf or, again, funded by public organizations. The process of procuring starts with the definition of what is to be procured (goods, services and/or works, quality), then is followed by how it should be procured. The overriding objective of a state's public procurement system is to deliver efficiency and "value for money" in the use of public funds, whilst adhering to public requirements and to national laws and policies. Performance measurement is, therefore, about seeking to answer the fundamental question of whether the procurement system and operations ultimately deliver in accordance with the main objectives set.

A theoretical analysis of Public Procurement Performance written by a practitioner of Public Procurement with a strong background in private procurement, focusing on one of the key performance indicators in procurement - Value for Money - proposes a new way to look at public procurement performance. Thus, public procurement, being all about value for money, brings in the critical debate that consumer and customer satisfaction cannot be achieved at any price. This is when Value for Money, cannot, but must come into the picture. Therefore, a critical question that should be asked is: What is value for money? Value for money is a concept associated with the economy, effectiveness and efficiency of a service, product or process, that is, a comparison of the input costs against the value of the outputs and a qualitative and quantitative judgement over the manner in which the resources involved have been utilized and managed. If the concept of Value can be captured through consumer and customer satisfaction, the concept of money can be captured in the price tag to

achieving the latter satisfaction ratings. In terms of efficiency of public procurement, it boils down to how much a shilling of procurement is going to deliver with regard to increasing consumer and customer satisfaction.

It is therefore critical that the matter of public procurement represents a new challenge to consider; although private procurement would certainly gain a lot from some of the best practices applied in public procurement, the reverse certainly does hold true. The researcher finds that Public Procurement devotes significant resources and time, to ensure the processes and the procedures are sound, transparent, shared and followed. This very attention to the latter, in many instances dilutes the value for money of the items procured, while current public procurement practices are driven mainly by value. This study will, therefore, concern itself with the play between intra-institutional dynamics and procurement performance in the tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda, hoping that the study findings will offer explanation for the wanting predicaments surrounding procurements in these public universities.

5. Methodology

This section presents the methodology the researcher used to gain and analyze information on the research problem. It included the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, procedure, data collection methods and instruments and data analysis.

5.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional study design was used. This design was used because it enabled the researcher to target a large group of respondents to obtain information without making follow-up of the respondents once information from them was obtained (Amin, 2005; Sekaran, 2003). Therefore, this design helped to save on time and resources during data collection. Both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms were adopted to ensure methodological triangulation. This was because the quantitative approach allowed the researcher to solicit information that was quantified while the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to solicit information that was in textual formant (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Combining numerical and textual information helped the researcher to enrich the interpretation of findings of the study.

5.2 Study Population

Basing on Human Resource departments' records in the tertiary institutions in West Nile sub-region of Uganda, this study's population included the Accounting Officer,

Contracts Committee members and User departments. Thus, the population from which the sample was selected was 165.

5.3 Sample Size and Selection

Using Krejcie and Morgan sample size table, the sample size was obtained as in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample size and techniques for collection

Categories	UCC Pakwach	NTC Muni	Target Pop	Sample Size	Sample Technique
The Accounting Officer	1	1	2	2	Purposive sampling
The Contracts Committee	5	5	10	10	Purposive sampling
User Department Staff	59	94	153	110	Simple random sampling
Total	65	100	165	122	

Source: Adopted Human Resource Department (2015) and guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Sampling Method as cited in Amin (2005)

The selected sample size covered three categories of respondents who participated in the study. These categories included the Accounting Officers, the Contracts Committee Members and User department staff respectively. This study targeted a sample of 122 respondents as computed in Table 1 above.

5.4 Sampling Techniques and Procedure

A combination of sampling techniques - probabilistic and non-probabilistic - was used. Probabilistic sampling techniques involved selecting respondents from the user population by chance and non-probabilistic techniques involved selecting respondents - the Accounting Officers and Contracts Committee members with the intention that they had to participate. The probabilistic sampling technique that was used was simple random sampling and the non-probabilistic sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Simple random sampling technique was used to select amongst the user department staff to give every user department staff an equal chance to participate in the study when drawing a sample from a large population of the users and helped avoid bias in the selection. It also minimized the time and cost involved in selecting. Purposive sampling was used to select the Accounting Officers and Contract Committee members because they were expected to be more knowledgeable about

procurement issues in the tertiary institutions as they superintend over the entire procurement process.

5.5 Data Collection Methods

5.5.1 Questionnaire survey

A questionnaire survey was used to collect information from a selected group of user department staff members using standardized questionnaires (Amin, 2005). This method involved collecting information from the user department staff in a systematic way. Questionnaire survey was used for this category of respondents to save on time because their number was too big to interview; moreover, they were all literate and capable of giving the required information.

5.5.2 Interviews

Interviews were used to collect data from Accounting Officers and Contracts Committee members because, according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), they enabled the researcher to establish rapport with this category of respondents and therefore gained their insight. Besides, they were few in number and yet most knowledgeable in procurement issues in the institutions. They also allowed the researcher to clarify answers and obtain in-depth information.

5.6 Data Collection Instruments

Two types of data collection instruments were used in the study. These included questionnaires, and interview guides as briefly explained in the following subsection.

5.6.1 Questionnaires

Self-administered questionnaires (SAQs) were used to collect quantitative data from the user department staff. Basing on Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), SAQs were used for this category of respondents to save on time because their number was too big for interview and because they could read and write in English and thus filled in the questionnaires by themselves without any assistance.

5.6.2 Interview guides

Interview guides were used to collect qualitative data (Amin, 2005) from Accounting Officers and Contracts Committee members who were in position to provide in-depth information through probing during the interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In this study, the probing interviewing tactic was used extensively to obtain deeper explanation of the issue at hand from the respondents. This was largely due to the fact

that the respondents often needed stimuli to expand or clarify their own answers and ideas more broadly, so that a broader understanding was more easily reached regarding the findings. The researcher presented questions to the interviewees and he wrote down their views. Data obtained during the interviews supplemented those obtained through the questionnaire.

5.7 Validity

For the instruments to yield relevant and correct data, they were given to two experts conversant with the study area to comment on the ambiguity, difficulty and relevance of questions to ensure construct, content and face validity. To establish the Content Validity Index (CVI), the following formula was used:

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{Number of items declared valid}}{\text{Total number of judges}}$$

Findings are presented in the following Table 2:

Table 2: Validity of Questionnaire

Raters	Items Rated Relevant	Items Rated Not Relevant	Total
Rater 1	43	9	52
Rater 2	46	6	52
Total	89	15	104

Thus, applying the formula,

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{89}{104} \approx .856$$

The CVI was greater than the recommended .70 (Amin, 2005). Thus, the questionnaire was valid for data collection.

5.8 Reliability

In order to ensure the degree to which questionnaires would produce consistent results if used under similar conditions, they were piloted on similar respondents in public tertiary institutions since they were similar in nature and the results subjected to Cronbach alpha reliability test. Data collected from the pilot test were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Results are presented in the following Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability of questionnaire

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Reliability For Institutional Culture	.845	6
Reliability For Procurement Performance	.745	10

Source: Data from the field

The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the variables in the questionnaire were above 0.7 which is recommended by Nunnally, as cited by Kent (2001). The questionnaire was, hence, considered reliable for collecting data.

5.9 Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis mainly consisted of descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Spearman Rank Order Correlation). The frequencies and percentages were used to determine the respondents' views on institutional culture and procurement performance. Spearman correlation was used to test the hypotheses. The correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables. The sign of the correlation coefficient (+ or -) was used to determine the nature of relationship. The significance of the correlation coefficient (p) was used to determine the confidence in the findings. The coefficient of determination, which is a square of the correlation coefficient (r^2), was computed and expressed as a percentage to determine the variance in procurement performance due to institutional culture.

Qualitative data analysis involved content analysis, which was used to edit qualitative data and re-organize it into meaningful shorter sentences. A thematic approach was used to analyze qualitative data where themes, categories and patterns were identified. The recurrent themes, which emerged in relation to each guiding question from the interviews were presented in the results, with selected direct quotations from participants presented as illustrations.

6. Findings

This section presents, analyzes and interprets the results about institutional culture and procurement performance in tertiary institutions in West Nile Sub-region of Uganda.

6.1 Response Rate

Completion rate (also known as response rate) in survey research refers to the number of people who answered the survey divided by the number of people in the sample (Johnson & Owens, 2003). It is usually expressed in the form of a percentage. A low

response rate can give rise to sampling bias if the non-response is unequal among the participants regarding exposure and/or outcome. In this study, the sample was 122 respondents but the study managed to get 93 (76)% respondents. The breakdown is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Response rate

Category of Population	Target Population	Sampled Size	Response Rate	Percentage (%)
The Accounting Officer	2	2	2	100
The Contracts Committee	10	10	10	100
User Department Staff	153	110	81	74
Total	165	122	93	76

Source: Data from the field

Table 4 shows response rate of 76% which was above the recommended 67% response rate (Amin, 2005; Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Therefore, the results were considered representative of what would have been obtained from the target population.

6.2 Effect of Institutional Culture on Procurement Performance in Tertiary institutions in West Nile sub-region of Uganda

Before determining the effect of institutional culture on procurement performance, descriptive statistics for institutional culture are presented to show the respondents views on this variable.

6.3 Descriptive results on institutional culture

User department staff members were requested to respond to six items about institutional culture by indicating their agreement using a five-point Likert scale as shown in Table 5. The analysis and interpretation of the findings about institutional culture follows the presentation of findings in Table 5.

Table 5: Institutional culture descriptive statistics

Institutional culture	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Total
1. In our institute, the role of culture in organizational compliance has not gained momentum.	4 (5%)	8 (10%)	21 (26%)	39 (48%)	9 (11%)	81 (100%)
2. Dissatisfaction among stakeholders brought about by loopholes left by the regulations is used by dishonest people to make processes inefficient	3 (4%)	14 (17%)	19 (23%)	31 (38%)	14 (17%)	81 (100%)
3. In our institution there is no compliance	5	9	15	41	11	81

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culture reflected and evidenced in every staff behaviors and attitudes	(6%)	(11%)	(19%)	(51%)	(14%)	(100%)
4. In our institution there is no strong institutional support at top levels of the institute needed by procurement personnel in order to promote integrity, monitor the public procurement process and apply procurement law appropriately	5 (6%)	19 (23%)	14 (17%)	34 (42%)	9 (11%)	81 (100%)
5. In our institution, culture does not play a central role in the compliance process and associated outcomes.	3 (4%)	19 (23%)	23 (28%)	27 (33%)	9 (11%)	81 (100%)
6. Our institution lacks specific values such as openness, trust and honesty and compliance behaviors, which collectively contribute to organizational non-compliance	11 (14%)	17 (21%)	13 (16%)	28 (35%)	12 (15%)	81 (100%)

Source: Data from the field

Findings in Table 5 show that most user department staff members concurred with six items about institutional culture (that is items 1 to 6) compared to those who opposed and those who were not sure. A comparison of these items shows that the percentages of those that opposed ranged from 18% to 34%, while those that were not sure ranged from 16% to 32%, and those that concurred ranged from 45% to 60%. From these comparisons, it can be seen that the percentages of those that concurred were higher compared to those who were not sure and those who opposed. From this analysis, the following is the interpretation. Findings show most user department staff members were of the view that the role of culture in organizational compliance had not gained momentum; dissatisfaction among stakeholders brought about by loopholes left by the regulations was used by dishonest people to make processes inefficient; and, there was no compliance culture reflected and evidenced in every staff behaviours and attitudes. Most user department staff members were of the view that there was no strong institutional support at top levels of the institute needed by procurement personnel in order to promote integrity, monitor the public procurement process and apply procurement law appropriately; culture did not play a central role in the compliance process and associated outcomes; and the institution lacked specific values such as openness, trust and honesty and compliance behaviors, which collectively contributed to organizational non-compliance.

The interview findings corroborate the findings from quantitative data. For example, The UCC Key Informant B revealed the following, *“Culture of dishonesty is continuously growing. Members disagree so much in the law as one interprets the law in his/her own ways”* (Interview with UCC Key Informant B, 10th May 2017). In addition, the NTC Key Informant X had the following views:

“We are not even aware of the culture. There are loopholes left by the regulations used for personal interests. For example, when auditors come they only look at statement made and receipts availed but never make in depth follow up. This is one of the loopholes used because anybody can pick receipts and formalize the procurement procedures”

(Interview with NTC Key Informant X, 11th May 2017)

Thus, findings reveal that tertiary institutions have a culture of dishonesty and some people use the weak regulations for personal gain. Related to the attitudes and behaviour of employees towards a culture of compliance, the UCC Key Informant C had this to say, *“Top management would not support the department in terms of training and getting relevant laws that are brought from time to time. Culture has no influence in the working sector”* (Interview with UCC Key Informant C, 12th May 2017). In addition, the NTC Key Informant Y revealed thus, *“True because all personnel in procurement are mainly answerable to the Accounting Officer, not top management”* (Interview with NTC Key Informant Y, 13th May 2017). The UCC Key Informant A’s response was similar the others as shown in the following, *“Staff are so dishonest that one thinks of him/herself to profit or benefit from any transaction made”* (Interview with UCC Key Informant A, 8th May 2017). The same was the response from the NTC Key Informant W, *“Only a few are trusted or believed in by the top boss, no openness at all to the rest of the stakeholders some issues are handled privately and other members are only involved to formalize”* (Interview with NTC Key Informant W, 9th May 2017). These findings show a poor institutional culture in the tertiary institutions which is not favourable for enhancing procurement performance.

6.4 Descriptive results on procurement performance

User department staff members responded to 10 items about procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda by indicating their agreement using a five-point Likert scale as shown in Table 6. The analysis and interpretation of the findings follows the presentation.

Table 5: Procurement performance descriptive statistics

Procurement Performance	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Total
1. Competitive prices are not paid for focus products.	5 (6%)	11 (14%)	31 (38%)	27 (33%)	7 (9%)	81 (100%)
2. Inefficient procurement mechanisms are being used.	8 (10%)	13 (16%)	18 (22%)	35 (43%)	7 (9%)	81 (100%)
3. Suppliers do not deliver the right goods at the right time.	6 (7%)	20 (25%)	17 (21%)	29 (36%)	9 (11%)	81 (100%)
4. There are delays in the procurement cycle.	1 (1%)	11 (14%)	21 (26%)	33 (41%)	15 (19%)	81 (100%)
5. There are delays in processing payments.	5 (6%)	6 (7%)	24 (30%)	28 (35%)	18 (22%)	81 (100%)
6. There are emergency orders frequently used to prevent stock-outs.	5 (6%)	11 (14%)	35 (43%)	23 (28%)	7 (9%)	81 (100%)
7. The procurement unit is operating inefficiently.	6 (7%)	19 (23%)	19 (23%)	28 (35%)	9 (11%)	81 (100%)
8. Funded operational training program is not in place to provide staff with appropriate training to maintain or upgrade their procurement skills.	11 (14%)	18 (22%)	18 (22%)	29 (36%)	5 (6%)	81 (100%)
9. Procurement prices are not available to the public.	10 (12%)	16 (20%)	31 (38%)	20 (25%)	4 (5%)	81 (100%)
10. Procurement methods being used do not promote competition.	8 (10%)	10 (12%)	17 (21%)	36 (44%)	10 (12%)	81 (100%)

Source: Data from the field

Findings in Table 6 show that most of the user department staff members concurred with eight items about procurement performance (that is items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10) compared to those who opposed and those who were not sure. A comparison on these items shows that those that opposed ranged from 13% to 36%, while those that were not sure ranged from 21% to 38%, and those that concurred ranged from 42% to 60%. From these comparisons, it can be seen that the percentages that concurred with the items were higher compared to those who were not sure and those that opposed. From this analysis, the following is the interpretation. Findings show most user department staff members were of the view that competitive prices were not paid for focus products; inefficient procurement mechanisms were used; suppliers did not deliver the right goods at the right time; and, there were delays in the procurement cycle and in processing payments. Furthermore, most user department staff members were of the view that the procurement unit was operating inefficiently; funded operational training programme was not in place to provide staff with appropriate training to maintain or

upgrade their procurement skills; and, procurement methods used did not promote competition.

On the other hand, findings show that most of the user department staff members were not sure with two items about procurement performance (that is items 6 and 9) compared to those who concurred or opposed. A comparison of these items shows that those that opposed ranged from 20% to 32%, while those that were not sure ranged from 38% to 43%, and those that concurred ranged from 30% to 37%. From these comparisons, it can be seen that the percentages that were not sure with the items were higher compared to those who were opposed and those who concurred. From this analysis, the following is the interpretation. Findings show most user department staff members were of the view that they were not sure whether emergency orders were frequently used to prevent stock-outs; or procurement prices were not available to the public.

The findings, therefore, show poor procurement performance in tertiary institutions in West Nile Sub-region of Uganda. Having established the views of user department staff members on procurement performance, the following subsection presents findings linking institutional culture and procurement performance.

6.5 Inferential statistical results on institutional culture and procurement performance

The fourth hypothesis, “*There is a significant effect of institutional culture on the performance of procurement in tertiary institutions in West Nile Sub-region of Uganda*” was tested. Table 7 presents the test results.

Table 7: Correlation and coefficient of determination on institutional culture and procurement performance

	Institutional Culture
Procurement Performance	$\rho = .474$ $\rho^2 = .225$ $p = .000$ $n = 81$

Source: Data from the field

Findings in Table 7 show that there was a moderate positive correlation ($\rho = .474$) between institutional culture and procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda. The coefficient of determination ($\rho^2 = .225$) shows that institutional culture accounted for 22.5% variance in procurement performance. These findings were subjected to a test of significance (p) and it is shown

that the significance of the correlation ($p = .000$) is less than the recommended critical significance at .05. Accordingly, the hypothesis “*There is a significant effect of institutional culture on the performance of procurement in different tertiary institutions in West Nile Sub-region of Uganda*” was accepted.

The implication of the findings was that the moderate effect implied that a change in institutional culture contributed to a moderate change in procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda. The positive nature of the effect implied that the change in institutional culture and procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda was in the same direction whereby better institutional culture contributed to better procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda and poor institutional culture contributed to poor procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda.

7. Discussion

The study sought to examine the effect of institutional culture on procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda. The study established that institutional culture moderately influences the procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda. In addition, institutional culture influences how employees approach their various duties and how they relate with external stakeholders including suppliers. Institutional culture has been known for a while as one of the conditions that foster procurement processes in organizations by creating an organic rather than a bureaucratic organizational structure (Lardenoije, Van Raaij & Van Weele, 2005). In the light of this observation, the study found that organizational values, teamwork, people orientation and hierarchical levels influence the procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda.

The cultural-cognitive pillar rests on shared understanding of common beliefs, and symbols). Although there is no single definition of culture, one can define it as the structure of behaviours, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies, and practices of a particular group of people that provide them with a general design for living and pattern for interpreting behaviour (Rice, 2007). The quantitative study findings further revealed that the role of culture in organizational compliance had not gained momentum; dissatisfaction among stakeholders brought about by loopholes left by the regulations was used by dishonest people to make processes inefficient; and there was no compliance culture reflected and evidenced in

every staff behaviours and attitudes. Most user department staff members were of the view that there was no strong institutional support at top levels of the institute needed by procurement personnel in order to promote integrity, monitor the public procurement process and apply procurement law appropriately; culture did not play a central role in the compliance process and associated outcomes; and the institutions lacked specific values such as openness, trust and honesty and compliance behaviours, which collectively contributed to organizational non-compliance. This was further enhanced with qualitative findings that revealed that, *“Culture of dishonesty is continuously growing”* and, *“Staff are so dishonest that one thinks of him/herself to profit or benefit from any transaction made”*.

According to Lisa (2010), culture plays a central role in the compliance process and associated outcomes. Findings of this study are similar to Lisa (2010) who conducted a study on culture in public sector and depicted uncondusive culture as a hindrance to procurement performance. It is also contended that in a specific type of culture, characterized by specific values such as openness, trust and honesty (Arjoon, 2006, as cited in Lisa, 2010), employees are more likely to engage in compliance behaviours, which collectively will contribute to organizational compliance, hence, better procurement performance. It therefore leaves no room for wonder, since Uganda that forms the predicaments of this study is immensely characterized by dishonesty and corruption, amongst other vices.

According to the research findings by Lisa (2010) in his study, it was revealed that institutional culture affects the procurement performance for it favours unethical behaviour of channelling procurement activities, thus limits the idea of competitiveness, emphasizes the application of cash purchases and not direct payments to suppliers. Additionally, Mwangi and Kairuki (2013) in their study found that some cultural elements within the organizational entities promoted the procurement performance through emphasizing cooperation among procurement actors in ensuring compliance with rules and regulations. The researcher agrees with this view and that explains why the view of Basheka and Mugabira (2008) could have been influenced by the Ugandan predicament.

In this study, the researcher established research questions which acted as the guiding principle for data collection. Because of those questionnaires, it was revealed that institutional culture affected the procurement performance in the organization. This finding was similar to the findings by Lisa (2010) in his study; but the same finding was controversial to the research findings of Mwangi and Kairuki (2013). The level of integrity, confidentiality, ethics, conflict of interest, competences in the area of procurement and level of procurement knowledge have greater impact on

organizational procurement performance. These findings are the same as those found by Mwilima (2006) in his study concerning losses of UGX 200 billion annually on procurement budget.

8. Conclusion

The study focused on analyzing the effect of institutional culture on procurement performance. The study concludes that there is a moderate positive effect of institutional culture on procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda. A unit increase in institutional culture will lead to a 22.5% increase in the scores of procurement performance in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda. From the findings in relation to how culture influences procurement performance within tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda, it can be concluded that the moderate effect was obtained because there were other cultural elements that were not included, such as religion and language, that might have greater influence on institutional culture in relation procurement performance, besides other intra-institutional factors.

9. Recommendation

The study recommended that organization culture should be balanced with normal organizational operations to facilitate the various procurement activities within tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda. In-house training and coaching of employees should be promoted within the organizations in order to bring awareness among them so that they may separate various duties according to the laws and regulations governing operations of the tertiary institutions without bringing negative attitudes that are ignored in different decisions that are made by top leaders on their behalf. Besides, management needs to take deliberate efforts to sensitize all the critical institutional stakeholders of the importance of an institution developing a positive culture that enhances the achievement of its goals.

10. Areas for Further Study

This study sought to assess how institutional culture affects performance in public procurement in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda. However, due to demographic and economic differences the findings of this study (conducted in tertiary institutions in the West Nile Sub-region of Uganda) cannot be generalized to

other tertiary institutions in Uganda. This study therefore recommends studies on how institutional culture affects procurement Performance in all tertiary institutions in Uganda, especially with respect to public universities.

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