

PROCUREMENT GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY IN UGANDA: AN EMPIRICAL RELATIONAL ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT. In a world that currently has more than 200 states, each of which represents a unique society with its own physical and social characteristics including a system of government that has its own peculiar public institutions mandated to delivery a variety of public services, no serious contention appears among academics, policy makers and practitioners on the importance of the public procurement function in facilitating the running of governments. However, what is fiercely contested is on whether this function is well governed to promote administrative efficiency. This study investigated the implications of public procurement governance within the context of structures, mechanisms, values and processes on administrative efficiency in Uganda's public sector; but with a rejoinder that our findings may be applicable in other polities. The results of our study should assist policy makers to ascertain the significant implications of a well governed public procurement system in promoting administrative efficiency; although other factors/functions deserve equal attention. Our findings confirm that improvements in public procurement governance is likely to contribute to 45% in improvements on administrative efficiency; an indeed significant percentage especially when comparison is directed to the number of functions performed by public organizations. While all the procurement governance dimensions post a statistically significant positive association with administrative efficiency, governance values and processes emerge as the most central procurement governance issues. Such findings present pertinent information which in our view ought to guide policy makers on the need to craft appropriate strategies for promoting administrative efficiency in a country's public sector where majority of citizens have lost confidence in the quality of services being delivered. Based on the findings, we suggest a framework for the 'House of Procurement governance and Administrative efficiency' whose application may cut across a number of public sector contexts in both developed and developing countries.

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INTRODUCTION

To argue that the values of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy have occupied a central position in the academic study of public administration is not out of place. Indeed, as Bourgon, (2007) would remind us, governments have always had a legitimate place as vehicles through which citizens express their values and preferences. However, to argue that governments have diligently performed their core functions to citizen expectations is contestable. Moreover, political economy and public choice literature, informs us that one cannot take for granted that public decision-makers will always use public resources in the most appropriate way (Giordano, Tommasino, & Casiraghi, 2008). Where public decision-makers misuse the public resources, it is the citizens that suffer most. Governments have historically performed many roles-some political, social, and economic as the need for government is traceable from the time when man started living in organized society after a careful realization that as individuals nothing much could be achieved. From an economic point of view, governments use many policy instruments to allocate resources so as to influence the level of economic activity. From a public administration context, the resources expended by governments need to translate to better public goods and services.

Theoretically, the administrative processes of government must be efficient if the resources expended are to translate to better service delivery. Governments work on the logic of input-process-output and outcome framework. Inputs are made up of labour, procurement of goods and services as well as capital consumption (Atkinson, 2005). Inputs when positively implemented produce outputs which in turn when positively measured generate outcomes. Public procurement in this context is seen as an input since if well managed may be associated with administrative efficiencies which in turn would lead to effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence and extant literature portrays an acutely negative image of administrative inefficiencies in Uganda. Even the adoption of New Public Management (NPM) prescriptions which had been epitomized as centers of efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services have generally produced very poor results. The use of the

private sector styles in running government as espoused by NPM has instead poisoned the administrative systems. With the apparent failure of the NPM to fix the public sector ailments, advocates of governance emerged. It is within this context that we use the concepts of procurement governance. Because governance is a power word, a dominant descriptor and the current preference of academic tastemakers, there has been a rush to affix it to all other fashions of the day (Frederickson, 2005).

Government procurement is a key part of a demand-oriented innovation policy (Edler and Georghiou, 2007; Aschhoff and Sofka, 2008). It is often appreciated as an important function of any government. On this subject, Trionfetti, (2000); Brulhart and Trionfetti, (2004) have eloquently defended long history of public procurement in facilitating the running of governments in both developed and developing countries. However, due to the problems of government originating from the procurement function, demand for empirical scrutiny of the function from policy evaluators and academic hunters have become real among scholars. Scholars armed with public administration tools of analysis, are needed to take an interest in matters of public procurement research with a motivating desire to suggest approaches to promote the values of efficiency and effectiveness. Until not too long ago, the subject of public procurement would have received little attention by academic researchers and policy makers, because it was considered an administrative function too mundane to worry about (Wittig, 1998, Thai, 2001). Even then, the level of empirical analysis of the area in many African countries still remains low and in some cases even nonexistent. Universities themselves have not taken public procurement as part of the academic study within public administration. This partly contributes to its neglect in public administration research.

Studies devoted to assessing the implications of procurement governance on administrative efficiency and effectiveness are virtually non-existent in Uganda and yet performance measurement is often viewed as a logical way of demanding accountability (Bruijn, 2007; Heinrich; 2007). Some previous studies have assessed the role of rules and institutions and the scope for privatizing public

sector activities (Persson & Tabellini, 2001; Rodrik, 2000; Strauch & Von Hagen, 2000) in improving the performance of the public sector. However, there is scarcity of information on the benefits of improved procurement governance on administrative efficiency. The scarcity of information on this important aspect is regrettable because it is the sort of evidence that policy makers would require if they were to design performance improvement oriented procurement policies. This is for self evident reasons.

Public procurement supports all government functions (Coe, 1989, McCue & Gianakis, 2001). If the procurement function fails to deliver quality goods and services in a timely fashion, and at an economical price then the performance of government suffers" (Coggburn, 2003, p. 4). Smith and Street (2004) posits that variations in efficiency may lead to unequal quality of services and a consequent perception of unfairness which in turn undermines the public's support for tax funding of public services. Any public financial management system; for which public procurement is part, needs to maximize efficiency. Many stakeholders in Uganda have a perception that the introduction of a new procurement governance regime since 2003 has seriously affected administrative efficiency of the public sector. Architects of this school believe that the prevailing administrative inefficiencies in Uganda's public sector are only attributable to procurement governance which has been fingered as being too bureaucratic and legalistic with no focus on value for money. This perception is 'succeeding' considering the degree of inefficiencies that now characterize all government projects measured by their long completion dates and poor quality services like in road construction projects. Many senior government officials now target public procurement as the primary suspect.

On their part, procurement professionals and practitioners believe that administrative inefficiencies are the ones that undermine efforts to create a better procurement governance regime. This 'war' between the reciprocal relationships of procurement governance and administrative efficiency has been building up and no empirical study has been undertaken to resolve these 'contradictions'. Should these problems remain unresolved; a clear understanding of the weakness in administrative capacity will remain biased. Neither will there be an

attempt to devise procurement governance systems which are based on the principles of scientific reasoning. This study was premised in pursuit of this endeavor. It addressed the central problem relating to lack of empirical research in applying theories that impose a causal logic linking context, procurement governance, and administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

Public procurement governance as the predictor variable was assessed in terms of the procurement governance structures, mechanisms, processes and values. The paper begins with the theoretical framework which alludes to the mechanisms of exploring the interrelationships among the governance dimensions which were theoretically using the transaction cost economics theory. After the theoretical framework we delve into the methodology adopted to conduct the study. We then present results and discuss them before we develop an analytical framework which we label the 'house of procurement governance and administrative efficiency'. . Finally, the paper makes conclusions and draws some important implications for theory and practice before making suggestions for future research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Writing on the state of the discipline of public administration, Denhardt, noted that public administration theory draws its greatest strength and its most serious limitation from its diversity. On one hand, public administration theorists are required to understand a broad range of perspectives relevant to their theory building task. On the other hand, the diversity of public administration often means that the field lacks a sense of identity (Denhardt, 1990: 43). All social science disciplines are interrelated and thus public administration has a number of disciplines from which it borrows. This debate can be extended to the discipline of public procurement which ought to have its natural home from public administration owing to its emphasis on the operations of government systems. For an in-depth study of public administration, an interdisciplinary perspective is often required (Basu, 1994). Like its mother disciplines of public administration, public procurement is a multidisciplinary field. Moreover, it has not yet developed its own scientific theories that can be relied upon to

explain and predict relationships among its study variables. In such a scenario, one has to rely on theories developed in other fields. For academic purposes it suffices to select an administrative theory most relevant for understanding, describing, explaining and predicting the dynamics between procurement governance and administrative efficiency.

In this study was found to be the Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) provided a useful prototype. Transaction cost economics theory broadly involves an interdisciplinary field of law, economics and organization and attempts to explain the governance of transactions based primarily on the assumptions of bounded rationality and opportunism (Erick, 2006). With the changing perception on the role of governments, administrative functions which once were a preserve of government have been transferred to other players. Government agencies engage the private sector and other providers through outsourcing, contracting out and public-private partnerships to deliver public services at a cost. In this arrangement, governance of the contractual arrangements becomes critical. TCE approaches the debate with the bounded rationality which suggests that in decision making, rationality of individuals is limited by the information they have, the cognitive limitations of their minds, and the finite amount of time they have to make decisions. Public procurement is a rules-bound function with specific timelines dictated by the law. While making decisions, those involved usually have limitations on information. For example, those in contracts committee where final decisions of procurement award are made have limitations on information as the system assumes that those players before have done a perfect job. This is not always the case.

Public procurement is one area where such irrationality is widely noticeable. The structural governance of public procurement management in Uganda for example assumes that the contracts committees make decisions based on a thorough job by the evaluation committee as well as the Procuring and Disposal Units (PDUs). It is widely assumed that those on the evaluation committee and the PDU base all their submissions on rationality and yet, this is rarely the case. As a consequence, most decisions have been based on opportunism which creates a number of direct and indirect costs.

While transaction cost economics accepts rationality in some respects, opportunism; which is the conscious policy and practice of taking selfish advantage of circumstances, with little regard for principles often emerges. Opportunism in this context means self-interest seeking with guile, involving some kind of deliberate deceit and the absence of moral restraint. It involves deliberately withholding or distorting important information, or failing to fulfill formal or informal promises and obligations. Transaction costs are the costs associated with planning, adapting, and monitoring task completion under alternative governance structures (Williamson 1985, 2).

Public procurement governance and its object of positively influencing administrative efficiency which in turn contributes to effectiveness operate within the context of well elaborated legal systems, with organizations and individuals making procurement decisions expected to show rationality and behaving ethically to determine the best evaluated bidder. Given that Transaction cost economics (TCE) has emerged as a common framework for understanding how managers craft governance arrangements (Poppo and Zenger, 2002), the general proposition being that managers align the governance features of inter-organizational relationships to match known exchange hazards, particularly those associated with specialized asset investments, difficult performance measurement, or uncertainty (Williamson, 1985), the application of transaction cost economics to this study became relevant. Conceptually, the theory enabled us to identify four classes of variables that were subjected to empirical investigation. These include (1) procurement governance structures, (2) governance mechanisms, (3) governance processes and (4) governance values. The study hypothesized that if there are appropriate structures, mechanisms, processes and values for managing the procurement function, and then public sector organizations are likely to enhance their administrative efficiency and will translate into effectiveness.

Procurement is a legal matter, because it is governed by specific rules and regulations. It is an economic matter because it involves spending money in the most efficient way. It is an organizational matter because the institutions mandated by law to spend the money

are guided by a set of processes. In this interaction, value systems need a central place.

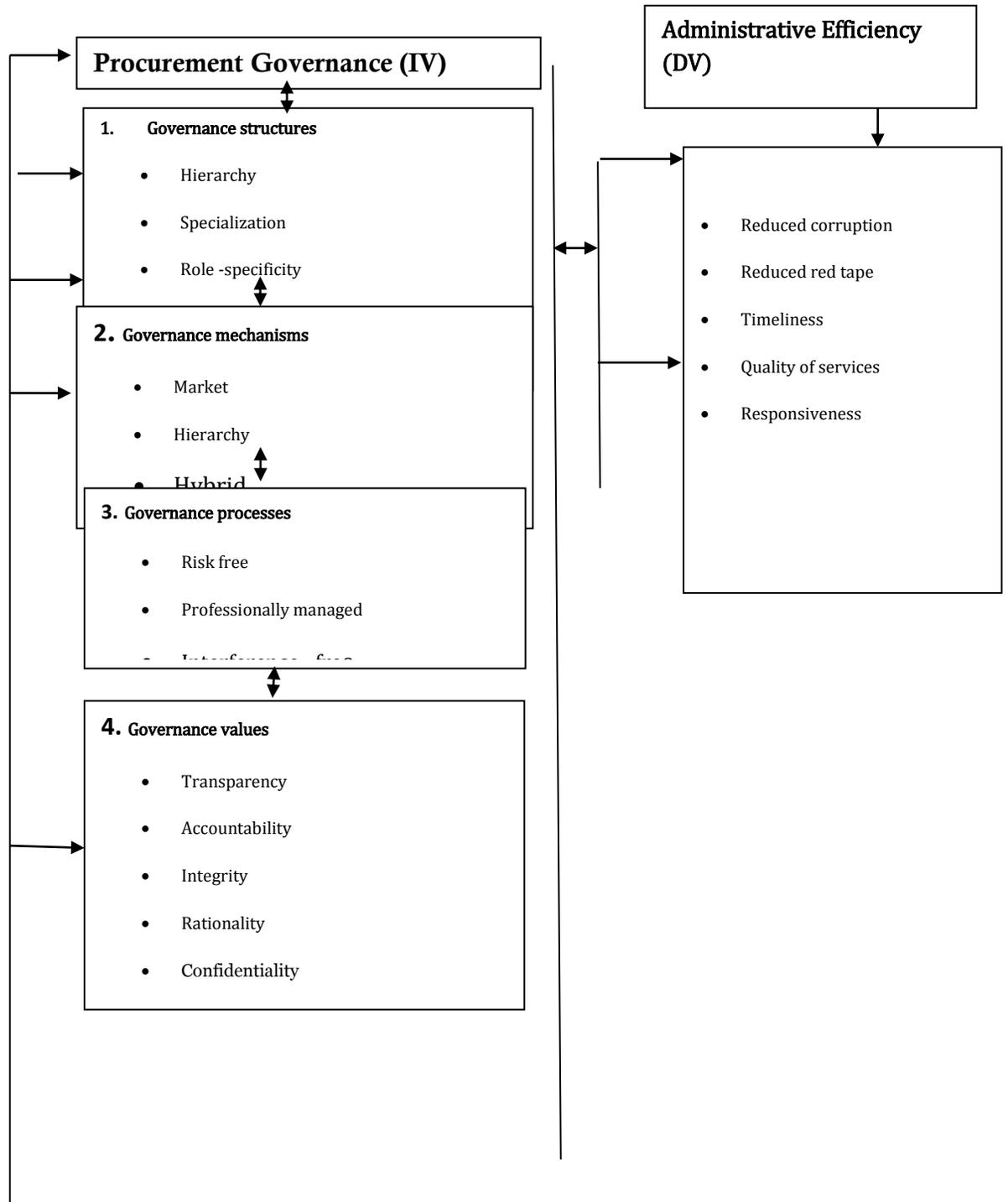
Hughes (2010) confirms that governance has recently gained a rediscovery in the political science/public administration literature offering an opportunity for scholars to adopt such a concept in different contexts. Williamson (1979) defined governance as 'alternative institutional modes for organizing transactions' and 'the institutional matrix within which transactions are negotiated and executed. The institutional arrangements or frameworks through which the procurement activity in Uganda is undertaken constituted the nomenclature of the procurement governance grammar in this study. Moreover, Kooiman (1993) suggests that a description of the governance phenomenon should include the pattern or structure that emerges in a socio-political system as a common outcome of the interaction involving different actors. This indirectly suggests that governance requires an appropriate structure.

Brinkerhoff (2006, p. 270) recommends that an analysis of governance places accountability as a critical element in the framework although other areas of focus may include transparency, and responsiveness. This conception inspired our reliance on certain procurement values of accountability, transparency and responsiveness in addition to concepts of value for money, ethics, confidentiality and trust. All these constitute the fundamentals of a well governed procurement regime. The study was concerned with procurement governance indicators and their interplay on administrative efficiency within the context of a public sector. Procurement processes by nature culminate into a contract between the buyers (a public sector organization like a ministry or department) and the sellers (providers of goods, services and works). Each of these has interests to protect which usually contradict each other. While the buyer is interested in quality goods and services at the right price, in the right quantities, delivered at the right place in a right packaging, the seller is ostensibly interested in maximum profitability. Analyzing contractual governance and performance measurement between these two actors is a matter of necessity (Lusch *et al.*, 2010).

The study contends that a well governed public procurement system involves having appropriate governance structures,

mechanisms, processes and values which conform to best practices. The robustness of a public procurement governance regime guarantees administrative efficiency. The opposite of this is a recipe for inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the public sector machinery. We therefore envisaged a procurement system built on a culture of excellence promotion at each of the public procurement processes. This must be accompanied by a good banquet of professional values including transparency, accountability, openness, trust, professionalism, participation, equity, rule of law, efficiency and effectiveness. While these are mainstream elements of good governance in the general governance literature, the study took them to be public procurement best practices. To carefully explore how the above interrelationships work out to influence administrative efficiency, we developed a conceptual model in figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



NB. All the above are influenced by the developments within the economic, political, social, cultural and technological environments.

Government requirements are obtained from the private sector through a contractual arrangement. Public procurement is a business process within a political system – with distinct considerations of integrity, accountability, national interest and effectiveness (Witting, 1999). This makes its governance challenging. As Williamson (1985) guides us, transactions can mainly be governed within three different structures namely market, hierarchy and the intermediate hybrid structure. Procurement in perfect competition implies market governance, which is most efficient when standardisation and mass-production make transaction-specific investments redundant (Williamson, 1975). Regardless of the type of organizational arrangements and its mission or product, the use of performance standards and incentives serves a basic objective: to focus management attention on important organizational goals and to motivate behavior and decision making that enhance organizational performance toward those goals.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. Descriptive studies provide data about the population or item being studied by describing who, what, how, when and where but do not go into describing the causal effect (Amin, 2005). However, some descriptive studies go an extra mile of examining causality. Our study examined the relationships between four governance dimensions as depicted in the conceptual framework and the measures of administrative efficiency. We acknowledge that mixed methods have come of age and to include only quantitative or qualitative methods falls short of the major approaches being used today in the social and human sciences (Creswell, 2003). However, we also acknowledge

that the quantitative side of the study during design aids conceptual development and instrumentation (Amaratunga, et al, 2002). As Sarantakos (2005:49) suggests that both research methodologies possess certain qualities that make each one suitable for studying a particular aspect that the other cannot address equally effectively, in our view, the subject under investigation was conceived to be covered effectively using the quantitative methodologies because of their scientific rigor.

The population for our study included stakeholders involved in the daily management of the public procurement process. These included accounting officers, members of Contracts Committees and procurement personnel in the procurement and disposal units. It also involved policy makers like the staff of the procurement policy unit in the ministry of finance, the development partners, and the senior staff of the Public procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA). Members of the two relevant committees of parliament responsible for the procurement and accountability sectors were also part of the study population. A sampling frame of the number of procuring and disposing entities was obtained from the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA). By law, each public entity is supposed to have one accounting officer, 5 members of the Contracts Committee and, on average, 5 procurement professionals and there are also technical staff.

The National Development Plan (2010) of Uganda has grouped the country into four major clusters namely (1) primary growth sectors to include agriculture, forestry sector, tourism, mining, oil and gas sector, manufacturing, information and communication technology and housing development; (2) complimentary sectors to include science and technology, transport sector, energy sector, water for production, land management and administration, physical planning, urban development, trade development, financial services and cooperatives; (3) social sectors including population, labour and development, education and sports, skills development, health and nutrition, water and sanitation and social sectors; (4) enabling sectors including legislature, law and order sector, national defense and security, public sector management etc .Random sampling was used to select a cluster of government ministries, departments and

agencies. Stratified sampling was then used to select the final sample sizes for each of the categories.

There are about 148 central Government PDEs (both ministries and statutory bodies). The former stands at about 50 and the latter 98. The country has about 132 Local government PDEs (both districts and municipal councils-MCs). On average, each of the PDEs has at least 2 staff in the Procurement and Disposal Unit (PDU) and their population is estimated to be 560 staff. Again on average, a PDE has 80 staff, (some ministries have about 200 staff yet some Statutory Bodies like Capital Markets Authority have about 10 staff). This gives us an estimated category population of about 21,600. At the moment, the development partners supporting public procurement include the World Bank, Royal Netherlands Government, DFID, UNDP, and the Belgian Technical Cooperation. ADB, DANIDA and USAID used to support the country but have since joined other sectors. The Irish government is also interested, though not yet involved. From each of the donor agencies, at least one respondent had been identified to participate in the study. This gave a total population category of about 12 respondents. The committees of parliament that deal with public procurement issues are the Finance, planning & Economic Development (they approve the budget); PAC (they discuss the Auditor General's report that includes procurement issues); Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (PPDA being a statutory body); Local Government Accounts (discuss local governments' budgets and audit reports); National Economy (sometimes discusses procurement issues generally). Each of these committees has on average ten members and this gives a population of 50 respondents. Based on this computation, we only covered respondents from the central government ministries and excluded the local governments. But other stakeholders were represented as seen in the findings section.

Data was collected using a closed ended questionnaire which was carefully constructed following the conceptualization of the study variables as indicated in the conceptual framework after an extensive review of the literature. Validity regarded the correctness of the information to be collected and this was ensured through empirical and theoretical validation means. The study first pre-tested the survey

instrument as a strategy for ensuring validity. Face validity was confirmed through the use of experts and other prominent scholars knowledgeable on the subject under investigation. Content validity was confirmed through identifying appropriate indicators for the dependent and independent variables. These indicators were identified from theoretically verified concepts. We also used different judges to determine how many of the items were valid or not and we explored it to determine an intra-judge coefficient of validity. The same experts judged the same item more than once and a ratio on each of the items as well as the overall validity of all items was determined. It was found to be above the cut-off of 0.7 alpha coefficient.

Content validity was determined using two approaches. The first approach involved the use of expert judges who were given the instrument without indicating the constructs to which the items belonged. If the opinion of the judge coincided with the pre-determined assignment of the indicators to different constructs, the instrument was considered to have construct validity. In the second complimentary approach, the researchers used exploratory as opposed to confirmatory factor analysis particularly on the dependent variable. The structure of our survey instrument and the emerging reliability (after data collection) as indicated in table 1 confirms the robustness of our instrument.

Table 1-Variables, measures and items in a survey

Variable	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Biographic variables	Questions from 1 to 7 (8 items)	-
Governance structures	Questions from 8-23(16 items)	0.80
Governance Mechanisms	Questions from 24 to 32 (9 items)	0.72
Governance processes	Questions from 33 to 49 (17 items)	0.79
Governance values	Questions from 50 to 74 (25 items)	0.83
Administrative efficiency	Questions from 75 to 109 (35 items)	0.92

The question with 109 items had an overall reliability coefficient of 0.94 which was far ahead of the 0.7 often recommended.

Reliability; the dependability or trustworthiness of the instrument was measured using both internal and external procedures. Internally, reliability was ensured through use of (1) simple descriptors, (2) multiple data sources, (3) creating a careful audit trail of the study process, (4) other researchers to check the accuracy of the congruence of perception, and (5) tape recorders in case of in-depth interviews. As far as the external reliability is concerned, the researchers were as objective as possible. During the design of the instrument, the researchers gave adequate introductions to the instruments to ensure that readers knew the purpose of the study. Respondents were given a detailed explanation as to why and how they were selected and how their information was beneficial. They were assured of maximum confidentiality. We also explained to respondents the data collection procedures meticulously.

Data emerging from the questionnaires was carefully coded, entered and cleaned using the statistical package for social scientists (SPSS). We used frequency, means, standard deviations, cross tabulations and exploratory factor analysis on administrative efficiency measures. Before the actual analysis, our data sets were cleaned through the use of preliminary analysis particularly by examining the minimum and maximum ranges and the percentage distributions. The data was then checked for normality to confirm the classical assumptions assumed by most statistical techniques. We also checked for the problems of multi-collinearity. The data was finally subjected correlation analysis to establish the relationships between the independent and the dependent. Once relationships were examined, we computed regression analysis through examining the co-efficient of determination for the various dimensions to determine the predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.1. Sample characteristics

In this section, we present the background characteristics of our respondents. Such information is useful in not only giving us a context in which the interpretation of our results must be anchored

but is also useful for more advanced statistical analysis. The respondents in the study had varying levels of work experiences in the public sector. Our anticipation was that respondents with longer years of experiences in a public sector have vivid experiences to share on the study variables and more so on how government procurement has comparatively facilitated or inhibited efficiency in the pre-reform and post procurement reform periods. In that regard, 49 (28.0%) were analyzed to be with less than 5 years of work experience, 87 (49.7%) of the respondents had between 5-15 years of experience, 32 (18.4%) had between 16 and 25 years while only 6 (3.4%) had work experience that spanned above 25 years in the public sector. Overall, all the respondents had substantial work experience that we believe gave them reasonable latitude to give their perceptions on the study variables. Moreover, further analysis confirmed that 43 (24.6%) of the respondents were public sector employees who worked at a strategic policy level, 108 (61.7%) were at the middle level of management while 22 (12.6%) operated at lower levels of management.

Public procurement is now a strategic function. In Uganda just like other African countries government procurements estimates constitute over 70% of the budget; a figure that once put to good use has significant implications for delivery of efficient services at both central and local government levels. Members of the Contracts Committee and procurement staff who constituted majority of our respondents are all senior staff in their respective ministries and have an understanding of the public procurement operations in their areas of jurisdiction. Age was in our view another important background variable worth consideration in our study. Different age groups often have different perceptions on subjects like measurement of administrative efficiency *visa vis* public procurement governance. Indeed, most of the public procurement professionals in Uganda are of a relatively younger age; a fact that largely owes from the young nature of the public procurement discipline in the country. Procurement started being offered as a course only in the late 1990s and first graduates did not appear on the market until about 2003. It was found that 37 (21.1%) were below 30 years of age compared to 78 (44.6%) who were between 31 and 40 years of age and 47 (26.9%) and 13 (7.4%) who were between 41-50 years and above 50

years respectively. In terms of gender distribution, the respondents included 94 (53.7%) males and 80 (45.7%) females.

We also examined the religious affiliation of our respondents as it is often perceived to be an important variable when assessing the performance of the public sector in a country like Uganda. Traditionally, some government institutions are known to be dominated by particular religious groups in terms of employment. According to the 2002 census in the country, religious affiliations in the country involved Catholics being 41.9%, Church of Uganda (Anglicans/protestants) were 35.9%, Pentecostal churches -4.6%, Seventh Day Adventists - 1.5%, Orthodox Christians - 0.1%, other Christians -1.2%, Muslims - 12.1%, traditionalists - 1.0%, and Baha'i - 0.1%. We found that the majority of the respondents totaling to 87 (49.7%) were protestants compared to 69 (39.4%) Catholics and the remaining percentage were shared among the remaining religious groupings. Our study further examined the different levels of educational qualifications of our respondents. It was confirmed that 52 (29.7%) were holders of Bachelors Degrees compared to 38 (21.7%) who held postgraduate diploma qualifications, 23 (13.1%) held professional qualifications, 59 (33.7%) had Masters Degrees and the remaining had other qualifications.

Public Procurement is a field claimed by many disciplines and this perception extends to the performance and perception of the effectiveness of this function in administration of the public sector. The views of economists, political scientists, historians, engineers, sociologists, psychologists, lawyers, and Business administration and management professionals among others will differ on how well the public procurement process should be organized. However, as Jeong-Wook Choi (2010:1) rightly observes, procurement activities are very critical to all organizational units from households to firms, organizations, and the government and so the various government employees with different educational backgrounds ought to appreciate the contribution of the public procurement function on the running of government. While sociologists may consider social forces like culture, values, attitudes in public procurement governance, economists would possibly be interested in the costs and benefits of using a particular governance mechanism say relying on the market.

Political scientists would mainly be concerned with the forces which are likely to be at play whenever the public procurement process is underway. Historians would be concerned with how the function has possibly been governed over time just as psychologists would be concerned with the role of individual behavior and group dynamics. Despite these divergent conceptions of the public procurement function, procurement remains an indispensable activity and its successful achievement is essential to any function or individual within an organization.

As seen in tables 2 and 3, the respondents for our study were from different organizations, operating at different levels and had various academic backgrounds which shape our understanding of their perceptions on the likely influence of procurement governance on administrative efficiency in Uganda. It was a homogenous group of respondents which in our views presents a fair picture on the dynamics involved in our study variables. In terms of respondent category table 2 gives a summary.

Table 2-Summary distribution of the respondent classification

Category	Frequency	Percentage
1. Accounting officers	6	3.4%
2. Members of the contracts committees	52	29.7%
3. Staff of the Procurement and Disposal units	84	48.0%
4. User departments	9	5.2%
5. Members of parliament	5	2.9%
6. Development partners	3	1.7%
7. Staff of PPDA	13	7.4%
8. Ministry of Finance-Policy makers	2	1.1%

Table 2 confirms that the majority of the respondents (48.0%) were procurement staff followed by members of the Contracts Committees who constituted 29.7%. Accounting officers constituted only 3.4% of our respondents. Experience suggests that most accounting officers often claim they are too busy to respond to survey questionnaires and this problem has often been experienced in PPDA compliance and monitoring visits and yet, the same people

often complain about public procurement. The staff of the Public Procurement and Disposal Authority (PPDA); a procurement regulatory body in the country constituted 7.4% while user departments constituted 5.2% of our respondents. We wish to observe that from a technical argument, most of the procurement decisions, as provided for in the country's procurement legal framework are handled between the procurement and disposal units manned by procurement professionals and the contracts committees while the accounting officers approves the recommendations emanating from lower levels.

Snider (2006:275) suggests that a significant amount of procurement literature reflects concern over perceptions of the field as merely clerical or tactical function; a conclusion that ignores the substantial literature which often reports that procurement has now moved to a strategic level. The author blames the literature as generally introspective because it is in his view produced by members of the procurement community in procurement -related publications, the principal audience of which are members of that same community. On this same subject, Murray (2008:7) offers a suggestion that to improve the validity of public procurement strategy and management research there is a need to be more critical of potential responses from procurement managers and look for triangulation from other actors, particularly those of the respective politicians. Our paper triangulates the findings as a significant number of contract committee members who technically are not procurement professionals emerged among the major respondents for our study. Responses from other categories as represented above equally offer very useful insights for generating views on our study subject instead of solely relying on views from the procurement professionals.

Our focus on the public sector in this research addresses a potential limitation of existing public procurement research which has focused on traditional, private sector procurement aspects as opposed to fully exploring the uniqueness of public procurement (Murray, 2008:6). In a further attempt to address limitations caused by reliance on procurement professionals, we thus included in our study a background variable of the academic fields of specialization

of our respondents. Findings from this variable are summarized in table 3.

Table 3-Professional areas of specialization

Discipline of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1. Accountancy and Finance	19	10.9%
2. Procurement	88	50.3%
3. Law	9	5.1%
4. Engineering	3	1.7%
5. Education	5	2.9%
6. Public Administration	40	22.9%
7. Others	9	5.3%

Our views in the study are representative of the major professional areas that work in the public sector. Public procurement is an interdisciplinary field of practice. Even the academic study of public procurement relies on insights from well established disciplines. In our study, 19 (10.9%) of our respondents were professionals in accountancy and finance, 88 (50.3%) were procurement professionals, 9 (5.1%) had a legal background, 3 (1.7%) were from the engineering profession, 5 (2.9%) from education, 40 (22.9%) from public administration and other specialization areas constituted 10 (5.3%).

1.2. Descriptive results for public procurement governance Structures

The political institutions and administrative structures of a country provide the context for all government activities. The public procurement function of the country is often managed within the framework of government organizational structure. Public procurement is usually a highly regulated activity and often involves an elaborate legally instituted structure through which various players perform their tasks. We examined how public procurement governance structures are likely to influence administrative efficiency. Traditionally, the Weberian Model is one of the common structural approaches in public administration. Such a model emphasizes

hierarchy, specialization, role-specificity, and recruitment by merit, promotion by seniority, career development, training, discipline, and separation between personal and official means (Basu, 1994, p.382). However, as Dumaine, (1991) opines, though not realistically, in modern administrative systems, the bureaucratic forms of structure have been in retreat. This analysis is farfetched as many organizations, particularly in the public sector, are still far from abandoning bureaucracy (Appelbraum & Batt, 1994; Marsden et al., 1994).

While authors like Heckscher and DonneUon, (1994) have even suggested the "post-bureaucracy" era characterized by "the reduction of formal levels of hierarchy, an emphasis on flexibility rather than rule-following and the creation of a more permeable boundary between the inside and outside of organizations, the public sector in almost all countries remains a bureaucratic organization. Some public sector organizations have tried the flexibility route but this has remained more on paper than in practice. There is inconceivably no activity of government that does not prescribe a structured way on how such a function out to be performed. Some public sector organizations have resorted to increased use of subcontracting, temporary working and consultants rather than permanent and/or in-house expertise (Grey & Garsten, 2001). However, in this regard, our measurement of governance structures took cognizant of the features of the traditional structures though some could have implications for the post-bureaucratic structures. Table 4 presents the respondent's assessment on each of the items.

Table 4-Descriptive statistics for public procurement governance structures

Item measures for Governance structures	M	SD	N
1. Structure should have strong institutions with quality public service	4.67	.495	173
2. PP structure should have strong appeals mechanism for complaints	4.57	.562	174
3. PP structure should have accountability mechanisms by all stakeholders	4.70	.473	175
4. PP structure should have hierarchical separation of responsibilities	4.51	.566	174
5. PP structure should have independence by PPDA in performing its	4.55	.668	173

duties				
6.	PP structure should have recruitment of all PPDA & PDU staff by merit	4.71	4.71	174
7.	PP Structure should have PPDA & PDE staff trained in procurement law	4.63	.496	175
8.	PP structure should provide for evaluation of all PPDA & PDE staff	4.58	.517	175
9.	PP structure should have independent appointment of the PPDA Board	4.59	.638	172
10.	PP structure should have PPDA Board include all professions in Uganda	4.21	.925	172
11.	PP structure should have all accounting officers trained in procurement law	4.43	.629	175
12.	PP structure should evaluate procurement plan performance of AO	4.40	.578	173
13.	PP structure should have all AOs trained in management	4.47	.556	172
14.	PP structure should have CC members with senior staff of high integrity	4.47	.678	173
15.	PP structure should have CC members trained in procurement law	4.55	.532	175
16.	PP structure should have CC membership inclusive of all major professions	4.28	.761	171
17.	PP structure should have regular rotation of procurement staff in PDUs	4.13	1.03	174
18.	PP structure to evaluate staff's capacity to handle ethical dilemmas	4.42	.571	173
19.	PP structure should employ procurement staff with no criminal records	4.44	.717	174
20.	PP structure should have effective supervision of all procurement staff	4.50	.566	174
21.	PP structure should have evaluation of performance of all procurement staff	4.55	.544	173
22.	PP structure should provide for proper recordkeeping system	4.69	.463	175
23.	PP structure should have effective system for good recordkeeping	4.67	.472	175

A comparative analysis of the items measuring procurement governance structures (table 4) reveals useful information pertaining to the perceptions of respondents on the kind of procurement structure they believe ought to be in a country if the public procurement system is to be structured in a way that would promote

administrative efficiency. Generally, the results indicate that the majority of respondents expressed a high degree of rating for each of the measures of governance structures as the mean scores were all above 4.2 on the basis of a 5-likert scale. The highest ranked items which suggests the strong ranking by respondents included the need to have a public procurement governance structure where (1) recruitment of all PPDA & PDU staff ought to be by merit, (2) accountability mechanisms by all stakeholders is emphasized., (3) proper recordkeeping system for all public procurement transactions is highly prioritized and (4) the system of good recordkeeping is actually maintained, (5) strong institutions with quality public service at the fore front and finally where (6) all PPDA & PDE staff are trained in procurement law. These findings confirm the superiority of traditional Weberian model of structures. Weber conceived that the most efficient organization had to be based on promotions by merit, accountability of public officials as there was a need to distinguish public and private interests, extensive use of records and a focus on public services.

The above findings confirm the assertion by Appelbraum and Batt, (1994) who contend that an assertion of the death of bureaucracy is farfetched as many organizations, particularly in the public sector, are still far from abandoning bureaucracy. Governance structures are institutional in nature, and they define the choice set and determine transaction and production costs and the profitability and feasibility of engaging in economic activity' (North, 1991, p. 97). Recently, proponents of government reinvention and New Public Management have attacked the traditional approach to public management- a fact that is applicable to procurement as it is responsible precisely for failing to attain the managerial values of efficiency and effectiveness as construed from the views of Coggburn, (2003); Gianakis & Wang, (2000); and Thai & Grimm, 2000). Our findings are indicative of the strong need to have a reliance on 'traditional' Weberian systems which had public interest at the forefront. The highest ranked items all relate to traditional principles which have their foundations on Max Weber's conception of what a bureaucracy should entail.

Public procurement has become known for corruption necessitating a need for a rigid structure but which is driven by public service values. We argue that while highly centralized and regulated procurement based on the traditional model entails excessive compliance costs for both government purchasers and those wishing to do business with government and has sometimes in our view been wrongly accused of inefficiency (too many steps, too time-consuming) and ineffectiveness (the goods purchased do not meet end users' needs), the findings in this study confirm a need to establish appropriate structures to hedge against rampant unethical problems that characterize most public organizations. Our findings therefore do not support the views of writers like Gansler (2002) who say that government purchases of goods and services take too long, cost too much, and often don't result in the highest quality". If structures are appropriately designed to be managed by the right people recruited through merit and guided by the need to serve public interest as opposed to private interest, efficiency ought to be promoted. However, human beings who occupy the structures of procurement have a critical role to play in either enhancing or frustrating efficiency.

The findings on the high rankings for all the measures of procurement governance structures were reflected by a wide range of respondent categories. For example, on whether public procurement structures in Uganda's public sector ought to have systems for ensuring accountability by all stakeholders, both male and female respondents strongly supported this view considering that 94 (54.0%) of the male respondents agreed with the statement as did 80 (46%) of the female respondents. Respondents with different age groups equally gave high ratings for these items as was the case for other items. For example our cross-tabulation analysis confirmed that 37 (21.3%) of the respondents below 30 years agreed to the need for accountability of all stakeholders, as compared to 78 (44.8%) between 31 and 40 years of age, 47 (27.0%) between 41 and 50 years of age and 13 (7.5%) above 50 years of age who rated the same variable. This confirms to us that structures have not boundaries but all respondents supported the need to establish an appropriate procurement governance structure.

1.3. Descriptive results for Governance Mechanisms measures

Our review of literature revealed an illustrative analogue of a governance mechanism by Manelli and Vincent (1995) which assumed that in attempting to acquire an object, a buyer often must decide whether to exploit competition among a pool of potential sellers or simply bargain with a given seller. Although economists often do not doubt the benefits of relying on competitive behavior, competition may have some highly undesirable self-selection consequences. Indeed, there is a general perception in Uganda’s public sector and the citizens in general that the competitive procurement regime has affected efficiency of government departments. The president of the country himself, a believer of market liberalization, has blamed the use of private contractors as the primary source of poor road construction works in the country; a phenomenon that he assumes has also fueled corruption in that sector. Instead, he supports Force Account.

Three governance structures have been in use and include market with price, hierarchy with authority and hybrids with trust. Procurement governance mechanism in Uganda has focused on market with price and hierarchy with authority but minimum efforts have been directed to trust. Contracts; which culminate from the procurement process, are considered a key mechanism of governing inter-organizational exchange (Hart, 1988; Williamson, 1985). A formal contract signifies that the exchange is important to both parties in the relationship and provides details of the exchange and assisting in its monitoring (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972). Building on the central tenets of transaction cost economics (TCE), contracts are designed to ensure that quality, price, quantity and other requirements are to the agreement of the buyer. In table 5 we summarize results pertaining to measures of governance mechanism.

Table 5-Descriptive results for the measures of governance mechanisms

Item Measures for Governance Mechanisms	M	SD	N
1. PP should emphasize reducing overall administrative cost of procurement	4.47	.651	174

2.	PP should emphasize using the market to determine procurement prices	4.18	.838	174
3.	PP should emphasize relying on prices quoted by providers	3.50	1.26	175
4.	PP should emphasize encouraging use of force account	3.91	.820	170
5.	PP should emphasize allowing negotiations to come to reduced prices	4.16	.892	173
6.	PP should allow government's strong say on works, health, defense etc procurements	4.10	.968	173
7.	PP should encourage a system of no-PDU contact with providers during tendering	3.86	1.18	173
8.	PP should emphasize citizens to monitor procurement implementation	4.36	.688	175
9.	PP should emphasize discouraging unfair competitive practices	4.65	.587	175

Table 5 indicates the rating of respondents on governance mechanism indicators. Items with a highest score indicate a high degree of ranking by the respondents. The results confirm that all the measures were highly rated as indicated from the mean scores which were all above 3 (based on a 5-likert scale). A further frequency analysis suggests that when asked whether public procurement in Uganda should emphasize reducing the overall administrative cost of procurements, 165 (94.8%) agreed compared to 3 (1.7%) who disagreed and only 6 (3.4%) who were undecided. This implies that the majority of respondents believe that Uganda's public procurement system has high administrative costs which a well governed public procurement system ought to address. The length of the public procurement process in most public sector organizations in Uganda is presumably one of the sources of these administrative costs. Indeed, when the respondents were asked to comment on whether the public procurement systems in Uganda should encourage the use of markets to determine the prices of all procurements, 145 (84.5%) of the respondents agreed while only 9 (5.2%) disagreed and 18 (10.3%) were undecided. This information is useful in pointing to the areas where the public sector in Uganda should direct its efforts if there is to be better procurement governance.

The use of force account as a method of procurement was also strongly supported by 115 (65.7%) of the respondents compared to 5 (2.9%) who disagreed and 50 (29.4%) who were undecided. While these findings could indicate the high rating, the hidden interpretations to this could also point to the wish by majority of the stakeholders to have control over the procurement processes. In our study, the support for negotiations to reduce prices for procurements currently prohibited by the public procurement regulations in Uganda was measured and confirmed that 147 (84%) agreed compared to only 1 (0.6%) who disagreed and 12 (6.9%) were undecided. This information is suggestive of the perceptions among stakeholders that the market prices for government procurements are always high. Asked whether it was prudent to encourage a procurement system where non-PDU staff have contact with the bidders during tendering, only 7 (4.0%) agreed, 24 (13.7%) were undecided, 77 (44%) disagreed while 66 (38%) strongly disagreed. On whether citizens should be allowed to monitor procurement implementation, 3 (1.7%) disagreed, 12 (6.9%) were undecided, 79 (45.1%) agreed and 81 (46.3%) strongly agreed. These findings provide useful information for any strategy intended to improve the public procurement system in the country.

1.4. Descriptive results for Governance Values

Public procurement requires an integrated, sequenced and well-coordinated approach, and a need to address all the relevant factors affecting its success (Hameiri, 2009). Unlike private procurement, public procurement is a business process within a political system – with distinct considerations of integrity, accountability, national interest and effectiveness (Witting, 1999). During the process of managing public procurement which involve (a) planning and advance information; (b) preparing the tender documentation with the requirements to the product and supplier and the evaluation formula, and publication of the contract notice; (c) collecting and evaluation of the bids; (d) contracting; and (e) implementation (Pashev, 2009), systems for addressing the vulnerabilities and exposure to abuse need careful consideration.

Discussions about procurement variably reflects societal emphases on various administrative values which must be pursued and the means they use to pursue which all reflect decisions made within complex value environment (VanWart, 1998). We argue in our paper that a well governed public procurement system must have known core values which ought to guide all stakeholders involved in the process of acquisition of government. In table 6 below, the findings regarding the respondent's ranking on this indicator are summarized:-

Table 6- Descriptive for the measures of public procurement governance values

Items	M	SD	N
1. Procurement staff not to get involved in political activities	4.13	1.09	174
2. Systems should not disclose confidential information by all officers	4.38	.815	174
3. Preventing future employment by those found to be corrupt	4.27	.833	175
4. Strict obligations to declare assets and income before employment	4.05	1.07	175
5. Prohibition of conflict of interest in whatever form	4.50	.624	175
6. Introduction of special sanctions for procurement offenses	4.31	.710	173
7. Ensuring independence in work for procurement officials	4.49	.606	174
8. Publishing bid notices for all methods of procurement	4.06	1.15	175
9. Evaluation criteria announced before the bid process	4.44	.801	174
10. Communication to unsuccessful bidders on their failures	4.53	.633	175
11. Punitive prohibit political interference in procurement process	4.67	.482	175
12. Punitive prohibit bureaucrat's interference in procurement process	4.66	.486	173
13. Public procurement should be considered a strategic function	4.59	.569	175
14. Environmental protection should be a key selection criteria	4.35	.670	173
15. Encourage public-private partnerships	4.39	.643	174
16. Put more emphasis on monitoring and management of contracts	4.51	.556	174
17. Government to set clear performance standards for contractors	4.58	.518	175

As can be inferred from table 6, the most important public procurement governance values highly rated by respondents and likely to have a significant contribution to any strategy for promoting administrative efficiency in Uganda's public sector are implied from the mean scores. Items with a high mean score indicate their favorable rating by respondents as compared to others. A comparative analysis of the mean scores, confirms that the most rated governance values included the need to have a system where (1) punitive measures to prohibit political interference in procurement process and (2) punitive measures to prohibit top bureaucrats from interfering in the procurement process are instituted. These two findings are indicative of the perceived or real scenarios in Uganda's public procurement where political and technical people interfere with the procurement process. Most of the problems experienced in public procurement system are a result of interference by the political and highly ranked technical officials of government. Yet, at the conception of public procurement reforms in 1997, politicians were to be excluded from participating in the process of procurement in favor of the technical staff that were presumed to be of superior competency and would possibly be less corrupt. Unfortunately, evidence from this study and the practical scenarios in this function of government confirms that both groups are seriously interfering with the process largely for personal benefit, although quite often, they do so under the guise of public interest.

Consistent with the procurement laws in Uganda, all public procuring entities are required to ensure economy and efficiency, transparency, competition, accountability, non-discrimination, reservation, fairness, confidentiality, ethics and preference (Ntayi, Ahiauzu & Eyaa, 2011). However, from the early stages of procurement planning to contract implementation, the procurement process is rife with not only the opportunities for corruption but trenchant cases of outright robbery of public resources. Quite often, the public procurement environment in Uganda is characterized by lack of transparency and high 'monitoring costs', as well as bribery which have played a role in influencing which firms win public contracts (Basheka, 2011). The practice is rampant at all levels of government and goes beyond a single sector of the economy and the procurement categorization. These manipulative techniques appear

in supplies, services and works but they become more of a grand form when it comes to procurement of works. These developments contradict the view that public procurement ought to be a central instrument to ensure efficient and corruption-free management of public resources (OECD, 2007).

In terms of frequency distributions when a statement was posed to the study respondents on whether there was a need to punitively prohibit bureaucrat’s interference in the public procurement process, 56 (32.0%) and 116 (66.3%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively. On whether such punitive measures should be put to the politicians, 55 (31.4%) agreed and 119 (68.0%) strongly agreed confirming that these two items whose mean scores were the highest had high rankings from all the respondents. This rating came across all categories of study respondents.

1.5. Descriptive results for Governance processes

Literature informs us that governance is expensive to direct and is often focused on short-term profits and organizational systems that fail to achieve desired results (Baucus and Beck-Dudley, 2000). In this regard, the need for certain values, policies, processes and institutions becomes of essence. Moreover, as Furubotn and Richter (1997) suggest, governance can be regarded as the 'system of rules plus the instruments that serve to enforce the rules'. Our study involved measuring the governance processes whose findings we summarize in table 7.

Table 7-Measures for the public procurement governance processes

Items	M	SD	N
1. Identify potential areas of corruption in the procurement process	4.55	.532	175
2. Reduce the length of the procurement process	4.47	.668	175
3. Encourage procurements that generate value for money	4.63	.520	174
4. Aim at getting better quality products rather than lowest prices	4.64	.516	175
5. Reduce procurements that take a long process	4.33	.958	174
6. Disqualify providers based on criminal activities	4.49	.668	175
7. Promote records-based procurement process decisions	4.39	.643	174

8.	Emphasize the pre-bid and post-bid phases	4.40	.671	174
9.	Discourage exceptions to competitive procedures	4.18	.829	173
10.	Establish minimum transparency benchmarks	4.42	.680	175
11.	Review internal micro-procurement procedures in entities	4.36	.646	174
12.	Encourage entities to reduce internal inefficiencies	4.53	.512	175
13.	Discourage selective display of procurement information	4.47	.719	174
14.	Give procurement staff adequate tools to do their work	4.70	.458	175
15.	Put an appropriate number of procurement staff in each PDU	4.59	.515	175
16.	Equip procurement people with project and risk management skills	4.56	.531	175
17.	Maintain a clear chain of approvals in procurement process	4.51	.586	175
18.	Carry out annual procurement audits in all entities	4.57	.551	175
19.	Ensure that procurement audits take a risk-based approach	4.47	.585	174
20.	Ensure adequate systems for challenging procurement decisions	4.40	.588	173
21.	Encourage alternative dispute resolution mechanisms than courts	4.25	.859	175
22.	Promote whistle blowing as an administrative culture	4.08	.956	175
23.	Involve civil society in monitoring procurement implementation	4.13	.855	175
24.	Encourage end users to scrutinize the delivered services	4.50	.577	174
25.	Automate key stages of the public procurement process	4.40	.634	175

As seen from the above findings, the respondents gave an impressively high rating of all measures of the governance processes. Their ratings are indicative of the kind of public procurement process that respondents perceive should be in Uganda's public sector. An analysis of the item ranking suggests a need for policy makers to focus on building a procurement process less of 'procurement risks' as a deliberate intervention to promote administrative efficiency. The findings concur with the existing governance literature. Good governance, according to most accounts should be participatory, transparent, effective and efficient, responsive, accountable, consensus oriented, equitable and inclusive and should be based on rule of law. There is also a need for accountability long argued to be one aspect for eliminating corruption and promoting transparency in

government (Kaufman, 2005). Day and Klein (1987) identified five types of accountability – political, financial, professional, managerial and legal. They highlighted the need for public officials to be accountable for responding to the needs of citizens, using taxpayers’ money judiciously, remaining dedicated to their professions, properly using authority delegated to them for specified tasks, and upholding the rule of law. However, the suggestions by DeLeon (1998:553) that “different accountability mechanisms are appropriate in different circumstances depending on the type of problems it is designed to handle, needs to be taken into account.

1.6. Measuring administrative efficiency in Uganda’s public sector

Efficiency is a word claimed by both the public and private sector but in a bureaucracy, it means the ability to fulfill the given objectives with the optimum use of resources (Anitha, 2007). Bogason, (2002) and Schachter, (2007) convey to us that the status of efficiency and effectiveness as core values in the study of public administration has been extensively acknowledged although efficiency has often been a fiercely contested concept. As Rutgers and van der Meer, (2010) wishes us to believe, before the 19th century, one may look in vain for references to the concept of efficiency; even in such fundamental economic treatises such as Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (1776) and Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital* (1867) as they all lacked serious references to efficiency. Efficiency is traceable to the Aristotelian era and its meaning became dominant in the 20th-century studies of public administration. We measured administrative efficiency using the following dimensions:-

Table 8-Measures of administrative efficiency in Uganda

Items	M	SD	N
1. Length of procurement complaints in courts	3.30	1.175	174
2. The functionality of the technology used in procurements	3.90	.833	173
3. The lead time for service delivery related to procurements	4.26	.773	175
4. The amount of time a customer spends in need of a service	4.13	.891	174
5. Well-functioning administrative review procedures	4.28	.718	174

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6. Adequate policies for all government functions	4.21	.787	173
7. Responsive systems to customer needs	4.34	.632	174
8. Fully functional government systems of operations	4.32	.645	173
9. Public servants being competent in their work	4.53	.555	173
10. Government finances being released on time for procurement	4.61	.556	174
11. Decision- making in government being based on careful analysis	4.44	.666	174
12. Involvement of stakeholders in decisions	4.26	.758	174
13. Limited interference from politicians in decision making	4.55	.667	174
14. Good coordination of all government functions	4.52	.596	174
15. Innovative systems of government administration	4.42	.571	174
16. Efficient management of policy making in government	4.47	.605	174
17. Decentralized systems of management	4.20	.840	174
18. The public sector appreciating the potential of its human resources	4.25	.731	174
19. Communication in government being well coordinated	4.48	.596	174
20. There being rationalized payroll management	4.31	.694	173
21. Public administration expenditure being under control	4.42	.709	172
22. Government building capacity in all areas	4.44	.631	174
23. Civil service leadership being encouraged in government	4.35	.617	173
24. Process improvement initiatives being mandatory	4.31	.668	173
25. There being serious monitoring of government activities	4.53	.534	174
26. There being alignment of sectoral policies with government strategy	4.37	.582	172
27. Inter-ministerial consultations being highly encouraged	4.29	.715	173
28. There being good capacity for negotiating government contracts	4.40	.646	172
29. Government has effective systems of handling conflicts	4.41	.705	174
30. Civil servants access their performance appraisal	4.35	.774	174
31. Equal training opportunities to all employees	4.46	.677	174
32. Government using applied research in making decisions	4.32	.713	173
33. Government encouraging professionalism and ethics in its	4.61	.489	174

activities			
34. Government believing in harnessing diversity in workforce	4.40	.646	173
35. Government departments encourage inter-collaboration	4.40	.608	173

As indicated in table 8, thirty-five (35) variables were used to seek views of stakeholders on appropriate measures of administrative efficiency in Uganda’s public sector context for which an improved public procurement governance regime would contribute. All the variables as seen from the table, received a high degree of rating by the respondents. A comparative analysis of the item scores reveals useful information on what respondents perceive as critical benchmarks on which they judge the efficiency of the public sector as well as areas which ought to receive adequate attention by policy makers. Moreover, the highest rated measures of administrative efficiency based on the mean score that include the need for (1) government to encourage professionalism and ethics in its activities, (2) limited interference from politicians in decision making, (3) need to have serious monitoring of government activities and (4) good coordination of all government functions are central for the well functioning of any contemporary administrative system worth the name. However, to develop a conceptual categorization for measures of administrative efficiency, we subjected all the 35 items to exploratory factor analysis. These results are illustrated in table 9.

Table 9-Factor analysis results for the measures of administrative efficiency

Efficiency being measured was based on:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Government believing in harnessing diversity in workforce	.76							
2. Civil Servants accessing their performance appraisals	.73							
3. Government using applied research in making decisions	.69							
4. Equal training opportunities to all employees	.68							

23. Adequate policies for all government functions									.66
Percentage variance explained									
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.84								
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	1956.43								
df	406								
Sig.	0.000								

A comparative analysis of the factor loadings for each of the items suggests the most highly perceived measures of administrative efficiency in Uganda’s public sector. From these loadings, we imply the most important areas which require attention by policy makers in Uganda. Factor analysis seeks to resolve a large set of measured variables in terms of relatively few categories, known as factors. The technique allows the researcher to group variables into factors (based on correlation between variables) and the factors so derived may be treated as new variables. The factor loadings represent the correlation between the particular variable and the factor (Kothari, 2003:322). Sekaran (2003:408) suggests that factor analysis helps to reduce a vast number of variables (for example all questions tapping several variables of interest in a questionnaire) to a meaningful, interpretable and manageable set of factors. Analysis of the 35 items that measured the administrative efficiency using factor analysis returned 23 items with a total variance of 65%.

These items loaded on 8 principal components although the 8th component, which had only one item loading on it, was stayed in our subsequent analysis and interpretation. The first principal component with a total variance of 27.4% had four items with the highest factor loading of .76 and lowest of 0.68. This was followed by principal component two which had a total variance of 9.3% with a total of five items with the highest factor loading of 0.81 and the lowest being 0.64. The third principal component had a total variance of 6.5% with the highest factor loading of 0.76 and the lowest as 0.53. The fourth and fifth principal components with two items each had a total variance of 5.2% and 4.7% respectively. Finally, the sixth

and seventh principal components each with three items had a total variance of 4.3 % and 3.7% respectively.

In order to establish the relationships between all the procurement governance measures and administrative efficiency, we run a correlation analysis. We used a Pearson Product moment correlation to determine the relationship among the various measures of public procurement governance administrative efficiency. This style of correlation is used when both variables, which the researcher wishes to, study, are measured at ration or interval scales and are continuous (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999: 132). The authors suggest that if the correlation co-efficient obtained has a positive sign, it means that there is a positive relationship between the two variables which means that as variable x increases, variable y increases as well, and vice versa. Pfeifer (2000) confirms that a correlation is very low if the co-efficient has a value under 0.20, low is the correlation value if between 0.21 and 0.40, is moderate if the coefficient has a value between 0.41 and 0.70, is high if the coefficient is has a value between 0.71 and 0.91, and is very high if the correlation is over 0.91. Table 10 gives a summary of the findings.

Table 10-Relationship between governance dimensions and administrative efficiency (N=175)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	R ²
1. Governance structures	1	.242** .001	.576** .000	.512** .000	.333** .000	0.110
2. Governance mechanisms		1	.316** .000	.258** .001	.206** .006	0.042
3. Governance values			1	.542** .000	.391** .000	0.152
4. Governance processes				1	.387** .000	0.149
5. Administrative efficiency					1	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 gives us the positive relationships among all the measures of procurement governance and administrative efficiency. For the first independent variable (governance structures) the correlation between public procurement governance structures and administrative efficiency is $r=.333^{**}$, (sig, 0.000) at 99% confidence level. This implies that any improvements in the governance structures for public procurement in Uganda are likely to have a similar positive contribution towards improved administrative efficiency. The table also indicates that there is a positive association between the governance mechanisms and administrative efficiency ($r=.206^{**}$) at 95% confidence level (sig=0.006). The association between governance values and administrative efficiency is also confirmed to be positive ($r=.391^{**}$, sig.0.000) at 99% confidence level. Finally, our results also support a positive association between public procurement governance structures and administrative efficiency ($r=.387^{**}$, sig=0.000) at 99% confidence level. Existence of relationships among the measures of procurement governance and administrative efficiency does not imply causation (that one automatically affects the other). We thus use the co-efficient of determination to assess the likely impact of each of the independent variables on administrative efficiency.

The co-efficient of determination describes the common variance, that is, the degree of variability shared by two variables. It is the square of the coefficient of correlation (r^2), and offers an index of predictability (Sarantakos, 2005:381). It is useful because it gives the proportion of the variance (fluctuation) of one variable that is predictable from the other variable and it is a measure that allows us to determine how certain one can be in making predictions from a certain model/graph. For example, if r for procurement governance structure = 0.333, then $r^2=0.110$, which means that 11% of the total variation in y (administrative efficiency) can be explained by the governance indicators. Using the same logic, governance mechanisms would account for a variation of only 4.2%, governance values would account for 15.3% while governance processes would account for 15% of the variations in administrative efficiency. By combining all the independent variables together, they account for a

total variance of 45.5% implying that 54.5% of the variations in efficiency are not explained by public procurement governance. However, these findings portray to us the significance of better public procurement governance in improving administrative efficiency in Uganda.

These findings confirm that the most important public procurement governance measure is the governance values followed by the governance processes. The environmental influences as depicted in our conceptual framework offers a possible guidance on the contribution of others factors. Based on the rankings by respondents on the measures of administrative efficiency and procurement governance, we develop a framework presented in figure 1.

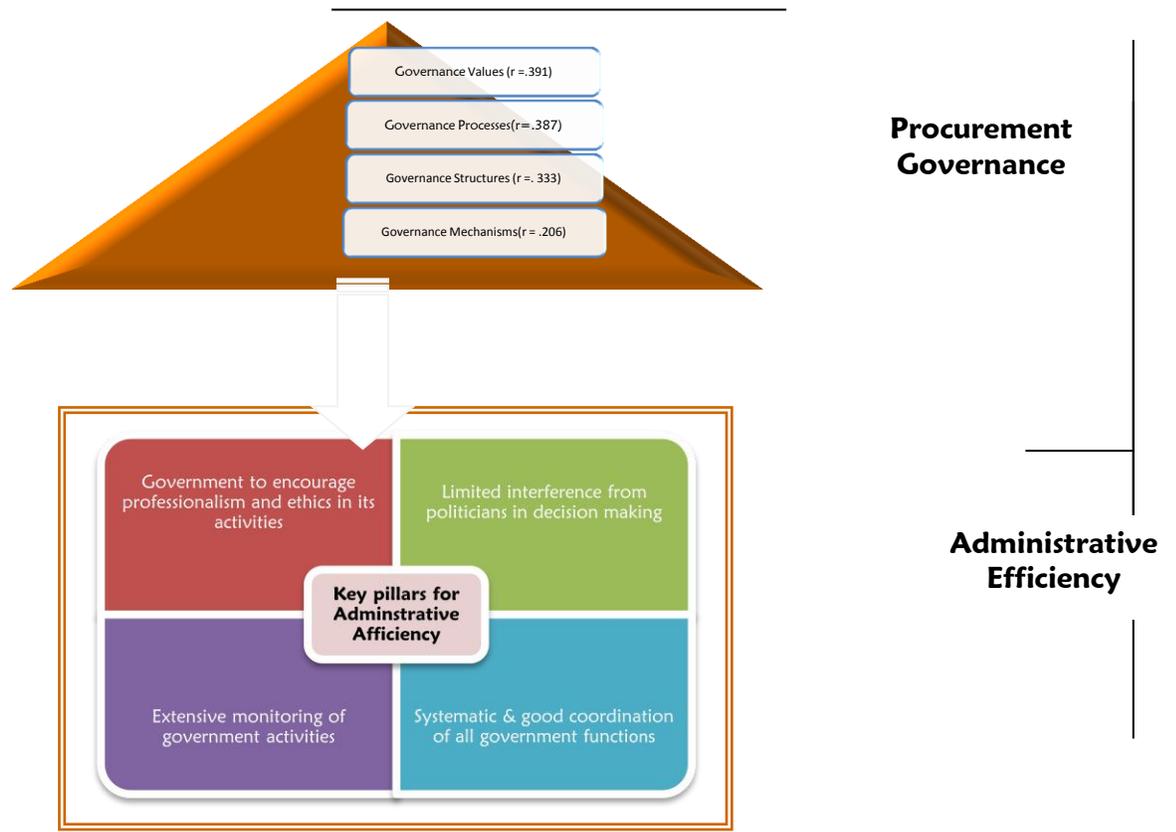


Figure 2-House of procurement governance and administrative efficiency

The House of Procurement governance and Administrative efficiency is a framework that depicts four key pillars of administrative efficiency as important ingredients of ensuring a good procurement governance system. We have assessed the relationship between the measures of procurement governance and administrative efficiency and found a statistically significant positive relationship. Public Procurement operates in broader social, political, economic and administrative arrangements of government. Promoting good procurement governance is unconceivable within an administrative system that does not cherish efficiency. Based on the

theory of reciprocity, our thesis is that administrative efficiency ought to be moved to perfection before a long term strategy of building a well governed public procurement system can be attained. Moreover, the fact that our results point to significant weaknesses in the performance of administrative systems as confirmed by high rankings of the participants' perception of what they consider to be important variables of efficiency provided us with useful information to justify our argument. For example, by having an administrative system that (1) encourages professionalism and ethics in its activities, (2) limits unnecessary interference of politicians (and bureaucrats) in decision making, (3) , encourages extensive monitoring of activities and finally (4) encouraging systematic and coordinated management of public programmes, the procurement governance values, processes, structures and mechanism will be improved. We therefore argue that one of the building blocks for a good public procurement regime ought to be an efficient administrative system.

6. Conclusions and Implications

In this study, results confirm that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between procurement governance and administrative efficiency. By implication, an improvement in the way public procurement is governed has important implications for any strategy to improve administrative efficiency in Uganda's public sector. However, the measures of administrative efficiency also point to the need to have efficient systems in our public sector organizations before procurement can be well governed. The implication is the existence of reciprocity relationships between procurement governance and administrative efficiency. Moreover, even the procurement governance dimensions also present these reciprocal relationships as seen from the correlation analyses. In general, our results indicate that public procurement governance could explain up to 45% of the variations in administrative efficiency which a high percentage given the complex nature of the public sector and the factors which ought to explain administrative efficiency. The unexplained percentage could be explained by other factors.

Our study confirms that procurement governance values and processes play a more significant role in promoting administrative

efficiency than other governance dimensions. This finding offers an important framework upon which policy decisions ought to be directed. With respect to governance structures and mechanisms, much as the results in our study posted a statistically significant positive association with administrative efficiency, their contribution as individual variables is clearly low compared to values and processes. By implication a complete package for promoting governance must possibly consider all the dimensions in a symbiotic relationship context because they affect each other positively or negatively. The study has realized important information on what respondents consider an appropriate structure for a well governed public procurement system. Such a structure ought to be based on the core principles of public service as opposed to private service. Such structures must be based on the principles of meritocracy as opposed to recruiting people based on nepotism. Once nepotism is allowed to penetrate a public procurement system, the possibilities of negatively affecting administrative efficiency is high.

Public Procurement values are of utmost importance to any effort intended to establish a well governed public procurement system. The study has identified some of these values which the respondents perceive to be important. Administrators have a duty to instill these values. Ethical codes of conduct for public procurement stakeholders need to be instituted and stringently implemented and monitored. Although we did not explicitly measure the influence of other environmental factors in influencing administrative efficiency, the 45% contribution from procurement governance dimensions point to the existence of these factors. In a country where service delivery is a responsibility of so many centers involving so many government functions, public procurement function alone would have undoubtedly contributed a high explanation to administrative efficiency.

In terms of managerial and policy implications, our study indicates that better procurement governance is holistically important for improving administrative efficiency of the public sector. Improvements in administrative efficiency would equally results in effectiveness of government activities which are measured around the central variables of better service delivery to the citizens.

Moreover, the study has also identified important variables on what stakeholders consider as important parameters for measuring administrative efficiency. As today's public sector operates in a competitive environment driven by a mixture of market forces and traditional values of public service, attention must be directed to the kind of values inculcated in the procurement systems, similar attention must be directed at creating a risk-free public procurement process, appropriate structures which are rigidly capable of preventing individual abuse ought to be instituted as reliance on market for procurement is encouraged.

Consequently, policy makers and 'managers' of the public sector and the public procurement sector in particular should direct their attention more at developing and implementing measures for a well governed procurement system. Our study suggests that a good public procurement system could be built around establishing punitive measures for the politicians and bureaucrats, who interfere in the public procurement process, staffing public procurement units with qualified staff that need to be recruited based on meritocracy and such officers need to be given adequate tools to do their work. These point to the need to empower public procurement units in all government entities. Moreover, procurement regulators and government in general must consider public procurement as a strategic function and appropriate performance standards must be set for all contractors of government. A clear coordinated and well monitored system needs to be instituted to evaluate the performance of all players in the public procurement process.

7. Limitations and areas recommended for future research

Some limitations might be related to collecting and interpreting our results. A first limitation might be the omission of certain variables in the study on both governance and administrative efficiency measures. For example, the competencies and behaviors of officials involved in public procurement could have provided useful information to understanding the dynamics involved in our subject of study. Another potential limitation in our study could be common method bias. We used one single questionnaire to measure all constructs included, so perhaps, the strengths of the relationships could have been altered since the findings point to the important

contribution of values which relate to individuals and groups. The confidence in our results could be strengthened with access to behavioral findings. The use of findings from the questionnaire which was closed ended also missed important information which could have been obtained through interviews and other qualitative methodologies. These recognized limitations could inspire researchers to define their future research agendas.

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