

**INFLUENCE OF ETHICAL PROCUREMENT PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE  
OF KITUI COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA**

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
SCIENCE IN PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLIES MANAGEMENT OF  
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**


**JULY, 2024**

## DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

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#### Declaration by the Student

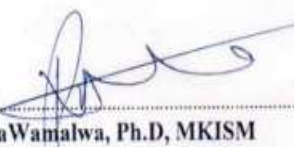
This is my original work and has not been submitted for any other award at any other University

Signature .....  
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Date 4/7/2024.....

#### Supervisor Declaration

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor

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Date 4/7/2024.....

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband Harrison and children; Shem, Ariel and Myla for supporting me in order to complete this project in time.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to my Supervisor Dr. Peter Wamalwa Barasa, Ph.D., for his invaluable assistance towards completing this proposal. I also wish to acknowledge my husband (Harrison Mulili) and children (Shem, Ariel & Myla) for their support and prayers during this time when I was busy compiling this Project.



## ABSTRACT

The government has been making great efforts in averting the vices that have for long been associated with the procurement processes within government entities in Kenya. Main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of ethical procurement practices on performance of Kitui county government. The specific objectives of the study included: to examine the influence of transparency practice on performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya; to establish the extent to which accountability practice influence performance in county governments in Kenya; to investigate how professionalism practice influence the performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya and finally to determine the influence of Competition in procurement on performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya. The study was underpinned in three theories; principal-agency theory, systems theory and utilitarianism theory. A descriptive research design was used and which employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The researcher used the sampling method to sample all the 589 employees from seven departments as the total population. Data collection tool was mainly a questionnaire which was administered by the researcher to the respondents. These responses were therefore analyzed using SPSS software version 24 in order to draw results from them. The correlation and multiple regression analysis were conducted and the results presented in the form of frequency distribution table and charts upon which conclusions were done. To ensure the reliability of our findings, the researcher applied the internal consistency technique, leveraging Cronbach's alpha. The findings indicate that there existed a positive and significant relationship between transparency practice and overall performance of employees in Kitui County government, Kenya with coefficient of correlation ( $r = 0.617, p = 0.000$ ). It was also observed that accountability practice has a positive relationship with performance of procurement process in Kitui County government, Kenya with coefficient of correlation ( $r = 0.107, p = 0.000$ ). The results established that professionalism practice has a significant positive relationship with performance of procurement practitioners in Kitui County government, Kenya with coefficient of correlation ( $r = 0.377, p = 0.000$ ). Finally the findings indicated that there was a slightly significant positive relationship between competition practice and employees' performance in Kitui County government, Kenya with coefficient of correlation ( $r = 0.017, p = 0.000$ ). It was therefore concluded that; the procurement process needs to embrace transparency, competition, accountability and professionalism. The study recommended that procurement rules and regulations should be put into place and strictly adhered in every step of the tendering process to ensure transparency. Procurement officers should be given enough room to make their own independent decisions without any undue influence from their seniors to ensure accountability. Employees should be trained regularly in their areas of specialization and later given room to exercise that what they have trained in. regular reviews of their performance should also be undertaken to enhance performance. To increase on competition, there should be no collusion between procurement officers and the contractors and also senior officers should not influence the outcome of the tendering process.

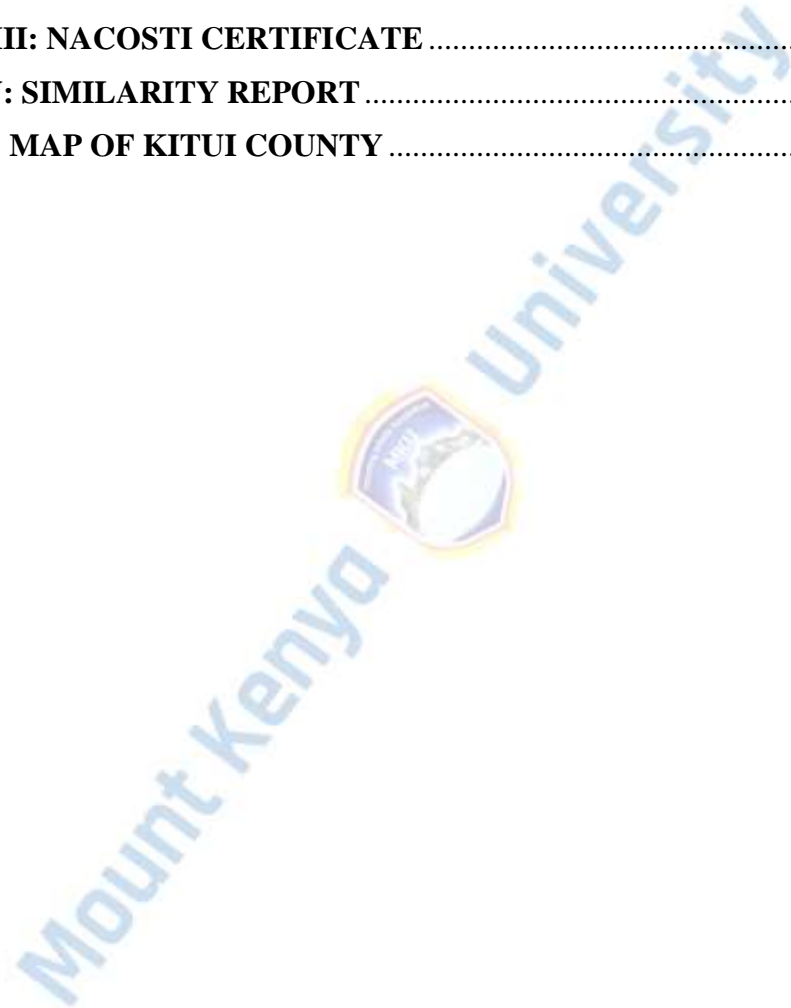
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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

- CIDP** : County Integrated Development Plan
- CIPS** : Chattered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
- EACC** : Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
- GDP** : Gross Domestic Product
- IFMIS** : Integrated Financial Management Information Systems
- KISM** : Kenya Institute of Supplies Management
- OECD** : Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- PPDA** : Public Procurement and Disposal Authority

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter covered background of the study, research problem, objectives of the study, research questions, Significance of the study, Scope of the study and operational definition of terms.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Procurement is the process of acquisition of goods, services and works by an entity which generally forms a significant part of spending (Lim, 2014). Overtime, the procurement function has received a lot of appreciation thus making many countries to lay much emphasis in streamlining their procurement processes hence making them change from reactive activities to strategic ones. Kiragu (2012) opined that all procurements should be geared towards achievement of value for money through effective and efficient processes in order to achieve organizational goals, which are mainly cost reduction and customer satisfaction. Successful government entities as well as companies worldwide have invested heavily on efficient operations which have in turn yielded to procurement excellence governed by a clear framework for transparency and effectiveness (Hunja, 2003).

Procurement plays a pivotal role in enhancing the overall performance. However, this can only be possible when the whole process is guided by ethical practices. According to Kabega (2016), both developed and developing countries have set out procurement reforms through

enactment of laws and regulations. However, these efforts have achieved little success owing to little regulatory compliance. Their efforts to anchor procurement practices on the pillars of value for money, elevation of public service delivery and creation of an environment for private sector growth have delayed their main objective of effective governance (World Bank 2012). According to World Bank (2010), it is estimated that close to 20% of all global governments' expenditures are as a result of public procurement. The presence of these structures aimed at ensuring efficient procurement practices has not spurred economic growth within the developed and developing countries due to poor governance.

According to Transparency International (2017), it is estimated that close to 20% of government contracts are infiltrated by corruption through awarding of tenders to firms with political linkages. Consequently, this act of corruption can inflate project costs by 50%. Therefore, weak governance in public procurement increases the overall price incurred in the acquisition of goods, services and works thus impacting directly on public expenditures as well as taxpayers' resources (OECD, 2009). Measures that ensure transparency, accountability, prevention of wanton wastage of resources and avoidance of corrupt practices can yield to good governance in public procurement.

### **1.1.1 Procurement in the World**

Public procurement consists of a set of interrelated activities that work together to achieve the desired organizational goals. Since its origin in 1960, public procurement has witnessed tremendous evolution up to today where it is regarded as a major strategic activity within both private and public sectors. However many countries and especially third world countries have been faced with challenges occasioned by the dynamic procurement

revolution which makes it difficult to have a functional procurement as well as enhancement of institutional performance (Wambui, 2012).

The evolution of procurement has been an on-going process throughout the world with governments coming under immense pressure to ensure value for money in the face of unrelenting budget constraints, increased demand for transparency as well as public concerns about efficiency and fairness. Consequently, procurement professionals have the burden to cope with the constantly changing environment occasioned by new technologies, emerging customer demands as well as complex international and regional trade agreements and treaties. Therefore, public procurement is being used globally to achieve socio-economic goals. The complexities that have been brought by the changing public procurement environment have forced procurement professionals to walk a tightrope in dealing with broad issues, some of which they have no prior knowledge about.

The World Bank, which is global lender to countries developed a framework known as Country Procurement Assessment Review (CPAR) which is premised on four pillars; procurement laws and regulations, procurement workforce, procurement organizational structure and procurement processes and methods (Thai, 2009). Ethical procurement is guided by laws and regulations which are considered as strong pillars that support procurement efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, competent professional workforce ensures a sound and effective procurement system for organizations and the country at large. Countries around the world have stepped up plans to ensure compliance with procurement rules in order to eliminate risks. For example, countries like Canada, United States, Brazil

and Thailand have their procurement activities regulated through the Model Procurement Code (Trybus, 2016).

### **1.1.2 Procurement in Africa**

Africa, just like the other continents operates in a global environment which highly responds to the trends of the global economy. According to Shah (2015), Africa had for long been associated with negative issues like poverty, political instability, ineffective public sector, rampant corruption and poor governance systems. Good governance in Africa was not given much attention until 1990s when the continent started responding to the calls from external pressures like the World Bank and IMF. This led to the start of reforms in the institutions as well as systems which provided public services (World Bank 2012). These reforms were aimed at addressing some of the serious weaknesses in the public sector like; non-transparency, serious conflict of interest, lack of accountability and wanton corruption.

Most countries in Africa have instituted strong legal and institutional frameworks to address the problem of irregularities in public procurement. However, these regulatory bodies have achieved little with some being totally redundant due to little political goodwill. The implementation of these regulatory bodies was aimed at overseeing procurement processes in order to ensure that they conform to the set rules and regulations. Notably, the ethics infrastructure coupled with its core principles are ignored or totally not put in to consideration. As a result, there has been lack of enforceable codes of conduct, efficient accountability systems, professionalism in public procurement and political goodwill. Consequently, there has been prevalence of illegalities in the whole system hence leading to minimal performance.

### **1.1.3 Procurement in the East african Region**

Significant reforms have since taken place though with little success and notable failures. Much emphasis of these reforms has been laid on public procurement reforms in Africa since 1990s. Public procurement has been in the limelight owing to the pressure to reduce operating costs in the public sector, demand for transparency and accountability from tax payers and the dynamics in the public sector. The systems in public procurement were weak in most African countries which acted as a breeding ground for inefficiency in service delivery. In addition, public procurement was and is still regarded as a major driver to economic growth, development, service delivery and ultimately poverty eradication. For example, in Uganda the implementation of public procurement reforms began in the year 2000 after the cabinet endorsed them. Tanzania started her reforms in 1992 through a consultant that was commissioned by the government to undertake a public procurement study in order to identify serious weaknesses.

Other studies carried out on why procurement practices have had little impact on performance seem to point at management flaws. For instance, in a study carried out by Nantage (2021), it was concluded that strategic procurement management impacts directly on financial performance on banks in Uganda. This study lays much blame on the policy planning as opposed to the implementation. Another similar study was carried out in Rwanda by Kabega et al (2016) on the effect of procurement practices on performance of public projects. This study majored mostly on the role of procurement planning as the major cause of the reason why procurement practices limit performance. It's worth noting that the study excluded activities like inventory management, procurement controls, monitoring and workforce training.

#### **1.1.4 Procurement in Kenya**

In Kenya, the procurement system has evolved greatly over the last five decades. According to Mukoswa (2015), procurement started in mid 1960s as a system with no regulations, then minimal regulations were introduced in the 1970s upto 1990s through Treasury Circulars. Serious regulations were enacted through the introduction of Public Procurement and Disposal Act (PPDA) in 2005 and the Procurement Regulations of 2006. This brought with it ethics within the procurement system thus making it a mainstream business practice in both public and private sectors in Kenya. Today Kenya boasts of a sound legal framework governing public procurement which came as a result of the inactment of the PPDA and the subsequent regulations. These regulations guide in the determination of methods of procurement to be used, advertising of tenders and their time limits, technical specifications in drawing up tender documents, opening of bids and their evaluation all through to the ultimate awards of tenders and handling of complaints.

Despite all these measures by the government of Kenya to instill discipline in the procurement system, it has been an uphill task to cultivate a good measure of public confidence owing to the notion that all public procurements are prone to rampant corruption occasioned by conflict of interest, bribery and political interference. According to Transparency International (2017), close to 35% of all government contracts in Kenya are riddled with corruption thus rendering them unclean. Indeed this corruption within public procurement has deprived the government of an environment for continuity since public resources are used in an unprofitable manner (Mutava, 2012). The enactment of the new constitution in 2010 outlined five principles for public procurement and disposal namely; fairness, equity, transparency, competitiveness and cost-effectiveness. These new principles

were meant to ensure the incorporation of groups or regions that had been disadvantaged for a long time owing to their inability to compete favourably. The target groups include; small enterprises, micro enterprises, disadvantaged groups, citizen contractors and citizen contractors in joint venture with foreign firms (Mokaya, 2014). Public procurement and disposal (county governments) regulations (2013) were meant to ensure sanity in procurement and disposal activities within the newly established county governments.

The main purpose of these regulations was to put into motion the Public Procurement And Disposal Act of 2005 within the counties in order to spur growth of local industries. According to a study conducted by Karanja and Kiarie (2015), it was discovered that both public and private procurements in Kenya are vulnerable to employment of incompetent staff who distort the flow of activities thus affecting performance. The conclusion by this study is that lack of competence within the procurement staff is the major cause of dismal performance in many organizations. In relation to this, Ejura and Augustine (2014) asserted that current procurement industry is less efficient in West africa not because of regulation models but non-compliance but pitiable execution of activities by incompetent staff.

#### **1.1.5 County Government of Kitui**

The enactment of the 2010 new constitution in kenya led to the establishment of the 47 devolved units called counties. Kitui County is one othe counties that were hived from the former Eastern province. It comprises of 8 sub-counties namely; Kitui West, Kitui Central, Kitui Rural, Kitui South, Kitui East, Mwingi North, Mwingi West And Mwingi Central. Just like other counties, notable growth has been witnessed in terms of business and infrastructure. Todate, the county has witnessed an improved measure of development projects initiated by the County government.

Despite the great potential, Kitui County is classified as Arid and Semi-Arid counties which exhibits relatively high levels of poverty (CIDP, 2018 - 2022). However, these developments within the county have come with equal measure of corruption cases some of which are still under investigation by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC). According to EACC report (2019), the county was under investigation due to irregular procurement of emergency construction works for drifts and road structures in various parts of the county following El-Nino rains. This included 21 projects valued at Kshs. 172,156,538. It was established that in the county procurement plan, the construction of drifts had not been included and in addition the contract exceeded the recommended threshold matrix by Kshs. 20,000,000/=.

#### **1.1.6 Ethical Procurement Practices**

Ethical procurement practices involve high degree of integrity, avoidance of conflict of interest and personal enrichment, equal and fair treatment of suppliers as well as total compliance with legal and moral obligations (Kaptein, 2008). Procurement practices on the other hand are well coordinated activities comprising of planning, implementation, controlling, monitoring, evaluation and training of workforce (Waiganjo, 2014). With the evolution in procurement, procurement practices have been aligned with the emerging trends in the business world. According to Wanyama (2012), some of the emerging trends today like E-procurement, have hastened the change from traditional procurement processes which consisted of manual paperwork to use of electronic methods of procurement. Today, county governments in Kenya are undertaking their procurement practices through the now popular Intergrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS).

In a bid to enforce internal control systems, enhancing capacities and strengthening oversight institutions, the government of Kenya implemented public finance reforms through the use of IFMIS in all government procurements. The use of this system has been highly regarded as part of the broad public finance management reforms intended to improve budget preparation, accounting, reporting and auditing processes (Khemani, 2015). However, despite IFMIS being a new technology, it is not devoid of challenges and obstacles. Some of these profound challenges include fraud allegations orchestrated by IFMIS users, delayed payments to service providers and delayed procurement services. Leftie (2016) reported that some senior officials of an agency under the ministry of Health tried to steal Kshs.30 million by manipulating the IFMIS system. This attempted theft of public funds was however detected and stopped as accountants prepared payments to six ghost companies. This might be an indication that some corrupt officials might be working with fraudsters to steal from the public coffers.

### **1.1.7 Performance**

Performance is defined as the institution's actual output compared with the targeted or intended output, goals or objectives. The metrics through which performance is measured include cost reduction, quality of goods and services produced, lead times, staff turn-over and the overall productivity (Baily, 2011). Financial targets, customer and employee satisfactions can also be indicators of performance. However, positive performance should be anchored on ethical practices which include efficiency, effectiveness, competition, accountability, transparency, ethics and industry development. In addition, this performance should be geared towards attainment of organizational goals with minimal costs in order to maximize profits (Chiboiwa, 2010).

In the early 1990s, the balanced score card was introduced by the Harvard Business School as a tool for measuring performance. This tool offers the organization the opportunity to align its strategies with the vision in order to translate them into action. According to Kumar (2005), Robert Kaplan and David Norton identified the weaknesses of the previous management approaches and opined that managers should look at the organization from four perspectives; learning and growth, business processes, customer and financial perspectives. Performance should therefore be viewed as a collective effort by all stakeholders and not as individual effort mostly from the top management. The performance should also be managed as a motivational tool to both the employees and management. However, in today's business environment, employees are less motivated by performance since corruption makes employees to be motivated by personal enrichment as opposed to performance (Waiganjo, 2014).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Many organizations, both public and private lay much concern on result-based metrics as the only measure of performance. Very little emphasis has been put on ethics. The ineffectiveness in public procurement processes has been blamed on poor management systems and not self-regulatory mechanisms that ethics instill on the professionals (Mukoswa, 2015). Most scholarly researches seem to ignore the role of ethics in enhancing performance. It's worth noting that most malpractices are usually more pronounced within the procurement processes especially on implementation in areas of tender evaluation and awards. Therefore, there exists a wide gap on the role played by ethical procurement practices in enhancing performance.

According to Njihia (2013), many of the cases identified by EACC on corruption in county governments in Kenya revolve around procurement staff engaging in unethical activities. It's worth noting therefore that much emphasis should be laid on importance of ethics in all procurement practices. Proper planning in procurement but without ethics, all these efforts will not yield the intended results. This study will therefore seek to fill the gap left by other researchers who opine that the linkage between procurement practices and performance lies solely on the planning and end results as opposed to the ethical implementation. This study will address the influence of these ethical procurement practices on the performance of Kitui County Government.

### **1.3.Purpose of the Study**

This study sought to examine the influence of ethical procurement practices on performance of Kitui county government

### **1.4. Research Objectives of the Study**

This study examined the following specific objectives;

- i. To examine the influence of transparency practice on performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya
- ii. To establish the extent to which accountability practice influence performance of Kitui County governments in Kenya.
- iii. To investigate how professionalism practice influence the performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya.
- iv. To determine the influence of Competition in procurement on performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya

### **1.5. Research Questions**

- i) How does transparency practice influence performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya?
- ii) To what extent does accountability practice influence performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya?
- iii) How does professionalism practice influence performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya?
- iv) How does Competition in procurement influence performance of Kitui county governments in Kenya?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study did not limit its significance to the county government of Kitui only. The different stakeholders who greatly benefited from this study included the following;

#### **1.6.1 The Government of Kenya**

The government of Kenya benefited greatly from this study. This is because the country at large has been battling mega corruption cases carried out in the county governments and which are threatening to cause huge losses to the country. The government is the main overseer of the spending within the county governments hence there is need to ensure that the resources invested in the county governments are utilized properly.

#### **1.6.2 The County government of Kitui**

The county government of Kitui also benefited greatly from this study. It being the county under study, it got to know the need of emphasizing on procurement ethics as a remedy to curb the rampant corruption cases that have been characteristic of this county. The governor

and other members of the county government understood the need to streamline the procurement procedures in order to ensure transparency and integrity in the whole process.

### **1.6.3 The world of academia**

To other scholars, this study added significant input to the body of knowledge. The findings of this study were used by future scholars in identifying the causes of the corruption cases that are regularly experienced in the government and the county governments. The study also formed the basis of further researches by different scholars who wanted to enhance further knowledge in this area or another related area.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study encompassed the area where the study was carried out, which is the area scope, the time scope which indicated the timeframe within which the study was carried and the area of interest where the researcher wanted to learn about.

### **1.7.1 Area Scope**

This study was conducted within Kitui County which lies within the former Eastern province. The researcher therefore collected the data from the employees based within the county headquarters based in Kitui town.

### **1.7.2 Time Scope**

This study was carried out within a period of 10 months. This was the period between the month of June 2023 to March 2024. This is the time when the researcher had sufficient time to carry out the study.

## **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

This study was centered in Kitui County. However, corruption cases have been witnessed in many counties around the country and which differ in magnitude. Therefore, limiting the

study to Kitui county alone would be limiting the data to one area of the country yet corruption happens in the whole country. On the other hand, procurement in just one area where corruption is rampant. This study did not highlight unethical cases in other departments of the county. To overcome this, the researcher reviewed some secondary data on the level of unethical practices in all departments of the county governments in Kenya.

The researcher relied on information given by respondents. However, some information might be concealed because some respondents might not be willing to divulge much information. Some information is also regarded as confidential hence the researcher might not have access to it. To overcome this challenge, the researcher sought to assure the respondents that this information was meant for educational purposes only and also ensure the confidentiality of the information obtained from the county.

### **1.9. Delimitations of the study**

Unethical cases and lack of ethical standards in procurement have been lacking even before the creation of the county governments, hence readily available information was at hand for the researcher. Corruption is very common in the country and especially within the county governments; therefore information and other studies done on the same was available to act as secondary data for the researcher to review.

The study was confined to Kitui County, thus providing a small scope of coverage. This made the study relatively easy to undertake bearing in mind that the researcher was able to gather information within a narrow scope.

### **1.10. Operational Definition of Terms**

In the context of this study, the following terms had the following meaning ;

**Public Procurement :** This refers to the process of purchasing of goods, services and works by governments as well as enterprises which are owned by the government

**Procurement Ethics :** This is the basis upon which all the principles of procurement which include; fairness, integrity and transparency are premised. A person to be considered as ethical, he/she has to adhere to rules governing the profession.

**Unethical practice :** Unethical practices is an act that are contrary to the public policy and welfare. Some of these acts are conflict of interest, leaking of confidential information with vendors, biasness and lack of integrity.

**Conflict of Interest :** This is a direct or mutually exclusive clash between the interest of the organization and the private or personal interest of the organization's procurement official. This happens when the procurement officer or relatives develop direct financial interest in the suppliers's organization.

**Fairness and Impartiality :** The act of getting what a person deserves through the right process and just allocation is fairness. Impartiality is the absence of bias. Fairness and impartiality in procurement can only be possible in an atmosphere of fair competition

**Confidentiality :** According to Transparency International (2017), this is the act of keeping information secret and can only be shared with liable parties within the organization. Information is consumed by only those it concerns.

**Integrity :** This is the quality of honesty which enables one to maintain firm moral principles. This enables one to put resources to use in relation to the intended purpose in line with public interest

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0. Introduction**

This chapter covered the theoretical review, literature review in line with the specific objectives, empirical review, conceptual framework and summary of the research gap.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

This study was underpinned in three theories that gave weight into the importance of ethical procurement practices on overall performance.

##### **2.1.1 Principal – Agency theory**

This theory was designed by Jensen and Meckling (1976). In their argument, they suggested how a company is run based on conflict of interest between the owners of the company who are shareholders, company's managers and providers of debt finance. Each of these groups has different interests and objectives. An agent is the person who acts on behalf of another person who is referred to as the principal. The main objective of this theory is to come up with a contractual relationship between the principal and the client as optimally as possible (McDonald, 2011). The Principal - Agency theory emphasizes on a relationship whereby a contractual agreement is entered into by the owners of the company who appoint managers as agents to run the company. Therefore, authority is delegated to the managers who are expected to act in the best interest of the owners.

Public procurement is also a delegated authority. Since public procurement involves the use of government resources, the procuring entity acts on behalf of the government. According to Chiboiwa (2010), public procurement is not only an economic activity but also a legal activity.

Agency relationship becomes clear when one party relies on the actions of another. In this case, the efficiency of the principal's actions are totally dependent on the agent's decisions (Nyman, 2015). According to Hounaida (2018), the agency relationship is purely an optimizing issue in the economic sense, which involves the appropriate selection of legal and organizational solutions that minimize information asymmetry hence increasing consistency between the agent's and principal's activities. Public procurement is viewed as an agency kind of an activity. Public procurement officers act on behalf of the organization which in this case of the government. Their actions are deemed to be the actions of the government hence there is an agency relationship between the procuring entity and the government.

### **2.1.2 The Systems Theory**

This was proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1940s. The theory is based on the view that an organization is a single and unified set of interrelated parts or subsystems. This system has four components; input, process, output and feedback. The process is the method employed to transform the inputs into the intended output (Miller, 2011). Feedback acts as a control tool to evaluate the process. This theory indicates that the components of a system are structured in hierarchial order and are highly interdependent such that one component can not function without the support of the other component (Poole, 2014). The strategic nature of public procurement today has cast this function as a system owing to the different activities within its process. The systems theory therefore fits the description of procurement as an integration of different aspects of process, structure and decision making.

Generally, the systems theory lays emphasis on three levels; the environment, the social organization and human participants within the organization (Poole, 2014). Organizations

operating in the same country or area are interdependent thus bringing out the aspect of environment as a system. Employees within an organization are interdependent thus leading to social system. Humans in nature are interdependent. Therefore, in any organization that has functional units or departments is a system by itself. No department can function alone in the organization, therefore they are all interdependent. All departments have activities within themselves. The procurement function has a set of processes that are followed so it qualifies to be a system.

### **2.1.3 Utilitarianism Theory**

This theory, which is an ethical theory was designed by Jeremy Bentham with a view of determining right from wrong by focusing on the outcomes. It draws its basis from consequentialism with a view that the most ethical decisions are the ones that produce the most desired outcome. The moral aspect of this theory is based on the view that everything is focused on pleasure and pain. Bentham advocates for the use of legislative laws, administrative principles, local orders and codified laws without restrictions. The law regulates behaviour through orders from rulers thus leading to legal positivism.

The utilitarian theory therefore advocates for a formal code of ethics which is designed in line with the organization's corporate culture, values and regional laws. For any significant growth to be witnessed, all the visions and missions should be alligned to ethics. Every entity has an obligation to do that which maximizes happiness not only to the employees but also other stakeholders. This becomes the basis for critisizing organization's behaviours that result in to harm. The ethical principles should be subjvt to periodic reviews in order to ensure happiness at all times through their effects.

The three theories explained above are highly applicable to the procurement process today. The Principal-Agency theory is applicable in the sense that a procurement professional acts on behalf of the procuring entity and thus all decisions made are binding to the entity. Therefore, there is a binding relationship between the entity and the procurement practitioner. The systems theory explains the linkage between procurement and other functions of the organization. For instance, the procurement department needs other departments for human capital, drawing of specifications and inspection of supplies to ascertain whether they conform to the set specifications. A system is a set of interrelated functions aimed at meeting a specific target. The utilitarian theory advocates for a set of rules that guide the process in order to ensure conformance in order to bring happiness to all the stakeholders.

## **2.2. Empirical Review**

The procurement function has taken major steps since 1960s from just a clerical unit to today's recognized function that plays a major role in strategic plans of many organizations. This trend has therefore attracted the attention of many researchers and scholars who have carried out extensive studies concerning procurement. However, owing to the broad base that this function has, these studies have not exhausted the subject of public procurement fully. The modern use of technology in public procurement has played a great role in enhancing transparency. According to Odhiambo (2013) the introduction of E-procurement by many governments has acted as an efficient tool in enhancing transparency in public procurement.

The greatest advantage that has been brought by this technology is improved access to procurement opportunities thus greatly dealing with the challenge of integrity that had deteriorated in many government entities (Mustaffa, 2012). Among the advantages that have

come with the use of E-procurement are disclosure of procurement laws, regulations and bidding procedures and advertisement of procurements. The manual methods of public procurement was devoid of transparency hence its integrity questionable. Other efforts that have been done to enhance transparency is standardization of rules governing procurement procedures and formats of documents. This step has helped greatly in stopping corruption cases while at the same time improving competitiveness (Loader, 2017).

In a study conducted by Carter and Narasimhan (2016), it was concluded that competitive advantage in procurement process happens through managing good supplier relationship. The study emphasizes on buyer-supplier relationship as the main reason why quality of supplies, shortened leadtime and possibility of getting credit facilities can be attained for continued operations in an organization hence avoidance of stoppages. The argument of this study is that this relationship enhances performance of organizations. The control systems instituted should be proportionate to the risks involved in terms of their regularity and thoroughness.

There should be complementarity between both internal and external controls which coordinate together to avoid loopholes as well as ensuring completeness of the information produced thus making it useful (Loader, 2017). The internal control guidelines should be clear on the level of individual responsibility, the knowledge required as well as experience and the financial implications of each action at different stages within the public procurement cycle. There should also be clear guidelines on the degree of responsibility in case of delegated authority. However, this can only be successful if the management expresses

goodwill through adequate communication and training in order to ensure integrity within the whole procurement process (Singer, 2017).

In a similar study carried out by Kiragu (2012) on the impact of information technology on procurement process in Kenya, it was concluded that the ability to employ technology in the contracting process relies on the cooperation between the organizations that maintain the data and organizations that use the data. This study emphasizes of the role of technology in enhancing performance. It argues that technology eliminates all the bottleneck associated with manual procurement processes hence increased performance.

Ntayi (2011) undertook another study on the relationship between procurement practices, collaborative relationships and supply chain performance in Uganda's Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs). This study found out that procurement practices and collaborative relationships played a great role in derailing the supply chain performance of SMEs. The findings of this study indicate that the institution of systems that support collaborative relationships greatly improve procurement practices as well as professionalism which results into timely deliveries, flexibility and customer satisfaction. Many countries in the world are still grappling with inefficient and ineffective public procurement despite their efforts in investing substantial financial resources in bringing reforms in their procurement processes (Eyaa, 2011).

According to OECD (2009), a study conducted in Zambia established that the procurement law in the country is silent on processes like open competitive bidding, no prequalification procedures, no procurement plans in most government procurements and there is no law

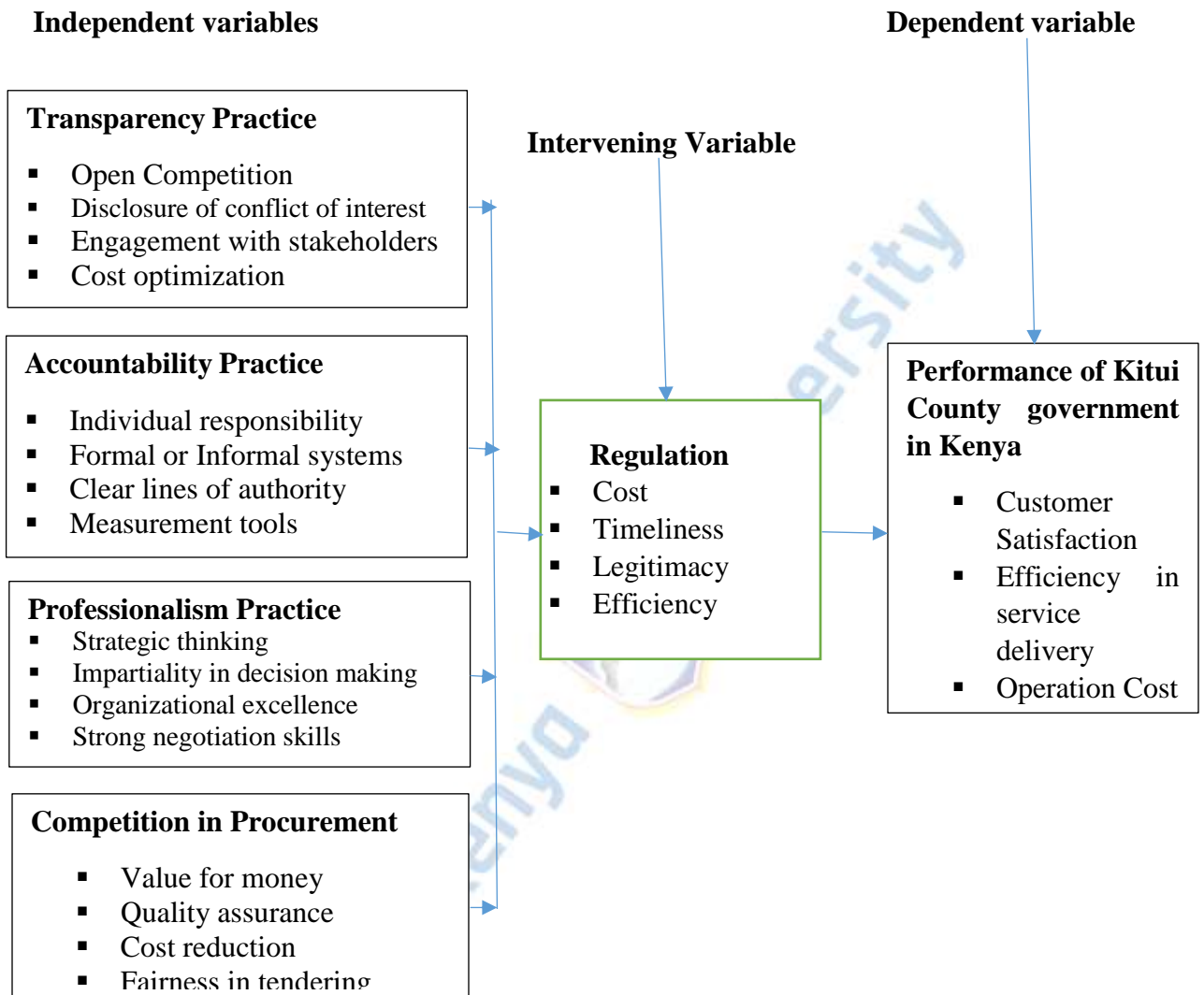
which governs storage and safekeeping of procurement records. In another study carried out by the World Bank in collaboration with the government of Kenya in 2012, it was established that public procurement in Kenya generally lacked transparency, fair competition, professionalism and minimal enforcement of the code of conduct from the professional body. This has greatly been used to explain the rampant corruption being witnessed in the country. Similarly, another study was conducted in Tanzania by Crown Agents (2012) and it unearthed a disjointed procurement system and standard procurement procedures were not in place. In addition, there lacked standard tender documents or records and no central organ was actively responsible for organizing public procurement processes.

Odhiambo and Musotsi (2019) carried another study on procurement management practices and procurement performance of government ministries in Kenya. This study aimed at establishing the extent to which procurement management practices had been implemented in Kenya through the various government ministries. This study concluded that the significant implementation of procurement practices and the subsequent performance was basically because of staff motivation. The study concluded that once the staff are motivated, performance is usually imminent. It was further pointed out that the greatest impediment to performance was the adoption of procurement management adoption.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual model can be defined as a collection of diverse principles and ideas drawn from relevant fields that are applied to guide the exploration and organization of subsequent information. The conceptual framework aims at showing the relationship between the

independent and dependent variable. The independent variable is Ethical procurement practices, while the dependent variable is performance of Kitui County government in Kenya.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

### **2.3.1 Transparency Practice and Performance of Kitui County Government**

In public procurement, transparency is the act of availing information concerning procurement processes to all interested parties like contractors, service providers and the public at large without bias unless there are valid reasons to keep the information confidential

(Mokaya, 2014). According to OECD (2009), corruption thrives in an environment of secrecy and therefore the biggest challenge across many countries is to ensure transparency in the procurement process regardless of the procurement method used. Transparency in public procurement is regarded as one of the principles which promotes integrity, fairness and equity among all the potential service providers. Proper documentation and easy accessibility of procurement decisions eliminates biasness, promotes fair competition and makes the awarding of contracts easy and justifiable within the public domain. Through transparent processes, there is disclosure which results to accessibility to public procurement opportunities occasioned by publication and dissemination of information on available tenders (Deases, 2015).

According to Transparency International (2017), the public procurement process in Kenya has seen little efforts aimed at ensuring transparency. Therefore, its integrity has been at stake. The little efforts have helped to a smaller extent in improving access as well as simplifying procedures thus doing little to stop the culture of secrecy and corrupt dealings. Wambui (2012) opines that a proactive disclosure of public procurements can be used as a vital tool in holding procurement officials to account while at the same time ensuring competition and integrity. Kenya and indeed many african countries have faced many constraints in their bid to ensure transparency in public procurement through the employment of technology through e-procurement (Hunja, 2003). There has been much reluctance from many entities to place their bids online as well as unreliable infrastructure to support the intended technology. There needs to be substantial improvement in infrastructure that can support the use of e-procurement like internet services, reliable power supply and adequate public sensitization.

The use technology alone can not adequately address the barriers to transparency in public procurement. It's worth noting therefore that transparent initiatives by the government need to be complemented by other public procurement reforms which include capacity building both on the side of procuring entities and the service providers (Baily, 2011). Public perception of corruption, bias and lack of integrity usually cast doubt on the extent of fair and open competition in public contracting. According to Karanja (2015), in order to ensure regular and open publication of information, a broader transparency regime which is supported by enforceable freedom of information laws is vital, then it should be monitored by an effective and independent audit and regulation body. Mbera (2016) posits that transparency to a large extent is a useful tool to address the vice of corruption, however, there needs to be a political goodwill to deal with it, absence of which will lead to failure in all the initiatives put in place to curb corruption in public procurement.

In many countries, public procurement rules have been instituted in the countries' legislation in the form of statutes or code, for example, here in Kenya there are the PPDA Act 2005 and the regulations of 2006. In these rules, contracts are required to be fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and to a large extent cost-effective. However, Nantage (2012) observes that abuse of public procurement systems occurs mostly as a result of weak and inconsistent enforcement of rules since these laws are not effectively applied. Bending of procurement laws to suit vested interests and poor oversight by those implementing the laws are some of the vices that make the procurement cycle ineffective thus acting as obstacles for fairness while at the same time hindering transparency (Chiboiwa, 2010). Access to procurement information which is as a result of transparency acts as the starting point to winning

government contracts. Transparency has received much attention from the reformers of late due to the celebrated use of technology through e-procurement tools.

According to Hounaida (2015), effective management of the procurement function is an essential ingredient in ensuring system performance through the attainment of presumes goals for the organization. Transparency in the procurement function since it ensures that information is given to all the parties to compete on equal levels hence the best and qualified service provider is awarded the tender. Ejura (2014) adds that a well managed procurement system normally yields to reduced costs for the organization. In many developing countries where corruption is still prevalent, transparency initiatives can be instrumental in unlocking the challenges facing the procurement functions hence increasing on the overall performance of the procuring entities. It is therefore important to note that disclosure of procurement information as well as creation of a level playing field through transparency can contribute greatly towards maximization of growth of the organization while at the same time ensuring cost reduction (Mustaffa, 2012).

### **2.3.2. Accountability Practice and Performance Of Kitui County Government**

Accountability in procurement means holding procurement practitioners responsible for their actions and decisions that they take in relation to the procurement process and for the resulting outcomes. The relevant entities takes steps to enable appropriate scrutiny of the procurement activity (Savas, 2010). Public procurement today operates in an environment that heavily emphasizes on accountability in the decision making process. Initially, procurement as a function was more of clerical in nature but has transitioned to a strategic function. This transition has brought with it a heightened responsibility for accountability on

the part of the procurement practitioner (Thompson, 2013). The major distinction between public and private sectors in procurement is that, whereas in public procurement the practitioner is accountable to the tax payer, in private sector, the practitioner is interested in controlling costs through pricing in order to arrive at the main objective of profitability (Khemani, 2015). Public procurement must ensure complete transparency in the process and fairness to all the vendors.

According to Wang (2012), accountability and transparency is costly since it becomes extremely difficult to provide uniform information to the vendors, avoiding collusion and ultimately averting corrupt deals with decision makers. Some of these enticements play a significant role in encouraging corruption in the process. Chiboiwa (2010) adds that accountability dictates that procurement practitioners are subject to a set of standards that are used to judge whether they have undertaken their responsibilities in strict adherence to these standards and consequently impose sanctions in case of any deviation from the rules (Mutava, 2012). In this regard, there is always a person in higher authority who imposes and supervises the practitioners in order to hold them to account. This can only happen in an atmosphere of transparency and information related to the process and a yardstick to determine if the standards have been adhered to.

Governments need to institute a set of well planned system controls, which should be implemented consistently in order to avert or reduce the probability of having fraudulent activities and maintain integrity within the procurement process (Baily, 2011). In addition, the control system should be detailed enough with cross-checks while at the same time allowing the opportunity to provide feedback on the ultimate success or failure of the process.

In this regard procuring entities should endeavor to put into place a code of ordinances to be followed to ensure competition, fairness and accountability of the procurement process. Weber (2019) observes that there should also be a well designed set of procurement rules that should dictate procedural guidelines for the smooth and overall operation of the process.

External procurement controls are also essential in ensuring total integrity of the whole process. External controls through audits of procurement activities are undertaken to ensure that practices align with the processes (Delaney, 2016). Public procurement that is devoid of corruption is gauged against set metrics. Financial audits, both internal and external audits are critical in detecting and investigating fraud and corruption. In addition, Basheka (2010) posits that performance audits on the other hand are used to generate information concerning the actual benefits of procurement thus pointing out areas that need complete improvements. To ensure accountability, procurement activities should be classified according to the degree of risks involved, hence more complex and sensitive procurements need regular audits (Waiganjo, 2014). The information generated from these audits should be effectively implemented in order to achieve the desired results. Whereas information generated from internal audits is necessary for accountability, information from external audits should be publicised in order to reinforce public scrutiny. These two audits, both internal and external are aimed at enhancing accountability and transparency.

The procurement controls should also be shared with bidders so that in case of any dispute that arises, it is solved quickly and effectively. A neutral dispute resolution mechanism should be formulated in order to give the aggrieved parties a fair hearing before reprimanding anyone (Basheka, 2010). The review systems should be well analysed to

ensure that parties applying for reviews do not harbour malicious intention of interrupting or influencing tenders. Kabega (2016) adds that there remains a major challenge in ensuring that complaints are resolved fairly while at the same time ensuring administrative efficiency through delivery of goods and services within the set timelines. In this case, the employment of technology like e-procurement is essential since information is relayed in real-time to enable public scrutiny. Manual processes are prone to manipulation thus compromising the integrity of the process and thus leading to skewed judgement (Siyal, 2019).

In line with the principle of competition, procuring entities are mandated to make public information concerning major contracts. Similarly, reports from oversight institutions should also be made public to encourage public scrutiny (Deases, 2015). Representatives from the civil society organizations should also be involved by the procuring entities to monitor high value procurements in order to minimize the risks of mismanagement and corruption. According to Dubinsky & Gwin (2016), civil society organizations, the public and more so the media provide effective and efficient avenues to uncover instances of mismanagement, fraud and collusion since freedom to information is instrumental in ensuring accountability and transparency. The wider public can be involved as a watch dog through civic education and awareness-raising campaigns which are crucial in supporting the integrity of the procurement process.

The government has many financiers to its projects and not only tax payers. Other stakeholders like donors and development assistance donors can also offer oversight role in ensuring the strength and assesment of the functioning of procurement ststems (Waiganjo & Makabira 2014). Procurements that are prone to mismanagement and corruption should be

under a tight watch of both internal and external stakeholders especially those that have high value. In this regard, Kiragu (2012) observes that direct control mechanisms are instrumental as external observers of the whole procurement process and key decision points in order to promote answerability. This can only be effective if the stakeholders stay away from conflict of interest and treat information that is confidential with the dignity that it deserves. In situations where public procurement practitioners are under the surveillance both internal and external stakeholders, accountability will be raised in to a higher notch (Kaptein, 2008). However, it's vital that accountability which is not enforced is the best in the field of procurement. Accountability that has to be enforced through regulations or acted out of fear is usually short-lived and any loophole in the regulations is exploited and thus corruption occurs (McDonald, 2011). Accountability should be practiced as a moral individual behaviour and not necessarily a governing law.

### **2.3.3. Professionalism Practice and Performance of Kitui County Government**

The government has a social contractual obligation with its citizens to provide essential goods and services. According to Agbodzakey and Upshaw (2018), governments spend a significant proportion of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through public procurement which necessitates public institutions to employ ethical practices in order to ensure accountability, fairness, integrity and confidentiality in their operations. To ensure the accomplishment of this objective, Snider and Rendon (2012) proposed that adequate reforms need to be carried out within the procurement institutions in order to strengthen ethical practices in public procurement. Professionalism is vital in public procurement with the aim of ensuring accountability and value for money in all transactions involved. This can only be

achieved through training of personnel to increase of their efficiency and productivity (Baily, 2011).

Professionalism in public procurement is the act of consistently doing the best in the right way and with strict adherence to set rules and regulations (Raymond, 2018). The degree of professionalism therefore depends highly on knowledge, staffing, skills and capabilities of human resources that control human behaviours at workplace (OECD, 2009). Arrowsmith (2012) pointed out that procurement is a profession that is largely dependent on theoretical knowledge, then perfected through frequent training and education and ultimately tested and examined in the actual workplace through adherence to professional code of ethics. The absence of professionalism exposes public procurement to corruption which is devoid of compliance to rules and regulations that govern the whole procurement process hence adversely affecting overall performance (Tukamuhabwa, 2012). According to Basheka (2010), organizations willing to embrace an effective procurement should be staffed with procurement professionals, not only trained in this profession but also recognized by the respective procurement professional body in the country.

The increasing importance of procurement and the subsequent importance that governments have attached to it has put a strict requirement that only well trained and qualifies personnel should be employed to manage public procurement process (Delaney, 2016). In addition the absence of professional training and non-conversant with procurement regulations and procedures births breaches of codes of conduct through the application of unsound procurement decisions hence dismal performance (Thompson, 2013). Gesuka and Namusonge (2013) observed that performance, mostly in public entities has been below par,

a situation which can be attributed to incompetence of the procurement staff who are not familiar with the procurement rules and regulations. Professionalism in public procurement does not solely relate to education levels and personal qualifications but it also relies heavily on the professional approach to business activities.

In Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Supplies Management (KISM) is the professional body that ensures competence of procurement practitioners. This body draws its mandate from the supplies practitioners management Act No 17 of 2007. This is an act that provides the legal framework within which the institute is established and additionally operates as a corporate body promoting learning, development of best practices and application of the same to the practice of procurement and supply chain management (KISM 2021). This body provides a code which dictates the ethical standards to assist its members to address ethical dilemmas faced in their line of duty. These standards guide their professional conduct as well as offering consistency in behaviours, creation of awareness and excellence which are incorporated in the procurement process. As a body, KISM expects all its members to be obligated to uphold the integrity of the profession in their daily duties. The code also sets the disciplinary actions that are applied to penalize any member who deviates from them including cancellation of the practising licence of the professionals.

It has become a matter of concern therefore that public procurement reforms can only be effective when addressed from the personnel level. According to Mrope (2017), many governments have been engaging in undertaking procurement reforms with a major aim of reducing costs while at the same time accelerating the speed with which procurement transactions are undertaken. Such reforms have been underpinned in procurement laws like

the KPPDA Act of 2005 and regulations of 2006 in Kenya. However, Mokaya (2014) opines that more has to be done on the aspect of professionalism as opposed to the enforcement of adherence to processes through laws. In his argument, Basheka (2010) points out that laws are made by humans and the same human beings break or bend them since they have vested interests. Compliance to public procurement behaviour has been perceived as one of the prerequisites to legitimacy of procurement rules (Nyman, 2015). However, Snider and Randon (2012) were of the view that the legitimacy of public procurement is perceived by the level of integrity and transparency of the procurement staff and process respectively.

The role of procurement oversight and regulatory bodies is limited to monitoring and reporting on the performance of public procurement system in the country (Baily, 2011). On the other hand, professionalism is determined by personal efforts to acquire knowledge, skills and expertise to carry out professional activities. The main fundamental tasks of procurement professionals is to interact with vendors in order to ensure that the organization is supplied with goods and supplies (Delaney, 2016). Ensuring a good relationship with the vendors while at the same time ensuring that the procurement process is in line with the principles of fairness, integrity, transparency and accountability is essential in procurement profession. The ability to juggle with all these responsibilities while at the same time ensuring that one does not fall prey to the temptations of corruption is what entails one to be termed as a true professional. In addition to this, strict adherence to professional code of conduct combined with high moral standing is equally important (Lim, 2014).

#### **2.3.4. Competition in Procurement and Performance Of Kitui County Government**

Competition in procurement is the process of rivalry between firms to supply their goods or services and it usually takes the dimensions of price, quality and innovation (Njihia, 2013). Competition in procurement occurs mostly during bidding whereby multiple vendors are invited to bid for the same product as per the business's requirements. The public sector sources for their supplies from a relatively competitive market through procurement of goods, services and works (Eyaa, 2011). This calls for safeguarding of public interest owing to the substantial amount of tax payers' resources involved. According to Weber (2019), competition in procurement is usually regulated through policies in order to guarantee eligibility of the participants. These regulations may include; bid fees, proof of standards, quality or prior works.

The procurement code of ethics stipulates that the process of procurement should not in any way be influenced in a manner to give an undue advantage to one party. Since public procurement is funded by the exchequer, all the information on requirements of procurement should be widely circulated in order to maximize the number of respondents from the public and enhance competition (Transparency International 2017). Although not every contract can be awarded through competitive bidding, like the restricted tenders, it should be noted that those that do not fall into that category should be subjected to fair competition in order to give each interested party an even playing ground (Kakwezi, 2013). Decisions in public sector procurement are not aimed at the objective of profit maximization, therefore it may be considered to be less likely to be prone to buyer power with a view to gain unfair advantage over other buyers. The private sector is vulnerable to buyer powers who aim at extracting

concessions from suppliers thus discriminating other buyers and eliminating competition (Hunja, 2003).

According to Arrowsmith (2012), the public sector procurement has the advantage of countervailing the supplier power. Owing to the bulk of the supplies, public contracts are attractive hence vendors can not exercise much power. This helps the procuring entity to check on the supplier market power hence making suppliers to compete more vigorously for public contracts (Tukamuhabwa, 2012). This countervailing in public procurement can either increase or decrease competition in the longrun. It can give an opportunity to new suppliers to enter the market while at the same time it can widen the gap between large and small suppliers by forcing some firms to leave the market altogether. However, Wang (2012) proposes that one of the ways to increase competition is designing procurement processes that ensure that participants are more alike while at the same time processes that make participants dissimilar reduce competition.

Organizations both in the public and private sectors usually employ a competitive bidding process with the aim of attaining better value for money in the procurement process (Chiboiwa, 2010). Their evaluation criteria usually involves reserve prices, quality of the products and ability to beat lead times. This can be achieved through a fair and competitive process where vendors are allowed to bid on equal terms honestly and independently. However, fair competition concerns arise from public procurement emanating from collusive agreements arrived between bidders during the tendering process (Wambui, 2012). Procurement in the public sector is highly transparent and strictly constrained by legislation and administrative regulations that govern public procurement. However, according to

Kabega (2016), transparency as one of the principal requirements of public procurement can result in to collusion where disclosure of identity of bidders and terms and conditions of each bid are known to the competitors. In addition to this, regulatory requirements dictating particular procurement procedures can make the process highly predictable thus creating further room for collusion. Kiarie and Karanja (2015) pointed out that little or lack of flexibility minimizes the available opportunities for procuring entity when confronted with unlawful coalition among bidders with the sole aim of maximizing profits.

According to OECD (2009) competition in public procurement has greatly been limited by presence of cartels that work closely with the government officials to deny other vendors a level playing field in the procurement process. These cartels are usually politically connected and therefore wield significant influence on the procurement decisions made in the procuring entities. The general public should be made aware of the harm that is posed by these cartels since the supply sub-standard goods or services and mostly get away with it owing to their great influence on the procurement process (Kakwezi, 2013). Both public and private sectors bear the burden of dealing with corruption occasioned by allocation of contracts unfairly due to enticement with monetary incentives, however, the World Bank report (2010) established that public sector procurers are faced with an additional challenge of dealing with political favouritism. Actions which limit the pool of potential suppliers may have a significant effect on the level of competition and the overall efficiency of procurement process.

Competition in both public and private sectors is also adversely affected by the problem of bid-rigging. This act of bid-rigging which is also referred to as collusive tendering occurs

when businesses that would have competed in the bidding process secretly conspire to raise prices or lower the quality of goods and services for buyers who would wish to purchase the products (Olaya, 2016). According to Poole (2014) the design of procurement processes and the related activities affects the overall efficiency of procurement. Bid rigging is considered to be an illegal practice in many countries and can be punishable under the competition laws and rules (OECD, 2009). Bid-rigging happens in many forms with the sole intention of limiting the efforts of buyers to obtain goods and services at the lowest possible price. According to Basheka (2010) ,in a contract that would have been awarded through a competitive bidding process competitors often agree in advance on who will submit the winning bid. The main objective of this collusive tendering conspiracy is to increase the amount of winning bid and the amount that the winning bidders will gain.

Effective competition in the procurement process can be enhanced if a sufficient number of bidders respond well to invitation to tender while ensuring them of the incentive to compete for the contract (Kakwezi, 2013). Some of the ways that can be used to increase participation in the tendering process is through reduction in the cost of bidding, establishment of participation requirements that do not unreasonably limit competition, non-discrimination of bidders from other regions or countries and coming up with ways of incentivising smaller firms to participate in the bidding process even without bidding for the whole contract (Olaya, 2016). To avoid collusive practices among a pre-qualified group, Nantage (2021) suggests that bidders should be qualified during the procurement process, as this will increase the amount of uncertainty among firms as to the number and identity of bidders. In addition the time period between qualification and award should be kept short in order to avoid collusion (Deases, 2015). Competition can also be increased through subdividing big contracts. This

will allow small firms that can not afford the whole contract to bid. Sub-division of contracts is also an effective method of avoiding collusion since tenders are made affordable to many firms. Collusive tendering is most prevalent in instances where the contracts involve large sums of money and overall profitability is high (Delaney, 2016).

#### **2.4 Recap of Literature Review**

Several studies have been carried out on the subject of procurement and how it impacts on the overall organization's performance. However, there still exists a wide gap about this subject and which the researcher will need to fill through this study. For instance, Kabega and Mbera (2016) undertook a study on the effect of procurement practices on public projects in Rwanda. This study concluded that public procurement planning has a close relationship with performance.

Makabira and Waiganjo (2014) in their study on the role of procurement practices on performance of Kenya National Police Service in Makueni County concluded that procurement practices such as development, controlling, monitoring and training workforce played a very great role in the performance within Kenya National police Service. Similarly, Walker and Brammer (2007) carried out a study on sustainable procurement among the United Kingdom public sector. In their study, the nature of procurement practices was found to have significant variations in performance in public sector agencies due to low morale among procurement officers.

In general, these are just a few studies among many that have evaded the subject of the influence that ethical procurement practices have on the performance of organizations. Many

researchers and scholars seem to overlook the contribution of ethical procurement process towards efficiency and effectiveness in public procurement. It's worth noting that ethical principles like transparency, competition, accountability and professionalism play an integral part in increasing performance. However, many studies have laid much emphasis on monitoring and control mechanisms by management. This this study therefore aims at filling the gap left by these scholars on the influence of ethical procurement practices on the overall performance of public entities.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter comprises of the research methodology. It includes the research design, population and sampling design, the data collection procedures, research procedures and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive design. According to Blumberg (2011), a research design refers to the overall plan or blueprint that binds a research. It guides the researcher on the appropriate methodologies and procedures to adopt in the study including the population and sampling techniques. A descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds with the major purpose being description of the state of affairs as it exists at present (Kothari, 2004).

This research design employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. This approach uses techniques like focus group interviews, projective techniques and in-depth interviews (Lincoln, 2010). Qualitative approach on the other hand tries to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed in to usable statistics. It quantifies attitudes, opinions, behaviours and other defined variables and therefore generalizes the results from a larger sample population (Bryman, 2006). Quantitative data is collected through the use of online surveys, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, questionnaires and longitudinal studies. Since this study intended to

assess views from a sample of respondents, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches in order to draw comprehensive information.

### 3.3 Target Population

Orodho (2003) defines a population as any groups of people, institutions or objects that have common observable characteristics. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2012), a population is an entire group of people or other components that share certain traits. For this study, the total population was all county employees working in the 10 ministries in Kitui County Government. Therefore, the total population for this study will be 589 employees as shown in table1;

**Table 1: Target Population**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Number</b>
Finance and Economic Planning	48
Administration and Co-ordination of County Affairs	63
Tourism and Natural Resources	36
Environment, Energy and Minerals Investments development	57
Basic education, Training and skills development	48
Health and Sanitation	84
Culture, youth, sports and social services	31
Lands, infrastructure and urban development	47
Trade, Industry, ICT and Co-operatives	69
Agriculture, water and Irrigation	52
Procurement Department	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>589</b>

Source : Author (2024)

### 3.3.1 Sample

Mugenda & Mugenda (2012) defines a sample as a smaller group or sub-group obtained from the accessible population. A sample, according to Kombo and Tromp (2009), is a portion of the population that has been chosen to reflect or represent the characteristics of the population. The sample is viewed as representative of the whole population and their views are regarded as the views of the whole population. Therefore, to come up with the sample, the researcher will use a mathematical formula by Yamane (1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

N = Population size

n = Sample size

e = Margin of error

For this study therefore;

$$N = 589$$

$$e = 0.05$$

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{589}{1+589(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 238.22$$

$$n = 238$$

The sample for this study was 238 respondents.

### 3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study employed a stratified random sampling technique. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), a stratified random sampling technique is a probabilistic sampling process that involves the classification of the sampling frame into stratas with unique characteristics and the random selection of individual elements within the stratas. This sampling technique was chosen owing to its ability to reduce probability of bias in the sample as well as its nature of being scientifically grounded. The stratas in this study are the different ministries and the procurement department in Kitui county where the researcher randomly picked the respondents from each strata as indicated in the table below;

**Table 2:Sample Size**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
Finance and Economic Planning	48	15
Administration and Co-ordination of County Affairs	63	19
Tourism and Natural Resources	36	18
Environment, Energy and Minerals investments development	57	18
Basic education, training and skills development	48	23
Health and Sanitation	84	40
Culture, youth, sports and social services	31	15
Lands, infrastructure and urban development	47	15
Trade, Industry, ICT and Co-operatives	69	21
Agriculture, water and irrigation	52	24
Procurement department	54	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>238</b>

Source: Author (2024).

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

Data was collected using several instruments that the researcher considered to be effective for this study. The following instruments were used;

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaires**

Primary data was collected through the use of a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a data collection instrument that is quantitative in nature, cheap and convenient for data collection and very commonly used in social researches (Blumberg, 2011). The questionnaire as a tool has potential in reaching out to a large number of respondents within a short time, its ability to give the respondents adequate time to respond to the items as well as offering a sense of confidentiality to the respondents and its characteristic of being objective and free from bias that results from the personal characteristics. The study used closed ended questions and likert scale questions in the questionnaire. This aided in quantification of the data as well as eliciting specific responses for the study. The likert scale for use in the study, was 1 – 5 representing: Strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree and not applicable.

#### **3.5.2 Direct observation**

Through this method, the researcher was able to get first-hand information about the behavior of employees within Kitui County in relation to influence of ethical procurement practices on performance. The researcher was able to observe the procurement processes within the County headquarters.

#### **3.5.3 Interviews**

These were either through personal interviews between the researcher and the employees within Kitui County. The researcher engaged some employees to gather vital information that might not be captured in the questionnaire.

### **3.5.4 County reports**

Secondary data was thus be utilized in the study by the use of annual reports of the Kitui county government and other audited County reports from the national government.

### **3.6 Validity of the Research Instruments**

Validity is a matter of trustworthiness, utility and dependability that the evaluator and the other different stakeholders place into it. It is an essential criterion for evaluating the quality and acceptability of research (Blumberg, 2011). Barasa, Namusonge and Iravo(2015) asserts that Validity is the standard for evaluating how well a design uses measurement techniques to gather data for the purpose of answering the research questions. Content validity is related to a type of validity in which different skills and behaviours are adequately and effectively measured. Internal validity is concerned with the congruence of the research findings with the reality. It also deals with the degree to which the researcher observes and measures what is supposed to be measured. External validity is concerned with the applicability of the findings in other settings or with other subjects. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the employee give 20 minutes and then collect the questionnaire back. This was expected to enhance the response rate and thus data validity.

### **3.7 Reliability of the research instrument**

Reliability deals with the consistency, dependability and replicability of the results obtained from a piece of research. Dependability and consistency of the data is very important. External reliability can be increased if the inquirer pays heed to five important aspects of the inquiry. These five aspects include the status of the researcher, the choice of informants, the social situations and conditions, the analytic constructs and premises and methods of data collection and analysis (Flick, 2006). To enhance the data collected for reliability and

validity, a number of research procedures will be implemented. The researcher pretested the questionnaire for errors and adequacy of the questionnaire using 10% of the respondents

Cronbach's Alpha is a commonly used method for testing instrument reliability, as elucidated by Wise (2013). In this study, constructs with an alpha score of 0.7 or higher will be deemed reliable and included in the analysis. Any construct with an alpha score below the critical value was revised. The researcher utilized Cronbach's Alpha to conduct the reliability tests.

**Table 3: Table Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients**

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>No of Items</b>
Transparency Practice	0.905	7
Accountability Practice	0.931	7
Professionalism Practice	0.964	7
Competition in Procurement	0.941	7
Performance of Kitui County	0.901	4

The results from table 3 on transparency practice show that the Cronbach's alpha is 0.905, which signifies a high level of internal consistency for the scale. Therefore, the researcher would not want to remove any of these questions as they improve the reliability of the constructs. The Cronbach's Alpha on accountability practice is 0.931 which indicates a high level of internal consistency for the scale. This shows that the removal of one question would result into a lower Cronbach's alpha or the alpha remains the same. Therefore, no questions could be removed as they all improve the reliability of the constructs. The Cronbach's alpha on professionalism practice is 0.964 which indicates a high level of consistency for the scale. All questions are therefore significant and they contribute towards the reliability of the

construct and hence no questions can be removed. The Cronbach' alpha on competition practice is 0.941 which shows a high level of consistency for the scale. Therefore, the researcher could not remove any question since they all contribute towards the reliability of the construct. Lastly the Cronbach' alpha on performance in Kitui County is 0.901 thus indicating a high level of consistency for the scale. Therefore, the researcher could not remove any question since they all contribute towards the reliability of the construct.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

Data was obtained through both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was the original work of the researcher, while secondary data was not collected by the researcher but obtained from previously done works (Lohr, 2010). Through active participation in the county's activities, the researcher was able to gather primary data through direct observation, information obtained through interaction with the clients and the self-administered questionnaires to the different respondents. The secondary data was obtained through reviewing the existing related literature like the county's publications and journals, past performance records and other materials from the County's website.

### **3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation**

After data collection, the researcher inspected the questionnaire for completeness and errors. Editing of the questionnaire was then undertaken. Edited questionnaires were coded into SPSS version 24 for data analysis. Analysis of data was done through descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, histograms and means were used in the study. To analyze relationships, the researcher conducted correlation and regression coefficients on the data. Frequency distribution table and charts were used in

the presentation of the data and finally multiple regression models were generated to show the relationship of variables.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

Ethics are usually the beliefs and rules that determine what is right or wrong. According to Freadrick and Ferrell (2011), ethical considerations in research consists of a set of principles that guide the researcher in research designs and practices. Ethics in this research project guided the researcher to ensure that the right procedures are followed during the period of collection, analysis and recommendations of the research findings. The researcher's judgement on findings were true and just in order to portray the exact situation at hand within Kitui County. The ethical principles that the researcher put into consideration included;

#### **3.10.1 Voluntary Participation**

The researcher ensured that all the respondents gave the required information voluntarily and thus there was no coercion whatsoever. The respondents were requested to fill the questionnaires voluntarily and those that did not wish or have no time were not forced to fill them.

#### **3.10.2 Informed Consent**

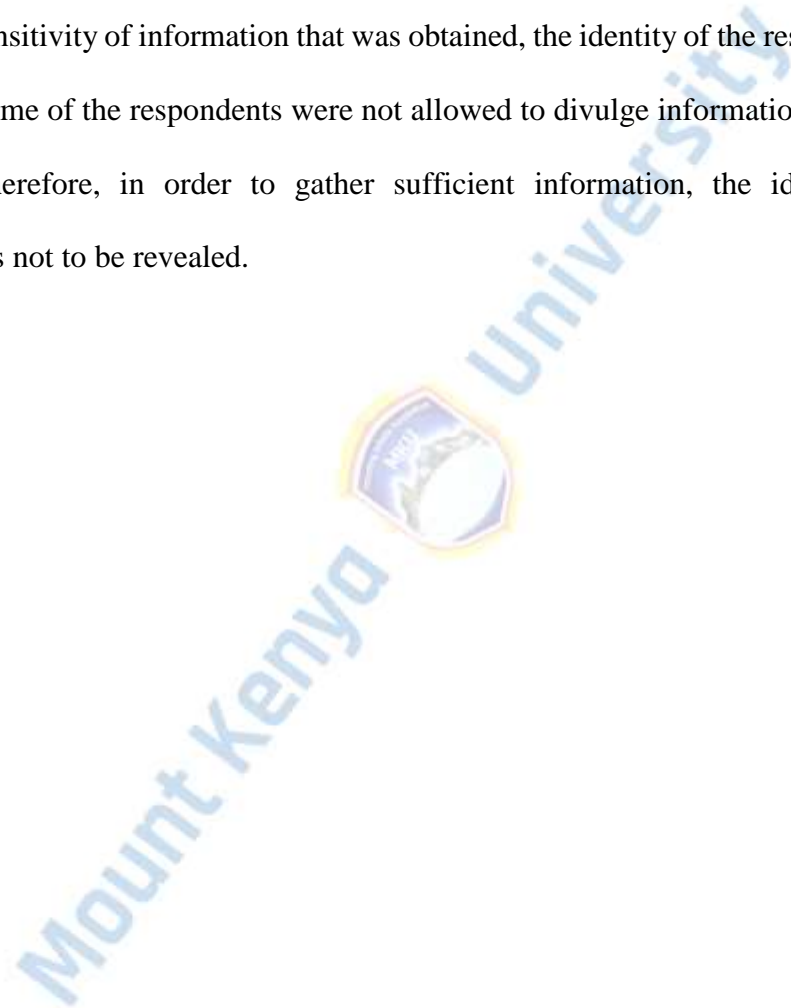
The researcher endeavoured to give prior information to the respondents concerning the benefits and risks on any information provided for the research. It's worth noting that some information might have fallen in to the wrong hands during analysis and therefore the respondents were duly informed about it. The respondents were also be informed about any benefits that may occur as a result of this research.

### **3.10.3 Confidentiality**

The information collected from the respondents was strictly used for the purpose of this research project and none was shared with any other party. The responses obtained were retained within the scope of this research.

### **3.10.4 Anonymity**

Owing to the sensitivity of information that was obtained, the identity of the respondents was not required. Some of the respondents were not allowed to divulge information on behalf of the county. Therefore, in order to gather sufficient information, the identity of the respondents was not to be revealed.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS/RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

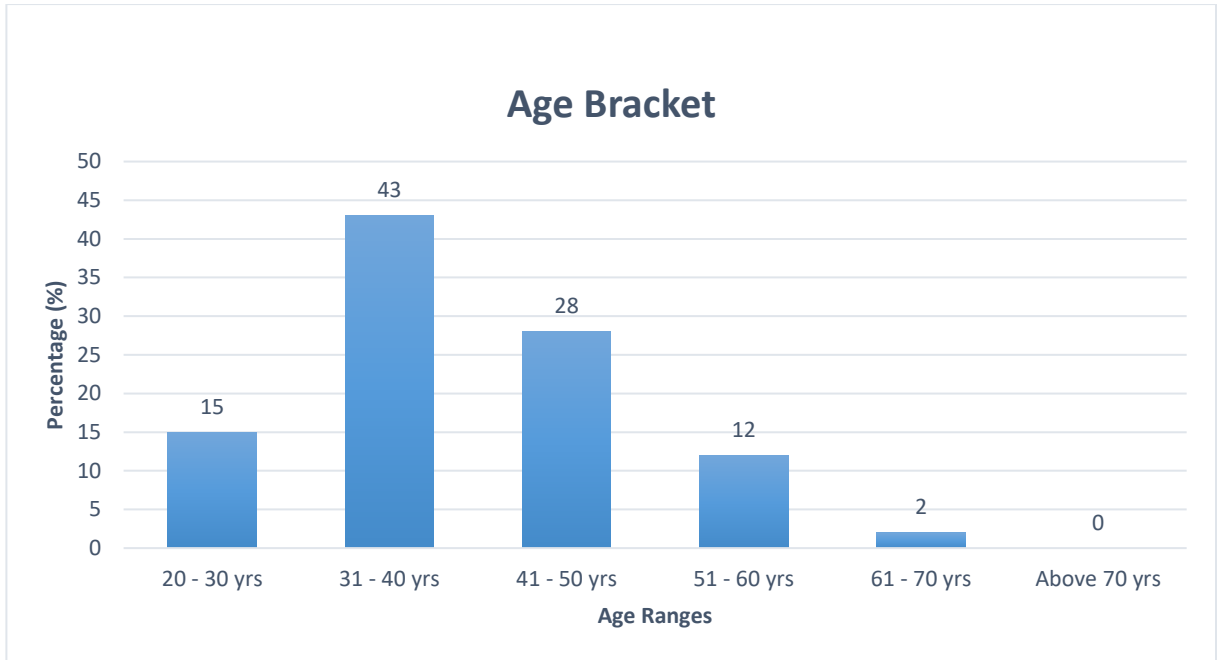
This chapter comprises of results from the data analyzed, which are presented in form of graphs and tables. The sections of this chapter are presented in line with the general information of the respondents and the study objectives. The researcher first presents demographic information followed by the descriptive and correlation analysis of the study variables for each of the objectives.

#### 4.2 General Information

This section presents the age bracket of the respondents, their gender, designation, their department and its name, their academic qualification, professional qualification and the length of duration they have worked in the department. The researcher issued a total of 238 questionnaires out of which 236 questionnaires were returned, this being 99% response rate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), any response rate above 50% is usually adequate.

##### 4.2.1 Respondents' Age

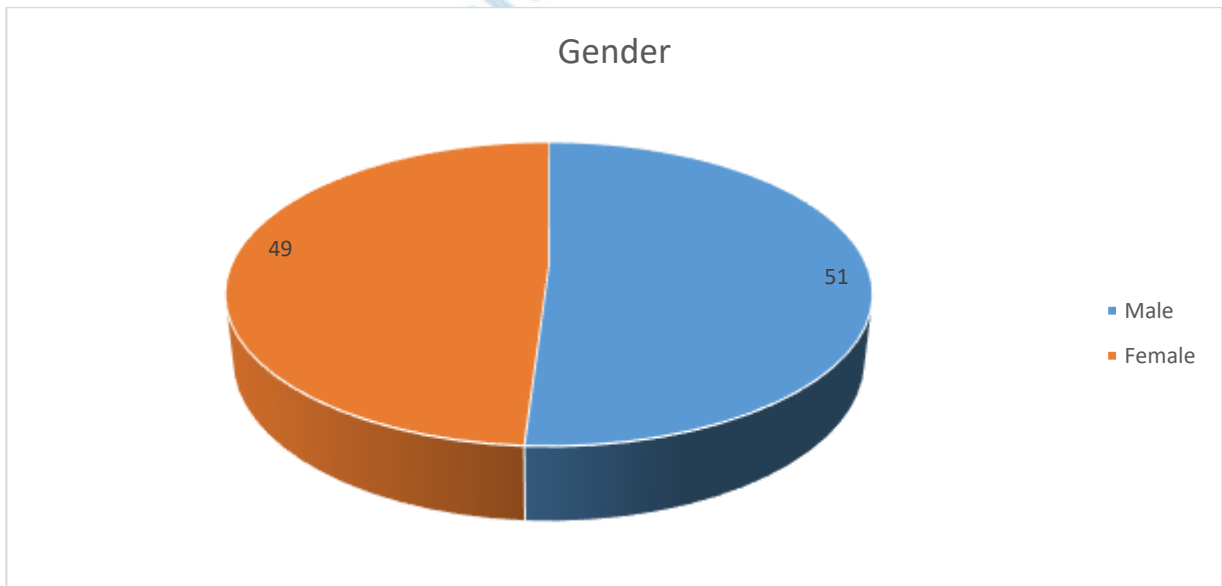
According to the results shown in figure 2 below, kitui county workforce is comprised of relatively young generation. Majority of them (43%) were aged between 31- 40 years, (28%) of them were aged between 41-50 years, those aged between 20-30 years stood at (15%), those aged between 51-60 years accounted for (12%) while none of the respondents was above 70 years.



**Figure 2: Respondent's Age**

#### 4.2.2 Respondents' Gender

The results indicate that there is almost perfect gender balance in Kitui county. A slight majority of the respondents (51%) are males while (49%) of the respondents are females as shown in figure 3 below.



**Figure 3: Respondent's Gender**

### 4.2.3 Respondents' Designation

Here, the researcher sought to know the designation of the respondents. The results are as shown in table 8 below.

**Table 4: Respondents' Designation**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Top-level management	26	11
Middle-level management	78	33
Support staff	114	48
Casuals	18	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

From table 8 above, majority of the respondents were support staff (48%), followed by middle-level managers (33%). The top-level managers accounted for (11%) of the respondents while the least were casual workers who stood at (8%).

### 4.2.4 Respondents' Department

The respondents were required to indicate the department where they belong. The results obtained are as table 5.

**Table 5: Respondents' Department**

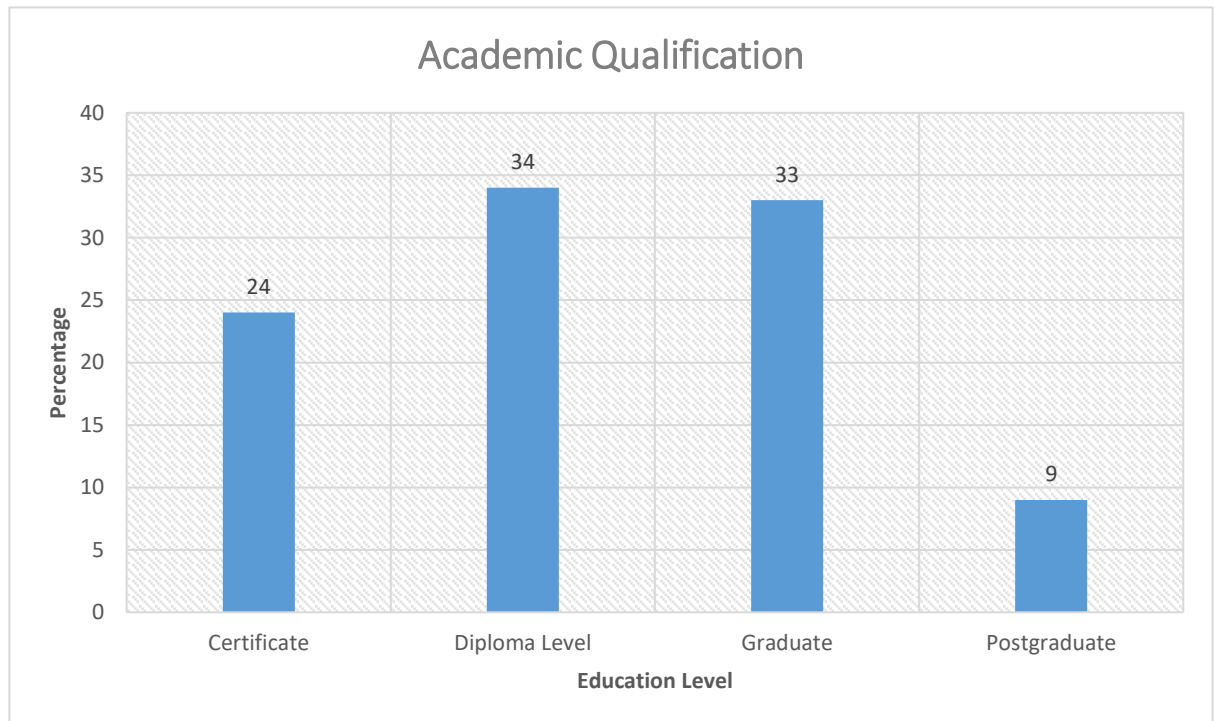
<b>Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Finance and Economic Planning	14	6
Administration and Co-ordination of County Affairs	19	8
Tourism and Natural Resources	18	8
Environment, Energy and Minerals investments development	18	8
Basic education, training and skills development	23	10
Health and Sanitation	39	17
Culture, youth, sports and social services	15	6
Lands, infrastructure and urban development	15	6
Trade, Industry, ICT and Co-operatives	21	9
Agriculture, water and irrigation	24	10
Procurement department	30	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

From table 9 above, majority of the respondents (17%) came from the ministry of health and sanitation. Second in majority was procurement department at (12%). Agriculture, water and irrigation together with basic education, training and skills development tied at (10%), with trade, industry, ICT and co-operatives standing at (9%). The ministries of administration and co-ordination of county affairs, tourism and natural resources and environment, energy and minerals investments development each accounted for (8%) of the respondents. The ministries of finance and economic planning, culture, youth, sports and social services and lands, infrastructure and urban development accounted for the least number of respondents standing at (6%).

#### 4.2.5 Academic Qualification

The researcher sought to know the highest academic qualifications of the respondents. The results obtained we as figure 4;



**Figure 4:Academic Qualifications**

From figure 4, the workforce of kitui county is relatively learned. The results indicate that majority of the respondents (34%) are diploma holders, (33%) of them are degree holders while (24%) are certificate holders. The post graduates account for the smallest percentage at (9%).

#### 4.2.6 Professional Qualification

The respondents were asked to indicate their areas of specification in terms of their studies.

The results were as per table 6;

**Table 6: Professional Qualifications**

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Procurement Officers	30	13
Accountants	14	6
Doctors	4	2
Nurses	22	9
Human resource practitioners	27	11
Drivers	15	6
Economists	24	10
Geologists	7	3
Surveyors	8	4
Agricultural extension officers	35	15
Plumbers	38	16
No Professional Qualification	12	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>100</b>

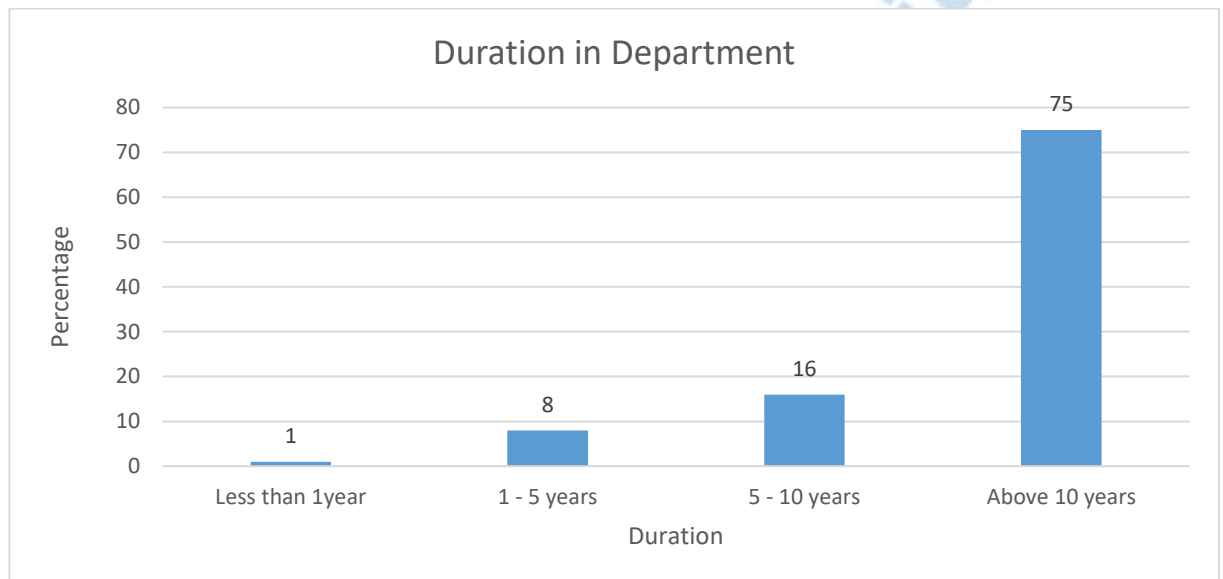
Source: Researcher (2024)

From table 6, it is evident that majority of employees within the county government of Kitui have professional qualifications in their areas of specialization. The plumbers account for (16%) of employees with professional qualifications, followed by agricultural extension officers at (15%), then procurement officers with (13%) while human resource practitioners stand at (11%). Economists account for (10%) of the employees with professional

qualifications, nurses at (9%), accountants and drivers tie at (6%), geologists at (3%), doctors at (2%). Those with no academic qualifications account for (5%).

#### 4.2.7 Duration worked in the department

The researcher sought to know the duration that the respondents had worked in their particular departments. The results were as per figure 5;



**Figure 5: Duration worked in departments**

From the figure 5, it's evident that majority of the respondents had worked in their present departments for quite a long time. Majority of the respondents (75%) had worked in their respective departments for more than 10 years. Those that had worked in their departments for a period between 5 – 10 years were (16%) with (8%) having worked in their departments for a period between 1 – 5 years. A small number (1%) of them had worked in their department for less than a year.

### 4.3 Transparency Practice and Performance of Kitui County Government

The researcher sought to know how transparency as a practice enhances performance of employees within Kitui County government. Below are the results are the descriptive statistics in table 11 and the correlation results in table 11. A mean of 0.1 – 1.0 indicates Strongly Disagree, 1.1 – 2.0 indicates Disagree, 2.1 – 3.0 indicates neutral, 3.1 – 4.0 indicates agree while 4.1 – 5.0 indicates strongly agree. The overall mean score is 3.33 out of a score of 5 with a standard deviation of 0.951.

**Table 7: Descriptive statistics on Transparency practice**

<b>Transparency practice Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Deviation</b>
There is open competition in the procurement processes	236	1.24	0.872
There is strict adherence to procurement rules and procedures	236	1.33	0.667
The practitioners are usually involved in strategic planning	236	1.37	0.069
Practitioners usually state in case of conflict of interest	236	2.88	1.158
Training is regularly undertaken to enhance stakeholder engagement	236	1.24	1.004
The procurement process promotes fair competition	236	0.71	1.142
All procurement processes usually aim at cost optimization	236	2.76	1.405
<b>Overall Mean Score</b>		<b>1.65</b>	<b>0.902</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

From table 7, there is little adherence to competition in the procurement process as shown by the mean of 1.24 and a standard deviation of 0.872. The results also show that there is no strict adherence to procurement rules and procedures as shown by the mean of 1.33 and a standard deviation of 0.667. A mean of 1.37 and a standard deviation of 0.069 shows that

procurement practitioners are not usually involved in strategic planning. However, the respondents were neutral about reporting cases of conflict of interest as indicated by the mean of 2.88 and a standard deviation of 1.158. Stakeholder engagement through training is not regularly undertaken within the county as many respondents disagreed hence forming a mean of 1.24 and a standard deviation of 1.004. The procurement process in Kitui county does not promote fair competition according to a great number of respondents who strongly disagreed with a mean of 0.71 and a standard deviation of 1.142. The respondents were neutral on whether the procurement processes are aimed at cost optimization with a mean of 2.76 and a standard deviation of 1.405. The overall mean of 1.65 and a standard deviation of 0.902 indicates that the respondents are of the overall view that transparency is not regarded as a vital ingredient in enhancing performance in the procurement process.

There was also need to know whether transparency in procurement plays an integral part in enhancing performance. The results in table 8 show the relationship between transparency practice and performance.

**Table 8: Transparency Practice and Performance**

		<b>Transparency practice</b>	<b>Performance in Kitui County Government</b>
<b>Transparency Practice</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.617**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	236	236
<b>Performance in Kitui County Government</b>	Pearson Correlation	.617**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	236	236

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

Source: Researcher (2024)

From table 12 above, the findings indicate that there existed a positive and significant relationship between transparency practice and overall performance of employees ( $r = 0.617$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This means that an increase in transparency would definitely enhance the performance of employees.

#### 4.4 Accountability Practice and Performance of Kitui County Government

This section sought the respondents' view about the need for accountability practice in enhancing employee performance within the county. The responses were analyzed and the results obtained were as indicated in table 9.

**Table 9: Descriptive statistics for Accountability practice**

<b>Accountability practice Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Deviation</b>
Each procurement officer is liable for the decision he/she makes in the procurement activity	236	0.77	1.453
There have been prosecutions of procurement practitioners over cases of procurement malpractices	235	3.27	0.852
Procurement practitioners are aware of all the risks that come with violation of procurement regulations	236	4.28	0.769
Frequent trainings are usually undertaken in order to make procurement officers more accountable in their profession.	236	3.79	0.563
Frequent reviews of procurement practices are required in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the practices	235	4.61	1.428
There is little bureaucracy within the procurement systems that give procurement practitioners room to make independent decisions	236	0.37	1.002
The county government facilitates the procurement practitioners with an enabling environment in order to be keen in their work	236	1.87	0.968
<b>Overall mean score</b>		<b>2.71</b>	<b>1.005</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

From table 9 above, it's evident that procurement officers are not normally held liable for the decisions they make as shown by a mean of 0.77 and standard deviation of 1.453. There have been prosecution of procurement officers over cases of procurement malpractices in the recent past as evident from the mean of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 0.852. Similarly, the procurement officers are usually aware of all the risks that come with the violation of procurement regulations as shown by the mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.769. The respondents agree with the view that regular trainings are usually undertaken with a view of making procurement officers more accountable in their profession as indicated by the mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.563. The respondents also agree with the view that frequent reviews of procurement practices are required in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the practices with a mean of 4.61 and a standard deviation of 1.428. However, bureaucracy within the procurement system seems to be high thus giving procurement practitioners little room for making independent decisions as indicated by the mean of 0.37 and a standard deviation of 1.002. In relation to this, the county government of Kitui does not facilitate procurement practitioners with an enabling environment in order to be keen in their work as shown by the mean of 1.87 and a standard deviation of 0.968. The overall mean of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.005 indicates that accountability is very minimal within the procurement practice within the county and therefore is not given high priority as a precursor to performance.

The researcher also carried out correlation analysis to ascertain the relationship between accountability and performance within the procurement process. The results obtained were as per table 10;

**Table 10: Accountability and Performance**

		<b>Accountability practice</b>	<b>Performance in Kitui County Government</b>
<b>Accountability Practice</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.107**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	236	236
<b>Performance in Kitui County Government</b>	Pearson Correlation	.107**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	236	236

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

From table 10, it was observed that accountability practice has a positive relationship with performance of procurement process ( $r = 0.107$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This means that an increase in accountability will likely lead to proportionate increase in the performance of procurement practitioners and vice versa.

#### **4.5 Professionalism practice and Performance of Kitui County Government**

In this section, the researcher sought to know the impact of professionalism in enhancing overall performance of procurement practitioners within the county government of Kitui. The results obtained are presented in table 11.

**Table 11: Descriptive statistics for Professionalism Practice**

<b>Professionalism Practice Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Deviation</b>
Procurement practitioners are usually involved in trainings to enhance their professional skills	236	3.63	0.372
Procurement practitioners are involved in strategic thinking for the county government	234	0.68	1.751
Impartiality in tendering process is highly encouraged in the procurement department	235	1.79	0.766
Procurement practitioners' input is a vital tool in the decision making process	236	0.72	1.641
Strong negotiation skills are vital in the tendering process within the county	236	0.84	1.569
Innovation is highly regarded in the procurement process	235	1.36	0.663
There is need to develop leadership skills for all the employees within the procurement department	235	4.81	1.568
<b>Overall Mean Score</b>		<b>1.98</b>	<b>1.190</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

From the results presented on table 11, the mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 0.372 indicates that procurement practitioners are usually involved in trainings in order to enhance their professional skills. However, on the negative side the practitioners are not involved in strategic thinking as shown by a mean of 0.68 and a standard deviation of 1.751. the results also show that the tendering process is usually partial as shown by the mean of 1.79 and a standard deviation of 0.766. The respondents also with the view that the practitioners' input is vital in decision making process with a mean of 0.72 and a standard deviation of 1.641. In addition to this, strong negotiation skills are not usually vital in the tendering process as indicated by the mean of 0.84 and a standard deviation of 1.569. Similarly, innovation is not highly regarded as shown by the mean of 1.36 and a standard deviation of 0.663. On the other hand, the respondents agreed with the view that there is the need to develop leadership skills for all the employees within the department as indicated by the mean of 4.81 and a standard deviation of 1.568. The overall mean score of 1.98 and standard deviation of 1.190 indicates

that professionalism is not highly regarded as an important tool in enhancing professionalism within the county government of Kitui.

The researcher also sought to know whether there exists any significant relationship between professionalism practice and performance in the procurement process. The results are as indicated in table 12;

**Table 12: Professionalism and Performance**

		<b>Professionalism practice</b>	<b>Performance in Kitui County Government</b>
<b>Professionalism Practice</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.377**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	236	236
<b>Performance in Kitui County Government</b>	Pearson Correlation	.377**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	236	236

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

From table 12, it was established that professionalism practice has a significant positive relationship with performance of procurement practitioners as shown by the co-efficient of ( $r = 0.377, p = 0.000$ ). This mean that an increase in professionalism will lead to increased performance of the procurement practitioners and vice versa.

#### **4.6 Competition practice and Performance in Kitui county**

In this section, the researcher sought to understand the impact of competition on the performance on procurement practitioners. The results obtained are as presented in table 13;

**Table 13: Descriptive statistics for Competition in procurement**

<b>Competition Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Deviation</b>
Procurement information is availed to all potential bidders fairly	236	0.46	0.379
There is influence on procurement practices by employees higher in the hierarchy	234	4.55	1.882
Procurement officers usually collude with contractors to influence the outcome of the evaluation process	235	4.37	0.966
Unsuccessful bidders usually get regret letters after evaluation and award of contracts to successful bidders	236	2.88	1.586
There is strict use of list of prequalified suppliers who are awarded tenders fairly according to their categories	236	2.62	1.889
There is strict use of an evaluation criteria that the evaluation committee uses in order to award tenders fairly	235	1.44	0.949
Tender opportunities are usually advertised in the media with wide circulation in order to reach a wide range of potential bidders	236	1.67	1.751
<b>Overall Mean Score</b>		<b>2.57</b>	<b>1.343</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

From the results displayed in table 13, the respondents strongly disagreed with the view that procurement information is availed to all potential bidders fairly as shown by the mean of 0.46 and a standard deviation of 0.379. On the other hand, the respondents strongly agreed with the view that there is influence on procurements by seniors as shown by the mean of 4.55 and a standard deviation of 1.882. The results also indicate that there is collusion between contractors and procurement officers with a mean of 4.37 and a standard deviation of 0.966 confirming this view. However, the respondents expressed mixed reactions on the view that unsuccessful bidders usually receive regret letters through a mean of 2.88 and a standard deviation of 1.586 showing that they were neutral about this matter. Similarly neutral results were realized on the view that there is strict use of a list of prequalified suppliers who are fairly awarded tenders as indicated by the mean of 2.62 and a standard deviation of 1.889. The results also show that there is no strict use of an evaluation criteria

that is used by the evaluation committee to award tenders fairly as indicated by the mean of 1.44 and a standard deviation of 0.949. Tender opportunities are also not advertised through media with wide circulation as shown by the mean of 1.67 and a standard deviation of 1.751. The overall mean score of 2.57 and a standard deviation of 1.343 shows that the respondents held mixed views about the role of competition in enhancing performance. The overall results show that they were neutral about this view.

The researcher also sought to know whether there exists any significant relationship between competition and performance. The results are as indicated in table 14;

**Table 14: Competition and Performance**

		<b>Competition practice</b>	<b>Performance in Kitui County Government</b>
<b>Competition Practice</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.017**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	236	236
<b>Performance in Kitui County Government</b>	Pearson Correlation	.017**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	236	236

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

The correlation results shown on table 14 indicate that there is a slightly significant positive relationship between competition practice and employees' performance as indicated by the correlation coefficient of ( $r = 0.017$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This means that increase in competition within the procurement process is likely to result to a small positive change in employee performance and vice versa.

#### 4.7 Performance of Kitui County Government

In this section, the researcher sought to understand the respondents' views on the overall performance of Kitui County government. The results obtained are as displayed in table 15;

**Table 15: Descriptive statistics for Performance of Kitui County Government**

<b>Performance Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Deviation</b>
Kitui county is usually ranked among the best performing counties in terms of fairness in procurement	236	1.96	0.321
Corruption is minimal in the tendering processes within the county	235	0.88	0.961
Kitui county usually gets value for money in its procurement processes	235	0.69	0.197
Suppliers are usually satisfied with the procurement processes and usually get regret messages for those who do not get the tenders.	236	1.48	0.762
<b>Overall mean score</b>		<b>1.25</b>	<b>0.560</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

From the results in table 15, a mean of 1.96 and a standard deviation of 0.321 indicates that Kitui county is not ranked among the best performing in terms of fairness in procurement. Consequently, corruption in the tendering process is high as shown by the mean of 0.88 and a standard deviation of 0.961. Similarly, the county does not get value for money in its procurement processes as shown by the mean of 0.69 and a standard deviation of 0.197. In line with this, suppliers are not satisfied with the procurement processes and also do not get regret messages for after failing to get tenders as shown by a mean of 1.48 and a standard deviation of 0.762. The overall mean of 1.25 and a standard deviation of 0.56 indicates that performance of kitui county government is below par owing to little regard to procurement processes.

The researcher also conducted a multiple linear regression analysis in order to ascertain the relationship between performance and the other four independent variables namely; Transparency, Accountability, Professionalism and Competition.

The regression equation was as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$X_1$  = Transparency

$X_2$  = Accountability

$X_3$  = Professionalism

$X_4$  = Competition

**Table 16:Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimate
1	0.833	0.748	0.784	0.4126

a). Predictors (Constant), Transparency, Accountability, Professionalism, Competition

b). Dependent Variable: Performance

This study employed the use of R-Square. The R-Square, otherwise known as the coefficient of determination is an indicator of how the dependent variable varies with the independent variables. In this case, the R-Square was used to ascertain the degree to which performance varied with transparency, accountability, professionalism and competition. From the results in table 16, the four independent variables account for (74.8%) of the factors affecting

performance of procurement practitioners in Kitui County Government as shown by the coefficient of determination (R-Square). This therefore means that other factors that affect performance of procurement practitioners and were not studied in this research account for (25.8%).

**Table 17:ANOVA**

		ANOVA				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.68	81	1.312	43.312	.000(a)
	Residual	3.611	155			
<b>Total</b>		<b>15.291</b>	<b>236</b>			

a). Predictors: (constant), Transparency, Accountability, Professionalism, Competition

b). Dependent Variable: Performance

ANOVA was used to establish the significance of the regression model where f-significance value of ( $\rho < 0.05$ ) was established. This indicates that the regression model has less than 0.05 probability of giving wrong prediction. Therefore, the regression model has a confidence level of above (95%) thus indicating a high reliability of the results. The model can be regarded as statistically significant in predicting how transparency, accountability, professionalism and competition affect the overall performance of procurement practitioners in Kitui County government.

**Table 18: Coefficient Results**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	0.114	.188		0.613	.528
Transparency	0.581	.068	.548	8.487	.000
Accountability	0.136	.041	.267	3.672	.035
Professionalism	0.368	.043	.299	2.161	.022
Competition	0.017	.005	.241	6.876	.002

a). Predictors (Constant), Transparency, Accountability, Professionalism, Competition

b). Dependent Variable: Performance

The established regression equation was as indicated below;

$$Y = 0.114 + 0.581X_1 + 0.136X_2 + 0.368X_3 + 0.017X_4 + \epsilon$$

The regression equation above means that holding the factors (transparency, accountability, professionalism and competition) constant, performance of procurement practitioners in Kitui County government would be 0.114. On the other hand, holding all other variables at zero, a unit increase in transparency would lead to a 0.581 increase in scores of performance. Similarly, a unit increase in accountability would lead to 0.136 increase performance. A unit increase in professionalism will lead to a 0.368 increase in performance while a unit increase in competition would lead to a 0.017 increase in performance. This infers that transparency has the greatest influence on performance, followed by professionalism, accountability and lastly competition. This study also established a significant relationship between performance and the independent variables; transparency ( $p = 0.00 < 0.05$ ), accountability ( $p$

= 0.035<0.05), professionalism ( $p = 0.022<0.05$ ) and competition ( $p = 0.002<0.05$ ) as indicated by the p values.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the previous chapters, discussions and recommendations for implementation and for future research. The discussions, conclusions and recommendations are presented in line with the research objectives.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Study

The study sought to assess the influence of ethical procurement practices on performance of Kitui County Government. It was established that organizations world over lay much emphasis on planning as a source of success in terms of performance. The study identified a gap brought about by failure to design, implement and adhere to a strict ethical code of conduct in the workplace. The study also majored on four variables for study namely; transparency, accountability, professionalism and competition. The significance of the study was aimed at aiding the government of Kenya, County government of Kitui and the world of academia.

Three theories were used to support the study. These theories are the principal-Agency theory, systems theory and utilitarianism theory. The principal-agency theory viewed procurement function as agent acting on behalf of the principal which is the county government of Kitui. The systems theory opined that all functions in an organization work together as a system and thus are interdependent. The utilitarianism theory advocated for the use of legislative laws, administrative principles and local orders which regulate the behaviour of employees at work. The study also put into consideration empirical studies undertaken by other researchers in relation to ethical conduct at work place. Each of the

independent variables was addressed at length through the review of related literature by other researchers.

The research design used in this research was descriptive in nature. It also employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population was the total number of employees within the 10 ministries of County Government of Kitui who are 589 in number. Out of the total population, the researcher took a sample of 238 respondents. The sampling technique used was stratified sampling. The questionnaire was used as the main tool for collection of the primary data while the researcher also used direct observation, county reports and interviews as other sources of information.

The questionnaire was subjected to reliability and validity checks. Data collection was done from both primary and secondary sources. The collected data was analysed through the use of SPSS version 24. The results obtained was displayed as both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data presentation was done through the use of charts, histograms and tables. Relationships between the variables were done through use of means, standard deviations, correlation and regression coefficients. Ethical considerations were put into consideration in data collection where the researcher ensured voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

Out of the 238 questionnaires administered, 236 of them were returned, this being 99% response rate. Majority of the respondents were aged between 31 – 40 years, this being (43%) of the total respondents. The male gender dominated the county population at (51%). A great number of respondents (48%) was the support staff with (17%) of them coming from the

ministry of health and sanitation. (34%) of the respondents were diploma holders. Procurement practitioners accounted for the greatest number with professional qualifications standing at (13%). Majority of the respondents (75%) had worked with the county for more than 10 years.

Transparency in procurement process is not highly regarded in the county government of Kitui as indicated by the overall mean of 1.65 and a standard deviation of 0.902. The results also showed that transparency and performance are significantly related as indicated by the correlation coefficient of ( $r = 0.617, p = 0.000$ ). Similarly, accountability is not given any significant priority in Kitui county as indicated by the mean of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.005. the results also indicated that accountability and performance have a positive and significant relationship as shown by the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.107, p = 0.000$ ).

The results obtained also show that professionalism in work is minimal as per the overall mean of 1.98 and a standard deviation of 1.19. However, professionalism and performance have a significant positive relationship indicated by the correlation coefficient of ( $r = 0.377, p = 0.000$ ). the respondents expressed mixed reactions on the impact of competition on performance with a mean of 2.57 and a standard deviation of 1.343. However, a correlation coefficient of ( $r = 0.017, p = 0.000$ ). indicated that there is a slight positive correlation between competition and performance. The regression analysis transparency has the greatest impact on performance with a coefficient of 0.581, followed by professionalism at 0.368, then accountability at 0.136, then competition is the least with 0.017. However, a significant relationship between performance and the independent variables; transparency ( $p =$

0.00<0.05), accountability ( $p = 0.035 < 0.05$ ), professionalism ( $p = 0.022 < 0.05$ ) and competition ( $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ ) was established.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this research and the discussions above, the researcher found it worth to make the following conclusions;

#### **5.3.1 Transparency and performance**

From the findings of this research concerning the impact of transparency of performance of procurement practitioners, it can be concluded that transparency within the procurement process has continually been ignored. This has been evidenced through the lack of open competition, disregard of procurement rules and procedures, lack of involvement of procurement officers in strategic planning, rampant cases of conflict of interest and little importance attached to cost optimization. The procurement process is opaque in nature and therefore denies some suppliers the opportunity to engage in the tendering process. The results also indicate that there has been a well coordinated syndicate within the county government of Kitui to influence the tendering process in favour of certain contractors who inflate prices. Therefore transparency is minimal if any.

#### **5.3.2 Accountability and Performance**

Accountability in the county government of Kitui has been neglected according to the findings in this study. This can be seen from the fact that employees are not liable for the decisions that they make and few prosecutions of staff who contravene rules have been made despite knowing the risks that come with such acts. The frequent trainings that are carried out in order to improve on their accountability have been bearing little fruits. High

bureaucracy redtape has made the chain so long such that it becomes hard to apportion blame to one person. This has also contributed to a great extent in denying the procurement officers the opportunity to make professional decisions as well as having a conducive environment to work. It's therefore worth to conclude that accountability is minimal or totally absent within the county government of Kitui.

### **5.3.3 Professionalism and Performance**

The county government of Kitui has been recognizing the need for professionalism skills according to the results from this study. This is because regular trainings have been carried out in order to enhance the employees' professional skills. However, when it comes to exercising these skills in the workplace, they are not given the chance. This is because their input is not usually employed in strategic thinking and also in the decision making process. The tendering process is usually partial meaning it's skewed in favour of certain suppliers and their negotiation skills are not needed. From these findings the professional skills held by the procurement officers are idle and not put into use in enhancing performance. The actual procurement process is determined by senior officers who possess little or no skills in procurement. It can therefore be concluded that despite the presence of procurement officers with the required professional skills, performance has been low since the professionalism in them has not been utilized owing to the personal interests in the senior county officials.

### **5.3.4 Competition and performance**

Competition in the tendering process within the county government of Kitui is has continued to be very much limited. This is because the results indicate that procurement information is not availed to potential bidders fairly because of interference by senior officials. There has

also been prevalence of excessive collusion between procurement officers and suppliers in order to influence the outcome of the tendering process. The results show that tenders are usually predetermined and the tender documents are designed with specific suppliers in mind. This has continued to deny the county innovation, variety, quality and ultimately value for money. Through this, the county has continued to lose money which is usually siphoned through inflated commodity prices, supply of sub-standard products or failure to supply at all.

#### **5.3.5 Performance in the County government of Kitui.**

Despite the presence of all the vices, the county government of Kitui has been ranked as one of the best performing counties in Kenya. This good performance has been achieved through the underlying cases of corruption in the tendering process. This ranking seems to disregard the means through which the perceived performance has been arrived at. It is no secret that many projects have been initiated and completed while others are in progress. What is not seen and factored is how the contractors won those tenders and the price of the tenders. The performance that is ranked is the physical manifestation of projects by not the performance of then procurement practitioners. It's therefore worth concluding that the county has been performing in terms of projects but the performance of the procurement officers is below par and limited to executors of instructions. Unethical practices still continue unabated.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

Having analysed the findings of the study and made conclusions, the researcher was better placed to make the following recommendations concerning the procurement process in the county government of Kitui;

### **5.5.1 Transparency and Performance**

Lack of transparency in the county government of Kitui can be related to a study undertaken by Handfield and Baumer (2006) which stated that participating in a tender or procurement process by the practitioner amounts to conflict of interest and thus erodes the whole essence of fair competition. Similarly, another study by Choo (2017) on the effects of ethical procurement and supply process in the Republic of Chile concluded that avoidance of bribes within the tendering process plays an important role moreso in times of economic downturn. In this study, it was observed that strict regard to ethical standards leads to a highly competitive market hence cost optimization.

The findings indicated that there is no transparency in the county government of Kitui. This study therefore recommends that the county should endeavor to streamline the procurement processes through embracing open competition. Procurement rules and regulations should be put into place and strictly adhered in every step of the tendering process. In addition, procurement officers should state any conflict of interest and an effective reporting channel installed in order to unearth any irregularity within the process.

### **5.5.2 Accountability and Performance**

It is evident that accountability in the county government of Kitui is minimal as a result of adherence to ethical practices. This is evident due to the fact that liability for the decisions made by procurement officers is minimal. Procurement practitioners do not fear prosecutions over malpractices as much as they are aware of the risks that come with the violation of procurement regulations. However, frequent trainings aimed at making procurement officers more accountable in their profession are usually undertaken. The findings indicate that

reviews of procurement practices are required in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in their practices. Contrary to this, bureaucracy is still prevalent in the procurement systems thus limiting the room of making independent decisions. This does not facilitate the procurement practitioners with an enabling environment to work.

The findings indicate that there is no accountability in the county government of Kitui. Owing to the high bureaucracy that is present within the county government, it becomes extremely hard to apportion responsibility to any employee. Accountability becomes hard to be realized. This study therefore recommends an institution of clarity and scope of duties so that each employee can be held personally responsible for their actions. Procurement officers should be given enough room to make their own independent decisions without any undue influence from their seniors. In addition, they should adhere to the set rules and guidelines that ensure ethical processes.

### **5.5.3 Professionalism and Performance**

From the findings, the respondents were clear that the county government of Kitui usually carries out trainings in order to enhance the professional skills of the procurement practitioners. For any public entity to have a vibrant and effective procurement system, it must be staffed with procurement officers who are professionals, adequately trained and thus recognized by the respective procurement professional bodies. Professionalism in workplace is highly dependent on the staffing process, acquired knowledge, skills and capabilities of the required human resources and also on the controls that influences human behavior like training (Basheka, 2010). It's therefore imperative that regular trainings are undertaken to sharpen the skills of employees especially in these times of dynamics in technology.

The findings of this study indicate that regular trainings are carried out with the sole aim of enhancing professionalism of the employees. However, the employees only acquire theoretical skills which are not usually appreciated in the workplace. This study recommends that employees be trained regularly in their areas of specialization and later given room to exercise that what they have trained in. regular reviews of their performance should also be undertaken. Monitoring and evaluation of processes in line with the professional training in very important. Employees' input should also be considered in making strategic decisions for the county government of Kitui.

#### **5.5.4 Competition and Performance**

From the findings, the respondents strongly disagreed with the view that procurement information is usually availed to all potential bidders fairly. This is a sign that competition in the county government of Kitui is not fair and thus information is skewed in favour of certain bidders where the procurement officers have interest in. According to Kakwezi (2013), limitation of competition may result in absence of advantages like innovation, quality, variety of goods and services and ultimately value for money. Any act within the public procurement process that limits participation has a negative impact on competition mostly in the short run. Having more bidders results in increased competition hence lower prices and better quality.

The procurement process in Kitui county does not encourage competition according to the findings of this research study. It's clear that it's opaque in nature and information is skewed in favour of some preferred suppliers. In line with this, the study recommends that all information concerning procurement opportunities be made open to all prospective suppliers. In addition, there should be no collusion between procurement officers and the contractors

and also senior officers should not influence the outcome of the tendering process. The list of the prequalified suppliers should strictly be used.

#### **5.5.5 Performance of County government of Kitui**

In terms of performance, the findings indicate that the County Government of Kitui is usually ranked among the best performing counties in terms of fairness in procurement. Although, all the indicators point to the fact that procurement processes are usually characterized with corruption and little or no regard to procurement rules and guidelines, it's performance is still ranked highly. The metrics that are used by the bodies that rank counties leave many questions unanswered. Contrary to this, the findings also indicate that the respondents strongly disagreed with the view that corruption is minimal in the tendering process within the county. This means that collusion, skewed decisions, partiality and price inflations are vices that are prevalent within the whole procurement process.

Based on the findings of this study, the overall performance of the county is ranked highly based on the initiated projects but the underlying processes of these projects are marred by irregularities. This study recommends that all the procurement processes be streamlined such that the success of the projects is replicated by the fairness and transparency of the process. This is therefore the true meaning of good performance.

#### **5.6 Recommendations for Further research**

This study was carried out about the influence of ethical procurement practices on performance of Kitui County Government. However, procurement being a reknown avenue for corruption and contravention of ethical standards, the researcher recommends that further

studies be extended to all the other 46 counties in Kenya. This is because of the many cases that have been raised countrywide pertaining procurement. Almost all counties in Kenya have faced investigations from the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) in cases pertaining their procurement processes. In addition, this study only covered transparency, accountability, professionalism and competition and their impact on performance of procurement practitioners. Further studies should also be undertaken on other issues pertaining ethical procurement like confidentiality of information, due diligence and avoidance of impropriety and how they affect procurement performance.

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## APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide the most accurate responses you can to the questionnaire's questions if you accept to take part in this experiment. It should be finished in around 40 minutes. I need the questionnaire back as soon as possible so I can finish the project report.

The questionnaire is designed to gather data on Influence of Ethical procurement practices on the performance of Kitui County government in Kenya.

Please Tick [] the box next to the statement that most accurately captures how you feel about it.

### SECTION A: Personal Data

1. Please Tick [] your age bracket

20-30yrs	31-40yrs	41-50yrs	51-60 yrs.	61-70yrs	Above 70yrs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Gender: Female  Male

3. Designation: -----

4. Name of the Department: -----

5. What is your highest Academic Qualification?

Certificate [ ] Diploma Level [ ] Undergraduate [ ] Postgraduate [ ]

Any other, please specify .....

6. Kindly state your Professional Qualification.....

7. How long have you been in this Department? (Tick appropriately)

Less than 1 year	1.0-5 Years	5-10 Years	Above 10 Years
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION B: Transparency practice and performance of Kitui County government in Kenya.**

Please read the following statements carefully and provide your responses based on your experience and knowledge on Transparency practice in Kitui County Government. Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1 strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 neutral, 4 Agree, 5 strongly Agree to indicate your level of agreement with each statement

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	There is open competition in the procurement processes					
2.	There is strict adherence to procurement rules and procedures					
3.	The practitioners are usually involved in strategic planning					
4.	Practitioners usually state in case of conflict of interest					
5.	Training is regularly undertaken to enhance stakeholder engagement					
6.	The procurement process promotes fair competition					
7.	All procurement processes usually aim at cost optimization					

**SECTION C: Accountability practice and performance of Kitui County government in Kenya.**

Please read the following statements carefully and provide your responses based on your experience and knowledge on Accountability practice in Kitui County Government. Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree to indicate your level of agreement with each statement

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Each procurement officer is liable for the decision he/she makes in the procurement activity					
2.	Procurement practitioners are aware of all the risks that come with violation of procurement regulations					
3.	There have been prosecutions of procurement practitioners over cases of procurement malpractices					
4.	Frequent trainings are usually undertaken in order to make procurement officers more accountable in their profession.					
5.	Frequent reviews of procurement practices are required in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the practices					
6.	There is little bureaucracy within the procurement systems that give procurement practitioners room to make independent decisions					
7.	The county government facilitates the procurement practitioners with an enabling environment in order to be keen in their work					

**SECTION D: Professionalism practice and performance of Kitui County government in Kenya.**

Please read the following statements carefully and provide your responses based on your experience and knowledge on Accountability practice in Kitui County Government. Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree to indicate your level of agreement with each statement

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Procurement practitioners are usually involved in trainings to enhance their professional skills					
2.	Procurement practitioners are involved in strategic thinking for the county government					
3.	Impartiality in tendering process is highly encouraged in the procurement department					
4.	Procurement practitioners' input is a vital tool in the decision making process					
5.	Strong negotiation skills are vital in the tendering process within the county					
6.	Innovation is highly regarded in the procurement process					
7.	There is need to develop leadership skills for all the employees within the procurement department					

**SECTION E: Competition in Procurement and performance of Kitui County government in Kenya.**

Please read the following statements carefully and provide your responses based on your experience and knowledge on Competition in Procurement in Kitui County Government. Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree to indicate your level of agreement with each statement

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Tenders are usually given to suppliers who offer the best value for money					
2.	Quality assurance is the major aim of the tendering process					
3.	Supplier selection and the subsequent tender award is done keenly as a form of cost reduction					
4.	The procurement process is followed keenly to ensure fairness to all the competing suppliers					
5.	There is usually a set criteria normally used in order to evaluate and award tenders to the deserving suppliers					
6.	All procurements are subjected to open competitive bidding to attract as many bidders as possible					
7.	There is no interference in the tendering process in order to encourage competition					

**SECTION E: Competition in Procurement and performance of Kitui County government in Kenya.**

Please read the following statements carefully and provide your responses based on your experience and knowledge on Competition in Procurement in Kitui County Government. Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree to indicate your level of agreement with each statement

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Procurement information is availed to all potential bidders fairly					
2.	There is influence on procurement practices by employees higher in the hierarchy					
3.	Procurement officers usually collude with contractors to influence the outcome of the evaluation process					
4.	Unsuccessful bidders usually get regret letters after evaluation and award of contracts to successful bidders					
5.	There is strict use of list of prequalified suppliers who are awarded tenders fairly according to their categories					
6.	There is strict use of an evaluation criteria that the evaluation committee uses in order to award tenders fairly					
7.	Tender opportunities are usually advertised in the media with wide circulation in order to reach a wide range of potential bidders					

**SECTION F: Performance of Kitui County government in Kenya.**

Please read the following statements carefully and provide your responses based on your experience and knowledge on Competition in Procurement in Kitui County Government. Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree to indicate your level of agreement with each statement

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Kitui county is usually ranked among the best performing counties in terms of fairness in procurement					
2.	Corruption is minimal in the tendering processes within the county					
3.	Kitui county usually gets value for money in its procurement processes					
4.	Suppliers are usually satisfied with the procurement processes and usually get regret messages for those who do not get the tenders.					

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## APPENDIX II: INTRODUCTION LETTER

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

I'm a student at Mt. Kenya University undertaking master of science degree in procurement and supplies management and I'm in the process of writing my project on the influence of ethical procurement practices on performance of Kitui County Government.

In the project, I have an obligation to carryout data collection using a questionnaire as the main tool. Therefore, it's my kind request to fill the questionnaire to enable better analysis and subsequent drawing of conclusions for the purpose of this research.

All the information collected is purely for this research and will be treated confidential and within the confines of the researcher. You are urged to provide the necessary information voluntarily and without fear of victimization since your identity will not be revealed.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully

Mumangi Janet Mutune.

**APPENDIX III: RESEARCH LICENSE**

  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **831173** Date of Issue: **02/February/2024**

**RESEARCH LICENSE**



**This is to Certify that Ms. Janet mutuse mutangi of Mount Kenya University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kitui on the topic: INFLUENCE OF ETHICAL PROCUREMENT PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF KITUI COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA for the period ending : 02/February/2025.**

License No: **NACOSTIP/24/32754**

**831173**  
Applicant Identification Number

  
Director General  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code



**NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.**

**See overleaf for conditions**

The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, hereafter referred to as the Commission, was established under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 (Revised 2014) herein after referred to as the Act. The objective of the Commission shall be to regulate and assure quality in the science, technology and innovation sector and advise the Government in matters related thereto.

#### CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH LICENSE

1. The License is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, and other relevant laws, policies and regulations. Accordingly, the licensee shall adhere to such procedures, standards, code of ethics and guidelines as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Act, or prescribed by provisions of International treaties of which Kenya is a signatory to
2. The research and its related activities as well as outcomes shall be beneficial to the country and shall not in any way:
  - i. Endanger national security
  - ii. Adversely affect the lives of Kenyans
  - iii. Be in contravention of Kenya's international obligations including Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN).
  - iv. Result in exploitation of intellectual property rights of communities in Kenya
  - v. Adversely affect the environment
  - vi. Adversely affect the rights of communities
  - vii. Endanger public safety and national cohesion
  - viii. Plagiarize someone else's work
3. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
4. The license any rights thereunder are non-transferable
5. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the research at any time during the research period if in the opinion of the Commission the research is not implemented in conformity with the provisions of the Act or any other written law.
6. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Governor before commencement of the research.
7. Excavation, filming, movement, and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies.
8. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
9. The Commission may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project for the purpose of assessing and evaluating compliance with the conditions of the License.
10. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy, and upload a soft copy of their final report (thesis) onto a platform designated by the Commission within one year of completion of the research.
11. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice.
12. Research, findings and information regarding research systems shall be stored or disseminated, utilized or applied in such a manner as may be prescribed by the Commission from time to time.
13. The Licensee shall disclose to the Commission, the relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee, and the relevant national agencies any inventions and discoveries that are of National strategic importance.
14. The Commission shall have powers to acquire from any person the right in, or to, any scientific innovation, invention or patent of strategic importance to the country.
15. Relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee shall monitor and evaluate the research periodically, and make a report of its findings to the Commission for necessary action.

National Commission for Science, Technology and  
Innovation(NACOSTI),  
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,  
P. O. Box 30623 - 00100 Nairobi, KENYA  
Telephone: 020 4007000, 0713788787, 0735404245  
E-mail: dg@nacosti.go.ke  
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke

**APPENDIX IV: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

***INFLUENCE OF ETHICAL PROCUREMENT PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF KITUI COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA***

Dear Participant,

I invite you to participate in a research study entitled ***Influence of Ethical Procurement Practices on Performance of Kitui County Government, Kenya***: I am currently enrolled in the Master of Science Degree in Procurement and Supplies Management at Mount Kenya University and am in the process of writing my Master’s project. The purpose of the research is to determine: ***Influence of Ethical Procurement Practices on Performance of Kitui County Government, Kenya***. The enclosed questionnaire has been designed to collect information on: ***Influence of Ethical Procurement Practices on Performance of Kitui County Government, Kenya***

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may decline altogether, or leave blank any questions you don’t wish to answer. There are no known risks to participation beyond those encountered in everyday life. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Data from this research will be kept under lock and key and reported only as a collective combined total. No one other than the researchers will know your individual answers to this questionnaire. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research. However, you may find it interesting to talk about the issues addressed in the research and it may be beneficial to the field and to future clients or individuals who have experienced similar concerns

If you agree to participate in this project, please answer the questions on the questionnaire as best you can. It should take approximately **30 minutes** to complete. Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible to enable me complete the project report.

If you have any questions about this project, feel free to contact *the INVESTIGATOR*, Ms. Janet Mutune Mumangi, +254727380805, Email: mumangij@yahoo.com or Dr. Barasa Wamalwa; Tel. 0721203761. Email: bwamalwa@mku.ac.ke.. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please be in touch with the Chairman, Mount Kenya University, Ethical Review Committee, P.O Box 342-01000, Thika.

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavor.

**CONSENT**


I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature ..... Date .....

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX V: ADMISSION LETTER

**Mount Kenya University**



22058/2014  
Janet Mutoni Njirang'i  
P. O. Box 1056  
KITUI Road  
Kenya

0727380805

01-Aug-2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: OFFER OF ADMISSION**

Following your application for admission and on behalf of the University Senate, We are pleased to inform you that your application has been successful. You have been admitted at Mount Kenya University in the **School of Business and Economics, Department of Management** to pursue studies leading to **Master of Science in Procurement and Supplies Management**. The programme will be offered in **Distance Learning Mode** and will be available at the **Virtual Campus**, your preferred Campus.

Reporting date will be on **09-SEP-2014** and the last date of registration is on **12-SEP-2014**. You are required to pay the requisite fees for this course before the registration date. This offer is valid for one trimester/semester session.

Kindly bring with you the following documents on the registration day

- Money order, Bankers' Cheque or Original Bank Deposited Slip for the fee amount (cash, Personal Cheques will NOT be accepted);
- This letter of offer;
- Original ID card or birth certificate and their copies;
- Two, coloured passport size photographs;
- Original educational certificates and their copies;
- Duly filled Student Medical Examination Form;
- Duly filled Recommendation Form and;
- All items indicated in the Admission Check list.

Fee payment should be made in the name of **Mount Kenya University** payable to:-

- Equity Bank, Thika Branch- A/c No 0200292430007 payable at any Equity Branch;
- Fina Bank, Thika Branch- A/c No 2014200002 payable at any Fina Branch;
- Family Bank, Thika Branch- A/c No 00000010000H payable at any Family Branch;
- Standard Chartered Bank, Thika Branch- A/c No 0102049817400 payable at any SCB Branch;
- Kenya Commercial Bank, Thika Branch- A/c No 1121032222 payable at any KCB Branch;
- Co-operative Bank, Thika Branch- A/c No 01120279981300 payable at any Co-op Branch

Quote your Application Reference No (22058/2014) when making payment.

We appreciate you and are honoured to have you pursue your studies at Mount Kenya University. We look forward to helping you build your professional career. In case you require any further clarification kindly contact the undersigned or the Director, Admissions and Registration through the contacts given below.

Yours Sincerely,

For and on behalf of **MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**  
Mount Kenya University  
Admissions & Program  
Date 1 Aug 2014  
**VIRTUAL CAMPUS**

Robert Mwangi  
Director,  
Directorate of Admissions and Registration.

Enclosed

Recommendation Form	- MKUADRF006
Students Medical Examination Form	- MKUADRF007
Academic Form	- MKUADRF008
Admission Checklist Form	- MKUADRF002
Fee Structure	- MKUADRF003
Information about Modules	- MKUADRF004

**NOTE:**

- For any lecture to be attended a minimum of 12 students is required per class.
- Fees may be waived without prior consultation with students.
- You are eligible for government sponsorship through Higher Education Loans Board (www.helb.co.ke)

## APPENDIX VI: NACOSTI CERTIFICATE

**Mount Kenya University**

**DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

MPSM/2014/75971

15<sup>th</sup> December, 2023

*National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)*  
*Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,*  
*P.O Box 30623- 00100*  
**NAIROBI, KENYA**

Dear Sir/Madam,


**RE: IANET MUTUNE MUMANGI - REGISTRATION NO. MPSM/2014/75971**

The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing **Master of Science in Procurement and Supplies Management** in the **Department of Management** in the school of **Business and Economics**

The title of the research is **"Influence of Ethical Procurement Practices on Performance of Kitui County Government, Kenya**. It has been cleared by the University's **Ethics Review Committee** (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data between **December, 2023 and February, 2023**.

Any assistance accorded to the student will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

  
**Dr. Samuel M. Karenga, Ph.D**  
**Director, Graduate Studies**  
Enc.

**Mount Kenya University**  
-P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika  
Office of the Director,  
Graduate Studies

---

Main Campus, General Kago Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika  
Tel: 020-2878 000, Cell: +254 709 153 000  
Email: info@mku.ac.ke, Web: www.mku.ac.ke  
Chartered and ISO 9001 : 2015 Certified Institution.  
*Unlocking Infinite Possibilities*

## APPENDIX VII: SIMILARITY REPORT

# INFLUENCE OF ETHICAL PROCUREMENT PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF KITUI COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA

*by* JANET MUTUNE MUMANGI

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**Submission date:** 04-Jul-2024 10:44AM (UTC+0300)

**Submission ID:** 2412411300

**File name:** MUMANGI\_REVISED\_PROJECT\_DOC\_11.docx (1.84M)

**Word count:** 23568

**Character count:** 136271

## INFLUENCE OF ETHICAL PROCUREMENT PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF KITUI COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	%	10%	0%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

### PRIMARY SOURCES

- 1** Ismail Abdi Changelima, Anjela Ewald Mdee. "Procurement skills and procurement performance in public organizations: The mediating role of procurement planning", *Cogent Business & Management*, 2022  
Publication 1%
- 2** Yonas Mebrate, Kahsu Shumet. "Assessing the impact of procurement practice on organizational performance", *Cogent Business & Management*, 2024  
Publication 1%
- 3** Zohrabi, Mohammad. "Mixed Method Research: Instruments, Validity, Reliability and Reporting Findings", *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2013.  
Publication 1%
- 4** "Public Procurement, Corruption and the Crisis of Governance in Africa", *Springer Science and Business Media LLC*, 2021  
Publication 1%

- |    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 5  | Sempaulus Silalahi, Rheny Afriana Hanif, Supriono Supriono, Eka Hariyani, Meilda Wiguna. "Determinants influencing fraud prevention in e-procurement: Empirical evidence from Indonesia", <i>Innovative Marketing</i> , 2023<br>Publication | <1% |
| 6  | Anne W Mbugua, Juliana Namada. "Information Technology Integration Effect on Operational Performance of Kenya's Public Health Sector", <i>Integrated Journal of Business and Economics</i> , 2019<br>Publication                            | <1% |
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| 8  | "Global Public Procurement Theories and Practices", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2017<br>Publication  | <1% |
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| 10 | "Intercultural EFL teaching : an account of EFL teachers' perceptions and practices in multicultural classrooms in Santiago, Chile.", Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, 2019<br>Publication   | <1% |

- |    |  |     |
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| 15 | Schnequa N. Diggs, Alexandru V. Roman. "Understanding and Tracing Accountability in the Public Procurement Process", Public Performance & Management Review, 2012<br>Publication | <1% |
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| 17 | Alban D. Mchopa, Ismail Abdi Changalima, Gabriel R. Sulle, Rahim M. Msofe. "Public   | <1% |

## APPENDIX VIII: MAP OF KITUI COUNTY

