



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS

**INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS AFFECTING PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCY IN PUBLIC
SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF LUSAKA DISTRICT SCHOOLS**

BY

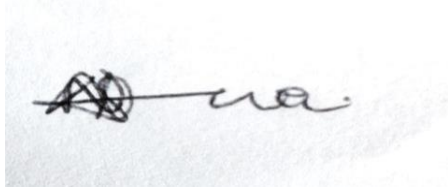
Nahiya Subulwa

Student Number: Bps 22114258

A Research report submitted as a partial fulfillment of a Bachelor of Science in Purchasing and Supply.

DECLARATION

This academic study is my original work and it has not been shared for any academic consideration in any university or learning institution of higher education.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Na', written on a light-colored background.

Signature

Date: 14th November, 2025

This dissertation proposal has been presented for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mansa', written on a light-colored background.

Signature: _____ Date: 14th November, 2025

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ABSTRACT

Procurement efficiency is a cornerstone of effective public sector administration, particularly within the education sector where the timely, cost-effective, and transparent acquisition of goods and services directly affects the quality of teaching and learning. This study, titled “Investigating the Factors Affecting Procurement Efficiency in Public Schools: A Case Study of Lusaka District Schools,” examined the key determinants of procurement efficiency in 20 selected public schools within Lusaka District. A descriptive case study design using a mixed-method approach was adopted. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques, with quantitative data processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

The findings revealed that procurement planning, staff competency, and ethical conduct are the major factors influencing procurement efficiency in public schools. Most respondents agreed that effective procurement planning-including needs assessment and budget alignment enhances timeliness and minimizes delays in acquiring goods and services. Additionally, staff competency emerged as a crucial determinant of efficiency, with 65% of respondents confirming that personnel possess adequate skills, though gaps remain due to limited training opportunities. Ethical conduct was also found to significantly enhance efficiency, as adherence to transparency, fairness, and accountability builds trust and reduces corruption.

However, the study identified several challenges hindering procurement efficiency, including inadequate funding, corruption, weak record-keeping, bureaucratic delays, and insufficient staff training. To address these issues, respondents recommended the adoption of e-procurement systems, improved budget allocation, regular capacity-building programs, and strengthened ethical oversight. The study concludes that enhancing planning, improving staff competency, and enforcing ethical standards are essential for achieving efficient procurement systems in public schools. Future studies are encouraged to include a larger sample size across multiple districts to allow comparative analysis and generalization of findings.

Keywords: Procurement Efficiency, Public Schools, Procurement Planning, Staff Competency, Ethical Conduct, Lusaka District, Public Sector, E-Procurement.

DEDICATION

I wholeheartedly dedicate this work to my family for their steadfast love and support, and to the Almighty God, whose infinite grace and guidance have sustained me throughout this academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I sincerely extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Ms. Grace Chomba Mwansa for her outstanding guidance, steadfast support, and invaluable academic insight throughout the course of this study. Her dedication, encouragement, and timely feedback were vital to the successful completion of this research. May the Almighty God richly bless her.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0. Introduction

This chapter introduced the study by presenting its background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and operational definitions of key terms. It highlighted the study's practical, policy, and theoretical implications while establishing the parameters within which it will be conducted. Furthermore, it set the stage for subsequent chapters by providing a foundation for understanding the factors that influence procurement efficiency in public schools.

1.1. Background of the Study

Procurement efficiency is a cornerstone of effective public sector administration, particularly within the education sector where the timely, cost-effective, and transparent acquisition of goods and services directly affects the quality of teaching and learning. In public schools, efficient procurement ensures that essential inputs such as learning materials, infrastructure, and support services are provided in a manner that aligns with educational goals and enhances student outcomes.

However, many public schools in developing countries, including Zambia, continue to grapple with persistent inefficiencies that undermine operational effectiveness and financial accountability (Achieng, 2019). These inefficiencies are often linked to weak procurement planning, inadequate staff capacity, and unethical practices. The magnitude of this problem is highlighted by global data: The World Bank estimates that between 25% and 30% of education budgets in developing nations are lost annually due to procurement-related inefficiencies and corruption. Similarly, UNESCO reports that approximately 40% of procurement processes in sub-Saharan Africa suffer from delays attributable to procedural flaws and weak contract management (Achieng, 2019). These realities underscore the urgency of addressing procurement inefficiencies in Zambia's public education system.

If procurement in schools is properly implemented, it can do much more than simply buy goods and services. The benefits ripple through financial efficiency, educational quality, community wellbeing, and even sustainability. Below are several paragraphs summarizing what well-executed procurement can achieve, drawing on recent research and practice.

When procurement systems in schools are efficient, transparent, and strategic, they help optimize cost savings freeing up funds that can be reallocated to core educational needs. For example, cooperative purchasing or group purchasing organizations, GPOs allows schools to band together to negotiate better prices, obtain bulk discounts, and reduce the overhead associated with repeated procurement cycles. Such savings are particularly significant for recurring costs such as supplies, uniforms, food, facilities maintenance, energy, and school infrastructure. By reducing waste and redundancy, schools can maximize what they can do with limited budgets.

Beyond cost, an improved procurement process can contribute greatly to operational efficiency and time savings. Traditional procurement often involves cumbersome workflows, manual requisitions, paperwork, and approvals that can delay service delivery and consume staff time. Modern tools such as eProcurement software, centralized digital platforms, automated approval workflows, integrations with financial systems help cut down delays, minimize errors such duplicate orders, mis-filed invoices, improve compliance, and provide better tracking and accountability. When administrative burden is lowered, school management and staff can spend more time focusing on educational quality and less on logistics.

Procurement, if approached strategically, can also enhance educational outcomes, learning environments, and well-being of students. Recent studies such as in Australia show that the way schools are built their infrastructure, and how procurement of design and building services is handled like those in PPP, design-and-construct, or traditional design / bid / build modes has measurable effects on student well-being and educational performance. By ensuring that procurement includes quality specifications, good facility design, durable and safe materials, as well as flexibility in design/maintenance, schools can offer environments more conducive to learning, safer environments, and better satisfaction among both teachers and learners.

Another key area is local economic development and social sustainability. For example, through school feeding programmes that source food locally, home-grown school feeding, procurement can provide stable markets for smallholder farmers, thus boosting rural livelihoods and economic inclusion. Also, inclusive procurement policies buying from local businesses, women-owned suppliers, youth, and other historically disadvantaged groups can strengthen communities and promote equity. Schools are often embedded in their local ecosystems; when procurement pays attention to community benefit, the positive effects multiply.

Procurement also plays a critical role in ensuring sustainability, resilience, and compliance. With rising awareness and regulatory demand for socially and environmentally responsible sourcing, schools that adopt sustainable procurement principles like using green products, minimizing carbon footprints, ensuring fair labour practices in supply chains are better positioned to meet policy requirements, attract funding, and reduce negative environmental effect. In addition, robust procurement systems help manage risk for example, by tracking supplier reliability, increasing transparency in contracts, digitizing records so that audits are easier, and mitigating vulnerabilities in supply chains.

1.2. Problem Statement

Despite substantial government investment and the establishment of procurement regulations, public schools in Zambia continue to experience major challenges in managing procurement processes effectively. The Auditor General's Report (2021) reveals recurring issues such as inflated prices, payments to ghost suppliers, and poor record-keeping, all of which contribute to financial losses and disrupt the delivery of essential school services. These shortcomings stem from systemic weaknesses, including poor procurement planning, low staff competency, and unethical practices that perpetuate corruption and non-compliance.

Although the challenges are widely acknowledged, limited empirical research has examined how procurement planning, staff competency, and ethical conduct collectively influence procurement efficiency in Zambia's public schools (Cebekhulu, 2023). Addressing this gap is critical to improving accountability, transparency, and value-for-money in public education. This study,

therefore, sought to investigate the extent to which these factors shape procurement efficiency in public schools.

1.3. Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to examine the factors influencing procurement efficiency in public schools in Zambia.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. Determine the influence of procurement planning on procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka.
- ii. Examine the effect of staff competency on procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka.
- iii. Investigate the role of ethical conduct in ensuring procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka.

1.4. Research Questions

- i. To what extent does procurement planning influence procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka?
- ii. How does staff competency affect the efficiency of procurement processes in public schools in Lusaka?
- iii. What is the effect of ethical conduct on procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study may be significant both empirically and practically. Empirically, it may contribute to the limited body of knowledge on public school procurement in Zambia, a domain that has received far less attention compared to private sector procurement. Practically, it may provide school administrators and procurement officers with evidence-based insights to enhance efficiency and ensure the timely and cost-effective acquisition of resources. Furthermore, the findings may assist policymakers in formulating robust, transparent, and accountable procurement policies tailored to the education sector. Ultimately, the study may contribute to improved governance, enhanced resource utilization, and strengthened service delivery in Zambia's public schools.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study focused on selected 20 public schools in Lusaka District, Zambia's capital city, which hosts a high concentration of schools and represents diverse procurement experiences. Focusing on Lusaka provided a strategic platform for generating findings that can inform broader national reforms, given the city's role as an administrative and policy hub. The study was confined to examining key determinants of procurement efficiency procurement planning, staff competency, and ethical conduct within the education sector.

1.7. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Procurement Efficiency: The ability to acquire goods and services in a timely, cost-effective, and transparent manner that supports institutional goals (Achieng, 2019).

Procurement Planning: The systematic process of identifying, forecasting, and organizing procurement needs in advance to ensure timely and efficient acquisition (Chiputa, 2017).

Staff Competency: The skills, expertise, and knowledge possessed by personnel involved in executing procurement functions (Chiputa, 2017).

Ethical Conduct: Honest, fair, and transparent behavior demonstrated during procurement processes to uphold integrity and accountability (Kioko, 2023).

Public School: A government-funded educational institution that provides free or affordable education to the community (Cebekhulu, 2023).

1.8. Summary

This chapter has introduced the study by outlining its background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and operational definitions. It has established the context within which the study will be conducted, highlighting the need to investigate procurement planning, staff competency, and ethical conduct in relation to procurement efficiency. The next chapter, Chapter Two, presents the literature review, empirical evidence, theoretical framework, and conceptual model that will guide this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.0. Introduction

This chapter presented a comprehensive review of relevant studies, theoretical perspectives, and conceptual underpinnings that inform the investigation. It began by outlining the significance of procurement efficiency, followed by an analysis of three critical determinants procurement planning, staff competency, and ethical conduct. The chapter also synthesized global, regional, and local empirical studies to establish the existing body of knowledge and identify gaps. Finally, it introduces the theoretical framework. Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Resource-Based View (RBV) which guides this study.

1.1. Structure of the Ministry of Education in Zambia

1.1.1 Overall Mandate & Role

The Ministry of Education in Zambia is the central government body responsible for public education, including early childhood, primary, and secondary schooling. It formulates educational policies, sets standards, implements regulatory frameworks, ensures quality and equitable access, and oversees education delivery across the country.

1.1.2. National Headquarters

The Ministry is headed by the Minister of Education, who provides overall policy leadership and national direction. Supporting the Minister are Permanent Secretaries often one for Administration and one for Education Services, who manage daily operations, implementation of policies, and administrative coordination. At headquarters are directorates and units responsible for core functions such as Curriculum Development, Standards and Assessment, Primary and Secondary Education, Teacher Training and Professional Development, Planning and Information, Human Resources and Administration, Finance, Audit, and Procurement and Supplies.

1.1.3. Decentralized Education Offices

To implement policies closer to schools, the Ministry has a decentralized structure:

1.1.3.1 Provincial Education Offices (PEOs)

Zambia is divided into provincial education regions, each overseen by a Provincial Education Officer. PEOs coordinate and supervise educational activities across districts in the province.

1.1.3.2 District Education Offices & Boards (DEBs)

At the district level, District Education Boards (DEBs) manage the operations of schools in their districts, bridging policy directives from the Ministry to the school level. They handle teacher deployment, school inspections, data collection, and support school management.

1.1.3.3 School Level

At the school level, public schools are the units where teaching, learning, and administrative functions happen:

1.1.3.4 Primary Schools

Run by Head Teachers who oversee daily school operations, curriculum delivery, and administrative duties. Primary schools fall under the supervision of the District Education Boards.

1.1.3.5 Secondary Schools

Also led by Head Teachers but are governed additionally by School Education Boards, which include community representation and help with governance decisions.

1.1.4 Operational Dynamics of Public School

1.1.4.1 Operational Autonomy vs Central Oversight

Schools operate within the national policies and standards set by the Ministry, but daily operational decisions especially relating to teaching, internal administration, routine procurement such as learning materials, supplies, and community engagement are managed by the Head Teacher and school boards. Central oversight remains important for accountability, standardized learning outcomes, and compliance.

1.1.4.2 Governance Structures at School Level

Public schools follow a hierarchical administrative system, unlike some private schools that may adopt more team-based structures internally. This hierarchical model means decisions often flow from the Ministry and district offices down to the head teacher and school staff.

1.1.4.3 Variation Across Schools

Public schools can vary operationally based on several factors:

- **Size and enrolment:** Larger schools may have more structured administrative teams compared to smaller schools.
- **Location:** Urban schools in Lusaka may have different resource availability and operational practices than rural schools due to infrastructure and staffing differences.
- **Resource levels:** Some schools run with full Treasury staffing authority including teachers and support staff on government payroll, while others operate under partial establishment or lack staffing authority, affecting their capacity to function effectively.

1.1.4.4 School Committees & Boards

Many schools have School Boards or Parent-Teacher Associations that engage in governance, oversight, and community involvement. These bodies play a role in accountability, resource mobilization, and support for operational activities

1.2 Procurement Efficiency and Its Importance

Procurement efficiency refers to an organization's ability to acquire goods and services in a timely, cost-effective, and transparent manner while ensuring value for money. It is a cornerstone of effective resource utilization and quality service delivery in both the public and private sectors (Kioko, 2023). In the public sector, efficient procurement promotes accountability, strengthens financial stewardship, and enhances public trust. Within the education sector, particularly in public schools, procurement efficiency is vital for the consistent supply of teaching and learning resources, infrastructure development, and the creation of conducive learning environments.

Given the limited resources available to schools and the growing demand for transparency, effective procurement systems are indispensable. Poor procurement practices not only strain financial resources but also compromise educational outcomes. This study therefore focuses on procurement efficiency in public schools, with particular attention to procurement planning, staff competency, and ethical conduct factors that have frequently been identified as areas of weakness in public procurement systems (Chiputa, 2017).

1.2.1. Procurement Planning

Procurement planning constitutes a central element of the procurement cycle, shaping the timeliness, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of acquiring goods and services. It involves identifying needs, estimating costs, determining procurement methods, and establishing implementation timelines. In public schools, effective procurement planning ensures that essential supplies and services are delivered in alignment with academic calendars and budgetary allocations. Conversely, poor planning often results in delayed deliveries, cost overruns, and disruption of academic activities (Kioko, 2023). Research demonstrates that institutions guided by well-structured, data-driven, and inclusive procurement plans achieve improved value for money and enhanced regulatory compliance.

1.2.2. Staff Competency

The knowledge, skills, and professional experience of procurement personnel play a pivotal role in determining the success of procurement processes. Competent staff is expected to interpret procurement laws, design and evaluate tenders, negotiate effectively, and ensure compliance with regulatory frameworks. However, in many public schools, procurement responsibilities are often entrusted to untrained or inadequately skilled personnel, heightening the risk of mismanagement, non-compliance, and inefficiencies. Such limitations frequently result in procurement delays and substandard outcomes (Mubanga, 2022). By contrast, institutions staffed with trained professionals consistently adhere to best practices, manage contracts effectively, and realize better cost efficiency.

1.2.3. Ethical Conduct

Ethical conduct encompasses integrity, transparency, fairness, and accountability in the procurement process. In public institutions such as schools, adherence to ethical standards is

critical in mitigating corruption, favoritism, and bid rigging. Unethical practices including kickbacks, conflicts of interest, and fraudulent bidding can cause significant financial losses and undermine educational quality, ultimately disadvantaging students. Evidence suggests that strict enforcement of ethical guidelines, coupled with accountability mechanisms, substantially improves procurement outcomes and fosters public confidence in the system.

1.3 Empirical Review

This will look at global, regional and local perspectives with regards to procurement performance

1.3.1 Global perspective

Staff Competence, Professionalism, and Capacity

Procurement planning has consistently been identified as a critical determinant of procurement efficiency. In China, a study by Technology (2024) at the Jiangxi Institute of Fashion Technology established a significant positive relationship between procurement planning and procurement performance. The findings showed that effective planning contributes to improved forecasting, timely procurement, and optimal use of institutional resources. Although procurement planning had a moderate effect ($\beta = 0.143$, $p \leq 0.000$), its contribution was significant in enhancing overall procurement outcomes.

Similarly, Zafar (2023), in a study conducted within Pakistan's home textile industry, found that procurement planning and resource allocation positively influence procurement performance. Guided by the Resource-Based View theory, the study demonstrated that adequate financial and material resource allocation strengthens procurement processes by ensuring availability of inputs and reducing delays.

At the regional level, Ambole (2016) in Kenya also found procurement planning and control to be key factors influencing procurement efficiency in secondary schools. The study highlighted that poor planning often leads to emergency purchases, non-compliance, and inefficiencies, particularly in public educational institutions.

These findings suggest that weak procurement planning and inadequate resource allocation can significantly undermine procurement efficiency, a concern that is highly relevant for public schools in Lusaka District where funding constraints and delayed disbursements are common.

Human resource capacity is another dominant theme in procurement literature. Technology (2024) found that employee competence had a statistically significant influence on procurement performance ($\beta = 0.153$, $p \leq 0.000$), emphasizing the importance of trained and skilled procurement personnel in public institutions.

In Pakistan, Zafar (2023) similarly reported that staff competency positively affects procurement performance, particularly when procurement officers possess technical knowledge, negotiation skills, and regulatory awareness. The study further demonstrated that competent staff are better positioned to implement procurement plans and comply with established procedures.

However, contrasting findings were observed in Malaysia. Nur (2022) examined professionalism and ethics within a uniform government agency and found that although professionalism and ethics had a positive relationship with procurement effectiveness, the relationship was not statistically significant. This suggests that professionalism alone may not yield efficiency unless supported by strong systems, monitoring mechanisms, and enforcement structures.

Within the education sector in Kenya, Ambole (2016) emphasized personnel skills as a key driver of procurement efficacy in secondary schools, noting that inadequately trained staff often struggle with procurement laws and documentation requirements. These studies collectively demonstrate that staff competence remains a crucial but context-dependent factor influencing procurement efficiency, especially in decentralized institutions such as public schools.

1.3.2 Regional perspectives

1.3.2.1 Procurement Procedures, Compliance, and Bureaucracy

Procurement procedures and regulatory compliance form a central theme in procurement efficiency studies. In China, Technology (2024) found procurement procedures to have the

strongest influence on procurement performance ($\beta = 0.256$, $p \leq 0.000$), indicating that well-defined, streamlined procedures significantly enhance efficiency.

In South Africa, Cebekhulu (2023) empirically evaluated factors affecting efficiency in public procurement and found that excessive bureaucracy and rigid compliance requirements negatively impact procurement efficiency. The study further revealed that complex approval processes and strict regulatory controls often slow down procurement cycles, particularly in public sector institutions.

Similarly, Ambole (2016) highlighted that procurement control mechanisms and adherence to public procurement laws greatly influence procurement efficacy in public secondary schools. While compliance promotes accountability, overly rigid procedures may limit flexibility and responsiveness.

These findings are particularly relevant to public schools in Zambia, which operate under the Public Procurement Act and Ministry of Education guidelines that may affect procurement timelines and decision-making autonomy.

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1.3.2.3 Audit, Monitoring, and Transparency

Audit, monitoring, and transparency have been widely recognized as enablers of procurement effectiveness. Nur (2022) found that audit and monitoring significantly and positively influence procurement process effectiveness in Malaysia's public sector. Transparent procurement practices were also shown to reduce inefficiencies and opportunities for misuse of public resources.

In Kenya, Ambole (2016) similarly found procurement monitoring to be a key determinant of procurement efficiency in secondary schools. Effective monitoring ensures adherence to procurement plans, budgetary controls, and accountability requirements. The emphasis on audit and transparency suggests that procurement efficiency is not only driven by operational capacity but also by governance and oversight mechanisms, which are critical in publicly funded institutions such as schools.

1.3.2.4 Ethical Leadership and Governance

Leadership and ethics have increasingly been incorporated into procurement performance studies. Zafar (2023) introduced ethical leadership as a moderating variable and found that it strengthens the relationship between procurement factors and procurement performance. Ethical leadership was shown to enhance compliance, reduce opportunistic behavior, and promote accountability within procurement units.

Although Nur (2022) found professionalism and ethics to be statistically insignificant on their own, the positive relationship suggests that ethical considerations become more impactful when combined with strong leadership and enforcement mechanisms.

In the context of public schools, leadership by head teachers and school management committees plays a vital role in shaping procurement practices, decision-making transparency, and compliance with regulations.

1.3.3 Local perspective

1.3.3.1 Procurement in Zambian Public Schools

In Zambia, Mwangata (2024) examined challenges faced by school management in the procurement of teaching and learning materials in selected secondary schools in Chipata District. The study revealed that school management employs strategies such as planning and budgeting, resource allocation, fund sourcing, and procurement monitoring to manage procurement processes.

However, the study also identified challenges including limited financial resources, bureaucratic delays, and capacity constraints, which negatively affect procurement efficiency and ultimately pupils' academic performance. While the study focused on learning materials, it highlights systemic procurement challenges within public schools.

Notably, existing Zambian studies place limited emphasis on procurement efficiency as a multidimensional construct, particularly within urban public schools such as those in Lusaka District. This gap justifies the need for the current study.

In Zambia, (Chiputa, 2017) did “factors affecting effective participation of small and medium enterprises in public procurement”. The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors affecting the effective participation of SMEs in the public procurement market in Zambia. This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive design with a quantitative approach. Data was collected from a total of 186 respondents drawn from SMEs registered with PACRA and operating in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. Random sampling was used to select SMEs, and respondents included company/business owners, managers, and supervisors. Data collected was analyzed using exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis. The findings revealed that regulatory framework factors, SME capacities factors, public procurement tendering factors, and SME attitude factors were significant determinants with a combined effect size of (0.675) and a

coefficient of determination of 43.9%. Further, based on the Hierarchical regression model, it was established that the largest predictors of SMEs' effective participation in the public procurement market are the public tendering process and SMEs' attitude towards public procurement (Mubanga, 2022).

1.4 The literature gap

As it can be seen from the studies, that none of the studies has being done in the Zambian context on factors influencing procurement efficiency in public school. The knowledge gap in procurement efficiency is a critical concern because it directly impacts educational quality, resource management, transparency, governance and policy development, all of which are fundamental to improving public education systems.

1.5 Theoretical framework

This study is underpinned by Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Resource Based View (RBV)

1.5.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour

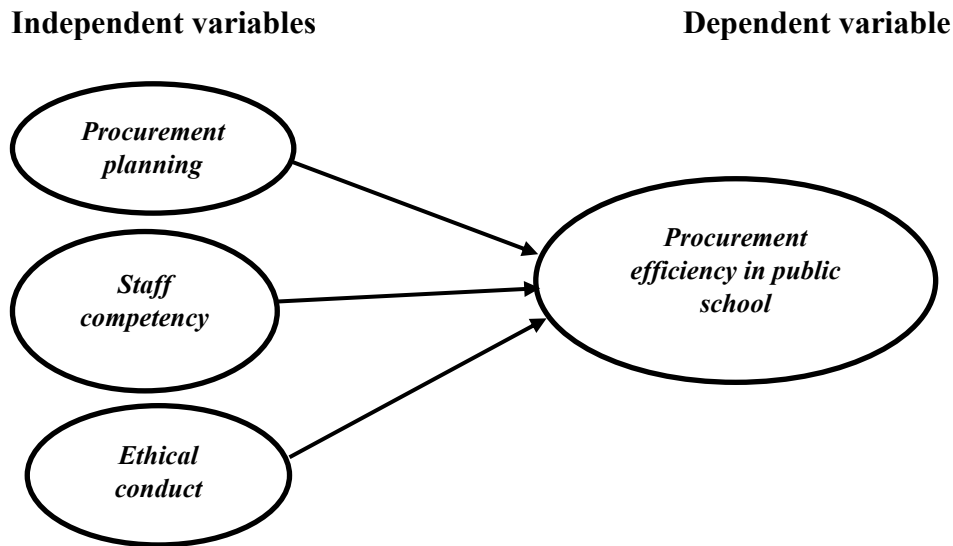
The Theory of Planned Behaviour, developed by (Ajzen, 1991) is a psychological theory that seeks to predict and understand human behaviour in specific contexts. TPB posits that an individual's intention to perform a given behaviour is the most important predictor of whether they will actually perform that behaviour. These intentions are, in turn, influenced by three key components; Attitude towards the behaviour ,positive or negative evaluation, Subjective norms, perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behaviour, Perceived behavioural control the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour, (Mubanga, 2022).

1.5.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV), articulated by (Barney, 1991), is a strategic management theory that emphasizes the internal resources and capabilities of an organization as the key to achieving competitive advantage. According to RBV, resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN criteria) can lead to sustained superior performance if effectively managed and utilized. In public schools, procurement efficiency depends heavily on internal organizational resources, including; Human resources such as skilled procurement staff, Planning tools and systems, and school processes and structures that support efficient procurement.

1.6 Conceptual model

In this study, procurement efficiency serves as the dependent variable, representing the outcome of interest influenced by various internal factors within public schools. The independent variables staff competency, procurement planning and ethical conduct are hypothesized to have a direct impact on procurement efficiency by shaping the quality, timeliness, and transparency of procurement activities. The model below posits that improvements in these three areas will lead to more efficient procurement processes, ultimately enhancing service delivery in the education sector.



Source: Developed by the researcher 2025.

Fig 1

Staff competency, procurement planning, and ethical conduct are interrelated factors that collectively influence procurement efficiency in public schools. Competent staff are essential for developing and executing effective procurement plans, ensuring that needs are clearly identified, budgets are aligned. Proper planning, in turn, provides a structured framework that guides staff actions and reduces errors or delays. Ethical conduct reinforces both competency and planning by ensuring transparency, accountability and integrity throughout the procurement process. Together, these elements create a coherent system where capable personnel, guided by solid plans and ethical standards, drive efficient and effective procurement outcomes (Chiputa, 2017). Up next is chapter there and deals with the methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

2.0. Introduction

This section outlined the overall methodological framework of the study. It presented the research approach, design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. In addition, it highlighted the strategies that was employed to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, thereby enhancing the credibility and accuracy of the research outcomes.

2.1. Research Approach

The study adopted a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This approach was supported by a descriptive orientation, which provided a comprehensive understanding of the subject under investigation. The quantitative aspect allowed for statistical measurement and analysis of procurement efficiency, while the qualitative aspect captured insights, perceptions, and experiences of the respondents. The combination of these methods ensured a holistic perspective and strengthened the reliability of the results.

2.2. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive case study design, focusing on a selected district as the sample area. The case study approach was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of procurement efficiency within public schools in the chosen district context, which was Lusaka in this case. By concentrating on this specific geographical and institutional setting, the design made it possible to capture unique practices, challenges, and contextual factors that influenced procurement outcomes.

The descriptive nature of the design enabled the researcher to systematically present the characteristics of procurement processes, highlight patterns, and document both strengths and weaknesses in current practices. This further facilitated the exploration of relationships between procurement procedures and efficiency outcomes without altering or manipulating variables. The case study perspective also provided practical insights and recommendations that where context-

specific while still generating lessons that may be applicable to other districts with similar conditions.

2.3. Study Population

The study population consisted of 60 public schools in Lusaka. This population included teachers involved in the procurement process, stores officers, and other personnel who play a role in or contribute to procurement efficiency. The diverse nature of the participants ensured that the study captured a wide range of perspectives and experiences relevant to procurement practices within the education sector.

1.4 Study Sample Size

The Sample size was 20 selected public schools within Lusaka district determined by using (Morgan's formula of 1970)

$$S \approx \frac{\chi^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + \chi^2 2P(1-p)}$$

Where S= Sample Size

χ^2 = 0.05% Confidence level

N= the Population

P= Population Proportion (to provide the maximum Sample Size, 0.05% will be assumed)

d= Degree of accuracy expressed as a percentage (0.05)

1.5 Sampling Technique

This study employed simple random sampling to ensure that each individual school in the target population had an equal and independent chance of being selected as a respondent school. This technique minimized selection bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample, thereby improving the generalizability of the findings (Esterberg, 2002). The random selection process was executed systematically to ensure fairness and transparency.

1.6 Data Collection Instrument

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire, carefully designed to capture information aligned with the study objectives. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for the collection of quantitative data as well as qualitative insights. Its design focused on clarity, relevance, and ease of administration to maximize response accuracy and completeness.

1.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data obtained from the structured questionnaire was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 (IBM Corp., 2019). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency was employed to summarize the data. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was applied to identify, analyze, and interpret emerging patterns and themes (Esterberg, 2002). This mixed approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

1.8. Reliability and Validity

To enhance the reliability of the study, the questionnaire did undergo pre-testing with a small sample similar to the target population. Feedback from the pilot test was incorporated to refine the instrument. For validity, the questionnaire items were adapted from previously validated instruments used in similar studies, ensuring content accuracy and relevance. This improved both internal validity and the credibility of findings.

1.9. Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to established ethical research principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for respondents' rights. Ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the University of Lusaka (Unilus) Ethical Review Board prior to data

collection. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and assured that their information was only be used for academic purposes (Esterberg, 2002).

1.10. Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology, detailing the sampling technique, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, and measures to ensure reliability, validity, and ethical compliance. The next chapter was will be chapter four of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

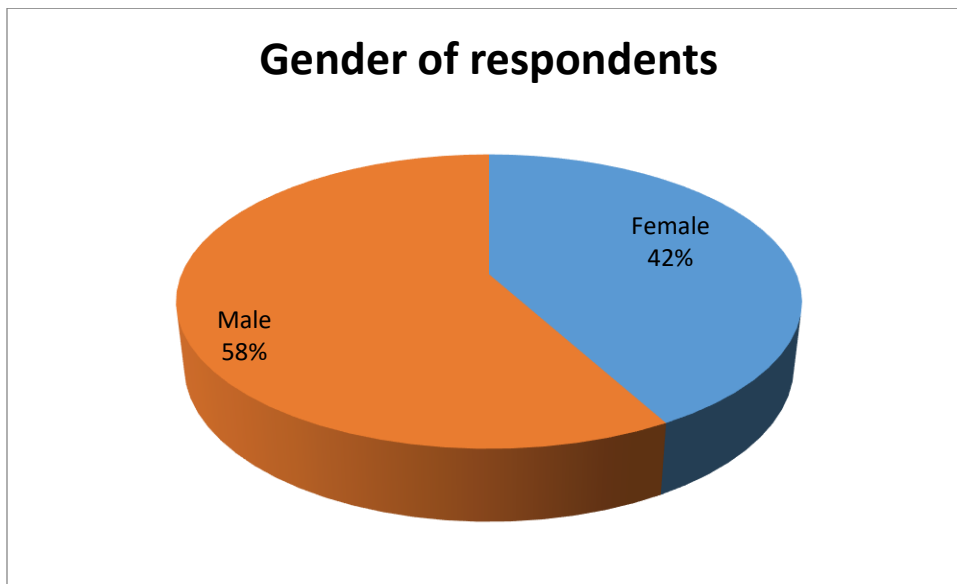
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the findings in line with the research objectives and the analysis of the data collected from questionnaires. This involved investigating the factors affecting procurement efficiency in public schools: a case study of Lusaka district schools

4.0 Interpretation of Data

Figure 4.1 Respondents Gender

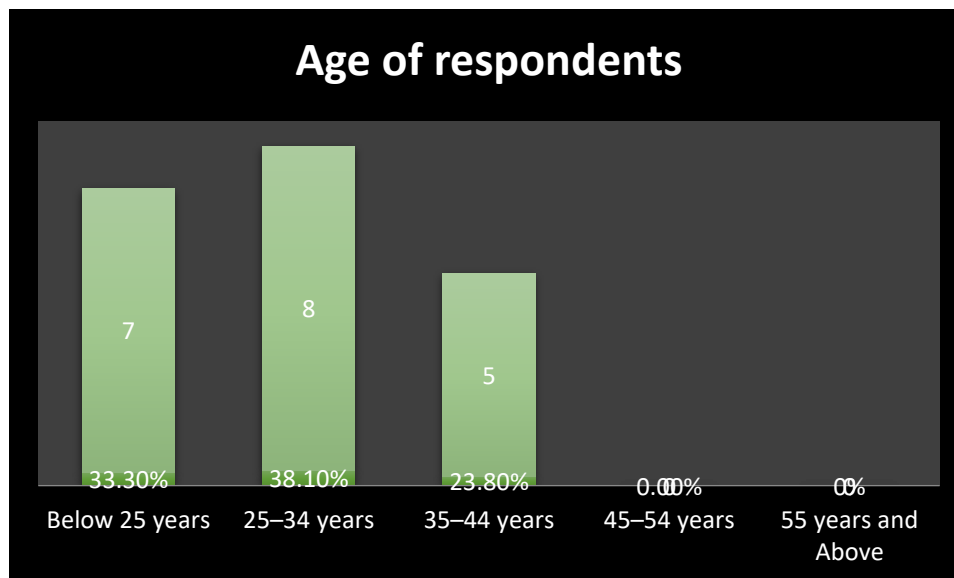


Source: Researcher, 2025

According to Figure 4.1 The study sought to establish the gender composition of respondents who participated in the investigation of factors affecting procurement efficiency in public schools within Lusaka District. The findings, as illustrated in **Figure 1**, show that **58% of the respondents were male**, while **42% were female**. The total sample covered **20 schools** across the district.

This distribution indicates that there were slightly more male participants than female participants involved in the procurement processes of public schools. This could be attributed to the existing gender composition in school administration and procurement-related positions, which in many cases tend to be male-dominated, particularly in roles such as head teachers, bursars, and procurement officers. However, the representation of females (42%) also demonstrates a fairly balanced participation, reflecting increasing gender inclusivity in administrative and financial management functions in the education sector. This balance enriches the study by incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences in relation to procurement efficiency. The involvement of both male and female respondents provides a more comprehensive understanding of procurement challenges and efficiency factors in public schools, ensuring that gender-based experiences and insights are adequately captured. It also reflects ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Education and related stakeholders to promote gender equity in leadership and management roles within schools.

Figure 4.2: Age of respondents



Source: Researcher, 2025

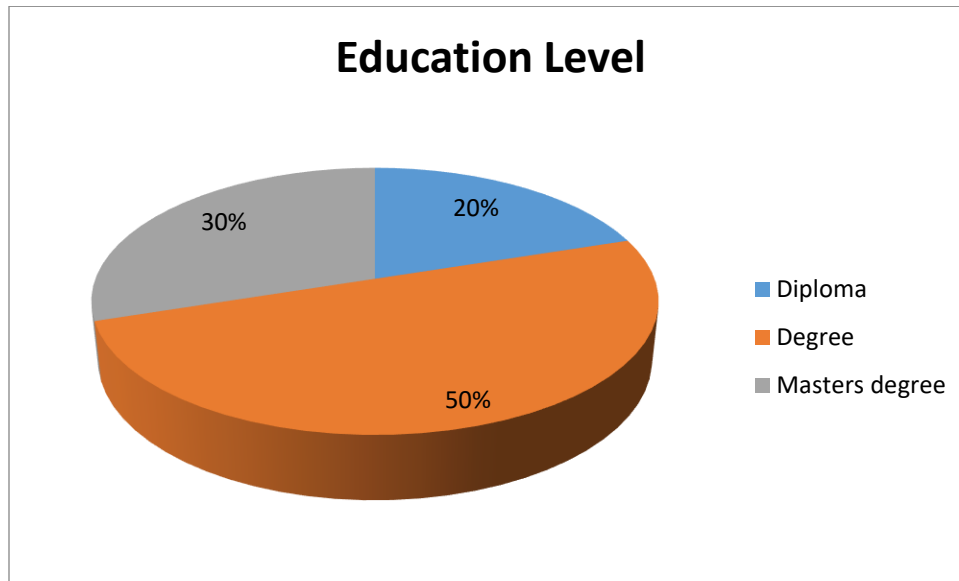
Figure 4.2 indicates that the study examined the age distribution of respondents to understand the demographic composition of individuals involved in procurement functions within public schools in Lusaka District. As shown in **Figure 2**, the results reveal that **38.1% of respondents were aged between 25-34 years**, followed by **33.3% who were below 25 years**, and **23.8% who were between 35-44 years**. There were **no respondents aged between 45-54 years or 55 years and above in these roles**. The total number of respondents was **20**, representing personnel across 20 public schools.

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents fall within the **young to early middle-aged categories (below 35 years)**. This suggests that most personnel handling or involved in procurement activities in public schools are relatively young and possibly at the early stages of their professional careers. This age composition may reflect the current recruitment trends in the education sector, where younger professionals are being engaged in administrative and financial management roles due to their adaptability to modern procurement systems and digital tools.

The moderate representation of individuals aged **35-44 years (23.8%)** adds a level of experience and stability within the procurement function. These respondents likely occupy supervisory or decision-making positions, offering guidance to younger staff. However, the absence of respondents above 45 years may indicate **limited senior or highly experienced personnel** directly

involved in school-level procurement activities, which could affect institutional memory and long-term strategy development in procurement management.

Figure 4.3: Education level of respondents



Source: Researcher,2025

Figure 4.3 indicates that the results show that out of the 20 respondents, **4 (20%) held Diplomas, 10 (50%) had Bachelor's Degrees, and 6 (30%) possessed Master's Degrees.** This distribution indicates that the majority of the respondents were **degree holders**, reflecting a generally well-educated sample group.

The presence of a higher proportion of respondents with tertiary qualifications (Bachelor's and Master's degrees) suggests that most participants had adequate academic background and professional knowledge to understand and effectively respond to issues related to the study topic. It also implies that their views are likely to be **informed, analytical, and reliable**, given their academic exposure. On the other hand, the smaller number of diploma holders could indicate that most of the positions or responsibilities in the institutions under study such as in public school management or procurement require higher academic qualifications. Overall, the results demonstrate a **competent and academically diverse workforce**, capable of contributing meaningfully to institutional decision-making and efficiency.

Table 4.1 Respondents position in school

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Head Teacher	4	20%
Deputy Head Teacher	3	15%
Procurement Officer	5	25%
Teacher	6	30%
Regular Student	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Source: Researcher,2025

Table 4.1 reveals that the results from the 20 school respondents show that **teachers** formed the largest group (30%), followed by **procurement officers** (25%), **head teachers** (20%), **deputy head teachers** (15%), and **students** (10%). This distribution indicates that the study captured views from a **diverse range of participants** involved in school operations and procurement processes. The high representation of teachers suggests that they are key stakeholders with first-hand knowledge of how procurement decisions affect classroom resources and teaching outcomes.

The significant number of procurement officers implies that the study was able to gather **specialized insights** on procurement procedures, efficiency challenges, and compliance within public schools. Their professional role directly aligns with the study's focus, strengthening the credibility of the findings. Head teachers and deputy head teachers, together making up 35% of respondents, provided an **administrative perspective**, reflecting how leadership influences procurement efficiency through supervision, policy enforcement, and budgetary decisions.

Although students comprised only 10% of the sample, their inclusion is valuable as they represent **end beneficiaries** of school procurement outcomes such as improved learning materials, facilities, and classroom environments. By and large, the data shows a **balanced representation** of different school roles, ensuring that the study's findings incorporate operational, managerial, and beneficiary viewpoints essential for a comprehensive understanding of procurement efficiency in Lusaka district schools.

Table 4.2: Respondents experience in procurement and school administration

Years of Experience	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Less than 2 years	8	40%
2 – 5 years	6	30%
6 – 10 years	4	20%
Above 10 years	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Source: Researcher,2025

Table 4.2 shows that the findings reveal that the majority of respondents, **8 out of 20 (40%)**, had **less than 2 years of experience** in procurement or school administration. This suggests that a significant portion of the staff are **relatively new** to their roles. This may be due to recent recruitment, promotions, or staff transfers common within the education sector. The implication is that while new personnel bring fresh perspectives, they may still be developing a deep understanding of procurement processes and school administrative systems.

Respondents with **2-5 years of experience** accounted for **30%**, indicating a fair number of staff who have gained some practical experience and understanding of institutional procedures. These individuals likely serve as a bridge between new and more experienced staff, providing moderate continuity in administrative operations. A smaller group, **4 respondents (20%)**, had **6-10 years of experience**, representing personnel who have likely developed strong institutional knowledge and procedural expertise. Finally, only **2 respondents (10%)** had **over 10 years of experience**, suggesting that **long-serving or veteran staff** are few. This could point to high staff turnover, career progression outside the school system, or retirements. Overall, the findings imply that while schools benefit from a mix of experience levels, there is a **predominance of relatively new personnel**, which may affect efficiency and consistency in procurement or administrative practices unless supported by adequate capacity building and mentorship programs.

Table 4.3: the influence of procurement planning on procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total (n=20)
Procurement planning is adequately conducted before procurement activities.	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	20
Needs assessment is properly carried out before procurement decisions are made.	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	9 (45%)	7 (35%)	20
Procurement plans are aligned with the school's budget and objectives.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	6 (30%)	20
Timely procurement planning reduces delays in acquiring goods and services.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	8 (40%)	10 (50%)	20
Proper procurement planning contributes to procurement efficiency in public schools.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	6 (30%)	12 (60%)	20

Source: Researcher, 2025

According to table 4.3 Findings indicate that **procurement planning is generally practiced effectively** in most public schools. The majority of respondents (70-90%) agreed or strongly agreed that procurement planning, needs assessment, and budget alignment are carried out before procurement activities. This demonstrates that schools follow structured planning processes. In addition, **90% of respondents** agreed that timely planning reduces delays, while **60% strongly agreed** that effective procurement planning enhances efficiency. These results suggest that **effective procurement planning positively influences procurement efficiency**, leading to improved timeliness, reduced waste, and better financial management. However, a few respondents (10-15%) remained neutral or disagreed, indicating that some schools may not consistently adhere to planning standards.

Table 4.4 The effect of staff competency on procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total (n=20)
Staff involved in procurement have adequate knowledge of procurement procedures.	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	9(45%)	4 (20%)	20
Procurement staff possess the necessary skills to manage procurement effectively.	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	8(40%)	5 (25%)	20
Training and capacity-building programs are provided for staff involved in procurement.	2 (10%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)	5(25%)	3 (15%)	20
Lack of staff competency negatively affects procurement efficiency.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	8(40%)	9 (45%)	20
Competent staff contribute significantly to improving procurement efficiency in schools.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	6(30%)	12 (60%)	20

Source: Researcher,2025

Table 4.4 reveals that the results show that **staff competency has a strong influence on procurement efficiency**. About **65%** of respondents agreed that staff have adequate knowledge and skills, while **30%** were neutral or disagreed, suggesting skill gaps in certain schools. Only **40% agreed** that regular training and capacity-building programs are offered, indicating a **need for more consistent staff development initiatives**. Meanwhile, **85% of respondents** agreed that lack of staff competency negatively affects procurement efficiency, and **90% agreed or strongly agreed** that competent staff improve performance. These results suggest that schools with **trained and skilled procurement personnel** achieve greater efficiency, accuracy, and transparency in procurement processes. However, limited training opportunities remain a major challenge.

Table 4.5 The role of ethical conduct in ensuring procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total (n=20)
Procurement activities in public schools follow ethical guidelines and standards.	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	9(45%)	6 (30%)	20
Corruption and favoritism negatively affect procurement efficiency in schools.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	5(25%)	14 (70%)	20
Staff involved in procurement demonstrate integrity in decision-making.	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	8(40%)	6 (30%)	20
Transparency and accountability are promoted in procurement processes.	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	9(45%)	6 (30%)	20
Adherence to ethical conduct enhances procurement efficiency in schools.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	5(25%)	13 (65%)	20

Source: Researcher,2025

Table 4.6 shows that findings reveal that **ethical conduct is widely recognized as essential to procurement efficiency**. Approximately **90% of respondents** agreed or strongly agreed that schools follow ethical guidelines and that corruption negatively affects efficiency. However, around **25%** expressed neutrality or disagreement regarding transparency and accountability, suggesting that some schools may face occasional ethical lapses or weak oversight mechanisms. Encouragingly, **90% of respondents** agreed that adherence to ethical standards enhances procurement efficiency by fostering fairness, trust, and accountability. Overall, the findings emphasize that **strong ethical practices and integrity among staff are crucial for ensuring transparent and effective procurement processes** in public schools.

4.6 Qualitative findings.

4.6.1 Findings on Challenges Affecting Procurement Efficiency in Public Schools

The study sought to explore the challenges that affect procurement efficiency in public schools within Lusaka. Findings from the 20 respondents revealed several recurring issues, with corruption emerging as a major obstacle. Respondents emphasized that lack of transparency and accountability has created opportunities for malpractice, often leading to misuse of funds and inefficiencies in the procurement process. Furthermore, some schools lack proper documentation and written evidence, which weakens internal control systems and makes it difficult to track financial activities and decisions.

“Corruption and lack of transparency have made it hard to manage funds and track procurement activities effectively.”-Respondent 8

Another critical challenge identified was mismanagement of funds and delayed or insufficient funding from the government. Many respondents indicated that procurement processes are hindered when funds are not released on time, forcing schools to postpone important purchases or operate under financial strain. Additionally, the lack of properly trained procurement personnel and limited budgets were cited as contributing factors to inefficiency. The combination of bureaucratic procedures, poor communication, and inadequate planning further compounds these challenges, resulting in a system that struggles to deliver timely and cost-effective procurement outcomes.

“Inadequate record keeping and unclear procurement processes can lead to corruption and inefficiencies.”-Respondent 15

4.6.2 Findings on Measures to Improve Procurement Planning in Public Schools

Respondents proposed several measures to improve procurement planning and efficiency. A key recommendation was the implementation of e-procurement systems to promote transparency, track spending, and reduce manual errors. They also emphasized the need for timely and adequate budget allocation from the government to ensure that procurement activities align with school operational needs. Furthermore, respondents suggested developing comprehensive procurement

plans, conducting needs assessments, and establishing centralized procurement units to streamline processes.

Another major suggestion was capacity building through staff training and sensitization on procurement procedures and ethics. Respondents highlighted the importance of employing qualified procurement officers and reducing favoritism in staff appointments. Enhancing transparency and accountability through proper record keeping, adhering strictly to procurement regulations, and promoting independence of procurement officers were also viewed as crucial steps toward efficiency. Regular monitoring and evaluation were recommended to ensure compliance and continuous improvement in procurement planning.

“Training staff, enforcing transparency, using digital systems, and setting clear budgets and timelines can help us improve procurement planning.”-Respondent 5

4.6.3 Findings on Training and Support to Improve Staff Competency in Procurement

The study further examined what type of training or support would enhance staff competency in procurement. Respondents consistently mentioned workshops and online training modules as effective tools for improving procurement knowledge. Training should focus on public procurement laws and regulations, ethical practices, and anti-corruption measures. Additionally, respondents emphasized practical capacity-building programs that cover key areas such as procurement planning, supplier management, risk management, and use of technology in procurement.

Respondents also indicated the importance of budget allocation for staff training to ensure sustainability and continuity in capacity development. Regular engagement meetings and awareness sessions were recommended to keep staff informed about procurement updates and policy changes. Motivation and recognition of well-performing staff were also mentioned as factors that can encourage adherence to best practices. Ultimately, developing procurement competencies through continuous professional development was seen as a vital step in enhancing efficiency and accountability in public school procurement systems.

“Procurement fundamentals covering laws, ethics, and supplier management would greatly improve staff competency at our school.”-Respondent 7

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the study titled “Investigating the Factors Affecting Procurement Efficiency in Public Schools: A Case Study of Lusaka District Schools.” The main objectives of the study were to determine the influence of procurement planning, assess the effect of staff competency, and examine the role of ethical conduct on procurement efficiency in public schools. In addition, the study explored the challenges affecting procurement efficiency and proposed measures to enhance effective procurement practices. The findings were obtained from 20 public schools through the use of structured questionnaires and qualitative interviews.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

Findings revealed that procurement planning significantly influences procurement efficiency in public schools. The majority of respondents agreed that procurement planning, needs assessment, and budget alignment are adequately carried out before procurement activities. This indicates that most schools in Lusaka have adopted structured planning processes. Additionally, 90% of respondents affirmed that timely planning minimizes delays in acquiring goods and services, while 60% strongly agreed that proper planning enhances efficiency. However, a small percentage (10-15%) of respondents were neutral or disagreed, implying that some schools still face inconsistencies in planning practices. Overall, the findings demonstrate that effective procurement planning contributes to improved timeliness, reduced waste, and better financial control within public schools.

According to findings staff competency was identified as a critical factor influencing procurement efficiency. About 65% of respondents agreed that staff possess adequate knowledge and skills to

manage procurement processes effectively, while 30% were neutral or disagreed, suggesting skill gaps in certain schools. Only 40% agreed that regular training and capacity-building programs are conducted, indicating limited opportunities for professional development. Furthermore, 85% of respondents acknowledged that lack of staff competency negatively affects procurement efficiency, and 90% strongly agreed that competent staff significantly improve procurement performance. These results highlight the importance of continuous training, professional qualifications, and practical experience in achieving efficient procurement outcomes.

Findings revealed that ethical conduct plays a major role in enhancing procurement efficiency. Approximately 90% of respondents agreed that procurement activities in schools follow ethical standards and that corruption and favoritism have a negative impact on efficiency. However, some respondents were neutral or disagreed regarding transparency and accountability, suggesting that some schools still face occasional ethical lapses or weak oversight mechanisms. Despite this, 90% of respondents emphasized that adherence to ethical conduct fosters fairness, trust, and accountability-key ingredients for efficient procurement systems.

Qualitative findings revealed several challenges that hinder procurement efficiency in public schools. Key issues included corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, delayed or insufficient government funding, and lack of trained procurement personnel. Respondents reported that weak documentation and record-keeping practices make it difficult to monitor financial transactions effectively. Bureaucratic procedures and poor communication were also found to contribute to inefficiency. These challenges collectively reduce schools' ability to implement timely and cost-effective procurement processes.

Respondents proposed several strategies to improve procurement planning and efficiency. These included the introduction of e-procurement systems to promote transparency and reduce manual errors, timely budget allocations, and the development of comprehensive procurement plans aligned with school needs. Furthermore, capacity building through regular training, promoting independence of procurement officers, and enforcing transparency and accountability were recommended. Respondents also emphasized continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with procurement guidelines.

Findings further indicated that regular training workshops, online courses, and seminars focused on procurement laws, ethics, and supplier management would help strengthen staff competency. Respondents stressed that sufficient budget allocation for training and continuous professional development is essential for sustaining improvements in procurement efficiency. Recognition of high-performing staff and engagement meetings were also viewed as motivational strategies to enhance adherence to best procurement practices.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that procurement efficiency in public schools within Lusaka District is largely influenced by three major factors-procurement planning, staff competency, and ethical conduct. Effective procurement planning ensures that needs assessments are done, budgets are aligned, and delays are minimized, leading to improved cost-effectiveness and timely delivery of goods and services. Staff competency was also found to be a crucial determinant of efficiency, as skilled and trained personnel are more likely to implement procurement procedures effectively and transparently. Ethical conduct, on the other hand, underpins the entire process by ensuring fairness, accountability, and public trust. However, challenges such as corruption, delayed funding, inadequate training, and poor record keeping continue to hinder procurement efficiency. Addressing these challenges through capacity building, stronger ethical oversight, and the adoption of digital systems can significantly enhance procurement performance in public schools.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Enhance Procurement Planning:
Schools should adopt structured procurement plans that align with annual budgets and objectives. Regular reviews should be conducted to ensure timeliness and cost-effectiveness.
2. Invest in Staff Training and Development:
The Ministry of Education should organize continuous professional development

programs focusing on procurement laws, ethics, and modern procurement systems to improve staff competency.

3. Promote Ethical Conduct and Accountability:

Strict adherence to procurement regulations should be enforced, with clear disciplinary actions for malpractice. Regular audits and transparency mechanisms should be strengthened to minimize corruption.

4. Implement E-Procurement Systems:

Introducing digital procurement systems will enhance transparency, efficiency, and traceability of transactions, reducing paperwork and opportunities for fraud.

5. Improve Funding and Resource Allocation:

The government should ensure timely disbursement of funds to public schools to avoid delays in procurement activities and to promote effective planning and implementation.

6. Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation:

Periodic performance audits and monitoring mechanisms should be established to assess compliance with procurement policies and to identify areas for improvement.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Study

Future studies should consider a larger sample size to include more schools across different districts for comparative analysis. Additionally, research could focus on the impact of digital transformation (e-procurement systems) on procurement efficiency in educational institutions.

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APPENDIX



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction:

Dear Respondent,

You are kindly requested to participate in this research by answering the questions below. The purpose of this research is to Investigating the factors affecting procurement efficiency in public schools: a case study of Lusaka district schools. The information provided will be used strictly for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

Section A: Demographic Information

(Please tick or fill in where appropriate)

1. Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Age:

- ☐ Below 25
- ☐ 25–34
- ☐ 35–44
- ☐ 45–54
- ☐ 55 and above

3. Education Level:

- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

4. Position in School:

- ☐ Head Teacher
- ☐ Deputy Head Teacher
- ☐ Procurement Officer
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

5. Years of Experience in Procurement/School Administration:

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ 2–5 years
- ☐ 6–10 years
- ☐ Above 10 years

Section B: Study Variables by Objectives

Objective 1: To determine the influence of procurement planning on procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka

Statement	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
Procurement planning is adequately conducted before procurement activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Needs assessment is properly carried out before procurement decisions are made.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Procurement plans are aligned with the school's budget and objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Timely procurement planning reduces delays in acquiring goods and services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proper procurement planning contributes to procurement efficiency in public schools.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Objective 2: To examine the effect of staff competency on procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka

Statement	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
Staff involved in procurement have adequate knowledge of procurement procedures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Procurement staff possess the necessary skills to manage procurement effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Training and capacity-building programs are provided for staff involved in procurement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of staff competency negatively affects procurement efficiency.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Competent staff contribute significantly to improving	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

procurement efficiency in schools.					
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7. Objective 3: To investigate the role of ethical conduct in ensuring procurement efficiency in public schools in Lusaka

Statement	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
Procurement activities in public schools follow ethical guidelines and standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Corruption and favoritism negatively affect procurement efficiency in schools.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff involved in procurement demonstrate integrity in decision-making.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transparency and accountability are promoted in procurement processes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adherence to ethical conduct enhances procurement efficiency in schools.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C:

- In your opinion, what challenges affect procurement efficiency in public schools?
.....
.....
- What measures can be taken to improve procurement planning in public schools?
.....
.....
- What type of training or support would improve staff competency in procurement?
.....
.....
- In your view, how can ethical standards be strengthened in the procurement process in schools?
.....
.....
- Any additional comments on factors that influence procurement efficiency in public schools?
.....
.....