**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF COMMERCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**

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**THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES ON OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY**

**IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE OF ZIMBABWE NATIONAL STATISTICS AGENCY**

**BY**

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**(B191373B)**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BCOM PURCHASING AND SUPPLY HONOURS DEGREE OF BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION. FACULTY OF COMMERCE.**

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# DEDICATION FORM

I would like to express my dedication of this dissertation to my exceptional parents, (Mr and Mrs Danda), as well as my cousins Ndanatsiwa Masimba and George Zivanai, for providing unwavering love and support throughout my academic pursuit. Their continuous encouragement and faith in my abilities have served as a guiding force and assisted me in overcoming every challenge that confronted me.

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# ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this study is to examine how public procurement procedures affect operational efficiency in Zimbabwe's public sector, with the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency serving as a case study. A qualitative survey approach was employed, and judgmental sampling was used to select a random sample of 35 employees from a population of 58 while adhering to ethical considerations. The study revealed that most respondents are familiar with the Act, as observed from their interviews, participation in questionnaires, and engagement with the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe website, which offers freshly updated information. Qualitative data was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study's findings highlight that sustainable procurement practices significantly impact profitability positively. The research aimed to explore the effects of critical components, such as adherence to the PPDPA Act, procurement planning, and documentation, on procurement procedures in Zimbabwe's public sector. Therefore, it is also recommended that future researchers look into the e-procurement environment.

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Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who has been part of this remarkable journey.

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

PMU Procurement Management Unit

PPDPA Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets

SI Statutory Instrument

ZIMSTAT Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

PRAZ Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe

EDI Electronic Data Interchange

GDP Gross Domestic Product

JIT Just In Time

TQM Total Quality Management

UN United Nations

KPIs Key Performance Indicators

MMDA Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly

VRIN Valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable

RBV Resource based view

ROI Return on Investment

ERP Enterprise resource planning

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

# 1.0 Introduction

The study's background, goals, and questions are discussed in chapter one, along with its scope, presumptions, importance, and limits. Key words are also defined, and the study's main findings are summarized. Public procurement practices' effects on operational efficiency in the public sector directly affect many people's social and economic wellbeing and have generated interest throughout time in developing nations all over the world, particularly in Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, many businesses have recently faced significant difficulties with the public procurement processes and the operational effectiveness in the public sector.

Public procurement practices have been a key source of worry for researchers and procurement specialists at tertiary schools. Globally speaking, the development of the public and private sectors' procurement has been quite strong, resulting in the creation of several procurement agencies and institutes. This study will focus on the issues that hinder operational efficiency in Zimbabwe's public sector, with the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency serving as a case study.

# 1.1 Background to the study

Public procurement refers to the process by which governments acquire goods and services from private entities. This process is vital and complex, as government spending can be significantly impacted by it. In Zimbabwe, the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (PRAZ) is responsible for monitoring, regulating, and overseeing public procurement. The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets [PPDPA] Act (2017) serves as the framework governing public procurement in Zimbabwe. Several African countries have also adopted this legal framework for managing procurement in their respective public sectors. Countries like Kenya, Namibia, and South Africa amongst other African nations have successfully managed to use the guidelines from the respective procurement act.

In most American nations for example the United States, procurement activities are being controlled using modern procurement practices such as the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and effective procurement planning and budgeting. All procurement proceedings starting from order processing to delivery of goods are done in line with procurement documentation and planning in accordance to the guidelines from the act. However, some of the developed nations in Europe are still facing challenges in public procurement. In Italy, procurement prices are higher than the market rates, corruption in the regulatory authority functions and poor procurement planning and budgeting.

A porous legal and regulatory framework, together with a limited capacity to promote reforms has resulted to significant inefficiencies and waste in public procurement. Internationally, many countries are failing to follow proper procurement practices in the procurement of high valued assets and sourcing of high value services. Countries are therefore taking steps to make reforms on their public procurement practices, the system however is still facing challenges of corruption, secrecy, inefficiencies and undercutting. According to Chowdhury (2013), at the heart of financial control and operational efficiency is public procurement. In Africa, public procurement in government institutions is included in the fiscal policy aimed at achieving efficient and effective procurement outcomes.

When properly planned and executed, public procurement can serve as an economic tool to ensure national development by improving the management of public expenditures at all levels. Successful government projects and public service delivery, as well as responsible public financial management through the attainment of value for money in government spending, are directly impacted by public procurement (Republic of Ghana as cited in Sarfo and Baah-Mintah, 2013).The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) is a public sector organization that is responsible for collecting and disseminating official statistics in Zimbabwe. ZIMSTAT is required to maintain a strong and flexible supply chain in order to meet its mandate. ZIMSTAT has implemented various procurement practices, such as Just In Time delivery (JIT), Total Quality Management (TQM), and e-procurement, to improve its procurement performance. Consequently, these practices have led to improved efficiency and increased trust in ZIMSTAT's procurement process.

The acquisition of goods and services from private companies by governments is referred to as public procurement. Due to its potential to take up a significant portion of a government's budget, public procurement considered a complicated and significant process. The management of public procurement is a matter of considerable attention and observation since it entails sizable amounts of money that may be vulnerable to corruption and other forms of irregularities. Many nations have established procedures to oversee and regulate their procurement methods, which often necessitate tender issuance and adjudication if the procurement requirement's value surpasses specific limits. According to the World Bank, public procurement accounts for roughly 18.42% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As a result, public procurement is a sizable economic undertaking, and it is critical to ensure that it is handled honestly and openly.

As stipulated in the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act (Chapter 22:23), the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe is responsible for overseeing all procurement activities for government and state-owned entities in the country. Leenders et al. (2008) assert that procurement is integral to an organization's success as it enhances its value. Improved procurement practices can contribute to organizational performance. While most organizations tend to rely on familiar procurement practices, Narasimhan and Kim (2002) suggest selecting ideal practices that are most advantageous to organizational success.

Gattorna (2006) highlights the increasing significance of integrating purchasing practices into organizational performance. As operational efficiency and the supply chain have a direct link to organizational performance, implementing procurement practices is crucial for an organization's success. Adapting procurement practices like Just In Time delivery (JIT), Total Quality Management (TQM), e-procurement, and integrating the entire procurement process is vital for overall organizational performance. Efficient procurement systems lead to enhanced efficiency and greater trust among employees, customers, and stakeholders of an organization.

Proper procurement planning and documentation can improve organizational performance Despite the implementation of procurement practices, various factors such as resistance to change among employees, inadequate resources, and insufficient allocation of resources by top management may impede their success. Procurement managers must stay up-to-date with the ever-evolving business environment and ensure that all procurement practices are environmentally friendly. ZIMSTAT faces several challenges, such as expensive internet services, weak inventory flow and monitoring, and inefficient use of procurement practices.

According to Madhavaram and Hunt (2008), the extent to which procurement best practices are implemented correlates directly with cost savings, better material flow, improved inventory, financial performance, enhanced customer service, and new product development. Procurement should take the lead in developing and implementing procurement practices, concentrating on integrating procurement planning, procurement documentation, and procurement practices into the procurement process. To assess organizational performance, a broad range of performance measures must be considered, such as quality, efficiency, productivity, profitability, and sustainability. Procurement practices should be seen as part of the organizations strategy, and procurement should be engaged in budgeting, supplier selection, and consolidation.

# 1.2 Statement of the problem

As it accounts for a substantial portion of a government's budget, it is a complex and significant process. Public procurement procedures have a notable impact on the public sector's operational efficiency. Inadequate procurement procedures can result in the slow delivery of products and services, increased expenses, and reduced quality of goods and services. A range of factors can contribute to inefficient public procurement procedures, such as lack of transparency and accountability, labyrinthine procurement processes, limited supplier competition, and corruption. Inefficient public procurement procedures can have catastrophic effects on the public sector, including decreased operational efficiency, poorer quality goods and services, and the mismanagement of taxpayer funds.

# 1.3 Research Objectives

1. To evaluate how public procurement practices impact the operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT.
2. To ascertain how public procurement planning influences the operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT.
3. To examine how public procurement documentation affects the operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT.

# 1.4 Research Questions

1. Is there a correlation between public procurement practices and operational efficiency?
2. How does public procurement planning impact operational efficiency?
3. How public procurement documentation contributes to overall operational efficiency?

# 1.5 Significance of study

The study looked at how Zimbabwe's public procurement practices affected a state-owned company's operational effectiveness. Additionally, the analysis looked at how ethical principles, supplier selection processes, and buyer-supplier relationships affect the operational efficiency of the entire organization. The following stakeholders will gain from this study's addition to the body of knowledge regarding public procurement practices:

# 1.5.1. To the Organisation

The organization will use the study to manage and control public procurement processes and address the problem of rot in the course of doing business. Additionally, it will be utilized to determine the best procurement approach, which will aid in lowering purchasing expenses and ultimately aid the organization in pursuing its primary competitive strategy. The study will be used to identify the best general procurement strategy for firms in the public sector. The study will also be used by government agencies to establish procurement frameworks and strategies for increasing procurement efficiency.

# 1.5.2. To Bindura University of Science Education.

The institution will use the study as secondary data to help future generations comprehend how procurement methods and processes affect organizational performance. University students will also use the study for academic and research objectives.

# 1.5.3. To the government.

The government, being accountable for procuring goods and services for the public sector, must grasp the impacts of procurement processes on operational efficiency to ensure that public funds are utilized effectively and efficiently. By implementing appropriate procurement procedures, the government can reduce costs, minimize service delivery delays, and improve the quality of services accessible to the public.

# 1.5.4. To the researcher.

Researchers can use the impacts of procurement procedures on operational efficiency to evaluate the effectiveness of public procurement policies and programs. Through research, they can identify best practices, areas of improvement, and develop suggestions for policy reform to enhance public sector procurement effectiveness.

# 1.5.5. To the public.

The standard and accessibility of public services are directly impacted by public procurement practices and by ensuring the operational efficiency of public procurement procedures, the public can receive high-quality services promptly and at minimal costs. The public can also hold the government accountable by requesting transparency in the procurement procedures, allowing them to monitor and evaluate the purchasing procedure.

# 1.6 Scope of the study

The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency's headquarters in Harare served as the study's site. The accounts office, transportation, PMU, and other organizational support workers were the focus of this study.

# 1.7 Research Assumptions

* The respondents will answer in honest and candid manner,
* All informants would answer the questionnaires sent to them with integrity and concern.
* The sample will offer an accurate depiction of the whole population being studied.

# 1.8 Delimitations

* Geographical delimitation: The study will focus on public sector organizations in a specific country or region, rather than examining procurement procedures and operational efficiency across multiple countries or regions.
* Time delimitation: The study will examine procurement procedures and operational efficiency over a specific time period, such as the past five years, rather than looking at long-term trends or historical data.
* Organizational delimitation: The study will focus on a specific type of public sector organization, such as a government department or agency, rather than examining procurement procedures and operational efficiency across all types of public sector organizations.

# 1.9 limitations of the study

* The study is movement associated and with the limited time available there will be need to use internet communication to get in touch with respondents and representatives from high offices
* Some of the staff would fail to provide the most required information due to confidentiality issues.
* Operational efficiency in the public sector can be influenced by a range of external factors, such as changes in government policy or economic conditions .These factors may be difficult to control for, and could limit the extent to which the study can attribute changes in efficiency to procurement procedures alone

# 1.10 Definition of terms

**Efficiency** is the capacity to complete a task or produce a good with the least amount of waste, cost, or labour while maximizing output.

**Procurement** involves finding and negotiating terms the purchase of goods, services, or other work from an external source, frequently utilizing a tendering or competitive bidding process.

**Procedures** refers to the guidelines which govern the accomplishment of a certain task by following laid down rules and regulations.

# 1.11 Summary

In the chapter's introduction, the study's background was discussed, and the problem statement, research objectives and questions, applicability of the study, and assumptions and delimitations were presented .Chapter 2 aims to conduct a literature review that covers both theoretical and empirical works and provides a conceptual framework for the dependent and independent variables of the study. The aim of this study is to assist public sector companies in optimizing their procurement processes, resulting in increased effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability. Furthermore, the study's findings will expand the knowledge of procurement practices' impact on operational efficiency. In addition, the development of effective strategies to address procurement failures and inefficiencies is beneficial to top management.

# CHAPTER II

# LITERATURE REVIEW

# 2.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 of the research paper offered a brief overview of the topic, while Chapter 2 will critically analyze the impact of public procurement practices on the performance of ZIMSTAT, a public enterprise in Zimbabwe, across various dimensions. The review of existing literature will involve analysis, criticism, and connection to relevant theories that support the concepts of the study, using relevant empirical and theoretical evidence to strengthen the argument for its necessity. The chapter will present a conceptual framework that shows the dependent and independent variables and represents the systemic features of the system in question. Additionally, it will examine the gap between empirical literature already studied and the existing evidence, with a critical examination of the area under study.

Hart (2015) claims that a literature review aims to re-evaluate the fundamental objectives of existing data, together with important objectives involving hypothetical and strategic contributions to a specific theme. Balanced Score Card and Resource-Based Theories will be assessed in this chapter. Theoretical and empirical reviews will also be critically analyzed to present arguments for the study's significance. Furthermore, an overview of existing literature will be explored to identify the key areas of public procurement practices in organizational performance.

# 2.1 Conceptual framework of the public procurement procedures in public sector institutions in Zimbabwe

Bogdan & Bilken (2003) state that conceptual frameworks are crucial structures that outline the systematic attributes of a system under investigation. Such frameworks are vital as they provide a basis for testing hypotheses in academic research. Variable conceptualization in a study further establishes hypothetical relationships of dependence and independence. A variable that can be measured, monitored, and is projected to change when the independent variable is manipulated is referred to as a dependent variable. In contrast, the independent variable is manipulated by the researcher, causing an effect on the dependent variable. In this study, procurement practices are defined as the independent variable, while organizational performance is the dependent variable. The study's hypothesis posits that public procurement practices affect organizational performance at ZIMSTAT.

A quantitative research approach will be employed to test the hypothesis of the study. The data for the research will be gathered via a survey of ZIMSTAT's employees. The survey will examine employee perceptions of the procurement practices at ZIMSTAT and their influence on organizational performance. The outcomes of the research will be utilized in creating suggestions for improving the procurement practices at ZIMSTAT. These recommendations are based on the research findings and the established best practices in public procurement. The study is anticipated to make a contribution to the collective knowledge on public procurement and organizational performance. The findings of the study will be of interest to researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

**Table 2.1 Conceptual framework**

***Figure 1: Conceptual Framework***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Independent variables** | **Dependent variable** |
| **Procurement plan**   * Budget preparation * Budget approval * Revised procurement plans * Budget execution | **Operational Efficiency**   * high-quality products and services * higher returns * position in the market * Performance of the organization |
| **Procurement documentation**   * Contractor claim * Vouchers used for payment * Documentation of receipt for goods, services, works, and consulting services |
| **Public procurement**   * transparency * fair competition * integrity/honest |

**Source: Researcher’s Construct**

**Procurement Planning**

In accordance with the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act (PPDPA) of 2018 and its regulations, procurement planning must serve as the basis for budget development. Procuring entities may also need to adjust their procurement plans to reflect actual budgetary allocations after approval. Modified procurement plans will, in turn, provide the groundwork for devising cash flow projections. These projections will inform the budget release process for the procuring entity. Cash flow submissions must remain closely linked to procurement plans to ensure efficacious commitment control. Predictable and timely budget releases can lead to more cost-effective procurement practices, resulting in greater efficiency for the organization.

The PPDPA Act mandates that procurement planning take place prior to budget preparation; this identification of the organization's needs and required resources is crucial. Following approval of the budget, procurement plans can be updated to account for the allocated funds. In doing so, the organization is better positioned to obtain goods and services at optimal prices.

Also, the PPDPA Act necessitates the submission of cash flow that aligns with procurement plans to ensure the organization possesses adequate funding to acquire requisite goods and services. Predictable and timely budget releases are instrumental in ensuring that the organization has access to these funds when required. This mitigates procurement delays, guaranteeing that the appropriate goods and services are procured without impediment. Effective procurement planning and budget preparation can improve procurement efficiency and efficacy, yielding savings and promoting timely availability of goods and services.

**Procurement documentation**

Public procurement management units (PMUs) rely on the coordination between procurement officers and finance and accounting officers to ensure that the requisite documentation covering contractor claims, registered vendor number, contract agreements, payment authorities, payment vouchers, and receipts of goods, services, works, and consulting services delivered, are present in all procurement files. This coordination enables effective contract administration and sufficient records management while ensuring the PMUs' ease of auditability.

Effective management of contracts assures that the organization is not spending more than required and receiving the expected goods and services. Sufficient records management is essential to enable tracking of procurement activities and compliance with regulations when evidence is necessary. Adequate auditability is required to hold organizations accountable for these activities. Procurement officers, when collaborating with finance and accounting officers, guarantee the inclusion of all the necessary documentation in procurement files, ensuring effective contract administration, adequate record-keeping, and auditable procurement activities. Beyond this, procurement officers, in collaboration with legal and technical experts, ought to ensure fair, transparent, and accountable procurement practices.

**Public procurement**

In Zimbabwe, public procurement practices are based on the core values of the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PRAZ), which are transparency, fairness, and honesty/integrity.

**Transparency**

Transparency means that all public procurement information must be shared with everyone in the supply community and private sector. This includes information about upcoming procurement opportunities, the evaluation criteria, and the results of the procurement process.

**Fairness**

To maintain fairness in procurement, all suppliers must receive equal treatment, and the procurement process must be transparent and non-discriminatory. This denotes that every supplier must be given an identical opportunity to participate in the procurement process, and their bids must be assessed fairly and without prejudice**.**

**Honesty/integrity**

Honesty/integrity means that the procurement process is free from corruption and that all decisions are made in the best interests of the public. This means that public officials must not accept bribes or other forms of inducement in exchange for awarding contracts to certain suppliers.

**Cost-effectiveness**

The term "cost-effectiveness" pertains to the importance of diligently and carefully managing public funds, ensuring that goods, services, and works are priced suitably and deliver good value for the money spent. All parties involved in public procurement should make a concerted effort to avoid defrauding, wasting, or abusing public resources. This means shunning over-specification of required goods, unreasonable prices for substandard goods, collusion with other bidders, or any other unacceptable practices.

**Competition**

The concept of "competition" refers to ensuring that any qualified organization or individual may participate in public procurement by submitting relevant proposals. Accordingly, public procurement terms should be broadly communicated to expand the possibility of good market responses and enable the awarding competently-priced contracts. The practice of non-competitive procurement methods, although valid under certain conditions, ought to be restricted as much as possible.

**Operational Efficiency**

The efficiency of a company is evaluated based on its ability to meet short-term objectives such as productivity growth and inventory reduction, as well as long-term objectives such as expanding market share. Businesses aim to offer top-notch service at a reasonable cost, and to achieve this, resources must possess different levels of efficiency (Barney, 2003).Comparing this organization's performance against that of other businesses operating in the same sector. Return on Investment (ROI) and market share growth are two ways to gauge an organization's performance.

Highly interdependent are specifications and procurement. For the buying department, inadequate requirements create several traps and challenges. The quality specifications for the customer should provide the least fundamental requirements, along with transparency in the procurement.

To ensure the products meet minimal standards and receive a fair award at the lowest price, it is necessary to identify minimum requirements to deliver value to customers (Edvardsson, 1998). Effective procurement practices within firms require better supply chain management and professionalization to achieve cost savings. Procurement efforts, including forecasting requirements, monitoring supplies, and more, translate into enhanced organizational performance. To achieve the right quality and service delivery, all stakeholders require personnel with strong management abilities who comply with ethical procurement rules and methods, which requires setting objectives and maintaining the highest quality standards. Properly trained procurement department employees can assist in creating accurate specifications and procuring high-quality items for the business (Gillingham and Lysons, 2003).

# 2.2 Theoretical Framework: Theories Underpinning the Study

# 2.2.1 Legitimacy theory

As per Wilmshurst and Frost (2000), the legitimacy theory posits that organizations must reveal their practices and procedures to stakeholders, especially the public, and demonstrate their validity within the limits of society. The procurement department works interdependently with its stakeholders which includes the society. Procedures for public procurement must be open and transparent because, according to this notion, the acquiring agency should make its policies known to all parties involved. The whole tendering process must be clear to the bidders and any other stakeholders. Advertising of tenders in different media is recommended for fairness and competitiveness. Focusing on the harmony and interaction between an organization and society, the theory provides an effective and more exceptional outlook for understanding government procurement systems, according to Hui et al. (2011). According to this theory, compliant behavior in public procurement has been attributed to the perceived legitimacy of public procurement regulations.

# 2.2.2 Institutional theory

In the analysis of various aspects of public procurement, Obanda (2010) contends that institutional theory is the accepted approach. According to Scott (2004), institutions can categorized into regulatory, normative, and culturally cognitive pillars. The regulatory pillar focuses on the enforcement of laws, regulations, and sanctions, with compliance being driven by the pursuit of efficiency. The normative pillar, on the other hand, prioritizes social responsibility, values, and standards as the basis for compliance. The third pillar, cultural cognitive, is anchored in the shared beliefs, knowledge, and symbols. In Zimbabwe, the PPDA Act (2018), regulations, and guidelines serve as the theoretical framework that guides procurement operations and processes.

The PPDPA Act lays down the legal foundation for procurement processes, particularly related to ethical practices. Meanwhile, regulations outline five ethical principles - transparency, honesty, cost-effectiveness, fairness, and accountability - which guide how procurement operations should be performed. Compliance with procurement regulations is dependent on Scott's (2004) pillars of institutions, wherein organizational culture, social impact, organizational incentives, and enforcement are identified as driving forces for procurement regulation compliance.

# 2.2.3 Spend Analysis Model

The company may analyze, gather, and classify expenditure data with the use of spend analysis, which can lead to cost reductions. Spend analysis may be used to keep a lid on unauthorized expenditure and contract compliance. The major goal of the spend analysis is to ascertain how the expenditures associated with procurement are allocated among the items that are acquired and among the suppliers, ( Enporion Inc, 2008)The expenditure analysis may assist to increase visibility and transparency. You may report aspects like proper pricing, rebates, and volume discounts by putting the analysis into practice. Within the organization, the visibility problem is equally relevant.

The firm may monitor if the buyers are adhering to corporate regulations and applying the proper contractual terms with suppliers, price, payment, and purchase value offers by using the spend analysis. Spend analysis helps lower the overall expenses associated with inventory management. Rearranging and combining the part and material masters allows for this (Enporion Inc,2008). Spend analysis must be implemented across the entire organization in order to be used effectively and efficiently, which adds to the cost of implementation. Additional challenges with adopting expenditure analysis include a lack of knowledge and expertise as well as the lack of a scalable and adaptable spend technology. In numerous situations, the company has a variety of sources from which to obtain and collect expenditure data. This can be problematic, especially if the categorization is not done well enough to make the information useful (Enporion Inc,2008)

# 2.2.4 Resource Based Theory

The resource-based theory examines a company's general corporate advantages that give it a competitive edge. These benefits might be financial, organizational, or human in nature, and their value lies in their rarity, distinctiveness, and usefulness. As per the resource-based theory, a business's competitive advantage within an organization is achieved through an effective and well-organized procurement process. In a critical analysis of competitive advantage based on this theory, Peteraf and Barney (2003) found two assumptions. The first was that enterprises in the same industry may have a variety of resources, however some people think this resource disparity may have existed for a long time.

According to Cool et al. (2002), an exceptional resource is crucial to a company's competitive strategy. However, if each company in a particular sector possesses the same resources, achieving a competitive advantage becomes impossible. Resource management that is effective allows procurement to get more done with less resources. Resources are essential for a corporation to increase its efficiency and reduce needless expenditures, according to Barney (1991). Similar to sourcing procedures, procurement approaches need to be uncommon and difficult to duplicate. Organizational and operational performance are taken into consideration by the resource-based view. Businesses that operate internationally run efficiently.

With limited resources, businesses may boost profitability and retain their competitive edge. The implementation of ERP systems is both expensive and not widely embraced, hence companies that have already adopted these systems have an advantage over their competitions. Effective supplier collaboration and early participation in product specification development enhance sourcing performance by providing additional value to end customers. Greater performance in procurement is facilitated by sourcing, resulting in a positive impact. This can be achieved by searching for the best profitable deal. Innovation is driven by product development and evolving consumer values.

# 2.3 Empirical Literature

**Andrew Kakabadse and Nada Kakabadse (2019)**

Andrew Kakabadse and Nada Kakabadse (2019) conducted a study to investigate the impact of functional diversity on board effectiveness in the FTSE 350 companies in the United Kingdom. The study used a qualitative research design to collect data from 30 board directors of FTSE 350 companies. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The study found that functional diversity has a significant impact on board effectiveness. The study also found that functional diversity has a positive impact on board decision-making, board monitoring, and board strategic planning.

The study found that functional diversity is important because it brings different perspectives and experiences to the boardroom, which can help the board to make better decisions and to monitor the company more effectively. The study was conducted in the United Kingdom in 2019. The findings may not be generalizable to other countries. The study used a qualitative research design, which is susceptible to researcher bias. The study did not control for other factors that may affect board effectiveness, such as the size of the company and the industry in which the company operates.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the impact of functional diversity on board effectiveness. The study's findings suggest that functional diversity is an important factor in improving board effectiveness. It gives a shallow investigation of the effectiveness of the public procurement procedures in the operational efficiency in public organisations. This study therefore seeks to give a high depth analysis of howthe impact of public procurement procedures on operational efficiency in the public sector in Zimbabwe.

**Adediwura, A. A., & Iyoha, F. O. (2016)**

Adediwura, A. A., & Iyoha, F. O. (2016) conducted the study examining the impact of procurement practices on organizational performance in the Nigerian public sector. The study used a research design, and data was collected from 195 procurement professionals in the Nigerian public sector. The study found a significant positive relationship between procurement practices and organizational performance. Procurement procedures, such as transparency, competition, and supplier evaluation, were found to have a significant effect on operational efficiency in the Nigerian public sector.

**Jribi, S., & Slimane, M. (2020)**

Jribi, S., & Slimane, M. (2020) carried out a study examining the impact of public procurement procedures on performance in developing and developed countries. The study used a survey research design to collect data from 150 procurement professionals in the Tunisian public sector. The survey questionnaire was designed to measure the impact of public procurement practices on organizational performance. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample of procurement professionals to ensure that the questions were clear and easy to understand. The study found that public procurement practices have a significant impact on organizational performance. The study also found that accountability and transparency have the strongest impact on organizational performance.

The study found that accountability and transparency are important because they help to reduce corruption and ensure that the best value for money is obtained. The study found that there is a gap between the theoretical and empirical evidence on the impact of public procurement practices on organizational performance. The study recommends that more research is needed to fill this gap and there are some limitations which include the study used a survey research design, which is susceptible to self-report bias and the study did not control for other factors that may affect organizational performance, such as the size of the organization and the level of competition.

**Han, L., & Rong, K. (2018).**

Han, L., & Rong, K. (2018) conducted a study to investigate the impact of public procurement practices on organizational performance in Nigeria. The study used a survey research design to collect data from 350 procurement professionals in Nigeria. The survey questionnaire was designed to measure the impact of public procurement practices on organizational performance. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample of procurement professionals to ensure that the questions were clear and easy to understand. The study found that public procurement practices have a significant impact on organizational performance. The study also found that accountability and transparency have the strongest impact on organizational performance.

The study found that accountability and transparency are important because they help to reduce corruption and ensure that the best value for money is obtained.The study was conducted in Nigeria in 2018. The findings may not be generalizable to other countries. The study used a survey research design, which is susceptible to self-report bias. The study did not control for other factors that may affect organizational performance, such as the size of the organization and the level of competition as a result it calls for further research

**Yusuf, A. A., Ngwenyama, O., & Oyebisi, T. O. (2021)**

Yusuf, A. A., Ngwenyama, O., & Oyebisi, T. O. (2021) conducted a study to investigate the impact of public procurement practices on organizational performance in Nigeria. The study used a survey research design to collect data from 350 procurement professionals in Nigeria. The survey questionnaire was designed to measure the impact of public procurement practices on organizational performance. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample of procurement professionals to ensure that the questions were clear and easy to understand. The study found that public procurement practices have a significant impact on organizational performance. The study also found that accountability and transparency have the strongest impact on organizational performance. The study found that accountability and transparency are important because they help to reduce corruption and ensure that the best value for money is obtained.

The study was conducted in Nigeria, and the findings may not be generalizable to other countries. The study used a survey research design, which is susceptible to self-report bias. The study did not control for other factors that may affect organizational performance, such as the size of the organization and the level of competition. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the impact of public procurement practices on organizational performance. The study's findings suggest that accountability and transparency are important factors in improving organizational performance.

**Yasmine El-Gohary and Tamer Elsharnouby (2017)**.

El-Gohary and Elsharnouby (2017) conducted a study to explore the impact of public procurement on organizational performance in the Egyptian public sector. The study used a survey research design, and the targeted population was procurement professionals in the public sector. A total of 150 respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that public procurement practices (such as accountability, transparency, and competition) had a significant impact on organizational performance (such as cost savings, timely procurement, and better quality of goods and services). The study revealed a correlation between public procurement practices and organizational performance.

A regression analysis showed that accountability and transparency had the strongest impact on organizational performance in the Egyptian public sector. The study's findings are consistent with the theoretical framework of the resource-based view of the firm (RBV). The RBV argues that firms can achieve competitive advantage by acquiring, developing, and exploiting valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources (VRIN). Public procurement practices can be considered a VRIN resource for firms in the public sector. The study's findings suggest that firms in the public sector can achieve competitive advantage by acquiring, developing, and exploiting effective public procurement practices.

**Kihoro et al. (2018)**

Kihoro et al. (2018) conducted an investigation on the effectiveness of public procurement on organizational performance in selected public hospitals in Nairobi County. The researchers adopted a cross-sectional research design, and the targeted population was the procurement and hospital management staff of the selected public hospitals. A simple random sampling technique was employed to obtain a sample size of 73 staff members of the selected hospitals. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. The results showed a significant positive relationship between public procurement practices (e.g., tendering, supplier selection, payment procedures, and contract management) and organizational performance (e.g., service delivery, cost efficiency, and quality of service).

The correlation analysis results showed that public procurement accounted for 68.6% of the influence on the organizational performance of the selected public hospitals. The regression analysis results revealed that the public procurement practices had a statistically significant positive effect on organizational performance. The study concludes that effective public procurement practices can improve the performance of public hospitals and recommends that public hospitals should develop and implement effective procurement practices to improve their organizational performance.

**Ben-Edigbe and Oteh (2016)**

Ben-Edigbe and Oteh (2016) conducted a study on the impact of public procurement on organizational performance in the Nigerian public sector. The study used a survey research design and collected data from 150 procurement professionals in the public sector. The study found that public procurement practices (such as accountability, transparency, and competition) had a significant impact on organizational performance (such as cost savings, timely procurement, and better quality of goods and services). The study also found that accountability and transparency had the strongest impact on organizational performance in the Nigerian public sector. Based on the results, the study recommends that the Nigerian public sector should adopt and implement effective procurement practices to improve their organizational performance. The study also suggests that there should be a strengthening of public procurement policies and regulations to enhance the effectiveness of public procurement practices.

**Wee Shu Hui (2011)**

In 2011, Wee Shu Hui conducted a study on the perspectives of procurement officers and contractors regarding accountability, transparency, corruption, integrity, and cronyism in the public procurement system in Malaysia. The study used interviews to identify common weaknesses in the Malaysian procurement system. The study found that the procurement system in Malaysia is often characterized by the purchase of products in incorrect quantities, specifications, and prices, which leads to a higher total cost of ownership, inefficient and ineffective procurement processes, which lead to longer cycle times, obscure and ambiguous procurement processes, which can lead to leakages and corruption and inadequate infrastructure supporting procurement, which highlights organizational and governance deficiencies and non-existent or ineffective vendor development programs (VDPs).The study concluded that the Malaysian procurement system needs to be reformed in order to address these weaknesses. The reforms should focus on improving accountability, transparency, and integrity in the procurement process.

**Nyeke (2013)**

In 2013, Nyeke conducted a study on the impact of public procurement policies and procedures on the health system in Zimbabwe. The study focused on Chitungwiza Central Hospital. The study used a case study research design involving both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study found that the procurement policies and procedures have a significant impact on the health delivery system in Zimbabwe. The Public Procurement Act, in particular, was found to be negatively impacting on health delivery. The Act requires three quotations even when the supplier is a monopoly, and the process of seeking for approval from the government takes a long time. This can lead to delays in the procurement of essential medical supplies, which can have a negative impact on patient care.

The study also found that other laws, such as the Look East Policy, are also affecting the health delivery system. The Look East Policy encourages the government to buy goods and services from countries like China, even if they are not the most cost-effective option. This can lead to higher prices for medical supplies, which can further impact on patient care. The study concluded that the public procurement policies and procedures in Zimbabwe need to be reformed in order to improve the health delivery system. The reforms should focus on reducing the time it takes to procure essential medical supplies, and on ensuring that the government is buying from the most cost-effective suppliers. In addition to the reforms suggested by the study, it is also important to consider the role of corruption in the procurement process. Corruption can lead to the overpricing of goods and services, and can also lead to the procurement of goods and services that are not essential. It is important to address corruption in order to ensure that the public procurement system is fair and efficient.

# 2.4 Critical review

Deliberate efforts by the company to encourage the full implementation of these right procurement methods are considered as having benefits for good ethical practices, transparent supplier selection, and collaborative long-term partnerships with suppliers (Ramayah et al., 2006). To fully exploit the benefits of technology implementation in promoting proper procurement procedures in state-owned companies, it is essential to invest in staff training and skill development. According to Mabert et al. (2003) posit that obstacles to expanding the procurement team's knowledge and skills stem from various external and internal cultural aspects, particularly when employees are disinclined to use an electronic system that might limit their ability to negotiate with established suppliers and worry about losing their positions because of process automation.

Nurmilaakso (2008) argues that the supply chain constitutes a bi-directional flow of goods, money, and communication between purchasers and suppliers, which is impacted by intra-organizational functions related to supply performance, either directly or indirectly. Through ethical procurement processes and network-based interactions, organizations have the capability of receiving the most favourable support for business activities and contribution. In cases of knowledge asymmetry, developing favourable buyer-supplier relationships during procurement maximizes trust and results in reduced transaction costs for interactions (Erridge and Nondi, 1994). Greater supplier cooperation enables access to data that is not easily accessible within the company, enabling better specification-writing decisions (Uyarra 2010).

# 2.5 Research gap

The review of literature emphasizes the significance of public procurement procedures and describes how governments have revised regulations to bolster accountability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, value for money, and cost-effectiveness. However, the literature notes a dearth of adequate data on the impact of public procurement procedures in improving operational performance in Zimbabwe. Several authors have explored challenges associated with the implementation of public procurement regulations, factors affecting them, and how they influence organizational performance. Additionally, the literature emphasizes the susceptibility of public procurement to corruption, which necessitates appropriate public procurement procedures. However, no research has been conducted on statistical organizations in the context of the Zimbabwean National Statistics System.

# 2.6 Chapter Summary

The primary focus of this chapter was to review existing literature from various authorities and journals relevant to the topic of public procurement procedures. The chapter also examined the conceptual framework of public procurement procedures, exploring both the dependent and independent variables that impact this area of study. Supporting theories were provided to strengthen the research topic, even if some were not directly related to procurement. Empirical evidence from prior studies on public procurement processes was also presented to analyze any gaps between those studies and the current research. These insights informed the researcher's investigation into the research questions and topic. The next chapter will delve into the research methodology, which will outline the different methods used to collect research data.

# CHAPTER III

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

The core aim of this chapter is to discuss the research design, target population, population and sampling techniques, and data sources, highlighting how the population sample was computed. The chapter also delves into research and data collection procedures used and assesses the validity and reliability of the data. The methodology employed in academic research is a crucial aspect of the study. For this particular study, a qualitative research design was utilized, and this chapter outlines the procedures followed and the activities conducted during research. It seeks to provide insights into research methods adopted and explain why these methods were chosen. It touches on survey design, sample design, data sources utilized, and data collection tools.

# 3.1 Research design

The research strategy adopted by the researcher was a survey. Bhat's (2020) definition of a survey is that it is a means of gathering information from a specified group of respondents to acquire valuable insights on various topics of interest. Surveys serve multiple objectives and can be conducted in various ways, based on the methodology and study goals. Naoum (2014) highlights the importance of identifying a study's objective, the sort of information it requires, and its availability when selecting a research strategy. Surveys serve both as a research strategy and a specific means of data gathering. They involve collecting information, typically from relatively large groups of people, through questionnaires, but other techniques such as interviews or phone calls may be used.

# 3.2 Target Population

To ensure accurate and unbiased results, the researcher targeted participants who were knowledgeable about procurement, organizational supply chain activities, stores, and corporate staff, although the total population of the study was fifty-eight employees. According to Best and Khan (2003), a target population refers to a group of people who share one or more characteristics of concern to a researcher. This group must meet the researcher's criteria of interest (Brink 1996). As a result, the target population included four departments, with a total of fifty-eight individuals. The data required for the study will be collected from a limited population consisting of employees from the Procurement Management Unit (PMU), Accounts department, Stores, and Corporate and support staff at the ZIMSTAT Head Office.

**Table 1: Target Population**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | Target Population |
| PMU | 15 |
| Stores | 9 |
| Accounts | 21 |
| Corporate and Support staff | 13 |

**Source: Researcher’s Construct**

**3.3 Sample size**

The sampling technique employed in the study involved non-probability sampling, resulting in a sample size of thirty-five participants selected through simple judgmental sampling. Bailey (2000) defines a sample as a selected subset of individuals from a specific population. Table 3.2 displays the sample size.

**Table 2: Sample size**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Population | Sample size | Percentage |
| PMU | 15 | 10 | 67% |
| Stores | 9 | 4 | 44% |
| Accounts | 21 | 11 | 52% |
| Corporate and Support staff | 13 | 10 | 77% |

**Source: Researcher’s Construct**

# 3.4 Non probability sampling

The sampling method utilized did not provide every element with an equal opportunity to be selected for data collection. The technique employed was:

# 3.4.1 Judgmental Sampling

As per Cooper's (2003) definition, judgmental sampling is a technique in which the sample selection is based on the researcher's knowledge. For sample selection, the researchers employed a judgmental sample method in which they utilized their expertise to identify and choose appropriate sample elements for data collection. Consequently, all individuals involved in the Procurement Management Unit at the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency were selected by the researcher.

**Justification of Judgmental Sampling**

Judgmental sampling is simple, fast, and targeted at certain appropriate items.

#### 3.5 Data collection methods instruments.

The research was carried out utilizing primary and secondary sources of data.

# 3.5.1 Primary data

Primary data pertains to data collected firsthand from the research area and is often in its raw form, lacking meaning until analysis and interpretation in reference to the subject matter (Kotler, 2000). Kotler identifies four fundamental technical tools for obtaining primary data, namely observations, focus groups, surveys via questionnaires, personal interviews, and experiments. The researcher collected data for this particular research through questionnaires and interviews.

# 3.6 Questionnaires

Initially, the researcher introduced herself to the intended respondents using a request letter from Bindura University of Science Education to establish her identity and purpose (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, date unknown). Thereafter, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency's top management granted permission to administer questionnaires to the respondents. Along with a cover letter emphasizing the confidentiality of information provided, the questionnaire was delivered to the respondents. Following up with the respondents after several days was done to improve the response rate. 35 questionnaires were dispersed to align respondents' outlooks and bolster the data's quality.

The primary aim of the questionnaire was to shed light on employee insights and understanding of procurement procedures and their effect on public-sector operational efficiency in Zimbabwe. Questionnaires were selected as the data collection tool the researcher since they provided a means for the respondents to receive information in writing and respond in writing with specific information relevant to the research question. Researchers have confirmed that the questions are expressed and arranged in a simple, direct, and unbiased manner. The researcher used a non-probability sampling technique to physically distribute questionnaires to survey participants.

The researcher opted to utilize questionnaires as one of the primary survey tools for the study due to the numerous advantages associated with them. By utilizing self-administered questionnaires, researchers were able to guide participants in examining the effect of public procurement procedures on the operational efficiency of a state-owned enterprise. Respondents had the flexibility to fill out the questionnaires at their leisure and take sufficient time to consider their answers. To ensure optimal outcomes, the researchers made sure to define some of the terminologies used in the survey to ensure that respondents comprehended the meaning of each word. Additionally, while distributing the questionnaire, the researchers emphasized the importance of answering the questions to encourage respondent participation.

**Justification for the use of questionnaires**

The researcher opted to use surveys as they provided an economical means of interviewing a large number of people in minimal time. The research population was easily accessible, and questionnaires allowed the researcher to maintain a high level of confidentiality of the information provided by the employees. Moreover, administering additional surveys of the respondents became feasible. The structured questions served as a useful guide for the respondents. However, concerns have been raised regarding the likelihood of misunderstandings, which may affect the instrument's effectiveness.

# 3.7 Interviews

As part of the research methodology, the researcher undertook semi-structured and unstructured in-depth interviews with each participant. Pre-set questions were formulated and posed consistently to all respondents to ensure uniform data collection. The researcher utilized interview guides to facilitate the interviews. Targeting participants who possess knowledge on the topic of interest and collecting their insights helped to generate valuable research data. By asking open-ended questions, the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of the topic from multiple perspectives, which enhanced the credibility and validity of the research findings. Additionally, the insights obtained from the interviews and questionnaires complemented each other, providing a broader perspective on the research problem. Overall, semi-structured and unstructured in-depth interviews, when conducted appropriately, offer an excellent opportunity to gain rich insights into sensitive topics, thereby enriching the overall research process.

**Justification of Interviews**

As part of the interview process for the research study, the researcher utilized personal interviews to obtain deeper insights into the impact of public procurement procedures on the efficiency of the Zimbabwean public sector organization. These interviews offered a chance to seek clarifications on complex issues related to the topic of interest, providing a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Additionally, the researcher was able to ask additional follow-up questions related to the topic to high-level officials in ZIMSTAT’s top management from the government and various departments about factors that may affect procurement procedures and operations.

However, despite the potential benefits of utilizing personal interviews, scheduling issues posed a significant challenge for some respondents. Consequently, many interviews had to be postponed or rescheduled to ensure the participation of key stakeholders with valuable insights. Nonetheless, the insights obtained from the interviews helped delineate the intricacies of procurement in the public sector and the potential consequences of not following the prescribed procedures.

# 3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis Plan

To analyze the data, the researcher first structured it in tabular form to visually present survey responses in an organized manner. The simplicity of the tabulation method made it easy to handle large volumes of data, quantify responses to each question, and ensure accuracy.

Additionally, the use of percentage calculations allowed the author to analyze the data by understanding the significance of each finding and reduce bias by ensuring that the sample population size informed the analysis. By utilizing percentages, the researcher was also able to provide a comprehensive overview of the data where categories of respondents had a differing level of educational background.

To present the data in a more understandable format, the researcher used graphs. Pie charts proved useful as they were easy to understand, representing data as a circle divided into sections that showed the relative frequency or proportion of responses for each category in comparison with each other. The resulting data was more manageable and conveyed information in a more intuitive form. In some cases, however, the author also included bar charts to demonstrate a larger number of data points for a comparison of response frequencies.

# 3.9 Validity and reliability of Formal survey questionnaires and key informant interviews.

Milne (2009) describes validity as a measure of an instrument's aptness to capture the characteristics or situation being studied. Additionally, the author notes that reliability is the degree of accuracy with which the instrument measures the variable of interest.

To improve the quality of the questionnaire, the researcher first forwarded sample questions to professionals in the field for review to augment the response rate. The professionals included the mentor and the researcher's instructor. To determine the questionnaire's validity, the researcher conducted a pilot study (Bhat, 2020). Furthermore, to improve the response rate, the interview guide was sent to the same professionals for additional input. Additional interviews with organizations and individual outside the sample group were also conducted. The outcomes of using both instruments showed similar responses, indicating the reliability and validity of the instruments.

# 3.10 Ethical and Legal Consideration

Christensen (2002) defines research ethics as a collection of principles used to operate a morally sound study. Such ethical considerations entail respect towards respondents, confidentiality and upholding the principle of autonomy. The researcher refrained from sharing data outside of the study, ensuring that it was solely utilized for research. The study's goals indicated the potential benefits, with no monetary compensation provided since it was an academic study.

During the research process, the researcher took great care to adhere to ethical standards. There was no intention to cause physical or psychological harm to the participants. All participants were treated with respect. Permission was obtained from high-level officials to conduct research, and participants' right to refuse participation was observed. The researcher obtained approval from the BUSE procurement management department and submitted an approval letter as evidence.

# 3.11 Summary

The chapter presented a comprehensive outline of the research, addressing crucial details such as the study instruments used, data collection techniques and procedures, and the steps taken in data analysis. By delving into the concepts of reliability and validity, the researcher demonstrated an astute understanding of data collection techniques and the requirements for analysing data with high precision. Additionally, the careful explanation of the sampling process, questionnaire distribution and retrieval assured the reader of the researcher's intent to execute the project with admirable competence. Furthermore, the chapter emphasized the importance of data analysis and presentation, outlining the systematic steps taken towards achieving accurate results through careful evaluation of the research instruments and data. The insights and knowledge gained from this chapter could be instrumental in providing a springboard for additional research studies in this field of interest, thereby expanding our understanding of relevant topics for years to come.

# CHAPTER IV

# DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

# 4.0 Introduction

Chapter III covered the methodology used in the research study, this chapter explored more on data presentation, analysis and discussion. Tables, pie charts and graphs were used to present the data on the research findings. All the tabulated and graphical information was supported by strong explanation. The presentations in this chapter are a result of raw data obtained in the field through questionnaires and interviews. It is from these findings that conclusions will be drawn on the effects of public procurement procedures on operational efficiency at National Statistics agency. Interviews and questionnaires were administered to a sample that consisted of those in Procurement Management Unit at National Statics Agency and those who work directly with the procurement and procurement procedures and tender evaluation committees.

The subsequent sections looked at answering research questions using various analyses. It is from these findings that conclusions are drawn on the impacts of the public procurement procedures on operational efficiency of a public procurement enterprise, the case of National Statistics Agency of Zimbabwe. Interviews and questionnaires were administered to a sample that consisted of those in PMU and those who work directly with the procurement, Stores, Accounts and the Cooperate staff of a public owned enterprise as mentioned above.

All the presentations, analysis, discussions and presentations of data were done based on the research objectives that is:

1. To evaluate how public procurement practices impact the operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT.
2. To ascertain how public procurement planning influences the operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT.
3. To examine how public procurement documentation affects the operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT

# 4.1 Response Rate

The response rate is a key factor in evaluating a study's results and determining its validity. The adequate proportion of participating subjects is fundamental in facilitating interpretation and analysis of data (Bhat, 2020). High survey response rates can be attributed to researchers' ability to send questionnaires to respondents electronically, who, in turn, share their feedback through email.

**Table 4.1 Response Rate**

**Table 3: Response rate**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Respondents | Questionnaires Administered | Questionnaires Answered | Response Rate |
| PMU | 15 | 10 | 67% |
| Stores | 9 | 4 | 44% |
| Accounts | 21 | 11 | 52% |
| Support staff | 13 | 10 | 77% |
| Total | 58 | 35 | 60% |

**Source: Author’s Fieldwork**

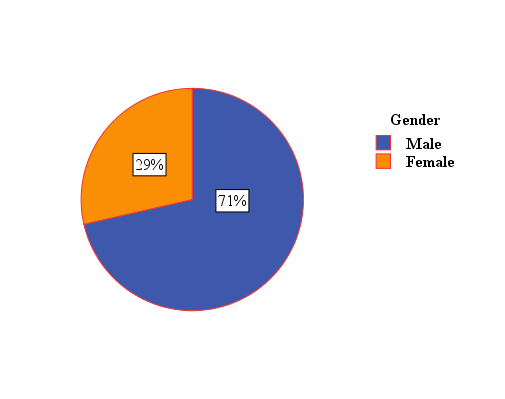
The research findings shows that fifty-eight questionnaires were administered and thirty-five were answered yielding an overall response rate of sixty five percent. The table above shows responses from different departments that work closely with Procurement Management Unit in a public enterprise. According to Orodho (2009), argues that a response rate of more than fifty percent is crucial to acquiring adequate data that could be used to generalize the views of respondents concerning the study problem. The outcomes presented above align with this fundamental principle.

# 4.2 Background of Respondents

The researcher considered the background information of the respondents as this help answer the research questions. As seen below, information on age, gender, education level, areas of specialization, and years of experience was shown as graphs, tables, and charts.

##### 4.2.1 Distribution by Gender

**Figure 2: Percentage Distribution by Gender**

****

*Source: Primary Data*

According to the research findings, a total of 35 questionnaires were completed by respondents. Of this number, 25 respondents were male, representing 71% of the total sample size. Female respondents made up 29% of the distribution, with a total of 10 respondents. These results demonstrate that male employees predominated at the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency among the sample of 35 employees.

**Table 4.2: Age of respondents**

**Table 4: Age of respondents**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age of respondents** | | | | | |
| Age | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|  | 18 to 35 years | 8 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 22.9 |
| 36 to 45 years | 14 | 40.0 | 40.0 | 62.9 |
| 46 to 55 years | 7 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 82.9 |
| Above 55years | 6 | 17.1 | 17.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

*[Source: Primary Data]*

The table above indicates that 40% of the respondents were between the ages of 36-45 years, representing the majority. The second largest group of respondents, comprising 22.9%, were aged between 18-35 years. Meanwhile, 20% of the respondents fell within the 46-55 age bracket, and the smallest group of respondents, making up 17.1%, were aged 55 years and above.

# 4.2.2 Educational level of respondents.

**Table 5: Educational Level**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Qualification | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Certificate | 4 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Diploma | 11 | 31 | 31 | 43 |
| Undergraduate | 9 | 26 | 26 | 69 |
| Postgraduate | 4 | 11 | 11 | 80 |
| PHD | 5 | 14 | 14 | 94 |
| Others | 2 | 6 | 6 | 100 |
| Total | 35 | 100 | 100.0 |  |

*Source: Primary Data*

The table above indicates that 11% of respondents possess a certificate, while most officers involved in public procurement hold diplomas (31% of respondents). Additionally, 26% of the respondents have undergraduate qualifications, while 11% have postgraduate degrees. A small percentage of respondents (14%) hold a PhD, and 6% have other qualifications. These individuals have the requisite academic and

intellectual competencies to comprehend the impacts of public procurement proceedings on the overall operational efficiency of the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency.

# 4.2.3 Work experience in the area of Specialization

**Figure 3: Work experience**



*Source: Primary data.*

Figure 4.2 above illustrates that most procurement employees at Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency have considerable experience in their particular domains. Specifically, 11 respondents reported having worked in the same area of specialization for 11-15 years, 6 respondents indicated they had spent 5 years or less in their areas of specialization at the public enterprise. Additionally, 8 respondents had been in the same area of specialization for 6-10 years at Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency. Furthermore, 6 respondents reported having worked in their areas of specialization for 16-20 years. Finally, the figure shows that 4 respondents have worked at the organization for 20 years or more, holding management and directorship roles at Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency.

# 4.3 Analysis of Dependent Variables

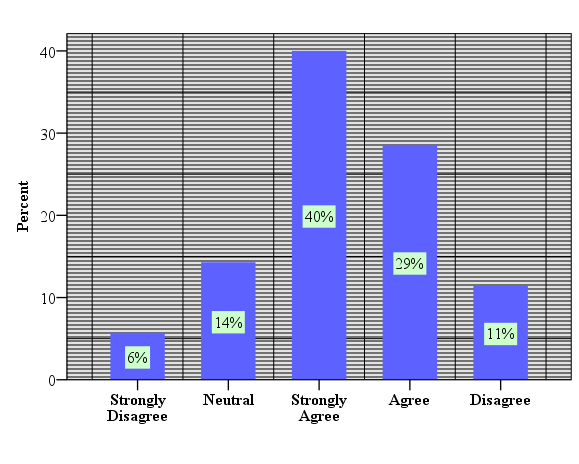
The respondents were asked to rate the key variables affecting the operational efficiency as major procurement procedures within the public sector under study. Below is the presentation of (key) factors affecting operational efficiency of a public enterprise in Zimbabwe.

# 4.3.1. Effectiveness of public procurement planning on operational efficiency at ZIMSTAT.

Section 20 of the PPDPA Act (2018) mandates all public entities in Zimbabwe to engage in procurement planning. The primary purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of public procurement practices on organizational performance at ZIMSTAT. The researcher specifically analyzed the efficacy of the existing procurement planning approach and its influence on organizational performance at ZIMSTAT.

**Figure 4.3 Effects of Public Procurement Planning Source**

**Figure 4: Effects of Public Procurement planning.**

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*Source: Primary data*

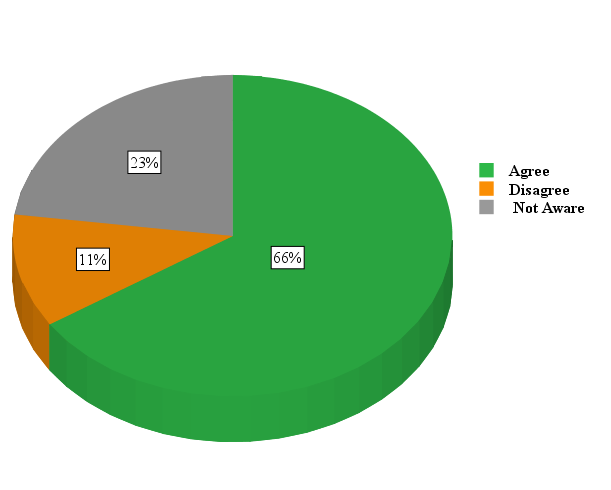
According to the figure above, 40% of respondents strongly agree that public procurement planning affects organizational expenditure, which ultimately influences organizational performance at ZIMSTAT. 29% of respondents have an ambiguous view, believing that public procurement planning may or may not affect organizational performance. 14% of respondents were neutral in their responses, while 11% disagreed with the notion that planning directly affects organizational expenditure. Finally, 6% of respondents strongly disagreed with the idea. Some respondents suggested the inclusion of general staff in the formulation of individual procurement plans to ensure that all procurements are aligned with the overall plan. Others were unsure since they were either not aware of the procurement plans or did not have sufficient information to make a definitive statement.

# 4.3.2 Effectiveness of public procurement documentation on operational efficiency at ZIMSTAT.

The PPDPA Act emphasizes the importance of appropriate procurement documentation and the use of procurement records in enhancing procurement efficiency and operational efficiency. In line with the primary objective of the study, the researcher evaluated whether procurement proceedings were adequately documented, from the initiation of a procurement need to the final payment of vendors. The PPDPA Regulations require accounting officers and procurement officers to maintain procurement records and documentation for ease of audit and record-keeping. To assess the extent to which public entities follow procurement documentation, the researcher utilized a pie chart.

**Fig 4.4: How public procurement documentation contributes to overall operational efficiency?**

**Figure 5: Effects of Public Documentation.**



*Source: primary data*

*Figure 4.4 Effects of Public Procurement Documentation*

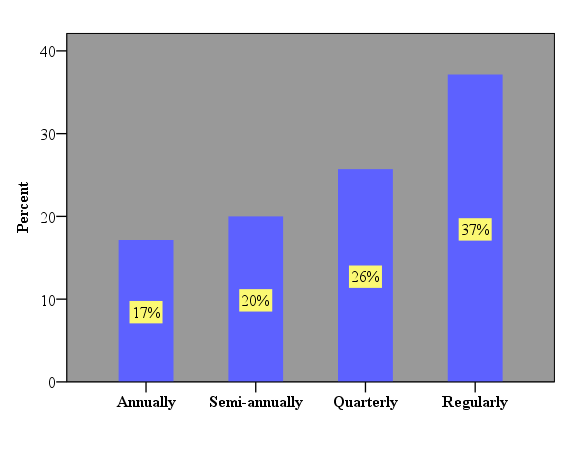
There were differing opinions among the respondents regarding the necessity of public procurement documentation. The majority of the respondents (66%) believed that it was essential to document procurement processes and label and code the files to facilitate effective contract administration, record management, and procurement audits. On the other hand, 11% of respondents felt that procurement documentation was unnecessary as most filed documents were found to be inaccurate. The remaining 23% had no clear opinion on the matter.

Respondents who disagreed argued that some procurement documents did not accurately capture the true state of things on the ground. They observed that procurement officials, accounting officers, accountants, technical personnel, and contractors sometimes colluded to produce fraudulent documentation to facilitate questionable payments when, in reality, no goods, works, or services were delivered as specified in the bid documents, or the quality was not up to par. Those who were not aware stated that there were no tangible financial benefits resulting from procurement documentation.

# 4.3.3 Contribution of Procurement Audits in Public Procurement Practices

Good public procurement practices call for audit of all procurement contracts audits periodically. This is to ensure that public procurement is being carried out with accordance to the PPDPA Act.

**Figure 6: Frequency of Audit of Public Procurement Practices and Procedures.**



***Fig 4.5 Frequency of Audit of Public Procurement Practices and Procedures Source: Primary data***

According to the survey, 37% of the respondents believed that public procurement audits were essential to ensure strict compliance with documentation, recording, minuting, and filing requirements outlined in the PPDPA, 2018. They also suggested that if audits were conducted more frequently, the procurement process would become more efficient, which would lead to decreased procurement costs. It is crucial to have effective expenditure control. Meanwhile, 26% stated that audits should done quarterly, as they felt that audits were not yielding practical benefits to public procurement practices. 20% advocated for semi-annual audits, while 17% did not think procurement audits were necessary, as some officials use them as a means of enriching themselves and that they should be conducted annually.

# 4.4 Summary

In this chapter, the data collected by the researcher was presented and analyzed using a variety of techniques- tables, pie charts, and bar charts. The data revealed that most respondents believed that inefficiencies in public procurement procedures led to a decrease in the overall operational efficiency of state-owned enterprises. The researcher recommends that all public entities within Zimbabwe adopt the best procurement practices to improve their organizational efficiency. These findings are significant as they served as the basis for the next chapter's summaries, conclusions, and recommendations.

# CHAPTER V

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# 5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a conclusion and summary of our research study's outcomes on the impact of public procurement practices on operational efficiency at Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT). We present our findings on how public procurement practices and procedures affect operational efficiency and make suggestions that can be useful to other public institutions. Additionally, we seek to investigate research networks that can advance the study of public procurement procedures in organizations.

# 5.1 Summary of the findings

The primary aim of this study was to assess the impact of public procurement practices on operational efficiency at ZIMSTAT. The researcher was motivated to deepen their understanding of what effective implementation of public procurement procedures entails, as it has a significant bearing on an organization's performance and expenditure control. Moreover, the study aimed to investigate the influence of key components such as public procurement planning, documentation, and adherence to the PPDPA Act in Zimbabwe's public sector procurement procedures. The study found that most respondents were aware of the Act, as evidenced by their responses to the questionnaires and interviews and their familiarity with the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe website, which provides updated information.

In practice, most departments fail to adhere to their procurement plans as the national government prioritizes the overall organizational plans instead. Furthermore, procurement at ZIMSTAT does not begin until the project account receives the allocated cash. The drawback to this is that if there are delays in receiving allocated funds, the project's completion will be prolonged, causing inflation and interest to raise the procurement costs. The study suggests that it is necessary to adopt proper public procurement practices in compliance with the PPDPA Act. However, there may be insufficient information available, highlighting the need for additional training for various organizational departments, including finance and stores, who work closely with procurement at ZIMSTAT.

As the Act is subject to amendment, it is crucial to keep abreast of the latest developments. The research findings reveal that the absence of top management support and the complexity of supply chain monitoring make it challenging to eliminate corrupt practices. These challenges need to be addressed over time with the Act serving as the primary guide for public sector procurement. The study also highlights the inadequate adherence to transparency and integrity in procurement practices at ZIMSTAT and emphasizes the importance of procurement planning in expenditure control. It is essential to ensure that procurement activities only commence when funds are available and in line with procurement requirements.

The significance of proper documentation and filing in the procurement process cannot be overstated. These documents serve as the basis for payment and audit procedures. Despite the belief that public procurement documentation enhances service delivery, the research has shown that these documents do not always reflect the true nature of procurement transactions, primarily due to the incompetence of some employees involved in procurement activities. In many instances, documents are falsified to embezzle government funds through public procurement, which highlights the need for improvement in the public sector procurement system.

The study findings indicate that procurement documents that adhere to the PPDPA Act and PPDPA (general) regulations provide accurate records of procurement proceedings. Furthermore, accurate documentation can ensure that payments are made only for goods delivered, works completed, and services rendered. However, the analysis revealed that even if documentation and filing conform to the legal and regulatory framework for procurement, these documents may still fail to provide an accurate representation of the procurement process. In many cases, officials responsible for procurement lack integrity, and these documents may be used to embezzle public funds through public procurement. This constitutes an area that needs to be addressed. Despite attempts to improve service delivery through public procurement practices, the study found major concerns that had not been fully addressed.

The public procurement audit did not necessarily lead to high-quality and efficient service delivery, indicating that improvements in service delivery may be elusive. In addition, the findings indicated that non-involvement of department heads in contract management adversely affected service delivery, and measures should be taken to improve this area. Staff members expressed dissatisfaction and demoralization due to prolonged delivery lead times, which impacted the quality and delivery of services, resulting in frequent stock-outs.

It can be concluded that procurement documentation and planning in the public sector have been reasonably effective, although adherence to the Public Procurement Act framework needs improvement. The research data was analyzed using the SPSS software package, with the results of the regression analysis and conclusions presented. The use of the SPSS software package led to statistical findings. The model identified three variables that showed a positive relationship with the independent variable.

# 5.2 Conclusions

The study revealed a correlation between an organization's purchasing policies and efficiency. The majority of the analysis and recommendations were based on the research objectives, and it was concluded that public procurement practices affect the operational efficiency of state-owned businesses. Effective structures and mechanisms in the procurement process enable transparency, accountability, cost savings, and improved quality and specifications. The regularity of the workforce significantly contributed to the organization's operational efficiency, with over half of the procurement staff working for the organization for more than five years. This long-term experience helps minimize waste and optimize resource utilization.

However, the staff still requires guidance in utilizing technology effectively. Continuous skill enhancement, particularly in the information technology sector, should be emphasized due to the industry's constantly changing landscape. Last but not least, if an organization wants its workers to uphold ethical standards, it must serve as an example by upholding such standards with fairness and equity. The organization's leaders shouldn't interfere in any manner with the procurement process. It is also reasonable to say that public procurement practices directly affect how well publicly held companies operate as a whole.

# 5.3 Recommendations

Zimbabwe's government has the responsibility of utilizing public sector institutions to provide goods, works, and services that cater to the needs of its citizens. The procurement process must undergo streamlining to ensure that public funds are used wisely. Public procurement is crucial for the performance of public entities. To achieve this, officers involved in public procurement should be familiar with the PPDPA Act 2018, PPDPA regulations, SI 2018 (S.I 5 of 2018), and Public Procurement Manual. Procurement should only begin when funds are available and strictly follow ZIMSTAT’s annual procurement plan to prevent delays and increased costs due to inflation and interest rates.

Apart from the above recommendations, it is also recommended that the public owned organisations must endorse ethical procurement procedures and make copies of these in the form of booklets to all professionals involved in public procurement practices. Public owned organisations must also make sure that supplier selection procedures are aligned to Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDPA) Act and Regulations (General). This help minimize conflicts of interests amongst public procurement officials.

# 5.4 Recommendation for Further Research

The research might have enclosed numerous areas but further research still needs to be done to avoid swallowing information. To establish benchmarks, private sector companies should undergo a similar research exercise, while companies in the goods industry should also receive comparable scrutiny for generalization purposes. Additionally, from this research it is evidenced that public procurement procedures impact on operational efficiency of state owned enterprises. Therefore, researchers should also consider carrying out a research on the e-procurement environment.

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# APPENDICES

**Appendix 1: Questionnaire**

**Section A: Background Information**

1. Gender

Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age of Respondents

18 to 35 years [ ] 36 to 45 years [ ] 46 to 55 years [ ] above 55years [ ]

3. Level of Education

Certificate [ ] Diploma [ ] Undergraduate [ ] Postgraduate [ ] PHD [ ] Others [ ]

4. Position held………………………………………………………………

5. Work experience in the area of specialisation

5years and below [ ] 6 to 10 years [ ] 11 to 15 years [ ] 16 to 20 years [ ] above 20 years [ ]

**Section B**

**Section 21(1) of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets [PPDPA] Act, 2018 make procurement planning mandatory to all public institutions.**

**6. Procurement planning has great effect on operational efficiency**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree |  |
| Agree |  |
| Neutral |  |
| Disagree |  |
| Strongly Disagree |  |

**Section C: public procurement documentation**

Indicate how public procurement documentation contributes to overall operational efficiency

Kindly point out the level of extent to which you approve with the following statements

**7. Public procurement documentation contributes to operational efficiency?**

Agree Disagree Not aware

**8. Procurement audits improve operational efficiency if carried out………………….**

Annually Semi-annually Quarterly Regularly

**Appendix 2: Interview Guide**

**1. Does public procurement practices affect operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT?**

**2. What are the effects of public procurement planning on operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT?**

**3. How public procurement documentation contributes to overall operational efficiency of ZIMSTAT?**

**THANK YOU!**