

Influence of Headteachers' exposure to management training on implementation of public procurement regulations in Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate the influence of head teacher's exposure to management training on implementation of public procurement regulations in Kenya. The study objective sought to establish the influence of induction of Headteachers as a management training aspect on implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools. The study established that majority of the headteachers 65.2 % had been inducted on implementation of public procurement regulations whereas thirty four point eight per cent of them had not been inducted. Results of Chi-square(χ^2) test established that headteachers' induction on public procurement regulations had a p-value of 0.043, an indication that there is a significant effect between headteachers' induction and implementation of public procurement regulations. The significance level was set at alpha = 0.05. It was concluded that headteachers induction on public procurement regulations had a significant effect on implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools in Kenya.

Key words: Management, training, induction, procurement, regulations

1.1 Introduction

Public procurement refers to the procurement by procuring entities using public funds (Republic of Kenya, 2015). World bank (1995) broadly defines Public procurement as the purchasing, hiring or obtaining by any other contractual means of goods, construction works and services by the public sector. Many developing countries have realized that a well-organized procurement system contributes to good governance by increasing confidence that public funds are well spent (Hunja, 2001). Although the procurement reforms focus on getting countries to implement a standard procurement law system, MacDonald (2008) notes that countries like Argentina, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ghana, Peru, Rwanda, Sieraleon, Uganda and Tanzania have all introduced new procurement legislation since 2001 in response to World Bank conditions. This implies that for effective implementation of public procurement regulations especially for those countries that have implemented them, implementation trainings on procurement regulations are imperative for those who are involved in the implementation exercise.

According to Hunja (2001), the developing countries instituted reforms to make the procurement systems more transparent, efficient and to increase the accountability of public officials. For that reason, a professional cadre of staff that implements and manages the procurement function is also necessary. Kenya is among the developing countries that have instituted procurement reforms. However Hunja (2001) noted that reforming public procurement systems has however proven to be quite difficult. Studies and assessments of procurement systems in many developing countries have consistently indicated weaknesses. It is therefore observed that such weaknesses could negatively affect implementation of public procurement regulations hence, some of the weaknesses could include lack of management training.

Public procurement in Kenya is governed by the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act 2015 (Republic of Kenya, 2015). Training on implementation of public procurement regulations is a very essential aspect of financial management in secondary schools in Kenya. According to Olembo (1975)) School heads are now required to deal with more specialised personnel in order to achieve the goals of the school as an organization. This is agreeable because organizational goals are likely to be effectively achieved if the personnel charged with performance of various tasks are well trained and qualified for the job as is the case with implementation of public procurement regulations. Although the public has invested a lot in the education of young people in the country,

if the investment is not entrusted in the hands of well-trained headteachers, there is no guarantee that much can be expected from our schools. Therefore headteachers' training on implementation of public procurement regulations is an inevitable necessity if public procurement regulations are to be implemented effectively in all public secondary schools.

Mcleary and Hencley (1970) cited in (Kalai, 1998) observed that many administrative failures in secondary schools result from inadequate understanding of the nature of administration and lack of technical knowledge coupled with essential skills. Grep paper on public sector procurement in South Africa (1997) avers that training and skill development and professionalism should be introduced to those with procurement responsibilities. Procurement staff would require basic procurement training in personnel and general management skills and more advanced training in specialist procurement skills. It is noted that if such trainings on procurement responsibilities are cascaded to other countries, the procurement staff could acquire the required competencies in procurement of goods and services hence forming a strong foundation for effective implementation of public procurement regulations.

According to Eshiwani (1987) headteachers of schools are appointed without any formal training. This is consistent with Kamunge report (1988) which stipulates that heads of institutions are appointed from among serving teachers most of whom had no prior training in institutional management. Thus, lack of training may lead to malpractices in the implementation of public procurement regulations. However, Olivero (1982) cited in Morumbasi (1992) notes that headteachers need self-renewal as well as sound managerial skills to help them to be more effective in their duties. The above observation may also translate to include training the newly appointed headteachers to be more effective in implementation of public procurement regulations as an aspect of financial management.

Republic of Kenya (2006) stipulates that the headteacher as the accounting officer is in -charge of procurement in the school. and is responsible for implementation of public procurement regulations which should be executed through various committees. Thus, although Public procurement regulations include some of the reforms in financial management in the education sector in Kenya, its implementation calls for competent headteachers. Such competence could be acquired through in-service training in order to enable them become more effective in their duties.

Secondary school headteachers are bound to resort to a number of ways to acquire skills and knowledge for their job. Dennison and Shenton (1987) cited in (Morumbasi, 1992) observed that Kenyan principals like the British principals had been recruited as teachers, promoted as teachers and then suddenly were confronted with different managerial skills. They learnt by working with a mentor, reading books on management, observing others as they act and react to organizational situations, self-discovery, experience on the job and course attendance. This also included discussion of difficult situations with fellow headteachers and use of common sense among others. This means that much of the managerial skills were learnt on the job as a result of lack of training hence subjecting organizations to managerial malpractices.

According to Eshiwani (1993), the roles and expectations of the headteacher are constantly changing, making the work of a headteacher very challenging. It is thus noted that Public procurement reforms are among the changing and challenging roles that require full implementation in public institutions, public secondary schools being included. Headteachers as managers require training on how to go about the implementation function of the public procurement regulations.

Hence, such training could be done through induction of the headteachers on implementation of public procurement regulations. Eshiwani (1993) observes that lack of induction affects the performance of headteachers in school administration and management. Lack of training adversely affects effective management of educational institutions in the maintenance of high quality and standards. Therefore, this could in turn translate easily into lack of value for public resources as a result of acquisition of low quality goods and services.

Kalai (1998) postulates that, continuous professional training is a prerequisite in order to keep educational administrators abreast with emerging changes and trends in education coupled with induction courses and constant refresher mandatory courses in order to improve the professional proficiency of headteachers in public secondary schools. In-service training and support services in Kenya are offered by Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI). KEMI was established in April 1981 in order to build the capacity of educational personnel and to enable them deliver education services efficiently and effectively (KEMI, 2017). Thus, it is expected that relevant induction training on implementation of public procurement regulations is provided to those involved in different procurement roles by KEMI. The induction training will provide the requisite knowledge and skills for effective implementation of public procurement regulations in institutions of learning.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Headteachers in Kenya are not appointed to headship positions due to their competence in managerial skills or public procurement. Republic of Kenya (2007) states that there have been cases of misappropriation of funds due to financial malpractices especially in the procurement of goods and services which include biased selection of suppliers, corruption and collusions. This problem might have been occasioned by lack of prior induction training on public procurement regulations before one is appointed to the position of a headteacher (sub-county director of Education, 2010). It is against this background that the study was carried out to investigate the influence of headteachers exposure to management training on implementation of public procurement regulations in Kenya.

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study was guided by the following objective:

To establish the influence of induction of the headteachers as an aspect of management training on implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools in Kenya.

2.1 Literature Review

Training is the process of bringing a person in leadership position to the expected level of administrative competence. Harris (1989) as cited in Morumbasi (1992) defines in-service training as any planned programme of learning opportunities offered to staff members of schools, colleges or other educational agencies for purposes of improving the performance of the individual in already assigned position. Luthans (2003) observes that organizations should ensure that training is part and parcel of the organizations human resource development. Republic of Kenya (2005) stipulates that training and capacity building is crucial in any successful organization. Training programmes comprise both short and long term courses in specific professionals that are intended to impart required knowledge, skills and attitudes to enhance staff performance. Hence, headteachers and those charged with various procurement roles require training on public procurement regulations in order to enhance their performance.

Mullins (2002) avers that training is a major influence on the success of any organization. It ensures sustainable economic returns and effective performance for achievement of aims and objectives of the organisation. Republic of Kenya (2005) policy on staff development stipulates that all Public servants will be eligible for at least five days training in a year. In addition, induction and orientation training in the Public service is expected to help an employee to familiarize with the work requirements. Thus, this policy enhances achievement of organizational goals through effective implementation of public procurement regulations.

According to Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992), secondary school headteachers in-service programme content falls mainly into three broad areas which include practical day-to-day school administration and organizational matters, management of school finances and store keeping and management aspects of school administrators. It is therefore expected that KEMI will provide adequate induction training to all those involved in procurement roles in order to enhance implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools as public entities.

Headteachers therefore need induction training on public procurement regulations as an integral part of the process of quality management and effectiveness in implementation of public procurement regulations. Mullins (2002) avers that the purpose of training is to improve knowledge, skills and to change attitudes. This increases confidence, motivation and commitment of staff and enhances responsibility. Proper induction and training of headteachers by identifying their training needs especially on public procurement regulations as well as providing an opportunity for training is very crucial because it improves headteachers' competence and performance.

Eshiwani (1993) postulates that training provides knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for effective performance of ones roles and responsibilities to accomplish the tasks. This is because according to Katz (1995) administrators require three skills to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. These skills are the technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills. Thus, secondary school headteachers may need to involve various groups of people in decision making in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in provision of learning materials and facilities. Therefore, the procurement of goods and services in schools should ensure acquisition of good quality school facilities in a competitive manner in order to enhance value for money in spending public resources.

In his study, Makori (2008) observed that training and retraining are important aspects of implementation when an organization shifts to a strategy requiring different skills, managerial approaches and operating methods. The shift to public procurement reforms in all public entities definitely requires that new tasks and challenges be matched with new skills. This study sought to establish the effects of exposure of headteachers' to management training on implementation of public procurement regulations in order to fill the gap.

3.1 Research Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey design which enabled the provision of an insight into intensive, descriptive and holistic analysis of a single entity. Descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). The target population for the study was twenty nine (29) public secondary school headteachers in secondary schools that had been registered with the (Ministry of Education) MoE and had served for at least one year in that school. Kombo & Tromp (2006) observe that a target

population is a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement.

The sample size for the study was twenty seven (27) Public secondary schools from which twenty seven (27) headteachers. The total respondents were 27. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample size. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) notes that ten percent (10%) of the population can be picked from a large population but Mulusa (1990) states that in small population of thirty (30) cases or less, it is possible to leave out one or two cases which would not make much difference to the resources and time.

The study used questionnaires as a tool for data collection. Content validity was enhanced by preparing the instruments in close consultation with the supervisors in order to ensure that the items in the questionnaire covered all the areas under investigation. Best & Kahn (1993) observed that, content validity of the research instruments could be enhanced through expert judgment. Instrument validity was established by a pilot study which was done in two public secondary schools which were not included in the study in order to identify those items that could be misunderstood and such items were modified accordingly thus, increasing the face validity.

Instrument reliability was ascertained by a test retest technique after which the reliability results were compiled and correlation calculated after piloting using the Spearman Brown Prophecy formula which gave a reliability coefficient of 0.81 implying that there was a high degree of reliability of data. Once data was collected, it was coded and analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The results of quantitative data from closed ended questions were tabulated and presented using frequency distributions and percentages. Qualitative data generated from open ended questions was categorised in themes based on the research questions and reported in a narrative form.

3.2 Research Findings

Influence of management training on headteachers' implementation of public procurement regulations

The headteachers need self-renewal and need to have sound managerial skills to help them to be more effective in their duties (Olivero, 1982). This is agreeable because the training would include being trained to be more effective in implementation of public procurement regulations as an aspect of financial management. Training on public procurement regulations would provide the required skills, knowledge and attitudes for effective implementation of public procurement regulations hence enhance transparency and accountability in procurement roles. Hence, the study sought to determine the extent to which implementation of public procurement regulations is influenced by exposure of the headteachers to management training. Table 1 shows whether headteachers had received induction courses on implementation of public procurement regulations.

Table 1
Status of headteachers' induction in public procurement regulations

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	65.2
No	8	34.8
Total	23	100.0

Majority of the headteachers sixty five point two (65.2%) had been inducted on the implementation of public procurement regulations while thirty four point eight percent of them had not been inducted. Lack of exposure came in when a headteacher is appointed with no prior preparation for the post of headship. It is thus observed that, although the headteachers had been inducted on the implementation of public procurement regulations, there is need for all of them to be inducted when appointed to headship of a school and provided with enough information on emerging trends in education. This concurs with Eshiwani (1993) who observed that lack of induction affects the performance of headteachers in school administration and management.

The Chi-square(x^2) test was used to determine the strength of association between establishment of procurement units in public secondary schools and headteacher's induction on public procurement regulations and to test whether the observed relationship is significant or not. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. The study established that headteachers induction had a p-value of 0.43 indicating a significant influence on implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools. It was thus concluded that headteachers induction on public procurement regulations had a significant effect on implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools in Kenya.

3.3 Recommendations

The study recommended an immediate induction of public secondary school headteachers after appointment to headship positions in order to enhance effective implementation of public procurement regulations and that those involved in procurement roles should be exposed to in-service trainings regularly.

3.4 Suggestions for further research

A study on the influence of in-service training on various committee members in the implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools should be carried out.

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