

Schools' Financial Standing and the Implementataion of Public Procurement Regulations in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study sough to explore the influence of financial standing on the implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools in Mbooni West sub-County in Makueni County, Kenya. The objective of this study was to determine the influence of school fees payment on the public procurement regulations in public secondary schools in Mbooni-West Sub-County in Makueni County Kenya. The study was guided by Stewardship Theory. Descriptive survey design was used in this study. The study targeted 31 public secondary schools. A total of 31 schools principals were targeted. The study employed simple random sampling method to determine the sample size. The study sampled 29 principle for the study. Two public secondary schools from Mbooni-West Sub-County were used for pilot study which were not used in the actual study. The research tools used for the study were questionnaires. Self-administration of the questionnaires was done by the researcher to the sampled principals. The reliability of the research tools was ascertained through test-re test. The research tools validity was ascertained in schools which were not involved in the actual study. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in a pie chart. The findings shown in the figure 1 indicates that 53 percent of the principals indicated that the school fees payment was irregular. 33percent of the principals indicated that the school fees payment was piece meal while 14 percent of the principals indicated that the school fees payment was regular. Form the findings, it is observed that the school payment was a big challenge. The study recommends that the schools should put in place strict fees payments by the parents. The school principals should be exposed to in-service training on public procurement regulations. The government should release the capitation fund on time to enable the smooth implementation of public procurement policies. The study also recommends that the principals should engage in flexible agreements with the suppliers to finance schools on credit and receive payments when funds are available.

Keyword: Financial Standing, fees payment and procurement regulations.

INTRODUCTION

Financial standing is the financial health and strength of an individual, company or organization like a school. It indicates their ability to meet financial obligations, manage and service debts and maintain a stable financial position. Basically, financial standing is essentially a measure of how well an individual or an organization is doing financially. Procurement regulations is the guidelines of utilization of financial resources in a given organization (Al Dalayeen (2017). Procurement is the acquisition of goods and services for ownership.

Globally, public procurement is a very vital aspect of government acquisition of goods and services for government departments. These government institutions and departments are supplied goods and services through public procurement guidelines (Uyarra& Flanagan, 2019).

In the United Kingdom, the public procurement plays a key role in the acquisition of goods and services of government institutions in order for them to achieve their missions, goals, objectives and preparations for the future uncertainties. Proper procurement process ensures that organizations acquires quality and quantity

goods and services at the right time and at reasonable prices. The public procurement and disposal Act was coined on 1st January 2007. The aim of this was to ensure clear procedure of acquisition of goods and services in public institutions.

In developed countries such as United States, Australia and European countries, advance financial support promotes the public procurement systems. In these countries, school are advantaged by adequate funding making it to effectively comply with the public procurement guidelines to deliver quality education hence quality outcomes(OECD, 2019). The schools in these countries benefit greatly financially from the local taxes and very minimal fees payments hence supporting procurement.

In other countries like India, schools receive great support from the school fees payment which makes procurement successful and effective enabling the acquisition of quality goods and services (Ahmed and Hassan 2020)

In developing countries in Africa are faced with challenge of poverty in the implementation of public procurement in public schools. In Zimbabwe, both public and private schools face challenge due to unpaid school fees (Mehmeti, 2016).

In Tanzania, public procurement is challenges by both internal and external problems of the learning institutions. The government allocates inadequate financial resources to schools making them to suffer inefficient procurement procedures. The schools do not receive capitation allocations in time. Also the parents delay fees payment in schools. (Ogwel et al, (2016)

The establishment of procurement and Asset Disposal Act (2015) in Kenya made effort to ensure effective implementation of the public procurement in public school. Despite the effort, public schools are still faced with the problem of implementation of the public procurement since they receive inadequate fund resulting from school fees defaults and late release of the government capitation fund in schools.

In Mbooni-West Sub-County, schools are facing challenges while implementing public procurement despite the effort to counter the challenge by the government and hence the need to address this knowledge gap was necessary in establishing the financial schools drawback to effective procurement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the existence of Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act (2015) guidelines and regulations on public procurement, schools in Mbooni West Sub-County still face the challenge of implementing the public Procurement. The major challenge is the lack of financial standing among the schools which varies one institution to the other. Many schools face financial challenges making them not to meet the public procurement. The schools struggle to pay creditors in time as well as sourcing for efficient tenders. Schools with inadequate finances may not be in a position to purchase quality goods and service in a school. These financial crisis may lead to delay in sourcing the school goods and services or lead schools to running schools in huge credits. The insufficient finances leads schools not to progress in the school development programs. This also leads schools from servicing workers' salaries and other recurring expenditures. In the other hand, schools with adequate finances allocation are in a position to effectively implement the public procurement regulations and guidelines. Schools with challenges of finance are faced with the learning outcomes. This is because of lack or delay in the provision of teaching and learning resources. The therefore makes this study relevant since it seeks in establishing the factors behind the procurement. There is little research on the factors determining the implementation of public procurement in public secondary schools and hence the need for this study to fill that knowledge gap.

Study Objective

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of school fees payment on public procurement in public secondary school in Mbooni West Sub-County of Makueni County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School financing in form of school fees is key for the implementation of public procurement regulations globally. Learning institutions learn to put in place effective procurement policies so as to ensure acquisition of quality goods and services. This will also enhance accountability and transparency in schools (World Bank, 2021). The problems experienced by schools during the implementation of the public procurement policy negatively affects the laid down objectives of a school. The procurement regulation points out six objectives. The financial challenges reduce the efficiency in acquisition of the goods and services in a school. Delayed fees payment by the parents negatively affects the implementation of public procurement guidelines in schools. By not putting public procurement guidelines and regulations in place, the school may be faced with challenges of corruption, honesty and bias in awarding tenders.

A study conducted in China to evaluate the schools' financial standing and implementation of public procurement regulations in public universities found out that delayed fees payment by parents and inadequate capitation significantly influence the procurement policy. The study also found out that students in China are exposed to many financial products which include credit cards and online payment systems which may delay payment of academic fees due to delayed systems (Yao et al., 2022).

On the other hand, the rising cost of education is challenging the access of university students in China hence reducing the number of students at the universities. This leads to inadequate financial resources to support procurement implementation due to difficulties in budgeting (L. Li, 2024).

Oladirin et al. (2013) did a study to investigate how procurement methods impacted by school fees payment in public secondary schools in Nigeria. The study found out that most procurement methods are based on traditional approach due to the delayed financing by parents and also by the government. The study also found out that the goods and services purchased by schools are of poor quality. The study concluded that the methods used in procurement none of them is a one-size-fits-all solution since one method may succeed while other methods may fail depending on financial availability.

Watermeyer and Phillipps (2020:63) conducted a study in South Africa and found out that schools' financial standing influence that policy of public procurement in public secondary schools. The study reviewed that inadequate funds in public schools affect negatively the implementation of procurement policies in South Africa. This challenge is a result of delayed disbursement of schools' capitation fund to learning institutions and huge fees balances in schools. Further the study found that perennial poor policies in implementation of public policy procurement negatively affected the schools' public procurement policy.

In Kenya, Mulwa (2025) conducted a study to investigate schools' financial standing on the implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub-county in Kitui County Kenya found irregular fees payment and piecemeal was reported by 43.5% of the principals which negatively affects the implementation of public procurement regulations in public secondary schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Macmillan and Schumacher (2001:166) defines research design as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer research questions. The study employed descriptive design to analyse the data collected. Orodho (2009) research design is a general layout utilized in responding to research questions. A research design that is appropriate where a problem is defined (Kombo and Tromp 2009). The study targeted 31 public secondary schools in Mbooni West Sub-County in Makueni County which had been registered by ministry of education. A target population is The 31 principals were targeted in the study. A sample size is a selected population to represent the characters of the entire target population (Kothari, 2004). The study adopted simple random sampling to select sample size of 29 principals. The purpose of pilot study in research is to ascertain the validity and reliability of the research tools (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). A pilot study was conducted using two schools which were not involved in the actual study. The pilot study was done

through random sampling. The questionnaires were used to collect data. The researcher did self-administration of the questionnaires to the responded. The collected data was coded and analyzed descriptively and presented in a pie chart.

RESEARCH RESULTS

School fees payments and implementation of public procurement regulations

The school principals were asked to respond appropriately on the school fees payment. Their responses were presented in a pie chart figure 1.

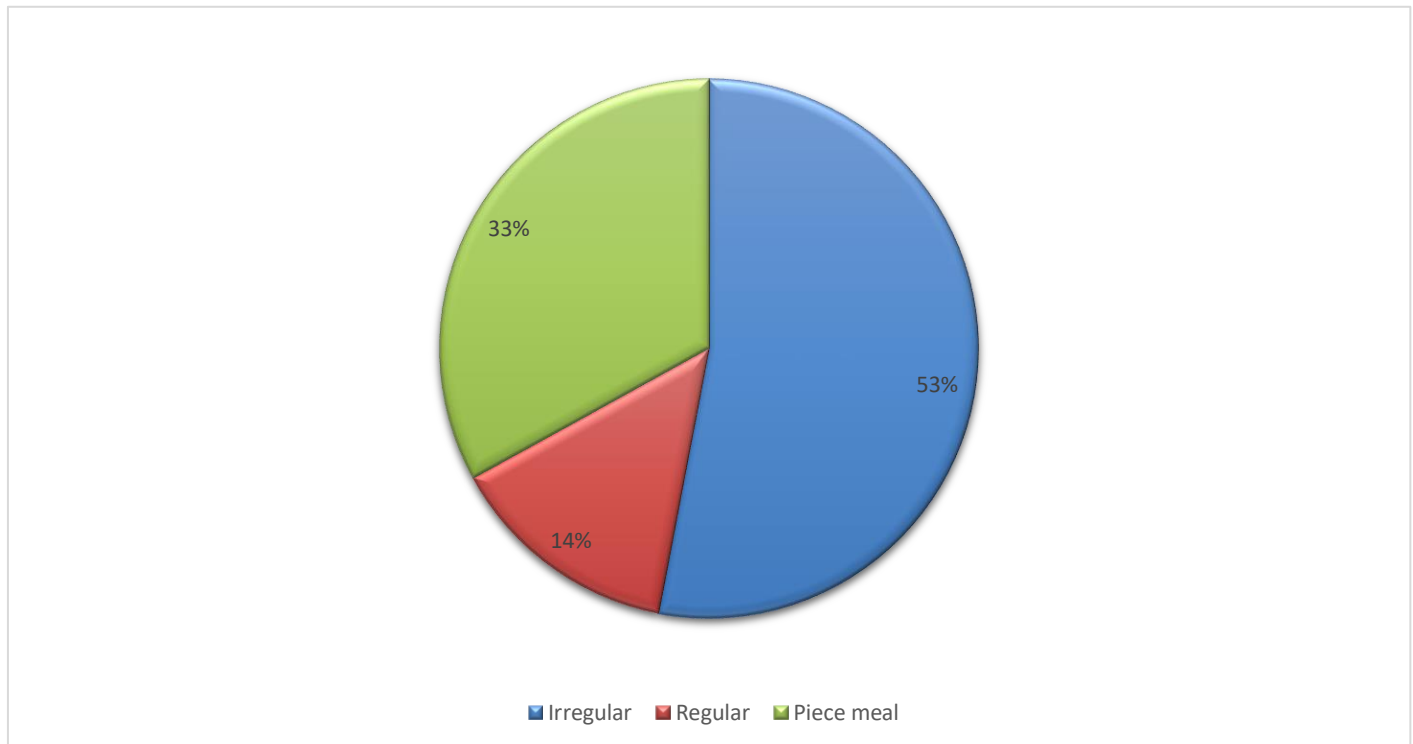


Figure 1 school fees payment in schools.

The findings shown in the figure 1 indicates that 53 percent of the principals indicated that the school fees payment was irregular. 33percent of the principals indicated that the school fees payment was piece meal while 14 percent of the principals indicated that the school fees payment was regular. Form the findings, it is observed that the school payment was a big challenge.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULT FINDINGS

The study found out that 53 percent of the school principals indicated that fees payment was irregular. The study also established that 33 percent of the heads of institutions indicated that schools fees payment was in piece meal while only 14 percent of the principals indicated that the fees payment was regular. This research finding indicates that schools do not have enough finance to enable them adhere to public procurement regulations. The findings also means that the schools are forced to acquire goods and services on credit from the suppliers to be paid once the funds are available. When school have no money, then it becomes a big challenge for the heads of the institutions to acquire quality goods and services as well as complying with the public procurement regulations. The findings of this research concurs with the findings of Mulwa (2025) who found the struggle in the implementation of Public Procurement Regulations in Mwingi Sub-County in Kitui County Kenya. The result of this study also agrees with the findings of Oladirin et al. (2013) in Nigeria who revealed that delayed fees payment leads to struggle of public institutions to meet the public procurement regulations.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the adherence of the public procurement regulation remains a challenge. This is because the research revealed 53 percent of the school fees payment was irregular. This means that the aspect of accountability and transparency is a nightmare. This means that school are struggling to actualize public procurement regulations due to lack of adequate finances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the schools should put in place strict fees payments by the parents. The school principals should be exposed to in-service training on public procurement regulations. The government should release the capitation fund on time to enable the smooth implementation of public procurement policies. The study also recommends that the principals should engage in flexible agreements with the suppliers to finance schools on credit and receive payments when funds are available.

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