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**ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF E-PROCUREMENT ON THE
EFFICIENCY IN THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS IN STATE-OWNED
ORGANISATIONS IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE OF ZINARA.**

PIUS MAKUNYA

B191132B

SUPERVISOR

MRS MUDAVANHU

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Student number: B191132b

Name of author: PIUS MAKUNYA

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Permanent address: PO BOX 21 SAGONDA/ NYANGA /ZIMBABWE

Phone number: 0786327171/ 0715482192/0772765079

APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they read and recommended to the department of Purchasing and Supply, Bindura University of Science Education for acceptance, a project titled **“Assessment of the contribution of e-procurement on the efficiency in the procurement process in state-owned organisations in Zimbabwe. A case of ZINARA. (2021-2022),”** submitted by **PIUS MAKUNYA** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Commerce (Honors) Degree in Purchasing and Supply.

Student's signature.....PM.....Date...02...../...10...../...24.....

Supervisor's signature..........Date...02...../.....10...../...24.....

Dr S Mutsvangwa

Chairman's signature...pp/.....Date.....02.../.....10.../.....24...

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I PIUS MAKUNYA, do hereby declare that this research report is the result of my own work to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments, references and by comments included in the body of the report and that has not been in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

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DEDICATION

It is of great honour to be part of the successful team in the purchasing and supply of the 2023 class. I dedicate this project to my family and loved ones. Special dedication goes to my parents and my siblings for their support and believing in me over the past four years.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of e-procurement on efficiency in procurement processes within Zimbabwean parastatals. The study employs a purposive sampling method, involving 72 respondents from various parastatals, to gather insights into the perceptions and experiences of professionals involved in procurement activities. A combination of structured questionnaires and interviews is used to collect data, employing a Likert scale for quantitative responses. The study aims to achieve three key objectives: first, to assess the familiarity and understanding of e-procurement concepts among procurement professionals; second, to analyse the influence of e-procurement on the efficiency of procurement planning; and third, to evaluate how e-procurement impacts efficiency in sourcing and contract award processes. Descriptive data analysis techniques are applied to interpret the quantitative data gathered through the Likert scale. The findings reveal a diversified characteristic among respondents regarding their familiarity with e-procurement concepts, with 55.5% expressing agreement or strong agreement. However, confidence in understanding transparency aspects varied, with 46.6% expressing agreement or strong agreement. Regarding efficiency, the majority agree that e-procurement systems positively influence procurement planning (mean score: 3.4) and sourcing activities (mean score: 3.41). In contract award processes, positive perceptions are evident, with a mean score of 3.4. The study underscores the positive impact of e-procurement on efficiency within Zimbabwean parastatals. Participants widely acknowledge its role in planning, sourcing, and contract award processes. Thematic analysis highlights the instrumental role of e-procurement in minimizing errors, streamlining processes, and contributing to cost savings. Based on these findings, recommendations include continuous training programs to enhance familiarity with e-procurement concepts, ongoing assessment of e-procurement system usability, and the exploration of long-term effects on organizational performance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the introduction and the background of the study. It also contains the statement of the problem which dissects the problem that prompted this research. The sections also contain the main aim of the study, the specific objective together with the research questions. The delimitation and the limitations that affects the study are also part and parcel of this chapter. The chapter also contains the research organisation and also the definition of key terms of this study. The chapter summary which is found at the end brings a conclusion to this study.

1.2 Background of the study

E-procurement, the process of conducting procurement activities electronically, has gained significant prominence in recent years as organizations worldwide recognize its potential to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in procurement processes (Msipa et al., 2021). This research proposal aims to assess the impact of e-procurement implementation on efficiency and transparency within Zimbabwean parastatals, with a specific focus on the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration (Zinara) as a case study.

In a global context, e-procurement has emerged as a transformative tool for governments and organizations seeking to streamline their procurement processes. The adoption of e-procurement systems has been steadily rising, driven by various factors such as cost savings, improved supplier relationships, and reduced procurement cycle times (Sikwila, 2016). Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Singapore have successfully integrated e-procurement into their public procurement systems, resulting in significant benefits (Mabhodha, 2021). E-procurement systems often encompass features like e-tendering, e-bidding, e-catalogs, and electronic payment systems. These technologies have played a pivotal role in reducing manual paperwork, enhancing procurement data accuracy, and promoting fair competition among suppliers (Dachyar & Karenina, 2020).

In Africa, the adoption of e-procurement varies across countries, influenced by factors such as technological infrastructure, government commitment, and the level of awareness among stakeholders (Pitso et al., 2018). Some African nations, like South Africa and Kenya, have

made substantial strides in implementing e-procurement solutions, which have positively impacted their public procurement systems (Adebayo & Evans, 2018). However, challenges remain, including the digital divide, limited access to the internet, and resistance to change within traditional procurement processes. African governments are increasingly recognizing the need to modernize their procurement systems to promote efficiency and transparency, thereby facilitating economic growth and development (Kademaunga & Phiri, 2019).

Turning our focus to Zimbabwe, the implementation of e-procurement systems within parastatals, such as Zinara, represents a critical step toward modernizing public procurement. Zimbabwe, like many other African countries, has been striving to enhance the efficiency and transparency of its procurement processes to combat corruption, reduce costs, and attract investment (Madziva, 2023). The Zimbabwean government introduced the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act in 2018, providing a legal framework for e-procurement adoption (Tapiwa, 2019). This act emphasizes the use of electronic systems for procurement purposes. However, the extent to which parastatals like Zinara have embraced e-procurement remains a subject of investigation.

Despite the potential benefits of e-procurement, there is a need for empirical research to evaluate its actual impact on efficiency and transparency within Zimbabwean parastatals. This study focuses on Zinara as a case study, aiming to assess the current state of e-procurement implementation, identify challenges, and determine the extent to which it has improved procurement processes.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In the context of Zimbabwean parastatals, particularly the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration (Zinara), the procurement of goods and services is a critical function that directly impacts the nation's infrastructure development and public services. However, the procurement processes within these parastatals have faced longstanding challenges characterized by inefficiency and a lack of transparency (Msipa et al., 2021). These issues have far-reaching consequences, including potential financial mismanagement, delayed projects, and compromised public trust. Traditional procurement methods, reliant on manual paperwork and conventional practices, have contributed to these challenges (Makudza et al., 2023). Inefficiencies manifest in the form of extended procurement cycles, excessive paperwork, and a cumbersome approval process. Transparency, a cornerstone of sound procurement practices,

has often been lacking, leading to concerns about favoritism, corruption, and limited competition among suppliers.

As Zimbabwe transitions towards a more digitalized economy, the adoption of e-procurement systems presents an opportunity to address these issues. However, despite the legal framework in place to promote e-procurement, the extent to which it has been implemented and its actual impact on efficiency and transparency within parastatals like Zinara remain largely unexplored.

The problem of inefficiency and a lack of transparency in procurement processes within Zimbabwean parastatals, particularly Zinara, persists, potentially hindering economic development and public service delivery. The extent to which e-procurement has been implemented and its actual impact on addressing these issues remains unclear, necessitating an empirical assessment. To bridge this gap in knowledge, it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the status of e-procurement implementation within Zinara and its implications for enhancing efficiency and transparency in procurement. Understanding the current state of e-procurement within this specific context will contribute valuable insights that can inform policy recommendations and best practices for parastatals and public procurement agencies in Zimbabwe and similar contexts.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The main aim of this research is to assess the contribution of e-procurement to the efficiency parastatals procurement process looking at ZINARA as a case study.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

1. To determine the effect of e-procurement on efficiency procurement planning at ZINARA
2. To identify the influence of e-procurement on efficiency of sourcing in parastatals at ZINARA
3. To analyse the effects of e-procurement on efficiency contract awards at ZINARA

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is effect of e-procurement on procurement planning at ZINARA?
2. What is the influence of e-procurement on sourcing in parastatals at ZINARA?
3. What is the effect of e-procurement on contract awards at ZINARA?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study holds profound significance for multiple stakeholders. For the student, it offers an invaluable opportunity to gain practical research experience while delving into a critical area of public administration and e-governance. The institution benefits from the research by enhancing its academic reputation and contributing to the generation of knowledge in the field. ZINARA, as the primary case study, stands to gain insights that can inform its strategic decisions and potentially lead to improvements in procurement processes. The government of Zimbabwe, as the overarching regulatory body, can use the findings to fine-tune policies and regulations, aligning them with contemporary e-procurement best practices. Policy makers can draw from this research to develop more effective strategies for modernizing public procurement across various sectors, ultimately promoting efficiency and transparency. Lastly, stakeholders in the broader community, including suppliers, taxpayers, and citizens, benefit from improved procurement practices, which can lead to cost savings, reduced corruption, and better public service delivery. Thus, this study carries considerable implications for education, governance, and socioeconomic development in Zimbabwe.

1.7 Limitations

In this study, one of the potential limitations could be the availability of comprehensive and up-to-date data within the context of ZINARA's e-procurement implementation. Access to internal documents or records might be restricted, impacting the depth of analysis. Additionally, the research might face constraints related to time and resources, potentially limiting the scope of data collection and the extent of the study's findings. Furthermore, the study's findings might be influenced by external factors beyond our control, such as changes in government policies or economic conditions. However, despite these limitations, rigorous research methodologies and thoughtful data analysis will be employed to ensure the study's reliability and validity to the fullest extent possible.

1.8 Assumptions

This study operates under several assumptions that guide its methodology and interpretation of findings. Firstly, it assumes that the respondents, comprising procurement professionals within Zimbabwean parastatals, provide accurate and reliable information about their familiarity with e-procurement concepts and their experiences with its implementation. Additionally, the study assumes that the sampled parastatals represent a diverse range of organizational structures and

practices, allowing for generalizable insights. Furthermore, the study assumes that respondents are candid in their self-assessment and that any limitations in their familiarity with e-procurement concepts are accurately reported. These assumptions collectively underpin the validity and reliability of the study's findings and recommendations.

1.9 Delimitations

This research specifically centres on the impact of e-procurement implementation within ZINARA, a Zimbabwean parastatal. While the findings may offer valuable insights into the broader realm of e-procurement in Zimbabwe, this study does not encompass an exhaustive assessment of e-procurement practices across all parastatals or government agencies. The scope is confined to the selected case study of ZINARA, and therefore, the generalizability of findings to other organizations or sectors may be limited. Additionally, this study primarily investigates the impact on efficiency and transparency, and while these are critical aspects, other dimensions of e-procurement, such as cost-effectiveness or supplier relationships, may not be explored in depth. Nevertheless, by focusing on a specific case, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the selected aspects of e-procurement within the context of ZINARA.

1.10 Organisation of the study

Chapter one of this study contains the background, problem statement, main aim and objectives, research questions, delimitation and limitations, and the definition of key terms. The following chapter is chapter two which contains the review of literature. This chapter contains the theoretical framework, the empirical review and the conceptual framework of the study. Chapter three precedes the chapter on literature review. It contains the research methodology. This chapter contains the research design, philosophy and approach together with a section on target population and sampling. It also contains a section on data collection which encompasses all the data collection instruments used in the study as well as the data analysis framework which contains the data analysis tools used in the study. The chapter concludes with the ethical consideration section.

1.11 Definition of Key Terms

1. E-Procurement

E-procurement, short for electronic procurement, refers to the use of digital technology and information systems to automate and streamline various stages of the procurement process, including requisition, sourcing, tendering, bidding, awarding, and contract management. E-procurement aims to enhance efficiency, transparency, and cost-effectiveness in procurement activities.

2. Procurement Planning

Procurement planning is the strategic and systematic process of identifying an organization's procurement needs, setting objectives, and developing a plan to acquire the required goods and services efficiently. It encompasses assessing requirements, budgeting, and determining the appropriate procurement methods.

3. Sourcing

Sourcing, in the context of procurement, involves identifying and selecting suppliers or service providers to fulfil an organization's needs. This phase includes activities such as supplier evaluation, negotiation, and the establishment of contracts or agreements.

4. Contract Awards

Contract awards pertain to the final phase of the procurement process, where contracts or agreements are formally granted to selected suppliers. This phase involves the confirmation of terms, conditions, and obligations, ensuring that both parties understand and commit to the contractual terms.

5. Parastatals

Parastatals, short for "parastatal organizations," are government-owned or government-controlled entities that operate in the commercial sector. They often have a specific mandate, such as infrastructure development, and play a significant role in economic and public service functions.

6. Transparency

Transparency, in the context of procurement, refers to the openness, clarity, and accessibility of procurement processes and information. It involves making procurement decisions, procedures, and results visible and understandable to relevant stakeholders, promoting accountability and fairness.

1.11 Chapter Summary

In the first chapter of the research, the study begins by introducing the research topic, which focuses on assessing the impact of e-procurement implementation on efficiency and transparency within Zimbabwean parastatals, with a specific case study of ZINARA. It provides a comprehensive background that highlights the global, continental, and national significance of e-procurement and the unique challenges and opportunities it presents in Zimbabwe. The chapter establishes a clear problem statement, emphasizing the ongoing issues of inefficiency and a lack of transparency in procurement processes within Zimbabwean parastatals and outlines the research aim, which is to generate evidence-based recommendations for improving public procurement practices. Additionally, the chapter introduces the research objectives, which are tailored to assess the effects of e-procurement on specific aspects of procurement within ZINARA, including planning, sourcing, and contract awards, collectively setting the stage for the study's in-depth exploration in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the literature review for the study. It is the introduction to e-procurement which contains the explanation of the e-procurement process and its potential benefits and trends at a global, regional and local level. The section also contains literature on the research questions of the study as well as the empirical section. It also contains three theories that act as the foundation of the study together with the conceptual framework which lays bare the relationships between the variables in the study. The section concludes with a summary of the chapter which summarizes the discussion of this section.

2.1.1 Concept of E-procurement

E-procurement, short for electronic procurement, is a transformative approach to acquiring goods and services that harnesses digital technology and information systems to streamline and optimize the entire procurement process (Munyede & Mapuva, 2019). It holds significant importance in contemporary procurement practices as it offers an efficient, transparent, and cost-effective means of conducting business transactions. On a global scale, the adoption of e-procurement systems has been steadily gaining momentum in both public and private sectors (Dlakuşeni et al., 2018). This adoption has been driven by the recognition of its potential to revolutionize traditional procurement methods and bring about enhanced efficiency and transparency.

The roots of e-procurement can be traced back to the emergence of electronic data interchange (EDI) systems in the 1960s and 1970s. EDI marked the initial step toward digitizing procurement processes by allowing businesses to exchange structured data electronically, automating transactions like purchase orders and invoices (Altayyar, 2016). However, the true catalyst for the development of e-procurement came with the advent of the internet in the late 20th century. The 1990s witnessed the rapid growth of online marketplaces and e-commerce platforms, setting the stage for the evolution of e-procurement. Businesses began exploring the potential of internet-based technologies to optimize procurement procedures, leading to the birth of e-procurement systems (Tsuma & Kanda, 2017). The late 1990s and early 2000s saw the introduction of e-procurement software and platforms that enabled organizations to

centralize procurement activities, automate processes, and connect with suppliers online. These solutions aimed to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and promote transparency in procurement.

E-procurement has evolved significantly over the years, adapting to technological advancements and changing business dynamics. In the early 2000s, e-procurement systems gained popularity in the public sector, with governments recognizing their potential to enhance transparency and reduce corruption in public procurement (Mutunga, 2020). This led to the development of e-government initiatives and the implementation of e-procurement platforms in various countries. The 2010s witnessed a shift toward more sophisticated e-procurement solutions, with a focus on user-friendliness, mobility, and integration with other enterprise systems (Singh, 2022). The global adoption of e-procurement continues to grow, with organizations recognizing the benefits of real-time data, improved supplier relationships, and enhanced compliance. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of e-procurement as organizations sought digital solutions to manage procurement remotely (Boateng, 2021). Today, e-procurement stands as an integral component of modern procurement practices, contributing to efficiency, transparency, and cost-effectiveness in both the public and private sectors worldwide.

2.1.2 Region and Local Context on E-Procurement

The adoption of e-procurement holds particular significance within the Zimbabwean and broader African context. Across the African region, countries have been making significant strides in progressively introducing e-procurement solutions as a response to a myriad of challenges within their procurement processes (Adebayo & Evans, 2018). These challenges often encompass inefficiencies, a lack of transparency, and the pervasive risks of corruption that have long hindered effective procurement practices. The adoption of e-procurement systems aligns harmoniously with the overarching regional agenda of leveraging technology as a catalyst for economic development and governance improvement (Zulu, 2018). The realization that embracing digital solutions can enhance efficiency, reduce operational costs, and combat corruption has spurred governments and organizations across Africa to explore e-procurement as a strategic avenue to advance their procurement capabilities.

At the local level, Zimbabwe, much like its African counterparts, has been proactive in acknowledging the transformative potential of e-procurement (Sikwila, 2016). Parastatals operating within Zimbabwe's diverse economic landscape, including ZINARA, have taken deliberate measures to integrate e-procurement technologies into their procurement activities.

This localized context showcases the practical application of e-procurement within the specific operational landscape of ZINARA. It positions the organization as a compelling case study, providing a unique opportunity to delve into the impact of e-procurement on procurement planning, sourcing, and contract awards (Chiripo, 2019). This study not only informs the Zimbabwean context but also contributes to the broader discourse on e-procurement within African public institutions, enriching our understanding of the role of technology in addressing procurement challenges in the region.

2.1.3 Legal and Regulatory Framework for E-Procurement in Zimbabwe

The legal and regulatory framework for e-procurement in Zimbabwe plays a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of digital procurement practices within the country. This framework encompasses a set of legislation, policies, and guidelines designed to govern the adoption and operation of e-procurement systems (Tapiwa, 2019). The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act (PPDPA), enacted in 2018, is a foundational piece of legislation that provides the legal framework for public procurement, including e-procurement, in Zimbabwe. This act sets out the rules and procedures governing procurement processes, including the use of electronic means for procurement (Chigudu, 2014). It establishes the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (PRAZ) as the regulatory body responsible for overseeing procurement practices.

Zimbabwe's legal framework for e-procurement is oriented toward aligning with international best practices. The adoption of e-procurement in the country is in line with global trends and the growing recognition of digital procurement's potential to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability (Adebayo & Evans, 2018). By aligning with international best practices, Zimbabwe seeks to position itself as a player in the global digital procurement arena. The legal framework recognizes the need for transparency in procurement processes and emphasizes the use of electronic means to achieve this goal. It fosters adherence to international standards of procurement efficiency and transparency by promoting the use of technology to improve the overall procurement process (Maepa et al., 2021).

The legal and regulatory framework for e-procurement in Zimbabwe has the potential to significantly impact procurement efficiency. By mandating the use of e-procurement systems and electronic methods for procurement planning, sourcing, and contract awards, the legal framework promotes speed and accuracy in these processes (Salifu et al., 2023). It encourages the use of digital platforms for data management and supplier interaction, resulting in

streamlined procurement procedures (Gihozo, 2020). The potential benefits include reduced procurement lead times, enhanced data analysis capabilities, and better monitoring and reporting, all of which contribute to heightened efficiency in procurement operations.

In terms of transparency, the legal framework sets the stage for notable improvements in procurement practices (Zaruk & Nangpiire, 2022). The emphasis on using e-procurement systems and electronic documentation increases the visibility of procurement activities. This transparency extends to supplier interactions, evaluation criteria, and the tracking of procurement processes. The legal and regulatory framework underscores the importance of adhering to procurement standards and ethical practices, reducing opportunities for corruption and promoting a higher degree of accountability (Makudza et al., 2023). By aligning with international best practices, the legal framework reinforces the notion that e-procurement can be a significant driver for procurement transparency in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section contains the explanation of key theories as they relate as foundation to the study. The study adopted the Technology Acceptance Model, the Agency Theory as well as the Institutional theory as part of the theoretical foundation of the study.

2.2.1 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Fred Davis in the late 1980s, is a well-established theory that investigates the factors influencing the adoption of new information technology and systems. At its core, TAM posits that an individual's intention to use technology is influenced by two primary factors: perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Kademaunga & Phiri, 2019). Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which users believe that utilizing the technology will be effortless and straightforward. Perceived usefulness, on the other hand, relates to the users' belief that the technology will enhance their performance and productivity in their specific tasks or roles (Ramkumar et al., 2019). Both of these factors collectively influence the individual's overall acceptance and adoption of the technology.

In the context of your study, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) can serve as a valuable lens through which to understand the adoption of e-procurement systems by Zimbabwean parastatals like ZINARA. The successful adoption of e-procurement is contingent on how key stakeholders, including procurement professionals, administrators, and suppliers, perceive the

technology in terms of ease of use and usefulness. Understanding the perceived ease of use within the context of ZINARA and similar parastatals is crucial. If the individuals involved in procurement processes find e-procurement systems intuitive, user-friendly, and not overly complicated, they are more likely to embrace the technology. Assessing their perception of ease of use can help identify potential barriers and challenges that may hinder adoption.

Moreover, the perceived usefulness of e-procurement technology plays a significant role. Stakeholders must see value in adopting e-procurement systems in terms of efficiency gains, time savings, cost reductions, and enhanced transparency in procurement (Granić & Marangunić, 2019). By evaluating their perception of the technology's usefulness, the study can gauge whether e-procurement aligns with the specific needs and goals of Zimbabwean parastatals, particularly ZINARA. In essence, the TAM framework provides a structured approach to investigate the motivations and intentions of stakeholders regarding e-procurement adoption.

2.2.2 Agency Theory

Agency theory is a fundamental concept commonly employed to comprehend the dynamics of relationships between principals (such as government organizations, in this case) and agents (like suppliers) in the context of procurement (Bosse & Phillips, 2016). This theory centres on the examination of how information asymmetry, self-interest, and the divergence of goals between principals and agents can significantly influence contractual relationships. In procurement, this is particularly relevant since government organizations or parastatals often delegate their procurement tasks to suppliers, creating a principal-agent relationship (Msipa et al., 2021).

In the context of your study, agency theory can be a powerful framework for assessing how the adoption of e-procurement systems impacts the alignment of interests between the procuring parastatals, exemplified by entities like ZINARA, and their suppliers. Agency theory delves into whether e-procurement contributes to reducing information asymmetry and, in turn, how it enhances transparency and efficiency in procurement transactions (Panda & Leepsa, 2017). E-procurement systems can be viewed as a potential means to mitigate information asymmetry, a common challenge in procurement. By offering a centralized platform for procurement-related data, e-procurement can improve the flow of information between the principal (parastatal) and agents (suppliers) (Maepa et al., 2021). When information is accessible and

transparent, it can lead to better-informed decision-making for both parties, thus reducing the risk of opportunistic behaviour and ensuring that contractual relationships are more equitable.

Additionally, agency theory can help assess whether e-procurement strengthens the alignment of interests between parastatals and suppliers (Bosse & Phillips, 2016). By examining the motivations and behaviours of both parties in the context of e-procurement adoption, the study can determine if the technology contributes to creating a win-win situation. For instance, e-procurement can offer suppliers a level playing field and equal access to procurement opportunities, fostering fair competition and ensuring that both parties have a stake in the success of procurement transactions. The theory can illuminate whether e-procurement encourages supplier compliance, adherence to contractual agreements, and the pursuit of common goals, which, in turn, can lead to enhanced efficiency and transparency in procurement transactions (Panda & Leepsa, 2017).

2.2.3 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory is a fundamental framework for understanding how organizations and individuals conform to established norms, values, and institutional structures (David et al., 2019). It delves into the mechanisms by which external pressures and institutional forces shape the behaviour of entities. In the context of your study, institutional theory can be a valuable lens for analysing how the adoption of e-procurement systems in Zimbabwean parastatals, including ZINARA, is influenced by the broader institutional environment. It offers insight into how government policies, regulations, and international best practices drive the adoption of e-procurement and, in turn, influence efficiency and transparency in procurement processes (Willmott, 2015).

In your study, institutional theory is particularly relevant for examining the forces that drive or hinder the adoption of e-procurement in Zimbabwean parastatals. The theory helps you understand the impact of external institutional pressures, such as government policies and international standards, on the behaviour and decision-making of these organizations in the context of procurement (Gihozo, 2020). Firstly, the theory allows for an exploration of how government policies and regulations affect the adoption of e-procurement. Government initiatives and policies can serve as a strong impetus for the adoption of e-procurement systems in parastatals (Msipa et al., 2021). By examining the influence of government directives and regulations, the study can assess whether they create a conducive environment for e-

procurement adoption, and how this, in turn, contributes to improving efficiency and transparency in procurement processes.

Secondly, institutional theory can shed light on how international best practices and global trends shape the adoption of e-procurement in Zimbabwean parastatals. Many countries worldwide have embraced e-procurement as a means to enhance transparency and efficiency (Gihozo, 2020). The study can investigate how Zimbabwe aligns with these international standards and the impact of such alignment on procurement processes. It can also uncover the role of international organizations and agreements in promoting e-procurement. Institutional theory, therefore, allows your study to consider the role of external pressures in shaping the behaviour and decision-making of parastatals like ZINARA. By assessing how these pressures drive e-procurement adoption and the subsequent impact on procurement efficiency and transparency, the study can offer a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between institutional forces and procurement practices.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is underpinned by the interplay between key variables identified in the research questions as shown in Figure 2.1. The study explores the impact of e-procurement adoption on efficiency and transparency in the procurement processes of Zimbabwean parastatals, particularly exemplified by ZINARA. The specific objectives correspond to these variables, addressing the effect on procurement planning, influence on sourcing practices, and effects on contract awards. E-procurement adoption is the central variable that links with these objectives, serving as the focal point of investigation. To bridge these variables, data collection tools such as questionnaires and key informant interviews have been employed, establishing a path for gathering information and insights. Through this framework, the study seeks to unravel the intricate relationships between e-procurement adoption, procurement planning, sourcing practices, and contract awards, ultimately shedding light on how these elements collectively impact the efficiency and transparency of procurement processes within Zimbabwean parastatals.

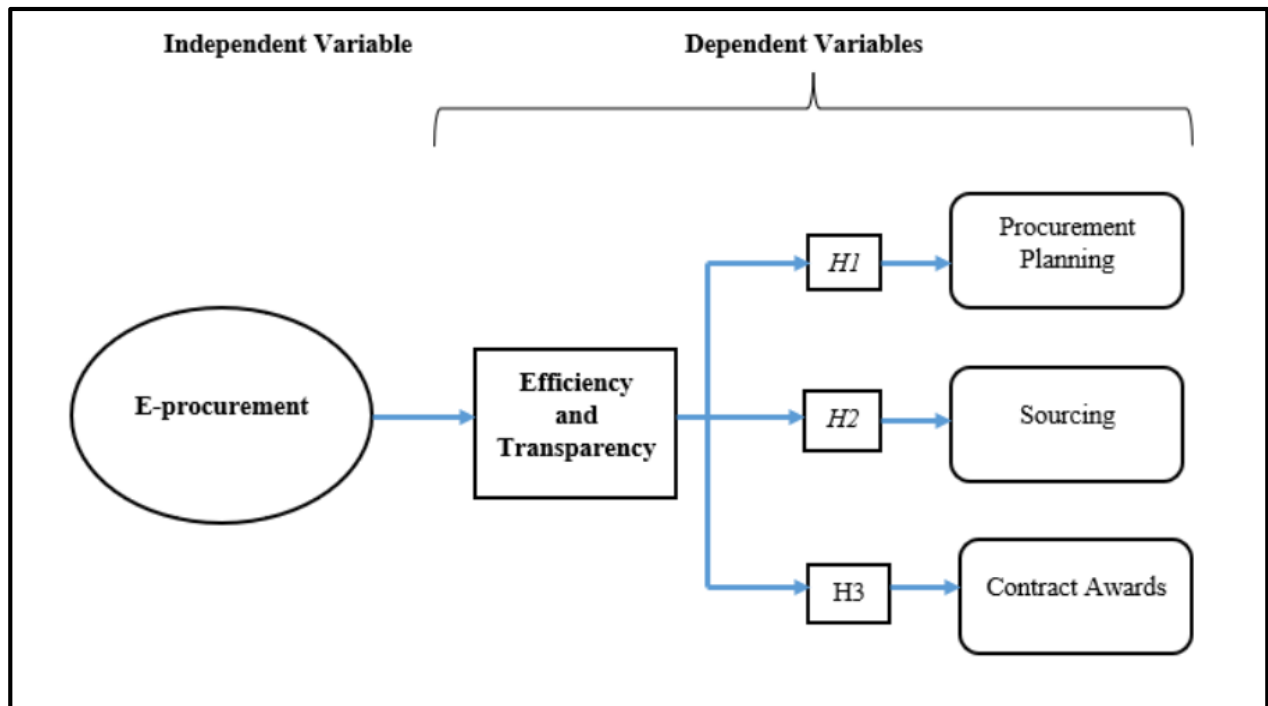


Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 E-Procurement and Procurement Planning

E-procurement systems have emerged as a transformative force in the realm of procurement planning, both in public and private organizations, and the existing literature offers compelling insights into this evolution (Salifu et al., 2023). A considerable body of research underscores that e-procurement facilitates a fundamental shift in the way organizations strategize their procurement. It empowers decision-makers with real-time data and analytics, enabling them to make more informed, data-driven choices (Duma, 2018). By providing a digital platform for creating and managing procurement plans, e-procurement enhances the speed and accuracy of planning processes. Moreover, it encourages collaborative planning by allowing various stakeholders to contribute to and access planning documents electronically. This results in more streamlined and efficient procurement planning, where inputs from across the organization are considered promptly (Maepa et al., 2021).

The adoption of e-procurement in procurement planning offers a range of advantages. It promotes efficiency by automating routine planning tasks, reducing the time required to develop and update plans (Dorasamy, 2021). Furthermore, it enhances transparency by providing a centralized platform where all stakeholders can access planning documents, fostering accountability. However, challenges exist in the implementation of e-procurement for

procurement planning. Organizations may face resistance to change, particularly in cases where traditional planning processes are deeply ingrained (Munyede & Mapuva, 2019). There are also concerns related to the security and integrity of data in e-procurement systems, as well as the cost of implementing and maintaining these systems (Dlakenseni et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the advantages typically outweigh the challenges, making e-procurement a valuable tool for enhancing the efficiency and transparency of procurement planning processes.

According to Gitonga et al., (2020), numerous best practices and success stories in the domain of e-procurement and procurement planning serve as guiding beacons for organizations. These cases demonstrate the tangible benefits that e-procurement can bring (Ngui, 2016). For instance, some organizations have successfully implemented e-procurement platforms that not only streamline their planning processes but also enable the dynamic adjustment of plans based on real-time data and changing conditions (Altayyar & Beaumont-kerridge, 2016). Best practices often revolve around selecting the right e-procurement system, ensuring effective user training, and establishing clear governance structures to oversee planning. In the context of ZINARA, these lessons are invaluable, offering insights into the potential improvements that can be realized in procurement planning through the adoption of e-procurement practices. The exploration of such success stories and best practices in the literature provides a practical foundation for ZINARA's adoption of e-procurement for more efficient and transparent procurement planning.

2.4.2 E-Procurement and Sourcing Efficiency

Literature offers a comprehensive exploration of how e-procurement systems have revolutionized sourcing practices across various organizations. Results from a study by Gurure & Takavarasha, (2020) highlights that, e-procurement's role in enhancing efficiency and transparency in sourcing is a recurring theme in scholarly works. It's evident that e-procurement streamlines the sourcing process by providing a digital platform that connects organizations with suppliers in a more efficient and transparent manner. It facilitates supplier identification, evaluation, and selection by centralizing supplier information and performance data, thus reducing the time and resources required for these critical activities. Additionally, e-procurement systems enable real-time tracking of supplier performance, contributing to transparency and accountability in sourcing.

The influence of e-procurement on supplier selection, negotiation, and the overall sourcing process is a matter of considerable interest in the literature. Research by Mutunga, (2020)

underscores that e-procurement systems have the capacity to enhance supplier negotiations by providing a structured, electronic environment for communication. It also supports the automation of procurement workflows, which includes requisitioning, supplier selection, and negotiation, resulting in faster and more transparent sourcing activities (Singh, 2022). Furthermore, e-procurement enables organizations to engage in strategic sourcing by promoting collaboration with suppliers, thus improving transparency in terms of supplier relationships and performance (Kabanda, 2019).

A noteworthy aspect of e-procurement's impact on sourcing practices is its influence on competition among suppliers. A study by Ngui, (2016) recognizes that e-procurement systems, by providing a level playing field and facilitating competitive bidding, can increase transparency and fairness in supplier selection. Suppliers are aware that their offerings are evaluated on merit and price, and this understanding can foster healthy competition. It also encourages suppliers to uphold high standards of performance, promoting transparency in supplier behaviour and interactions (Boateng, 2021). The implications of this competitive environment extend to the broader goal of enhancing efficiency and transparency in sourcing practices across various organizations.

2.4.3 E-Procurement and Contract Awards

A comprehensive review of the literature reveals the substantial impact of e-procurement on enhancing efficiency and transparency in the contract award process. E-procurement systems have been found to introduce significant improvements by automating and standardizing various stages of the contract award cycle according to findings by (Chigudu, 2014). They streamline the creation and issuance of requests for proposals (RFPs), the evaluation of bids, and the awarding of contracts. This automation not only reduces the time taken for these activities but also ensures consistency and transparency in the award process (Munyede & Mapuva, 2019). E-procurement platforms often provide an audit trail that makes it easier to track the entire contract award procedure, contributing to enhanced transparency.

The literature is replete with case studies and examples of organizations that have reaped substantial benefits from adopting e-procurement systems in their contract award procedures as illustrated by (Dlakuseni et al., 2018). This case demonstrate real-world success stories where organizations have transitioned from manual, paper-based processes to digital, e-procurement-driven contract award systems. The result has been notable improvements in efficiency and transparency. These organizations have achieved quicker and more streamlined

contract award procedures, and stakeholders involved in the process have benefited from greater visibility into the steps leading to the contract award. These examples offer valuable lessons and insights for organizations like ZINARA seeking to enhance their contract award practices through e-procurement.

An analysis of the impact of e-procurement on factors such as fairness, accountability, and adherence to regulations in contract awards is a recurring theme in the literature by (Altayyar & Beaumont-kerridge, 2016; Dlakuseni et al., 2018; Gitonga et al., 2020; Zulu, 2018). E-procurement's structured and standardized approach to contract award promotes fairness by ensuring that all suppliers are evaluated based on predetermined criteria. The transparency facilitated by e-procurement systems adds an additional layer of accountability, making it easier to scrutinize the award decisions (Singh, 2022). Furthermore, e-procurement systems often come equipped with features that help organizations adhere to relevant procurement regulations and compliance standards, reducing the risk of non-compliance and ensuring a fair, transparent, and accountable contract award process (Mutunga, 2020).

2.4.4 Challenges in E-procurement Adoption

One of the foremost challenges associated with e-procurement systems is the issue of data security. The digital nature of e-procurement means that sensitive procurement data, supplier information, and financial transactions are vulnerable to cybersecurity threats. A study by (Boateng, 2021) showed that inadequate security measures can expose organizations to risks such as data breaches, unauthorized access, and data manipulation. This not only jeopardizes the confidentiality of critical procurement data but can also lead to financial losses and damage to an organization's reputation (Kabanda, 2019). Addressing this challenge requires robust security protocols, encryption, access controls, and continuous monitoring to safeguard e-procurement systems.

According to Gitonga et al., (2020), implementing e-procurement systems can be a complex and resource-intensive process, presenting another significant challenge. Organizations must navigate system selection, customization, and integration with existing processes. Studies by Altayyar & Beaumont-kerridge, (2016) and Ngui, (2016) have identified issues such as resistance to change among employees, inadequate user training, and a lack of clarity in system requirements as common hurdles. Insufficient change management strategies can result in employee pushback and disrupt the successful deployment of e-procurement systems (Gurure

& Takavarasha, 2020). Effective implementation calls for comprehensive planning, clear communication, and training programs to ensure a smooth transition to the new system.

Data migration is a critical aspect of e-procurement system adoption and is frequently associated with challenges (Zulu, 2018). Organizations transitioning to e-procurement must migrate large volumes of procurement data from legacy systems to the new digital platform. The risks associated with data migration include data loss, data integrity issues, and data inconsistency. Studies by (Chigudu, 2014; Sikwila, 2016) have highlighted that poor data migration practices can have severe consequences, leading to errors in procurement processes and inaccurate reporting. Addressing this challenge involves meticulous planning, validation processes, and data cleansing to ensure that the integrity of procurement data is maintained during migration (Zaruk & Nangpiire, 2022).

According to Madziva, (2023), the success of e-procurement systems is contingent on supplier adoption, presenting a notable challenge. Suppliers may encounter barriers, such as system complexity or the need for system upgrades to interact with e-procurement platforms. Research by Salifu et al., (2023) indicates that low supplier participation can hinder the efficiency and transparency of the procurement process. Effective supplier engagement strategies and communication are essential to mitigate this challenge, ensuring that suppliers can seamlessly participate in e-procurement activities (Makudza et al., 2023).

E-procurement systems must align with an ever-evolving landscape of procurement regulations and compliance standards, which poses a consistent challenge (Zaruk & Nangpiire, 2022). Organizations need to ensure that their e-procurement practices adhere to legal and regulatory requirements, and studies have shown that non-compliance can result in legal repercussions and financial penalties. To overcome this challenge, organizations must remain updated on relevant procurement laws, establish compliance checks within their e-procurement systems, and implement mechanisms to monitor and enforce adherence to regulations (Opoku-fofie et al., 2022).

2.5 Research Gap

Despite the increasing adoption of e-procurement systems globally, there exists a notable research gap, particularly concerning its impact within the specific context of Zimbabwean parastatals. The existing literature predominantly focuses on e-procurement in the private sector, often overlooking the unique challenges and dynamics inherent in public entities. This study seeks to address this gap by specifically investigating the implications of e-procurement

adoption within the procurement processes of Zimbabwean parastatals. The scarcity of research in this area limits the understanding of how e-procurement influences transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the public procurement landscape of Zimbabwe, making this study a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

2.6 Chapter Summary

The literature review provides a comprehensive exploration of the critical themes and theories relevant to the impact of e-procurement on efficiency and transparency in Zimbabwean parastatals' procurement processes, with a particular focus on the case study of ZINARA. It encompasses a global, regional, and local context, shedding light on the significance of e-procurement in modern procurement practices and its potential to enhance efficiency and transparency. The historical evolution of e-procurement is traced, highlighting the progressive adoption of e-procurement systems in African countries and the transformative potential recognized within Zimbabwe and its parastatals. The review delves into three key dimensions: e-procurement and procurement planning, e-procurement and sourcing efficiency and transparency, and e-procurement and contract awards. The legal and regulatory framework in Zimbabwe is examined, illustrating how it aligns with international best practices and its potential impact on procurement efficiency and transparency. Additionally, the study integrates three relevant theories: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Agency Theory, and Institutional Theory, as analytical tools to investigate the relationships between e-procurement adoption, procurement practices, and institutional forces. The literature review sets the stage for the empirical analysis, providing a solid foundation for understanding the dynamics of e-procurement in the context of Zimbabwean parastatals.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter is a crucial component of this research, outlining the systematic approach undertaken to address the research questions and achieve the study objectives. This chapter provides a detailed account of the research design, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures employed in the investigation of the impact of e-procurement adoption in Zimbabwean parastatals. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, this study aims to gather comprehensive and nuanced insights into the multifaceted aspects of e-procurement implementation. The chapter also contains a section on purposive sampling which is used to determine the sample size for the study. The chapter closes with the ethical consideration section.

4.2 Research Design

The case study research design chosen for this study represents a focused and intensive investigative approach. By selecting ZINARA as the primary case, this design allows for an in-depth exploration of the intricate dynamics and nuances of e-procurement implementation within a specific organizational context. Unlike broader research designs, the case study approach permits a detailed examination of the interplay between e-procurement practices and the unique challenges and opportunities faced by ZINARA. Through interviews, document analysis, and potential observations, this design will unearth rich, context-specific data that can illuminate the impact of e-procurement on procurement planning, sourcing, and contract awards within ZINARA. By delving deeply into this particular case, the research seeks to provide not only a comprehensive understanding of the subject but also actionable insights that can inform both practice and policy within the organization and potentially contribute to the broader discourse on e-procurement in parastatals and similar settings (Bostley, 2019).

4.3 Target Population

The target population for this study comprises individuals and entities directly involved in the procurement processes at ZINARA, the chosen case study organization. Specifically, the research focuses on key stakeholders within ZINARA who play pivotal roles in the

implementation and execution of e-procurement practices. This population includes procurement officers, managers, and personnel responsible for overseeing and conducting procurement activities. Additionally, IT professionals within ZINARA involved in the maintenance and management of e-procurement systems are also part of the target population. By concentrating on these specific groups of individuals, the study aims to capture the firsthand experiences, insights, and perspectives of those closely engaged with e-procurement practices at ZINARA. Their knowledge and experiences are essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the impact of e-procurement on procurement planning, sourcing, and contract awards within the organization.

4.4 Sampling Framework

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where researchers select participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate, rather than through random or systematic sampling procedures (Tongco, 2017). In certain cases, such as when logistical constraints make random sampling impractical, convenience sampling can be a pragmatic approach (Palys, 2018). However, it's important to recognize that this method may introduce bias into the sample, as those who are more accessible or willing to participate may not be fully representative of the entire population. In this study, convenience sampling was employed due to the specific focus on ZINARA and contracted companies, where access to potential participants was more readily available.

The sample for this study includes 45 respondents, comprising 25 individuals from ZINARA and 15 individuals from contracted companies. Within ZINARA, participants were selected from various departments and positions directly involved in e-procurement processes, such as procurement officers and IT personnel. Among the contracted companies, participants were chosen based on their involvement in ZINARA's procurement activities. While convenience sampling was utilized for practical reasons, efforts were made to ensure a diverse representation of roles and experiences within both ZINARA and the contracted companies to gather a comprehensive range of perspectives on the impact of e-procurement in the context of this study.

4.5 Data Collection Instruments

In this research, two primary data collection instruments, questionnaires and key informant interviews, have been strategically chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of e-procurement in the context of parastatals in Zimbabwe.

4.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a structured data collection tool that involves presenting a set of predetermined questions to research participants (Marczyk et al., 2015). However, for this qualitative case study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection method instead of questionnaires. Unlike questionnaires, semi-structured interviews allow for more in-depth and open-ended responses, enabling researchers to probe for detailed insights and explore participants' experiences and perspectives regarding e-procurement within ZINARA and contracted companies. The qualitative nature of this study necessitates a more flexible and exploratory approach to data collection, which interviews are better suited to provide. These interviews offer participants the opportunity to express their thoughts and provide context-rich narratives, which is essential for capturing the depth and complexity of the research topic.

4.5.2 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews are an invaluable data collection tool for qualitative research. They involve engaging with individuals who possess expert knowledge or have a significant role within the context being studied (Bostley, 2019). In this case study, key informant interviews will be conducted with selected participants from ZINARA and contracted companies who hold key positions related to e-procurement. These interviews offer a platform for obtaining insider perspectives and insights into the impact of e-procurement on various aspects of procurement processes. The key informants' experiences and specialized knowledge will provide a deeper understanding of the nuances and intricacies of e-procurement practices within the specific organizational context, complementing the broader picture painted by other data collection methods such as document analysis and, potentially, direct observations.

4.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this qualitative case study will involve a systematic and rigorous process to derive meaningful insights and patterns from the collected information (Pawar, 2020). The

following steps outline the approach to data analysis. The textual data, including interview transcripts and any relevant documents, will be subjected to coding. Coding involves systematically categorizing and labelling segments of data based on themes, topics, or patterns. Initial codes will be generated through a process of open coding, allowing for the emergence of new themes from the data itself. Codes will be grouped into broader themes and sub-themes. These themes will represent key concepts and patterns identified within the data. The themes will be developed iteratively, and the researchers will continuously refine and revise them as the analysis progresses.

The extensive qualitative data will be condensed through the reduction process, where redundant or less relevant information is eliminated to focus on the most salient and informative content. This step helps streamline the analysis while retaining essential details. The researchers will interpret the coded and categorized data within the context of the research objectives. Interpretation involves making sense of the data, exploring relationships between themes, and drawing connections between participants' experiences and perceptions.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in the conduct of this research. The study is guided by principles that prioritize the well-being, rights, and confidentiality of all participants involved. Informed consent will be obtained from each participant, ensuring that they understand the research's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly maintained to protect the identities and privacy of the participants. Moreover, ethical approval, if required, will be sought from relevant institutional review boards to ensure compliance with ethical standards and guidelines. The research aims to foster a climate of trust and respect, emphasizing the importance of honesty, transparency, and integrity throughout the data collection and analysis process. These ethical considerations are integral to upholding the principles of responsible and ethical research conduct.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The methodology chapter serves as the research blueprint, outlining the systematic approach employed to investigate the impact of e-procurement within ZINARA and contracted companies. The chapter begins by justifying the choice of the case study research, emphasizing the need for a flexible and exploratory approach. Purposive sampling, involving 72

participants, is introduced as the method of participant selection. The decision to employ semi-structured questionnaires is elucidated, emphasizing the depth and openness that questionnaires offer. Key informant interviews are introduced as a pivotal component, providing access to expert insights from individuals occupying crucial roles in the e-procurement landscape. The chapter also includes the exploration of the data analysis which includes descriptive and thematic data analysis for triangulation and validity reasons. The chapter also contains the ethical considerations of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology. This chapter contains the presentation and the discussion of the primary data collected in the study. It contains the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the presentation and discussion of data on the research objectives.

4.1.1 Response Rate

The response rate of the study was 100%. A total 45 questionnaires were returned and responded to out of the 45 which were sent to the respondents of the study.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics

This section contains the presentation of the demographic primary data collected in the study. It contains data on the gender, age, educational qualifications and length of service in the organisation of the respondents.

4.2.1 Gender

The survey results in figure 4.1 indicate a gender distribution among respondents, with 71.1% identifying as male and 28.9% as female. The majority of respondents, constituting a significant percentage, are male. In the context of Zimbabwean parastatals, the higher representation of male suggests a gender disparity within the sector or a potential underrepresentation of female voices in procurement-related activities

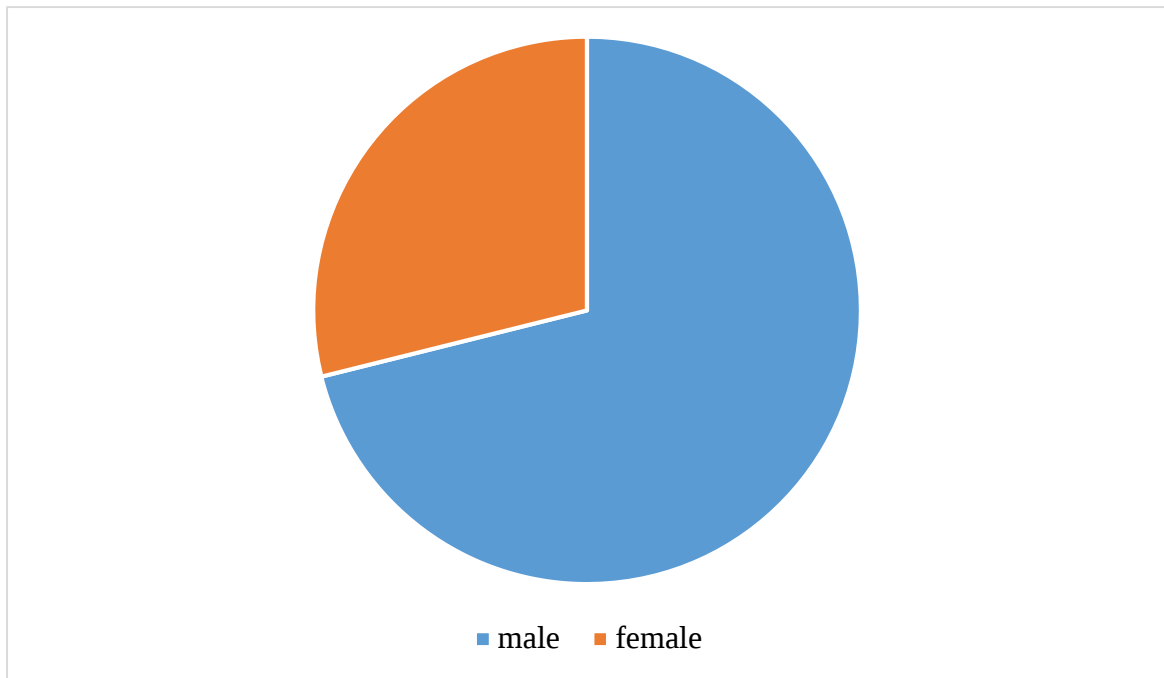


Figure 4. 1: Gender Aggregation of Respondents

4.2.3 Age

The survey results in figure 4.2 a varied age distribution among respondents, with 13.3% falling below 25, 33.3% in the 26-35 range, 24.4% in the 36-45 category, 17.8% between 46-55, and 11.1% aged 56 and above. The highest proportion of respondents falls within the 26-35 age bracket, followed by those in the 36-45 range.

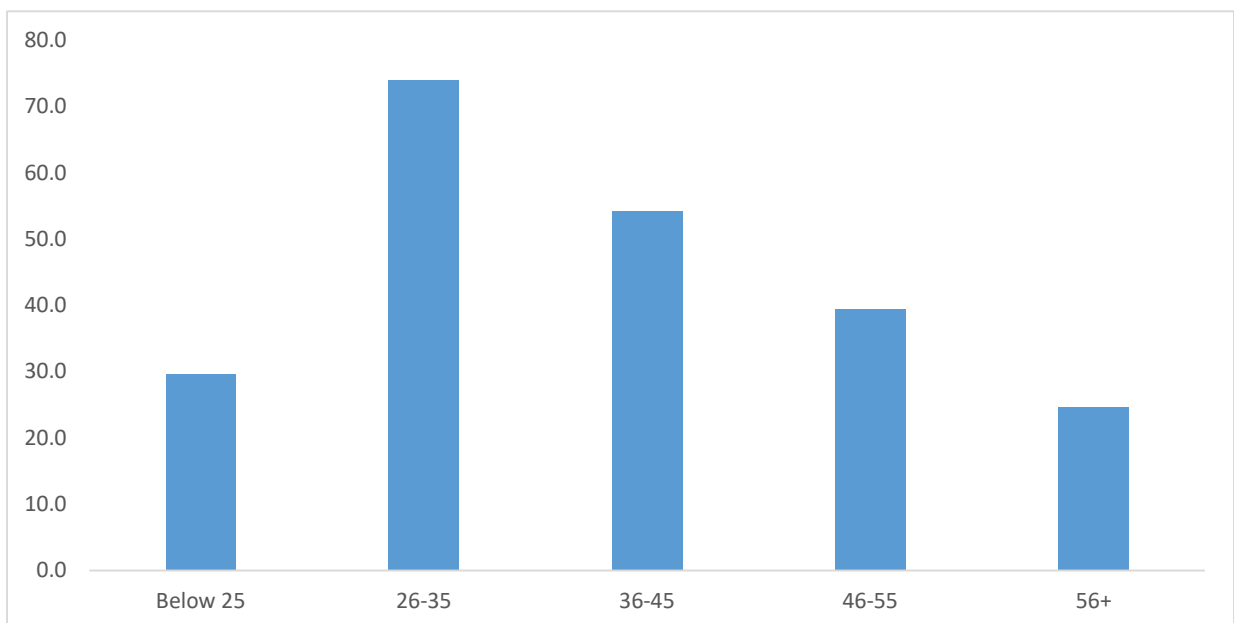


Figure 4. 2: Age of respondents

4.2.3 Educational Qualifications

The survey respondents exhibit diverse educational backgrounds shown in figure 4.3, with 11.1% holding primary education, 29.8% possessing a diploma or certificate, 40% having a degree, and 20% attaining a master's or higher qualification. The majority of respondents, constituting 40%, hold a degree, showcasing a significant level of higher education within the sample

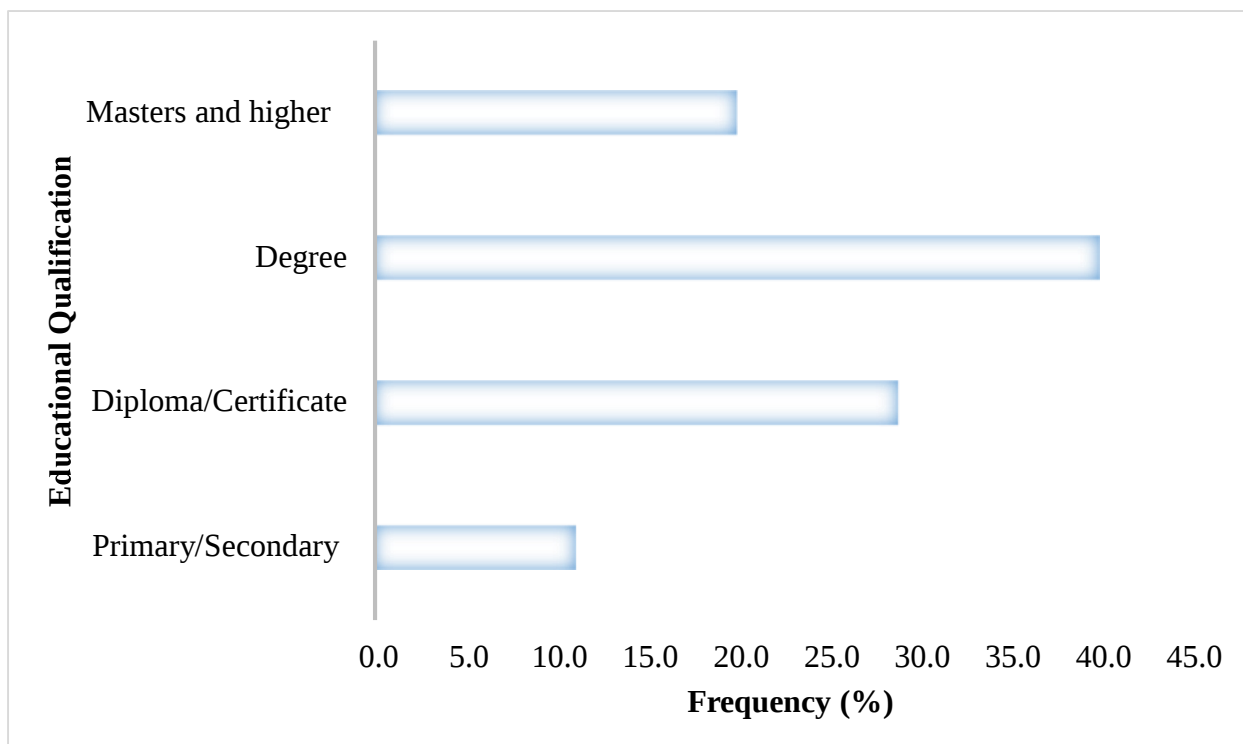


Figure 4. 3: Educational Qualifications of respondents

4.2.4 Length in Organisation

Primary results presented in figure 4.4 demonstrates diverse lengths of experience in both the sector and the organization. In terms of experience in the sector, 23.7% of respondents have 11 years or more, followed by 23.2% with 3-5 years, 21.0% with 6-8 years, 18.6% with 9-11 years, and 13.5% with 0-2 years. Regarding organizational tenure, the majority (30.5%) have been with their organizations for 9-11 years, followed by 23.0% with 6-8 years, 19.6% with 3-5 years, 11.8% with 0-2 years, and 15.1% with 11 years or more. This distribution highlights a varied mix of experienced and newer professionals within the sector and organization

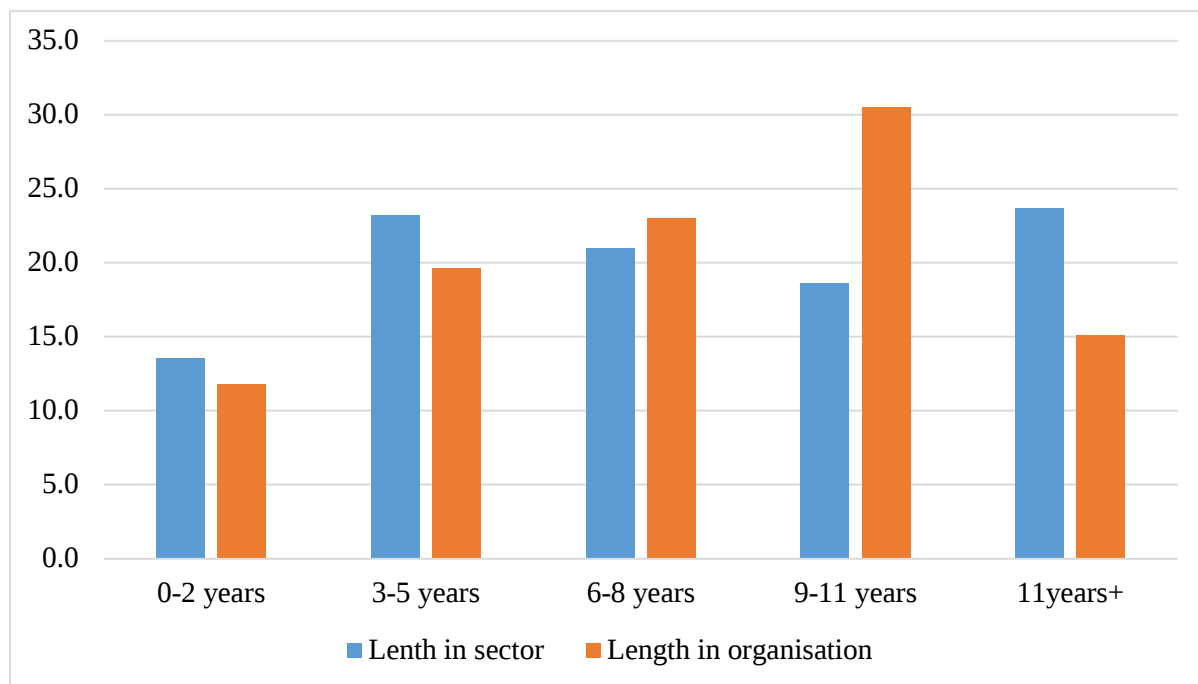


Figure 4. 4: Experience of respondents

4.3 Effect of e-procurement on efficiency and transparency of e-procurement planning

This section contains the primary data presentation on the objective of the effect of e-procurement on the efficiency of procurement planning. It also contains a section on the knowledge levels of the respondents.

4.3.1 Knowledge of E-procurement and Transparency

Results from primary data (Table 4.1) revealed a diversified characteristic with 55.5% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement regarding their familiarity with e-procurement concepts. However, when it comes to confidence in understanding transparency aspects, a more varied response was evident, with 46.6% expressing agreement or strong agreement. Additionally, 44.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they possess sufficient knowledge about the functionalities and implications of e-procurement systems in enhancing transparency in procurement operations.

Table 4. 1: Knowledge of E-procurement

Questions	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
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Do you agree that you are familiar with the concept of e-procurement in the context of procurement processes within organizations	11.1	15.6	17.8	33.3	22.2
How confident are you in your understanding of the term "transparency" concerning procurement processes, particularly in the context of e-procurement practices	11.1	20.0	22.2	33.3	13.3
Do you believe you possess sufficient knowledge about the functionalities and implications of e-procurement systems in enhancing transparency in procurement operations	15.6	20.0	20.0	28.9	15.6

4.3.2 Rate of effectiveness of e-procurement on streamlining procurement planning process

The survey results indicated in figure 4.5 reveal a favorable perception of e-procurement's effectiveness in streamlining the procurement planning process. The 46.6% rating of high to very high effectiveness emphasizes the efficiency benefits associated with e-procurement. Such positive perceptions are crucial in understanding the potential of e-procurement to enhance efficiency in procurement operations.

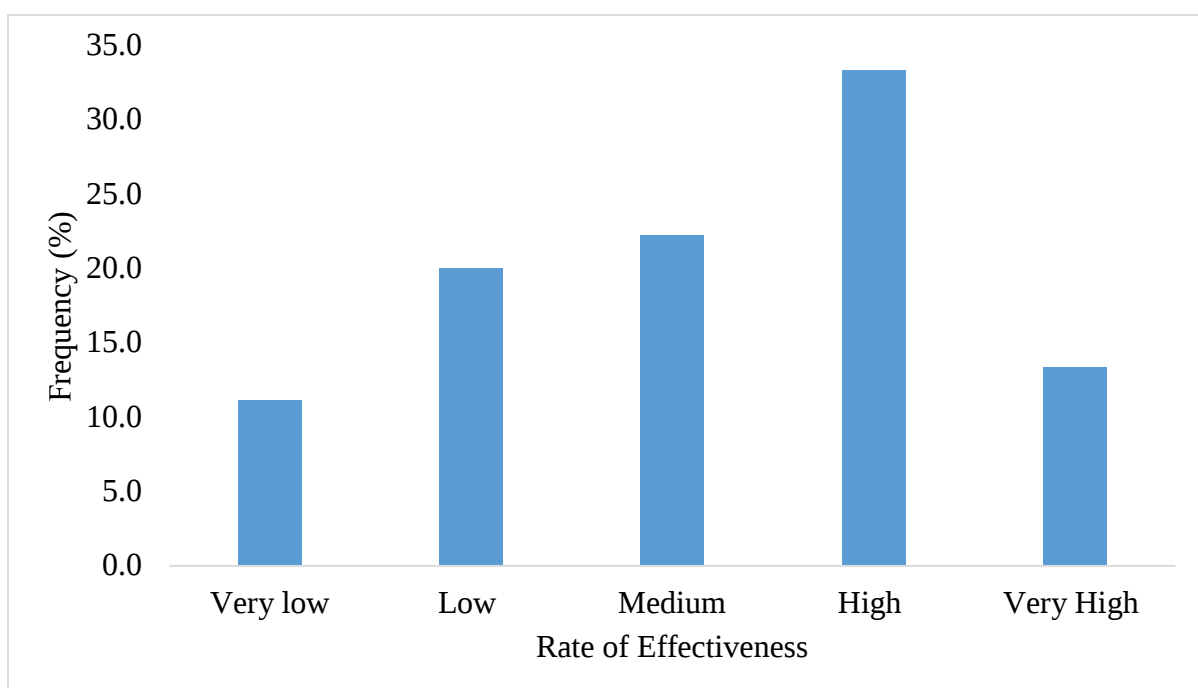


Figure 4. 5: Rate of effectiveness of e-procurement in the efficiency of procurement planning

4.3.3 Effect of e-procurement on efficiency of e-procurement planning

Results in Table 4.2 reveal a positive perception among respondents regarding the impact of e-procurement on procurement planning within organizations. Notably, the majority of participants agree that e-procurement systems positively influence the efficiency of procurement planning, as reflected in a mean score of 3.4. Additionally, respondents acknowledge the contributions of e-procurement in enhancing the procurement planning process in terms of time and resource efficiency, with a mean score of 3.3. The findings further indicate that e-procurement systems play a crucial role in minimizing errors and inefficiencies in the procurement planning phase, supported by a mean score of 3.2. Moreover, respondents affirm the effectiveness of e-procurement in ensuring transparency and accountability in procurement planning activities, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.2. While recognizing the value of e-procurement in enhancing transparency, there is room for improvement, as indicated by a mean score of 3.1.

Table 4. 2: Responses on the effect of e-procurement on the efficiency of procurement planning

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean Score
E-procurement systems positively influence the efficiency of procurement planning within organizations	11.1	15.6	17.8	33.3	22.2	3.4
E-procurement enhances the procurement planning process in terms of time and resource efficiency	11.1	20.0	22.2	33.3	13.3	3.3
E-procurement systems contribute to minimizing errors and inefficiencies in the procurement planning phase	13.3	24.4	22.2	20.0	20.0	3.2
E-procurement is effective in ensuring a transparent and accountable procurement planning process	17.8	22.2	15.6	26.7	17.8	3.2
E-procurement is a valuable tool in enhancing the transparency of procurement planning activities within your organization	15.6	20.0	20.0	28.9	15.6	3.1

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Nuetral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

The thematic analysis of responses related to the efficiency of e-procurement planning highlighted a consistently positive perception among participants. The majority of respondents acknowledged the positive influence of e-procurement systems on the efficiency of procurement planning. The analysis indicates a general consensus among participants regarding the significant role of e-procurement in enhancing the overall efficiency of procurement planning processes.

4.4 Influence of e-procurement on efficiency on sourcing

The study's findings in Table 4.3 shed light on the perceptions of respondents regarding the impact of e-procurement on sourcing activities. According to the results, participants widely agree that the implementation of e-procurement has significantly positively impacted the efficiency of sourcing activities, as reflected in a mean score of 3.41. Furthermore, respondents acknowledge the role of e-procurement in streamlining the sourcing process, resulting in quicker and more timely procurement outcomes, with a mean score of 3.30. The survey also indicates that e-procurement systems contribute to minimizing errors and inefficiencies in the procurement sourcing phase, evidenced by a mean score of 3.22. Additionally, respondents recognize the contribution of e-procurement to cost savings and resource efficiency in sourcing activities, with a mean score of 3.1.

Table 4. 3: Response on the effects of e-procurement on the efficiency of sourcing activities

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean Score
Implementation of e-procurement has positively impacted the efficiency of sourcing activities	11.1	15.6	17.8	33.3	22.2	3.41
E-procurement streamlined the sourcing process, resulting in quicker and more timely procurement outcomes	12.2	17.5	20.8	28.9	20.6	3.30
E-procurement systems contribute to minimizing errors and inefficiencies in the procurement sourcing phase	13.5	23.2	21.0	18.6	23.7	3.22
E-procurement contributed to cost savings and resource efficiency in our sourcing activities	15.6	20.0	20.0	28.9	15.6	3.1

E-procurement has enhanced transparency in our sourcing activities, providing clearer insights into the procurement process	18.3	21.8	16.2	26.4	17.3	3.27
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SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

The thematic analysis of responses related to the influence of e-procurement on efficiency in sourcing activities revealed a favourable perception. Participants widely agreed that the implementation of e-procurement significantly impacted the efficiency of sourcing activities. The analysis suggests a recognition of the instrumental role of e-procurement in streamlining the sourcing process, minimizing errors, and contributing to cost savings in procurement sourcing activities.

4.5 Effects of e-procurement on efficiency of contract awards

The study's findings in table 4.4 illuminate respondents' perspectives on the role of e-procurement in the contract award process. Participants widely agree that the use of e-procurement positively influences the efficiency of the contract award process, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.4. Respondents also acknowledge that the adoption of e-procurement systems has streamlined the contract award process, resulting in quicker and more efficient outcomes, with a mean score of 3.3. The survey indicates that e-procurement systems contribute to minimizing errors and inefficiencies in the contract award process, supported by a mean score of 3.2. Moreover, participants recognize that e-procurement contributes to cost savings and resource efficiency in the contract award process, reflected in a mean score of 3.4. Additionally, the study reveals that e-procurement ensures fairness and transparency in the contract award process, with a mean score of 3.1. Furthermore, respondents believe that e-procurement enhances efficiency in accountability in the contract award process by providing a clearer audit trail and documentation, as indicated by a mean score of 3.2.

Table 4. 4: Response on the effects of e-procurement on the efficiency of contract award process

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean Score
Use of e-procurement positively influences the efficiency of the contract award process	11.1	15.6	17.8	33.3	22.2	3.4

The adoption of e-procurement systems streamlined the contract award process, resulting in quicker and more efficient outcomes	11.8	19.6	23.0	30.5	15.1	3.3
E-procurement systems contribute to minimizing errors and inefficiencies in the contract award process	13.5	23.2	21.0	18.6	23.7	3.2
E-procurement contributed to cost savings and resource efficiency in the contract award process	11.1	15.6	17.8	33.3	22.2	3.4
E-procurement ensures fairness and transparency in the contract award process	15.6	20.0	20.0	28.9	15.6	3.1
E-procurement enhances efficiency in accountability in the contract award process by providing a clearer audit trail and documentation	15.2	19.8	20.3	27.6	17.1	3.2

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

The thematic analysis of responses related to the effects of e-procurement on the efficiency of contract awards unveiled a positive perspective. Participants widely agreed that e-procurement positively influenced the efficiency of the contract award process. The analysis indicates a shared belief in the transformative impact of e-procurement in streamlining contract awards, minimizing errors, ensuring fairness and transparency, and enhancing accountability in the process

4.6 Discussion of Results

This section contains the discussion of the primary results presented above. The section contains the discussion of results of the research objectives fulfilling the research questions of the study.

4.6.1 Effect of e-procurement on the effectiveness procurement planning process

The study shows in Table 4.1 that substantial respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they possess sufficient knowledge about the functionalities and implications of e-procurement systems in enhancing transparency in procurement operations. This finding underscores the importance of not only having a general understanding of e-procurement but also possessing specific insights into how these systems contribute to transparency. These results align with findings by Pitso et al., (2018) who emphasised the significance of knowledge and awareness in fostering successful e-procurement implementations, this then leads to reduced pilferages in time and resources leading to efficiency. Tapiwa, (2019) highlight the need for targeted

educational initiatives and training programs to enhance stakeholders' comprehension of e-procurement systems and their implications for transparency in procurement processes.

The survey results, as illustrated in Figure 4.5, unveil a positive perception of e-procurement's effectiveness in streamlining the procurement planning process underscoring the perceived efficiency benefits linked with the adoption of e-procurement systems. These findings align with existing literature by Dachyar & Karenina, (2020) who recognizes the potential of e-procurement in enhancing efficiency within procurement operations and further on highlighted that the effectiveness of e-procurement are crucial indicators of its acceptance and potential impact on organizational processes.

The compelling results depicted in Table 4.2 illuminate a notably optimistic perception among the survey participants regarding the transformative influence of e-procurement on the efficiency of procurement planning within organizational frameworks. The prevailing consensus among the majority of respondents, who express agreement, underscores the positive impact of e-procurement systems on the overall efficiency of procurement planning processes. This concurs with findings from Sikwila, (2016) who highlighted that, this shared acknowledgment implies that stakeholders recognize the instrumental role played by e-procurement in optimizing the planning phase, thereby contributing to streamlined and effective procurement operations.

Furthermore, the survey data highlights the substantial contributions of e-procurement in augmenting the procurement planning process, particularly in terms of time and resource efficiency. The recognition of these contributions is reflected in the favourable responses from participants, emphasizing the value of e-procurement systems in enhancing the overall efficiency of planning activities. This positive sentiment aligns with existing literature emphasizing the efficiency benefits associated with the integration of e-procurement tools in organizational processes (Singh, 2022; Tsuma & Kanda, 2017; Zulu, 2018)

A particularly noteworthy revelation from the survey findings is the pivotal role attributed to e-procurement systems in minimizing errors and inefficiencies during the procurement planning phase. The acknowledgment of this role indicates that respondents perceive e-procurement as a strategic tool for mitigating potential challenges and enhancing the accuracy of planning activities. This aligns with the broader narrative by Gurure & Takavarasha, (2020) that underscores the error-reducing capabilities of e-procurement systems in various organizational contexts. The consistent resonance between the survey results and established

literature reinforces the credibility and reliability of the identified positive perceptions regarding the impact of e-procurement on the efficiency of procurement planning within organizations.

Moreover, respondents affirm the effectiveness of e-procurement in ensuring transparency and accountability in procurement planning activities. This collective acknowledgment emphasizes the multifaceted benefits of e-procurement, ranging from efficiency gains to error reduction and enhanced transparency. These findings resonate with Altayyar & Beaumont-kerridge, (2016) who highlighted the positive impact of e-procurement on efficiency and transparency in procurement planning. The alignment between the survey results and relevant literature underscores the credibility and reliability of these findings in gauging the perceived impact of e-procurement on the efficiency of procurement planning processes.

4.6.2 The influence of e-procurement on sourcing

The enlightening findings presented in Table 4.3 provide valuable insights into the perspectives of participants regarding the influence of e-procurement on sourcing activities. The overarching consensus among respondents suggests a widespread acknowledgment of the significant positive impact of e-procurement implementation on the efficiency of sourcing activities. This collective sentiment is evidenced by the noteworthy mean score, underscoring the pivotal role that e-procurement plays in enhancing the effectiveness of sourcing processes. These results align with existing literature by Mutunga, (2020) that emphasizes the efficiency gains associated with the integration of e-procurement in sourcing activities. This was supported by Boateng, (2021) who indicated that the use of ICT is always better in procurement process in its seamless ability to generate and also spread information to a larger population in a short period of time leading to efficiency in sourcing.

Moreover, the survey outcomes reveal that respondents not only perceive the positive impact of e-procurement on sourcing efficiency but also recognize its role in streamlining the sourcing process. The results signify a shared belief among participants that e-procurement contributes to expediting and facilitating timely procurement outcomes, aligning with literature from Zulu, (2018) that highlights the systems embedded in e-procurement enable the creation of standardized templates and automated workflows, reducing the time spent on repetitive tasks and minimizing the chances of errors. Additionally, e-procurement platforms facilitate real-time collaboration among stakeholders, allowing for quick decision-making and communication.

Another noteworthy revelation from the survey is the acknowledgment by respondents that e-procurement systems play a crucial role in minimizing errors and inefficiencies in the procurement sourcing phase. The results reflect the perceived effectiveness of e-procurement in mitigating challenges and enhancing the accuracy of the sourcing process. This is in sync with literature from Singh, (2022), who highlighted that e-procurement platforms often incorporate validation checks and approval mechanisms, preventing errors before they escalate. The real-time visibility and tracking features provided by these systems enable quick identification and rectification of any discrepancies, fostering a streamlined and error-free sourcing process

Furthermore, participants affirm the contribution of e-procurement to cost savings and resource efficiency in sourcing activities, as evidenced by the results. This recognition aligns with established literature that emphasizes the cost-effective nature of e-procurement solutions, thereby enhancing resource utilization and efficiency. The congruence between the survey findings and existing literature reinforces the credibility of the identified positive perceptions concerning the influence of e-procurement on the efficiency of sourcing activities. Zulu, (2018) agrees that centralized procurement management, organizations can negotiate better deals, leverage economies of scale, and optimize procurement spend. E-procurement also facilitates real-time monitoring of budgets, expenditures, and supplier performance, enabling proactive cost control.

4.6.3 Effects of e-procurement on contract award

The comprehensive findings presented in Table 4.4 shed light on respondents' nuanced perspectives regarding the effects of e-procurement on the efficiency of contract awards. The study's results reveal unanimous assertion that the use of e-procurement significantly and positively influences the efficiency of the contract award process. This findings is supported by literature from Tsuma & Kanda, (2017) who highlighted that through the integration of advanced digital technologies and automated workflows, e-procurement systems streamline and expedite the entire contract award lifecycle. These platforms facilitate seamless communication, collaboration, and data exchange between stakeholders involved in the award process, from requisition to contract finalization.

Furthermore, the survey outcomes reveal that respondents widely recognize the beneficial outcomes associated with the adoption of e-procurement systems in the contract award process. The results reflect a shared perception that e-procurement has successfully streamlined the

contract award process, leading to quicker and more efficient outcomes. This aligns with literature from Dorasamy, (2021) who postulated that the adoption of e-procurement systems has led to a paradigm shift, replacing conventional methods with efficient, technology-driven approaches. This transition has resulted in quicker and more efficient outcomes in the contract award phase. By automating key steps, facilitating seamless collaboration, and providing real-time visibility into the procurement pipeline, e-procurement ensures a more agile and responsive contract award process (Altayyar & Beaumont-kerridge, 2016). Organizations leveraging e-procurement witness accelerated decision-making, reduced lead times, and increased overall efficiency in their procurement operations.

Moreover, participants acknowledge the instrumental role of e-procurement systems in minimizing errors and inefficiencies in the contract award process. This finding resonates with the existing body of literature emphasizing the error-reducing capabilities of e-procurement in enhancing the accuracy and reliability of contract award procedures. Mutunga, (2020) highlighted that, by enforcing standardized procedures and providing real-time validation, e-procurement systems enhance accuracy and efficiency in the contract award phase. This not only leads to more reliable outcomes but also ensures a transparent and accountable procurement environment. The study further reveals that e-procurement contributes significantly to cost savings and resource efficiency in the contract award process. This perception aligns with well-established literature that underscores the cost-effective nature of e-procurement systems, leading to improved resource utilization and overall efficiency in contract awards Boateng, (2021) indicated that, the automation of sourcing activities leads to time savings, allowing procurement professionals to focus on strategic decision-making and value-added tasks. The overall result is an improvement in resource allocation, enhanced financial management, and increased operational efficiency, contributing to substantial cost savings in the sourcing activities of organizations employing e-procurement systems

In addition, participants express a collective belief in the capacity of e-procurement to ensure fairness and transparency in the contract award process. This aligns with literature emphasizing the transparency-enhancing features of e-procurement, contributing to fairness and accountability in contract awards (Zulu, 2018). Furthermore, respondents affirm the role of e-procurement in enhancing efficiency in accountability in the contract award process by providing a clearer audit trail and documentation. This resonates with literature that highlights the auditability and documentation benefits associated with e-procurement, contributing to increased accountability and transparency (Tsuma & Kanda, 2017).

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter concentrated on the multifaceted impact of e-procurement on various aspects of procurement processes within organizations. The findings illuminated a positive perception among respondents regarding their familiarity with e-procurement concepts, with 55.5% expressing agreement. Additionally, 46.6% acknowledged their confidence in understanding transparency aspects related to e-procurement. Examining the efficiency of procurement planning, respondents widely agreed that e-procurement systems positively influence the process, as reflected in a mean score of 3.4. Similarly, the study revealed positive perceptions regarding the impact of e-procurement on sourcing activities, with a mean score of 3.41 for positively influencing the efficiency of sourcing. Furthermore, in the context of contract awards, e-procurement was perceived as significantly influencing efficiency, streamlining processes, minimizing errors, contributing to cost savings, ensuring fairness and transparency, and enhancing accountability. These results collectively underscore the transformative potential of e-procurement in fostering transparency, reducing errors, and enhancing efficiency across different facets of procurement operations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the presentation and discussion of study results. This section contains the summary of the research, the results-based conclusion as well as the recommendations of the study.

5.2 Summary of research

The research aimed to explore the impact of e-procurement on procurement processes within Zimbabwean parastatals, focusing on knowledge, efficiency, and transparency. Leveraging a mixed-methods approach, the study amalgamated quantitative survey data with qualitative thematic analyses to provide a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives. The findings underscore the multifaceted role of e-procurement in shaping knowledge, enhancing efficiency in procurement planning and sourcing, and influencing the transparency and effectiveness of contract awards. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on the adoption and implications of e-procurement systems in organizational contexts.

The first objective delved into the perceived impact of e-procurement on the efficiency of procurement planning within organizations. Survey results indicated a unanimous positive perception, with the majority of respondents agreeing that e-procurement systems significantly influence the efficiency of procurement planning. Thematic analysis enriched these findings, revealing a consensus among participants on the transformative role of e-procurement in streamlining planning processes. Insights suggest that organizations stand to benefit from the adoption of e-procurement systems in bolstering planning efficiency.

The second objective delved into assessing the impact of e-procurement on the efficiency of sourcing activities within organizations. The survey responses revealed a consistently positive perception among participants, indicating a widespread agreement on the favourable influence of e-procurement in enhancing sourcing efficiency. Thematic analysis further elucidated the multifaceted ways in which e-procurement contributes to efficiency, highlighting its instrumental role in minimizing errors, streamlining sourcing processes, and fostering cost savings. These nuanced findings underscore the strategic significance of e-procurement as a transformative tool, not only optimizing the efficiency of sourcing activities but also

positioning itself as a key driver for organizational cost-effectiveness. The results align with the broader discourse in the literature, emphasizing the strategic importance of e-procurement in modern procurement practices.

The third objective centred on exploring the perceived effects of e-procurement on the efficiency of contract award processes within organizations. Survey results illuminated a positive consensus among participants, with a significant majority expressing agreement on the influential role of e-procurement in enhancing the efficiency of contract awards. The mean scores reflected a favourable view of how e-procurement positively influences various facets of the contract award process, from streamlining procedures to ensuring fairness and transparency. Thematic analysis deepened these insights, uncovering nuanced perspectives on the pivotal role of e-procurement systems in minimizing errors, ensuring accountability, and providing a transparent audit trail in the contract award phase. The findings underscore the transformative potential of e-procurement in revolutionizing traditional contract award practices, contributing to organizational efficiency and accountability.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study comprehensively investigated the influence of e-procurement on various facets of procurement processes within organizations, with a focus on planning, sourcing, and contract award. The findings underscore a generally positive perception among participants regarding the impact of e-procurement on these critical aspects. In terms of procurement planning, respondents expressed a favourable view of e-procurement systems, emphasizing their positive influence on efficiency, transparency, and accountability. The study also revealed positive sentiments towards the effectiveness of e-procurement in streamlining sourcing activities, minimizing errors, and contributing to cost savings.

Moreover, the results emphasized the significant role of e-procurement in the efficiency of the contract award process, highlighting its positive impact on fairness, transparency, and accountability. Thematic analysis across these objectives further unveiled the intricate ways in which e-procurement contributes to organizational efficiency, aligning with established literature on the strategic importance of technology adoption in modern procurement practices.

These findings collectively contribute to the growing body of knowledge on e-procurement and its transformative role within organizations. As technology continues to evolve, embracing e-procurement becomes imperative for organizations seeking to optimize their procurement

processes, enhance transparency, and achieve overall efficiency. The insights from this study provide practical implications for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in the field of procurement, paving the way for informed decision-making and the continued advancement of procurement practices.

5.4 Recommendations

- **Enhanced Training Programs:** Given the varied levels of familiarity and understanding of e-procurement concepts among respondents, organizations should invest in comprehensive training programs. These programs should aim to equip procurement professionals with in-depth knowledge of e-procurement functionalities, emphasizing transparency, and efficiency aspects.
- **Continuous Improvement in System Functionality:** The study highlighted positive perceptions of e-procurement's impact on procurement planning, sourcing, and contract award. Organizations should, therefore, collaborate with technology providers to continually enhance system functionalities. This includes features that further streamline processes, minimize errors, and contribute to cost savings.
- **Strategic Integration of E-procurement:** Organizations should strategically integrate e-procurement systems into their procurement processes, emphasizing its role as a central tool for optimizing efficiency. This involves creating a seamless connection between e-procurement and other organizational systems, fostering interoperability.
- **Promotion of Transparent Practices:** The study revealed a positive correlation between e-procurement adoption and transparency in procurement activities. Organizations should actively promote transparent practices facilitated by e-procurement systems. This includes ensuring that system interfaces provide clear insights into the procurement process, fostering accountability, and minimizing the potential for errors.
- **Investment in Cybersecurity Measures:** As organizations increasingly rely on digital platforms for procurement, there is a growing need for robust cybersecurity measures. To safeguard sensitive procurement data, organizations should invest in cybersecurity infrastructure. This includes regular audits, employee training on cybersecurity best practices, and the adoption of encryption technologies.

5.5 Areas for further study

While this study has provided valuable insights into the impact of e-procurement on procurement efficiency, several avenues remain unexplored, offering opportunities for future research. One promising area for further study is the examination of the long-term effects of e-procurement adoption on organizational performance. This could involve a longitudinal analysis of organizations that have implemented e-procurement systems, assessing their sustained efficiency gains, adaptability to technological advancements, and overall competitive advantage over time. Additionally, future research could delve into the socio-economic factors influencing the adoption of e-procurement in different regions or industries, providing a more nuanced understanding of the contextual variables shaping its implementation.

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