



Politics, Bureaucracy and Corruption in Public Procurement in Emerging Economies: A Treatise of Chaos

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ABSTRACT

The degree to which public procurement may be implemented in a particular setting depends on the political praxis and the spectacle of bureaucracy in the face of corruption. There is not a lot of empirical research available in this field. This work examines the interactions between politics, /bureaucracy and corruption in public procurement practices, identifying holdups and potential solutions, within the context of Weberian and game theories in emerging economies. Using the body of existing literature, pertinent sources were equitably and competently examined, comprehended and tested for the goal of this study. Finding pertinent papers and using them in the study was the aim. The argument made in this work is that public procurement practices are becoming less effective and unable to provide the public with value for money because of politics, bureaucracy and corruption entangled in emerging countries. Politicians and bureaucrats in these economies rely too heavily on the whims of corruption, which frequently irritates the public and lowers the realization of any public procurement activity's value for money. Consequently, the work concludes that if emerging economy bureaucracies and politics restrict corruption outlets, especially those that enhance their public procurement operations and actions, then the dire situation in these economies could be reversed. International best practices ought to be domesticated in this age of globalization.

In public procurement, politics, bureaucracy and corruption are intertwined, forming a complicated web of relationships. Favouritism, cronyism and nepotism in contract awarding are examples of political influence and meddling that can slant the procurement process. An unduly strict and complicated bureaucratic structure can foster corruption because officials may use their judgment and authority for personal benefit. In the next of politics and bureaucracy, corrupt activities like bribery, embezzlement and fraud can flourish, undermining the equitable and transparent procurement process.

The contexts where political "public administration" is implemented are those in which bureaucratic corruption occurs (Borah et al., 2022). Yet, the conservative perspective on corruption, bureaucracy and politics in public procurement practices is not exclusive to emerging economies. Analytically speaking, their outcomes can be separated though they are sometimes viewed as the same. Around the world, procurement systems in governments are confronted with conflicting demands, entwined ideals and objectives. In addition to the need to handle "wicked" socio-political issues within adaptable frameworks and procedures that transfer procurement authority. Maintaining accountability and control is equally vital; it helps reduce operational constraints and reduces the potential for fraud and mismanagement. Additionally, it advocates for greater open and transparent competition while obtaining the greatest value, the use of best practices whilst navigating regulatory constraints and better economic efficiency through meeting political aspirations for the inclusion of the vulnerable (McGue et al., 2015).

Given the political and bureaucratic components of public procurement, the movement toward global sustainable procurement tackles two critical issues: maximizing value for money and resources concerns regarding any lack of accountability and transparency, fraud and corruption (Flyvbjerg & Molloy, 2011). Public procurement practices are implemented with predetermined

frameworks in the majority of developed economies to improve value for money by advancing strategy, technology and successful bidding techniques. However, the focus on public procurement practices in emerging economies aims to set up effective bidding processes that enhance competitiveness, accountability, openness and transparency (Masoud, 2023). Improvement in these economies often consists of the implementation of transparent legislative frameworks, institutional reform and provisions for professional human resources alone. They are limited by political manipulation intensified by incompetent bureaucracy.

Scholars agree that public procurement is the government's number one vulnerability to corruption (Locatelli et. al., 2017; Ochrana & Pavel, 2013). Many more acknowledge that corruption in public procurement is not just an emerging countries issue (Prabowo et al., 2018;). Bribery, fronting, contract price inflation, subpar goods, services and works, improper handling of conflicts of interest, embezzlement and diversion of public funds, are just examples of the numerous shapes that these practices can take. When inept bureaucrats and dishonest politicians collaborate, they can get worse. Yet, insidious institutions, such as corruption rob the impoverished of their human dignity and prevent them from accessing public goods, services and works that could help them overcome their poverty.

Given the situation, as stated by Piennar (2017), patrimonial activity or networks emerge in a somewhat organic way, flexibly responding to opportunities in a variety of settings. In consequence, developing economies continue to suffer from a variety of forms of weak governance, including corruption, rent-seeking, public finance wrongdoing, and the arbitrary and capricious distribution of public goods, services and works. Bureaucrats then maximize the 'opportunity' by frequently distributing resources arbitrarily, giving preferences to those with the means and willing to pay bribes. The distribution of goods, services and works among the population will then result in the poor being deprived of them. This process can also lead to increased inefficiencies and discourage productive activities in the economy. Additionally, ineffective bureaucracy makes the economy uncertain, discouraging investment in productive capacity.

In an exploratory article, Mazibuko (2020) aims to increase the body of information and foster discussion about government procurement practices. In this study, content analysis and qualitative research were used. Since the government procures products and services and spends billions or even trillions of rand financing public works and huge infrastructure development projects such as the construction of highways, bridges, dams, airports, seaports and other necessary amenities- it may be concluded that procurement is relevant in the government. These large procurement practices need to be held accountable to prevent state capture and corruption.

In emerging economies, public procurement performance is unimpressive despite government attempts (Masoud et al., 2021; Dávid-Barrett & Fazekas, 2019). Procurement and disposal delays, subpar work, expensive commodities, corruption, malpractice and the abuse of limited public funds are all linked to the procurement process (Myeza et al., 2021). Numerous scholars have been drawn to this topic of study because of the public procurement function's subpar performance. Their goal is to identify the causes of this misfortune and offer helpful suggestions to reduce the likelihood of future subpar performance (Basheka, 2011). The scholars identified several variables that lead to subpar public procurement performance, including incompetent personnel, inefficient monitoring systems, and inadequate planning. political meddling and similar issues (Basheka, 2017; Rendon & Rendon, 2016). Public procurement corruption has only ever been empirically reviewed from a macro and micro perspective, along with the economic losses that result for the country. Research on the topic of politics and bureaucracy amidst corruption in public procurement, which this work addresses, is still lacking.

There are seven portions to the topic in this work. The second section describes the research methodology used. The significance of Weberian and game theories as frameworks for interpreting the interface of politics, bureaucracy and corruption in the context of emerging economies is briefly covered in the third section. In the current times, when political patronage is a means of survival for public procurement enterprises, this fourth section will elucidate the politics, bureaucracy and corruption that characterised public procurement practices as the amphitheater of anarchy and mess. Fifth, hasty holdups in public procurement are examined in this section. In the sixth section, the possibilities are examined. Some recommendations are made to wrap up the paper in the last part of section seven.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses secondary data sources, including government, NGO and donor studies and reports, media coverage and previously published works that relate to the theoretical and empirical focus of the work (ancillary information). This entailed, among other things, summarizing concepts, reading critically and comprehensively and scanning text. While doing a desktop study, I examined credible scholarly sources. To get insight into the nature and characteristics of politics, bureaucracy and corruption, the work used a qualitative research design and descriptive approaches in an exploratory nature. Contextual reviews of many texts are combined with analytical works to create the analysis.

THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

Weberian theory

I employed Weberian theory to explain the issue under investigation about politicians and bureaucrats. According to Weberian theory, a bureaucrat is someone who works for the state and is defined by a set of externally imposed standards that include

impartiality, and neutrality, ethics and professionalism rather than an innate sense of drive. Using Weberian theory as a lens, I explored how bureaucrats are seen as agents of the state, motivated by externally imposed standards of impartiality, neutrality, ethics and professionalism rather than by their innate desire for personal gain. It suggests that structuring an organization into a tight hierarchy of people subject to stringent guidelines is the best approach to managing it (Jenei, 2021). It further states that there are three different kinds of power in organisations: legal power, charismatic power and conventional power. Since all facets of democracy are structured on laws and regulations, the established jurisdiction premise is vital.

The Weberian theory indicates that there are three components necessary to sustain bureaucratic management: Every routine task performed by a bureaucracy can be considered an official duty; regulations can be enforced by management; and when using proven techniques, following the rule is simple. In the long term, a bureaucracy may demotivate employees because employees in such organisations are not given the chance to express their thoughts or have an impact on decisions (Sandro & Miguel, 2019). Also, as time goes on, employees could grow irritated with the different guidelines and demands, which increases the possibility that they might begin to boycott, abuse or contradict the established order. That is why it is critical that bureaucratic organisations appropriately notify their employees about their work style and demand that they adopt it as well in advance. In a bureaucratic organisation, only employees who embrace this methodology are fit to work.

Game theory

The game theory provides an additional explanation for the pervasiveness of corruption in public procurement practices. This hypothesis attempts to explain dishonest actions made by public officials by drawing on economic research. Specifically, Macrae (1982) contends that corruption is an essential and frequently deeply ingrained component of people's logical decision-making process. People encounter a "prisoner's dilemma" in this situation, which "illustrates a conflict between individual and group rationality" (Kuhn, 2019). If a person abstains from corrupt behavior in the same circumstance when others do not, they fear that they will be at a disadvantage. As a result, everyone benefits in some way, but it is never as much as they would have if they had engaged in unethical behavior. This is seen, for instance, in the context of public procurement, where private sector players who are unaware of the activities of others are involved in corruption. Thus, organizations that would normally conduct ethically are driven to engage in procurement corruption by a fear of being outdone by competitors that act unlawfully or unethically. Furthermore, even though someone has the best intentions when acting morally, a variety of contextual and psychological circumstances may contribute to the development of unethical action.

The Norms and Chimneys

Largely, public procurement is responsible for enhancing impartiality in public institutions. It is a procedure by which public monies are used by government organizations to procure goods, services and works from the market. Its procedures cover creating procurement documentation, releasing procurement summaries, extending invitations to bidders, choosing winners and distributing contracts. In addition, it is imperative to take into account factors other than the economy while conducting public procurement. These factors include respect for local and international commitments, accountability and non-discrimination among potential suppliers. For these reasons, laws governing public procurement are passed to safeguard the interests of the general public but still, political stagnation and incompetent bureaucrats allow corruption to creep through legal gaps and rear its ugly head. Most disturbing, all of these are susceptible to bureaucratic maladies and political ploys that pave the way for corruption to triumph.

In contrast to private procurement, public procurement is a business process inside a political system and, as such, ought to take effectiveness, accountability, integrity and the interests of the public into serious consideration. Poor procurement practices, however, often lead to excessive expenditure for public goods, services and works, along with fraud, postponements of procure, and a rise in the use of public monies. All of which lower the quality of value for money provided and result in subpar goods, services and works. Effective procurement practices are based on universally applicable principles and values, such as optimizing economic growth and efficiency, encouraging competition and participation from suppliers and contractors, treating all parties fairly and equally, and having transparent procedures that eliminate opportunities for collusive and corrupt practices (Zhang et al., 2017). The success of public procurement is closely linked to other procedures in the government budget cycle, including program planning, budget planning, procurement and disposal bidding and contracting, procurement and disposal delivery and procurement and disposal implementation. For these to occur, a supportive political environment must be established and managed by capable, open bureaucrats.

Up until recently, it has been challenging to verify how procurement practices in emerging economies have led to efficient acquisition and impartiality of government procurement and disposal activities. In underdeveloped countries, Hunja (2013) argues, it is challenging to measure these kinds of impacts. Indeed, a great deal of them are still having difficulty adjusting to inconveniences, which include handling conflicts of interest, creating strong regulatory frameworks and addressing public officials' incapacity. Although many countries have tried to effect significant modifications to their procurement practices, Hunja (2013) notes that there is little proof that these attempts have resulted in comprehensive, fundamental improvements. For instance, most emerging economies have kept their public procurement practices essentially unchanged from manipulation. When attempts have been made to make major modifications, they have generally consisted of minor tweaks to a few of the best practices without altering the negative mindset to maneuver. It is also difficult to deal with the fallout.

Amphitheater of anarchy and mess?

Are public procurement practices in emerging economies influenced by politics, bureaucracy and corruption? There is a tonne of evidence in the literature. When public procurement practices in the public service are provided in exchange for political support, traded for bribes or used to fulfill obligations to patronage, the change of high levels of bureaucratic corruption increases significantly. The prevalence of corruption in Ghana was examined by Lassou et al., (2023) to determine how and why it has caused public procurement to become a money-making scheme rather than a way to deliver essential public services and goods. With an emphasis on Ghana as a case study and the mobilization of political monetization lenses, documents, videos, news articles and interviews with important procurement sector officials-including those from the government, donors and civil society-are used to gather data. The results indicate that the expenses associated with vote-buying which has become an institutionalised practice, along with the rising costs of elections and political finance, exacerbate corruption and reduce public procurement to a means of obtaining political capital. Political appointees and legalised loopholes contribute to this by undermining the protection that regulatory bodies like accounting and others are supposed to offer. The continuation of capture schemes is also facilitated by persistent poverty and growing inequality, which “force” citizens into a culture of vote-buying that distorts democratic principles and may force out honest politicians. Corrupt practices and inequality persist notwithstanding the limited progress made by civil society to address these issues.

In his study, Asea (2018) emphasizes how pervasive corruption is in Uganda, where it is mostly political and administrative in nature. Rule enforcement and service delivery are two areas where bureaucratic corruption occurs. Demand-induced and supply-induced are its two sides. High levels of politics are prone to political corruption. There exist businessmen and “political untouchables” who are immune to institutional control mechanisms and the law. He establishes that in Uganda, the long-standing institutions of checks and balances have diligently persisted in having a minimal impact on corruption. Certain Ugandan politicians and civil servants are non-resistant to the abnormal behaviour of structural corruption, even in the face of strong legal sanctions and contingent anti-corruption norms.

Adam (2019) sought to categorise different forms and manifestations of procurement corruption, emphasizing bureaucratic corruption above political corruption. The method was to look at organisational guardianship failures and turning points. He finds that guardianship gaps and sillage spots are present in both corrupt rich and poor countries. In rich countries, corruption occurs despite the presence of distinct bureaucratic procedures, a meritocratic civil service and the rule of law. Massive state control, kleptocracy and subpar civil service procedures are more prevalent in emerging countries.

Ombuki et al., (2014) conducted a study on the factors that influence Kenyan public universities’ adherence to procurement regulations. The study’s research design was an ex post facto survey. In 21 public universities in Kenya, 168 procurement employees and 42 senior employees served as the sample. The study’s conclusions show that, in Kenya’s public university procurement, political influences had the greatest impact on regulatory compliance. A woman representative held the highest level of influence among politicians, accounting for 95.5% of the total.

Picho (2017) examined the impact of institutional politics on public procurement performance at tertiary institutions within the West Nile sub-region of Uganda. There was a cross-sectional study design. In the study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The study’s target sample consisted of 122 participants. The results showed that the performance of procurement and institutional politics had a very slight negative connection ($p=.292$). It was thus established that the performance of procurement in tertiary institutions in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda was highly impacted by institutional politics, as assessed by the relationship between principals and agents and the pursuit of individual agendas/self-interest.

Masoud (2023) investigates how political meddling affects Tanzania’s parastatal organisations’ procurement performance. The study aims to examine the effects of political meddling in contract awarding, project allocation and legislative framework execution on procurement performance and provide suggestions for enhancement. Using a structured questionnaire, the data were gathered from departmental heads of 93 parastatal organisations in Dar es Salaam. Only 241 of the 271 responders in the study’s population-who made up the sample size of 256- were returned, filled out and utilised for analysis. With the use of SPSS version 26, a multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data both descriptively and inferentially. The results demonstrate how political meddling in contract awards and the application of the law has a detrimental effect on procurement performance. Procurement performance is positively impacted, however, when politics is involved in project allocation. The research recommended that the procuring body make sure that only authorized officers were permitted to participate in the procurement process and that politicians were kept out of it.

Using a quantitative comparative study, Kaluya and Elliott (2018) sought to determine how different citizens’ and public officials’ perceptions of corruption were, as well as the extent to which different types of corruption exist in Uganda, with the aid of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (IAD). They discovered that, although public officials and civilians had slightly different perceptions of corruption, corruption is a cooperative effort involving numerous behaviors that are covered in detail. This was determined by a poll of 670 public officials and 12,000 citizens. This study reveals that an unholy alliance between people in need of services and public authorities willing to charge for those services that they must freely supply leads to corruption. The

results of this study changed the definition of corruption from abuse of public office to an act that benefits the community by showing that corruption in Uganda is mostly dependent on cooperation between residents and public officials.

The impact of patronage politics on the tendering process at Zimbabwe's state Procurement Board was examined by Chilunjika et al., (2022). The administration of tender procedures, the permeability of regulating frameworks and the degree to which discriminatory politics impeded tender awarding were used to determine the extent of the impact. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used to collect data. In that sense, the survey was able to interview 15 people and deliver 25 questionnaires. The results show that a lack of openness in tendering procedures also extended widely, protecting and exacerbating contract wrongdoing.

To tackle the scourge of corruption, Koto and Kanjere (2021) identified common types and causes of public procurement corruption in the province and developed intervention measures. Data collection and analysis for the study were conducted using a qualitative content analysis methodology. Data was gathered through the examination of 40 newspaper articles and five journal publications from Polokwane Observer and Sowetan Newspapers. It was discovered that public procurement corruption was caused by official rule-breaking and political meddling.

Eyo (2017) investigated the connection between sustainable public procurement (SPSS) and corruption in Africa. It makes the case that, on a larger scale, institutional corruption undermines the already meager amount of money available for public spending in African countries, making it more difficult for these countries to achieve SPP goals and having a detrimental effect on sustainable development.

Harries et al., (2020) posed, what part do bureaucrats play in the resource curse emerging in oil-producing countries? Based on data from a survey experiment involving more than 3,000 government employees in Ghana and Uganda- two nations that have recently discovered gas and oil-they find that bureaucrats who are given access to information about oil revenue are more inclined to object to spending policies that benefit political allies. The findings also imply that there might be material incentives at work: Ugandan officials who are independent of government patronage networks and who feel safe in their positions are more likely to be against the political exploitation of oil wealth.

Charron et al., (2016) posed the question, why do authorities in some countries award public contracts more unbiasedly to well-established firms while doing so in others? It implies that the likelihood of corruption is reduced when bureaucrats rely more on their peers for career advancement than on political ties. They evaluate this theory using a new objective corruption risk measure that includes over 1.4 million procurement contracts, as well as a novel measure of career incentives in the public sector that they obtained from a poll over 18,000 employees in 212 European regions. They both exhibit considerable subnational variety throughout Europe. The study concludes that when officials' career incentives are solely based on professional standards, corruption risks are, in fact, far lower. Moving EU areas to places where officials' merit and effort matter as much as in, say, Baden-Württemberg (90th percentile) might result in annual savings of 13-20 billion euros.

Basheka (2011) investigated the political and economic factors that influence corruption in public procurement in Uganda. The study highlights the important political and economic factors that influence public procurement corruption in Uganda by analysing data from 548 respondents working in the country's public, private and non-governmental sectors. Although political variables were shown to be less relevant in determining public procurement corruption in Uganda than economic factors, their total contribution was still very small, indicating the presence of additional drivers.

The Hasty Holdups

In the public sector, efficient procurement practices are hampered by politics, bureaucracy and corruption-related antics. Igbokwe-Ibeto (2019) examined the relationship between African bureaucracy and political administration to determine its opportunities and challenges using the framework of system theory. He employed a qualitative research design and descriptive approaches to acquire a deeper understanding of the characteristics and nature of public administration and bureaucracy in Africa. According to his research, African bureaucracy is becoming less effective and unable to provide public administrators with intellectual leadership. Field bureaucrats rely excessively on discretion, which frequently irritates the public and leads to subpar service delivery. 0772076189

Panya and Moronge (2023) investigate how political patronage affects public procurement ethics in Kenya. A descriptive research design was used in this investigation. Like other desktop research studies, this one also primarily relied on secondary data. The research examined conference papers, unpublished papers and journal articles about the impact of political patronage on public procurement ethics. The study utilized a desktop methodology to address the research goals. The study discovered that the main reason corruption flourishes in Africa is that the continent's judicial system is weak and easily manipulated, making it difficult to keep an eye on and punish those who commit crimes against the governing elite.

The study conducted by Huka et al., (2014) aimed to evaluate the efficiency of government authorities' procurement procedures and identify the obstacles they face when implementing the designed procedures. Employing the case study research design, the study discovered that by increasing openness, accountability and competition, reforms have enhanced performance procurement processes. However, the practitioners have been confronted with obstacles such as low accountability, unethical purchasing methods by certain workers, interference from stakeholders and other departments and delayed user department specification delivery.

The issues faced by the South African public sector in the area of procurement were examined by Ambe (2012). Research reveals that the following issues hinder the effective and efficient implementation of public procurement: inadequate knowledge, skills, and capacity; noncompliance with national treasury policies and regulations; inadequate planning and budgetary linkage; inadequate accountability; fraud and corruption; inadequate measures for monitoring and evaluating public procurement; unethical behavior; excessive decentralisation and ineffectiveness of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) policy.

Using democratic decentralisation as a starting point, Mustafa (2021) gives an overview of Indonesia's procurement reform by stating that the country's government has made efforts to ensure that its procurement practices adhere to international standards, especially in terms of good governance and the competitiveness of public procurement. However, there is no concrete proof that more democratic procurement procedures have been adopted as a result of the procurement reform. Rather, a political environment where the public procurement budget is susceptible to being captured by predatory elites for their private purposes has been created by the democratic decentralisation process, which involves local politicians, local leaders, bureaucrats and corporate actors.

Despite the government's pursuit of accountability reforms and anti-corruption policy objectives, Muhumuza (2016) noted the rising levels of corruption in the public sector. He argues that if political considerations are disregarded, even an excellent institutional and legal structure for promoting accountability and curbing corrupt behavior may not be sufficient. He further argues that combating corruption will remain a distant memory in the absence of outstanding political leadership and backing for the organisations that uphold compliance. He concludes that reducing public sector corruption will be difficult in environments where the political landscape attributes to the use of patron-client and neo-patrimonial tools to consolidate and hold onto power. Ultimately, he maintains that political will has a greater role in combating public sector corruption than the appearance of institutions, regulations and technocrats.

Using the administrative rituals approach or a bureaucratic analysis, Onyango (2022) was able to investigate the institutional and normative synergies between corruption and maladministration in Kenya on a practical level. He demonstrates how Kenyan public employees are ritualistically forced to adhere to specific patterns over others, even when they are aware of anti-corruption regulations. This leads to some public accountability techniques being reduced to little more than administrative symbols or rituals in the public administration system.

Neu et al., (2015) investigated the function of internal controls and monitoring procedures in unethical environments, as well as how these procedures and controls influence the morality and ethics of organisational actors. Effective "luminous arrangements" can deter corrupt behavior and have an impact on ethics within organisations. They suggested that anti-corruption initiatives that are successful rely on an awareness of and analysis of the politics and practices around visibility. Organisational players are suggested to be both free and autonomous, as well as subject to and constructed by anti-corruption procedures, even though such structures do not always prohibit corrupt behaviours. Instead, they do encourage particular actions and reactions among organisational actors.

In three East African countries, Baez-Camargo et al., (2019) provided comparative data about the significance of behavioural determinants in connection to petty corruption. The possibility of using behavioural insights in the formulation of anti-corruption policies is discussed. Field research in Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda revealed evidence of these behavioural factors, demonstrating how social pressures and beliefs impact people's behaviour and eventually encourage petty corruption by validating related maladaptive practices. The research highlights a problematic overlap between the public (formal) and social-cultural (informal) sectors, which is maintained by social norms of group solidarity and reciprocity and legitimized by widely held views of corruption as a norm.

In contrast to tunneling firms without government procurement contracts, Mironov and Zhuravskaya (2016) find that companies with government procurement contracts demonstrate a political cycle by increasing goal tunneling around elections. The data matches both the alternate channels and the corruption channel, which states that money is sent to politicians in return for contracts related to procurement. They refute the "efficient grease" theory, which holds that in more corrupt locations, procurement contracts go to unproductive enterprises, by using the strength of the connection between procurement revenue and tunneling around elections as a proxy for local corruption.

The Options

To improve service delivery, Manyathi et al., (2021) determine the extent to which public-sector procurement processes might be based on private-sector ones. The study was qualitative in nature and focused on a literature review strategy employing non-intrusive research methods. The study involved a thorough review of the body of research in the areas of public and private sector procurement as well as trend analysis. The study pointed out that the public sector procurement process is now beset by several red tape issues that can be avoided by implementing some of the operating procedures seen in the private sector. Naturally, to improve service delivery, this would necessitate a complete revision of the current public procurement procedures, including certain legislation, Red tape includes things like rigid government procurement procedures that prevent new ideas, enduring supplier connections and communication about government plans for the future. Because of this, some of these red tape significantly hinders the improvement of service delivery, particularly when fraud and corruption are involved. Other procedures are ineffective and lead to the selection of inexperienced vendors that perform poorly.

Several historical causes of corruption in African public procurement were examined by Dza et al., (2015). The method of constant comparative analysis is applied to the analysis of the interview data. Based on the research, procurement decisions are mostly influenced by political factors rather than administrative ones, which results in a reduction of the authority and responsibility granted to practitioners. By raising their degree of education and experience, practitioners will be able to participate in the decision-making process for longer, which will help them overcome this obstacle. Families exert social pressure because of the intricate cultural contexts and attitudes that link a join to the capacity to meet the financial needs of large families.

The consequences of fraud and corruption in public procurement in Nigeria are examined by Aminu and Ella (2019) using secondary data. Due to the enormous amounts of money involved, the study shows that public procurement is vulnerable to fraud and corruption. The research additionally shows how procurement fraud and corruption have hampered the progress and development of the country. To combat corruption, the report suggests strengthening the legislative branch's oversight capabilities, maintaining the integrity of the legal system and enhancing the professionalism of procurement authorities through capacity building.

To effectively promote good governance and the delivery of public services, Nkyabonaki (2019) evaluated the effectiveness of the public service ethics code. An ethical code's potential to prevent corruption in the public sector was examined qualitatively in this study. The study conducted between June and September 2017 at Toangoma Ward yielded findings that demonstrated the public sector ecology, which includes inadequate performance monitoring and evaluation, nepotism in the public sector and low pay, does not uphold the principles of a public ethos. As a result, due to these flaws, Tanzani's management and delivery of social services have failed to uphold the public service ideal, rendering it a myth. The ongoing corruption in the service industries has ruined and degraded the standard of services. The report urges a complete reorganization of the public sector to promote best practices like competitive salary, merit-based hiring and promotions to higher managerial positions.

CONCLUSION

To try to untangle this conceptual "cobweb", as well as to assess the normative choices and obstacles, the concepts of politics, bureaucracy and corruption in public procurement practices have been investigated in this work. Moreover, the searchlight affords a deeper comprehension of the problems being investigated. Scholarly hypotheses about the situations have therefore been explained by the Weberian and game theories that form the basis of the study. The causal relationship between politics, bureaucracy and corruption has also been attempted to be investigated. Both can be distinguished analytically, even though they are occasionally perceived as achieving the same result. The evidence presented in this work suggests that bureaucracy and politics are becoming less effective at stopping corruption in public procurement practices, especially in emerging economies. Even if this discretion frequently does not sit well with the public and results in value-for-money procurement and disposal of goods, services and works, many people find that the politicians and bureaucrats with whom they come into effect public procurement, rely too much on corruption. All these could alter if politics and bureaucracy allow for public procurement that is free of corruption, especially when it adds value for their operations. This work holds that bureaucracy and politics can contribute to the process of reducing corruption in public procurement with value-for-money stunts and bringing about inclusive growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Politics, bureaucracy and corruption form a poisonous triangle in public procurement which can lead to inflated pricing, low-quality goods or services, unfair contract awards, waste of public funds and a decline in public confidence in government institutions. Measures like accountability, openness, independent supervision and strong anti-corruption laws are crucial to ending this loop.

It is imperative to consider what happened in the traditional societies of emerging economies when politics, bureaucracy and corruption evils were nearly absent. Thus, in most traditional African institutions, for example, there were formal and informal channels fo handling vices in public procurement as well as checks and balances. Political and bureaucratic pressure to quickly end public procurement corruption is stronger than sincere concern for the smooth operation of the countries' public procurement systems.

Public officials can become corrupted by bureaucracy, particularly in the areas of rule enforcement and service delivery (Werner, 2010). Both supply-side and demand-side factors can contribute to bureaucratic corruption. Demand-induced corruption could occur because those who stand to gain prefer to receive their rewards in private. Alternatively, a bribe from one agent to another- probably a public official- may result in supply-induced corruption. It is possible for the giver and the recipient to deal with one another directly through middlemen. As per Werner's (2010) assertion, the majority of corruption within various countries and in situations occurs covertly and informally through isolated relationships. Occasionally, verbal consent is not even necessary. Even a simple glance might start a toxic relationship. To eliminate the incentives for opportunism and put an end to corruption, the socio-political norms governing the market must be successfully altered.

Since international best practices are always changing in the age of globalization, politicians and bureaucrats should stay up to date on these developments and adapt domestic and global best practices to suit their circumstances. Authorities and investigators are being called upon more than ever to expedite the process of public procurement practices free from corruption in emerging

economies. The public procurement system will need to be continuously reformed and politicians and bureaucrats with their innovative talents and experience will be needed to do this rather than doing it all at once.

Skladany (2009) makes the case for the creation of performance-based financial incentive programs in developing countries, which would provide politicians and senior bureaucrats with sizeable bonuses (ten to twenty times or more than their official yearly salaries) to combat corruption in those countries. The argument put up is that while it may seem reprehensible to compensate dishonest public officials for their theft, the issues faced by developing countries due to systematic corruption are immense and have mostly resisted other forms of anti-corruption measures. Performance-based incentive programs for high-level bureaucrats and politicians in developing countries can, over time, foster a culture of clean governance that supports sustained economic growth and makes all aspects of development, like enhancing infrastructure, education and healthcare, more manageable by simply changing the source of funding for public servants.

Based on the facts that the procurement function is severely impacted by direct and indirect corruption-which is presumably sustained by political leaders and civil servants- Basheka et al., (2012) offered strategies that can be used to minimise public procurement corruption in Uganda. Even while civil officials technically oversee the procurement process, lawmakers approve the budgets and plans and keep an eye on the proceedings. In light of the research, the best ways to lessen procurement corruption are to streamline public procurement processes, enhance government accountability and transparency mechanisms, put in place robust measures to protect internal informants and promote international community involvement.

Mustafa (2021) argues that until there is a significant shift in the local political structure to prevent the predatory elites from obtaining local government projects, good governance is difficult to expect. Panya and Moronge (2023) suggested that to combat corruption in public procurement, the countries's senior leadership should pledge to combat corruption through a top-down strategy, bolster anti-corruption measures and ensure that those who violate the law face consequences. Additionally, the populace must be inspired to demand accountability and openness from those positions of authority within the state. 0782695021

The obstacles to public procurement performance in Kenya's public sector are identified by Amemba et al., (2013). The study suggested that the enhancement of public procurement performance in Kenya solely be achieved by examining the current laws to promote the widespread utilisation of technology in the management of the procurement process, cultivating enduring relationships between buyers and suppliers, and engaging stakeholders through training and awareness campaigns about the importance of conducting procurement ethically.

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