

Factors Affecting Women Vendors Participation in Public Procurement and Contract Management in County Government in Kenya: A Case of Narok County

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Abstract: The specific objective of the study was to find out the effect of cultural impediments on participation of women vendors in public procurement and contract management activities in Narok county government. The study adopted a case study research design. The population of the study constituted all registered women vendors operating in Narok County who are 115. Census method was used as the sampling method where all the registered women vendors and the county procurement officers were considered. A Questionnaire was used to collect data. Validity and reliability was ascertained before using the questionnaire for the actual data collection. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 and more and a validity coefficient of 0.6 and more was considered appropriate. The quantitative data was coded and entered into Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS) Version 21.0 and analyzed using descriptive statistics where frequencies and percentages were computed and inferential statistics where Pearson's correlation analysis and multivariate linear regression was computed. The study established that organizational culture did not give them chance to participate in the process. The study therefore concluded that women vendors are at a disadvantage to participate in public procurement process because of organizational culture. The study recommends that there is need for the organizations in the public sector to enhance their culture to be accommodative for women and hence enhance their participation in public procurement

Keywords: Contract, E-procurement, Public procurement and Women participation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public procurement is increasingly being recognized as a vehicle to help governments to achieve social goals and sustainable economic development (World Trade Organization (WTO), 2013). Within the Commonwealth, South Africa and Malaysia are two examples of countries where public procurement policy has been used to empower previously disenfranchised populations and thus pursue the goal of equitable sustainable development (International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), 2013). According to Commonwealth Secretariat (2011) Government procurement programmes, largely in member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), attach additional conditions to government contractors, designed to raise environmental and/or social standards. These conditions include improvement of women's rights. Unlocking government procurement for businesses owned by women could be one route to using trade as a vehicle for increasing the benefits of economic development for women. Policy-makers continue to make the case that if inclusive, accelerated GDP growth is to be achieved, women's economic empowerment must be embedded in our communities. Yet, governments are not alone in this drive towards unleashing the potential of women business owners in the supply chain. We are at a time of significant global demographic change, which is driving major multinational corporations to create new opportunities for women as leaders, managers, employees and agents of change and value, both as suppliers and consumers (World Trade Organization (WTO), 2013).

Statement of the problem:

Government procurement offers a unique, fiscally responsible route to empower women, combat poverty and promote inclusive economic growth. Public procurement accounts for as much as 10–15% of gross domestic product (GDP) in developed countries and over 30% of GDP in developing countries. This translates into trillions of dollars of government spending annually. To date, however, women entrepreneurs have been largely excluded from this sizeable market due to lack of access to information on bids, understanding of procedures and ability to meet requirements. As both market regulators and participants, governments are in a unique position to change this and benefit from enlarging the pool of potential suppliers.

Although Gender issues have emerged to global prominence in the last couple of decades (UN Millennium Project, 2005). Yet, women in Kenya continue to suffer marginalization in terms of access to economic incentives. Efforts aimed at dealing with this marginalization as outlined in national procurement rules and procedures, continue to be undermined by short-term political expediencies. For instance the achievement of provision of legal notice 114 of June 2013 that reserves 30% of procurement opportunities to the youth, women & persons with disabilities is still not enforced 4 four years down the line. Quite often, public procurement is considered as part and parcel of privatization, given that the latter broadly refers to the transfer, shift or change of control, ownership or service provision from the public to the private sector through a variety of means, including divestiture, franchising, contracting-out, leasing and liberalization (deregulation) among others (Therkildsen & Semboja, 1995). In principle, the main difference between the two terms is that under public procurement, the private sector provision of works, goods or services is clearly defined by the public authorities that continue to bear the full responsibility for the success or failure of the projects that have been contracted out.

Objectives:

1. To examine the effects of resource on women participation in public procurement in county government in Kenya.
2. To assess the effect of competency and skills on women participation in public procurement in county government in Kenya.
3. To determine the effect of technology on women participation in public procurement in county government in Kenya.
4. To establish the effect of organizational culture on women participation in public procurement in county government in Kenya.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW**Institutional Theory:**

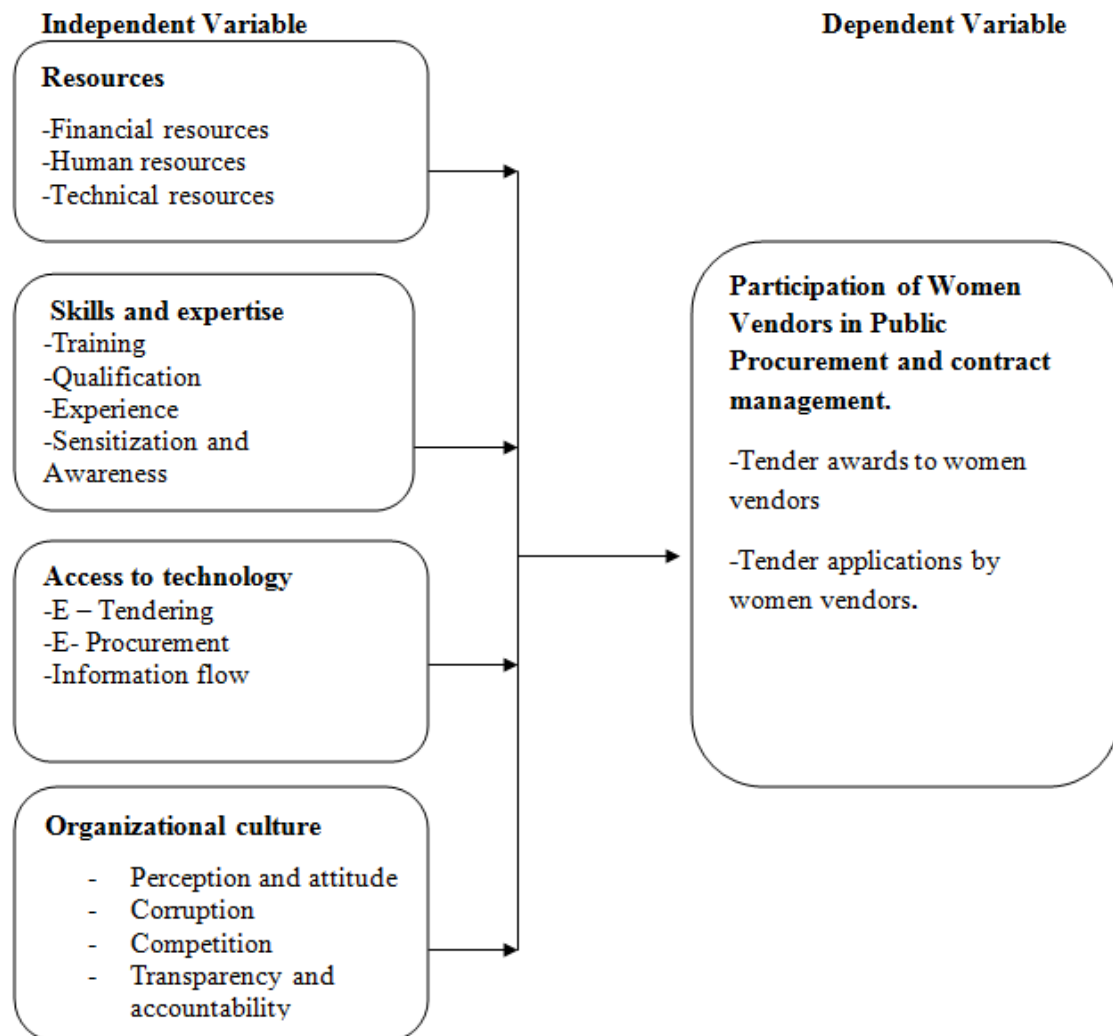
Najeeb (2014) asserts that the study of institutions traverses the academic fields of economics, sociology, political science and organizational theory. According to Kaufman (2011), the common denominator for institutionalism in various disciplines appears to be that of, institutions matter. Hence, organizational practices are either a direct reflection of, or response to, rules and structures built into their larger than the environment (Paauwe & Boselie 2003). In public procurement and contract management, different institutions interact in order to meet the needs of each other while abiding to the set rules and regulations established by the government. There are three pillars of institutions as regulatory, normative and cultural cognitive as identified by Scott (2004). The regulatory pillar emphasizes the use of rules, laws and sanctions as enforcement mechanism, with expedience as the basis of compliance. The normative pillar refers to norms and values with social obligation as the basis for compliance.

System theory:

In Systems theory, Wang (2005) refers to information in the sense that assuming information does not necessarily involve any conscious mind, and patterns circulating (due to feedback) in the system can be called information. In other words, it can be said that information in this sense is something potentially perceived as representation, though not created or presented for that purpose. According to Kang'ethe (2002), a system is a group of related and interacting components, which work together to achieve a desired purpose or set of objectives. Kang'ethe (2002), the need for efficiency and effectiveness therefore brings forth another need of ensuring harmony and synergy between the human resource as the core resource that controls other resources on the one hand and the other tools of trade, in particular modern ICT on the other hand so as to realize the objectives of office secretarial management. There is therefore the clear need to understand

the perception of human resource and areas with potential for conflict in the course of interaction between the human resource and modern ICT.

Conceptual Framework



Research gaps:

A number of research studies have been carried out on trade, gender and public procurement; factors affecting procurement performance; experiences small vender companies and youth participation in government procurement; women empowering through public procurement; among others. There is however, very little that has been done with regard to factors influencing women participation in public procurement and contract management in county governments specifically in Kenya. Literature has clearly shown that despite the numerous opportunities available in public procurement, few women effectively participate in the same, due to numerous factors. This study established that there was little research in Kenya on the topic hence there is little evidence of the implementation of the various legal requirements for the 30% procurement rule. The different underlying factors that shape women participation in public procurement and contract management have been discussed as presented on the conceptual framework.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was descriptive research design. The target population was constitute all the 115 women vendors registered by the department of commerce and industry in Narok County and the procurement officers at the county government of Narok. The researcher used questionnaires as research instruments to collect data to study. Census is a sampling technique was employed to select respondents. The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis purpose.

Model:

The study employed time series multiple regression method. In this study the following was the regression equations that were used to test the significance of the study hypotheses:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \alpha$$

Where: Y = women vendors participation in public Procurement and contract management Opportunities.

X₁ - X_n: factors affecting women vendors' participation in public Procurement and contract management Opportunities

B₀ – Constants of the Model

β₁ – β_n : Co-efficient of determination

α – Stochastic Error Terms

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organizational culture:

The study sought to address the challenge of women financial capability and which affects their participation in public procurement. The respondents who in this case are women vendors were asked to respond by indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. The respondents were required to rate the statements on a five scale Likert where SD- strongly disagree; D= disagree; N- neutral; A= agree and SA= strongly agree. The results indicated that most of the women 88.9% who participated in the study strongly agreed that the counties do not adhere to the legal requirement of setting aside 30% of government procurement opportunities to the women vendors, This was confirmed by the overall mean response of (M= 4.89). This suggests that despite the 30% requirement for women to be given tenders in public procurement many county governments do not observe this requirement and hence it influences women participation in public procurement.

The study also sought to establish the views of the women on the provisions in the Kenyan constitution that makes it favorable for the women vendors to be empowered. The results shows that majority of the respondents 78.8% strongly agreed with the statement that county governments do not give the chance for women to participate in public procurement. The overall mean response of M= 4.79 suggests that despite the Kenyan constitution clearly making it favorable for women to participate in public procurement, the county governments have not taken the initiative to assist the women in participating in the procurement process. This supports the argument of Brody (2009) that experiences from around the globe, including Commonwealth countries, indicates that affirmative action is more readily acceptable where there is a historical reference to past discrimination.

On whether the regulation on communication of awards for special groups such as the women vendors is inadequate, the results show that most of the respondents 81.8% strongly agreed with the statement. This suggests that most women vendors indicated that communication on regulations concerning award of tenders to special groups such as women was not done effectively and this influenced the participation of women in public procurement. The study also sought to examine whether women vendors felt that the county does not comply with the requirement for reporting contract awards from the special group to the PPOA. The results show that majority of the respondents 79.8% strongly agreed with the statement indicating that county government does not support the women vendors because it does not comply with the requirement for reporting contract awards.

The results also noted that majority of the respondents 81.8% strongly agreed with the statement that the regulations on advertising / communication of opportunities for special groups such as the women vendors is inadequate. This suggests that women vendors were unable to effectively participate in public procurement at the county government because they were not able to access adverts and other communications on procurement. The results also show that majority of the respondents 83.8% strongly agreed that the regulations on 'preference and reservations' to special groups such as the women vendors are not clear on how the allocation should be done in the budget and procurement plans. This indicates that though the 30% is provided for in the constitution to but there is still a change on the directions about the budget allocation and reservation to cater for the needs of the women vendors.

The results also indicated that majority of the respondents 79.8% felt that there is too much corruption which affects participation of women vendors in public procurement. The results show that the procurement process of the county government is still influenced by too much corruption which affects the effective participation of women in the process. This suggests that organizational culture that has existed at the county governments has had a negative effect on the participation of women in public procurement and contracts. These results support the findings of Lisa (2010) and Rice (2007) who established that culture has been a key influencing factor in the participation of women in public procurement. Most women are unable to participate because their culture does not give them the freedom to do business.

The study further sought to establish whether there was a significant relationship between organizational culture and women vendors' participation in public procurement and contracts. Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed and the results showed that there was positive correlation which is very significant between organizational culture and women vendors participation on public procurement and contracts at the county government ($R=0.444^{***}$ P-value.000). This suggests that organizational culture has an influence on women vendors' participation in public procurement and contracts at the county governments. In a UNEP (2009) report it was also established that there is a correlation between organizational culture women participation in public procurement.

The Regression model summary was used to establish the magnitude of the relationship between the variables of study. The study used the model to explain by how much organizational culture affects the level of women vendors' participation in public procurement and contract at the county government.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of resources, competency and skills, technology and organizational culture on women participation in public procurement. The study also concludes that the organizational structure has a very significant influence on the participation of women in public procurement and hence there is need to have emphasis placed on the factor to enhance women participation in public procurement in county governments.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the responses the study recommends that; It is also recommended that women should take the initiative and adopt the use of technology in their procurement process. Technology is able to assist them in achieving the most critical information on procurement and hence create a competitive edge.

Suggestions for Further Research:

This study proposes that a further study that will be done to establish whether the results from this study can be generalized to other counties. Other studies to consider other organizations to check whether the results obtained can be considered for other institutions like schools and universities

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