



**Dynamic of procurement processes and application: The case of the University of
KwaZulu-Natal**

By

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. Thank you very much for your support, sacrifices and encouragement.

Table of content

Abstract	xi
Chapter 1	1
1.1 Introduction and Background	1
Introduction	1
Background	2
1.2 Background of the study	2
1.3 Research Problem	6
1.4 Purpose of the study	7
1.5. Research Objectives	8
1.7 Significance of the study	9
1.8 Research Methodology	10
1.8.1 Design of the study	10
1.8.2 Research Approach	11
1.8.3 Study Site	12
1.8.4 Target Population	13
1.8.5 Sampling	13
1.8.6 Sample Size	13
1.8.7 Data Collection Methods	13
1.8.8 Data Analysis	13
1.9 Ethical Considerations	14
1.10 Dissertation Structure	14
Chapter 2	16
2. Literature Review	16
2.1 Development of Supply chain Management Concept in South Africa	16
2.2 Best practices concept	18
2.3 Overview of procurement processes	21
2.3.1 identifying the requirement/ Recognising the need	22
2.3.2 Identify the requirements/need specification	22
2.3.3 Sourcing	22

2.3.4	Price and Terms are negotiated and finalized	23
2.3.5	Purchase order and requisition	23
2.3.6	Purchase order delivery	23
2.3.7	Expediting	23
2.3.8	Inspection and supply of goods/ services	23
2.3.9	The payment process	23
2.3.10	Maintaining and examining records	24
2.4	Application of the policy according to the Constitutional Act at the University of KwaZulu Natal	24
2.4.1	The policy states the following processes of procurement.	26
2.4.2	The policy regulations further state the roles involved:	34
2.4.2.1	End Users	34
2.4.2.2	Legal Experts	35
2.4.2.3	Technical Experts	35
2.4.2.4	external advisors	35
2.4.2.5	Central Procurement Office (CPO) and Designated Procurement Office (DPO)	35
2.4.2.6	Bid Specification Committee (BSC)	36
2.4.2.7	Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC)	36
2.4.2.8	Bid adjudication committee (BAC)	37
2.4.2.9	Mini Tender Committee (MTC)	37
2.4.2.10	Procurement Committees	38
2.5	legal framework guiding Procurement in South African Universities	38
2.6	Global review	39
2.7	South African review	47
2.8	Procurement best practices in SAHEI	50
2.9	Summary of the chapter	52
Chapter 3		54
3.1	Research design	54
3.1.1	Exploratory Design	55
3.1.2	Descriptive Design	55
3.1.3	Explanatory Design	55
3.2	Research Approach	55
3.2.1	Qualitative approach	56
3.2.2	Quantitative Approach	56

3.2.3 Mixed Approach	57
3.3 Target Population	58
3.4 Sampling Design	58
3.4.1 Non-Probability sampling	58
3.4.2 Probability Sampling	59
3.5 Sampling Size	60
3.6 Data Collection and Time Horizon	62
3.7 Research Paradigm	62
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS	63
3.9 Ethical Considerations	68
3.10 Summary of the chapter	68
4. Research findings	69
4.1 Introduction	69
4.2 SECTION A Demographics	69
4.3 Thematic Analysis	72
4.3.1 Theme 1: Current understanding of procurement processes	77
4.3.1.2 Expediting, Vetting and Approval	82
4.3.1.3 Suppliers	85
4.3.1.3.1 Master File and external suppliers	85
4.3.1.3.2 Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB)	85
4.3.2 Theme 2: Effectiveness and Value	86
4.3.2.1 Effectiveness of procurement processes and Value creation	86
4.3.2.2 Value Creation through Procurement	87
4.3.2.2.1 Early Involvement in Procuring Research Equipment	88
4.3.2.2.3 Committees and experts	88
4.3.2.3 Ineffectiveness of procurement processes	89
4.3.2.3.1 System Inefficiency (Lack of database and multiple steps of routing)	89
4.3.2.3.2 Policy Limitations (Outdated policy, Incognisant of research, Lack of SOP's and policy awareness)	89
4.3.2.3.3 College vs. Central Disjoint(Information dissemination, Evaluation of model and SARS compliance)	90
4.3.2.3.4 Budget and Costing (Lack of budget awareness, no procurement plan and cost estimation errors)	90
4.3.2.4 Lack of value	91
4.3.2.4.1 Process and Controls (Lack of internal controls, lack of strategic communication and Supplier	

evaluation and manual systems)	91
4.3.2.5 Attainment of Economies of Scale Through Purchases	92
4.3.2.5.1 PURCO	92
4.3.3 Theme 3: Policy and Regulations	93
4.3.3.1 Provision of Adequate Guidelines Relating to Relevant Acts	94
4.3.3.1.1 In Alignment with relevant Acts.	94
4.3.3.1.2 Minimal Alignment (Lack of Comprehensive guidelines and challenges with regulations impacting on international standards)	94
4.3.3.2 Influence of Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act	95
4.3.3.2.2 Equality in Bidding	95
4.3.3.2.3 Subcontracting (Empowering smaller businesses)	95
4.3.3.2.4 Enforcement (Promoting Transformation)	96
4.3.3.3 Public procurement policies and regulations of the national treasury (2017) and their influence the university procurement policy.	96
4.3.3.3.1 Influence of Public Procurement Policies	96
4.3.3.4 Acquisitions versus National treasurer regulations of 2017	97
4.3.3.4.1 Subcontracting	97
4.3.3.4.2 Ratio rule	97
4.3.3.4.3 Not entirely Aligned with the National treasury Regulations.	98
4.3.3.4.4 Customisation, implementation and interpretation	98
4.3.3.5 Successful application of regulations in conjunction with procurement-based practices	99
4.3.3.5.1 Regulations vs. Innovation	99
4.3.3.5.2 Quality vs. Cost	99
4.3.3.5.3 Policy Inclusion	100
4.3.3.5.4 Government Influence	100
4.3.4 Theme 4 :Procurement versus Supply chain	101
4.3.4.1 Status of evolvement to supply chain management	101
4.3.4.1.1 Have not evolved (Absence of Supply chain Elements, Budgeting, Model, System and record keeping)	101
4.3.4.1.2 Partially (Only procurement element and Research department purchases)	102
4.3.4.2 Applicability of the principles of supply chain	103
4.3.4.2.1 Fairness	103
4.3.4.2.2 Transparency	104
4.3.4.2.3 Competitiveness	104
4.3.4.2.4 Cost effectiveness	105
4.3.4.3 Compromised due to lack of database	105
4.3.4.3.1 Limits market reach, fairness, and transparency, especially for smaller contracts.	106
4.3.4.3.2 Relies on internet searches or personal connections, which compromises equity and fosters favoritism.	106

4.3.5 Theme 5 : Challenges in adoption of procurement-based practices	107
5.3.5.1 Policy	107
5.3.5.1.1 Policy revision	107
5.3.5.1.2 Policy Delays on critical processes	108
5.3.5.1.3 Policy Change and Continuity	108
5.3.5.1.4 Policy Awareness	108
5.3.5.2 Supplier challenges	109
5.3.5.4 Contract management	110
5.3.5.5 Processes	112
5.3.5.6 Decentralization Disjuncture	112
5.3.5.7 Staffing	113
5.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	115
5.2 Introduction	115
5.2.1 Objective 1: Establishing the procurement processes followed by UKZN in acquiring inputs	115
5.2.2. Objective 2: Determining impact of the procurement function at UKZN for sustainability.	120
5.2.2.1 Effective procurement processes and value adding	120
5.2.2.2 Ineffective and Non-value adding processes	121
5.2.2.3 Attainment of economics of scale through purchases	124
5.2.3 Objective 3: Determining whether procurement has evolved to supply management at UKZN.	125
5.2.3.1 Applicability of the principles of supply chain	126
5.2.3.2 Compromised due to lack of database	128
5.2.4 Objective 4 :To determine the level of compliance to the National Treasury Regulation regulations.	129
5.2.5 Objective 5 :Determining the understanding of PBPs at UKZN	130
5.2.6 Objective 6: Establishing if public procurement influences the application of PBPs at UKZN	131
5.2.7 Objective 7: To determine the challenges faced by UKZN in the adoption of PBPs	132
5.2.7.1 Policy	132
5.2.7.2 Supplier challenges	133
5.2.7.3 Decentralisation disjuncture	134
5.2.7.4 Staffing	134
5.2.7.5 Contract management	135
Chapter 6	136
6.Recommendations and conclusion	136
6.1 Contribution of the study	136
6.2 Limitations of the study	136
6.3 Recommendations	137

6.4 Recommendations for future research	139
Conclusion	140
List of Appendices	151
Appendix A: interview Guide	152
Appendix B: Informed Consent	156
Appendix C: Ethical Clearance	160

Abstract

Public procurement in South Africa is constitutionally mandated under Section 217 of the 1996 Constitution, which stipulates that procurement processes must be conducted in a fair, equitable, transparent, competitive, and cost-effective manner. Although higher education institutions (HEIs) operate with institutional autonomy, their significant reliance on public funding subjects them to these constitutional provisions. Persistent non-compliance with procurement regulations and inefficiencies in service delivery, however, remain critical challenges in the South African context. This study investigates the extent to which universities comply with constitutional requirements and adopt procurement best practices that have been shown to enhance efficiency, reduce waste, optimize supplier relationships, and contribute to institutional sustainability. Procurement best practices are conceptualized as standardized approaches that support strategic spend management and supplier base optimization, thereby advancing long-term value creation. Employing a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive design, the research was conducted in two phases: a review of relevant literature and an empirical investigation. Data was collected through virtual interviews with procurement staff at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, selected for their expertise in institutional procurement processes. Data saturation was achieved with seven participants. Findings highlight ambiguities within the constitutional framework, particularly the lack of alignment between Section 217 and Section 239 regarding the definition and scope of organs of state. While HEIs are not explicitly classified as organs of state, principles of good governance necessitate compliance with procurement regulations. The study further reveals that existing regulatory frameworks, both locally and globally, provide structural guidance but lack interpretive flexibility, rendering them inadequate for complex and time-sensitive procurement within universities. The study concludes that the effectiveness of procurement in HEIs depends on the integration of digital platforms, continuous capacity development, periodic policy review, and rigorous compliance mechanisms. Such measures are essential to advancing accountability, enhancing supplier performance, and supporting sustainable higher education development.

Key words: Public procurement, Higher Education Institutions, compliance, South Africa.

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction and Background

Introduction

This chapter introduces the research topic, the background of the study, and presents the research objectives and questions. This study explores procurement processes at the University of KwaZulu Natal as a Major contributor to the total spend of the university. The study seeks to understand the level of compliance to the national constitution acts and the implementation of its own best practices. The University spends large amounts of money on the procurement of goods and services annually. It is essential that purchasing is conducted in a consistent, ordered, transparent, responsible and cost-effective manner in order to avoid fruitless and wasteful expenditure. The University's funds must be managed responsibly, ensuring that goods and services of the correct quality and quantity are delivered at the right time and place and at fair prices. The policy directive applies to all staff involved with procurement either as the person requesting the purchase, as the cost center manager authorizing the purchase, additional approver or as the buyer in the Procurement Division (Koornhof&Nicholson, 2020). According to Wu,liu & bretscheinder (2023) Best practices are defined as practices that produce the best maximum outcomes in the organisation. These methods have been proven to consistently and continuously provide desired results when managing practices within the organization (Fauci et al.,2023). Public procurement in South Africa is used as a social policy tool, partly through preferential and empowerment policies (like B-BBEE scorecards) that support supplier diversity and address past inequality, aligning procurement practice with broader socio-economic objectives (Panya &Ochiri, 2025). Agbeka et al. (2024) states that procurement best practices as progressive methods can and have been proven to improve spend and supplier base optimization, increase return on investment and sustain growth in the long run. Many Organizations have progressed from reactive purchasing to a level of supply management utilise PBPs. The study seeks to understand whether the university complies with the Public acts and the effect it has on the institutional best practices.

Background

1.2 Background of the study

Procurement is the process of establishing, managing, and fulfilling contracts. Procurement begins when a need for commodities and services, or any combination thereof, is identified and concludes when the goods are received, the services are performed and contracts are concluded (Annexure 13: Procurement Strategy and Tactics, 2019) . It is a carefully documented process of acquiring and delivering goods and services within a set time period (Mak,2014).

Below are procurement stages:

- 1) The planning step:** Involves determining the required goods and services, market approach, and contract details.
- 2) During the acquisition phase:** Contracts are signed once a selection process is completed.
- 3) Contract management:** Involves managing compliance, modifications, and risk events that arise during contract execution. The purchase of general goods and services for consumption typically entails the direct acquisition of products and services that are standard, well-defined, and easily scoped and specified. The process typically begins with the creation of a specification, which is then converted into a requisition. A quick decision can be made regarding the cost of goods and services that meet the given parameters and can be paid for upon delivery. Because of the numerous risks that can arise during the implementation of an infrastructure project, there are significantly more risks to manage in infrastructure procurement than in regular goods and services. Furthermore, infrastructure needs are frequently determined based on anticipated performance rather than a well-defined specification. A variety of combinations of commodities and services with varying characteristics, such as initial cost, reliability, life-cycle costs, and operating expense may meet performance requirements. An infrastructure project is typically supplied and paid for incrementally over time and is "manufactured" on-site. For these reasons, infrastructure procurement requires a different approach than conventional goods and service buying. Because procurement accounts for such a big amount of an organization's expenditure, it is supposed be carried out in accordance with best practices in order to save money, reduce waste, and streamline operations in order to achieve to be competitive (Dlamini, 2013).

According to a study of 329 manufacturing enterprises, optimal procurement levels are associated with greater performance outcomes (Agbeka et al., 2024). Public procurement can help to promote social goals like sustainability and community development, which are in line with broader governmental aims (Villoria-Mendieta, 2024). Thus it has been held accountable due to a large amount of budget allocated to it.

Under certain extreme circumstances and after following due process and procedure outlined in the Higher Education Act, the Minister may intervene especially when a council has failed to discharge its duties. The Ministry's oversight role does not involve responsibility for the micro-management of institutions however it does justify direct intervention when such is in the interest of ensuring public accountability regarding the use of funds or preventing mismanagement. We have to always remember that institutional autonomy should be exercised in tandem with public accountability as clearly articulated in the white paper. Government invests vast amounts of public resources to ensure that institutions contribute to national development goals and this has to be met by a degree of accountability to the South African public (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017).

Public procurement is crucial to service delivery, particularly in the setting of considerable public expenditure. However, corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of transparency frequently jeopardize its effectiveness. This response combines findings from other research to show the issues and potential solutions in public procurement (Matebese-Notshulwana, 2021).

Procurement is one of the government activities most susceptible to corruption in the public sector. Procurement involves many financial and material exchanges. Stakeholder relations can be manipulated due to entrenched interests in public service delivery. In poor nations, weak legislation and legal enforcement contribute to the high risk of corruption in public procurement (Auriol et al., 2016). Thus, procurement has remained a major activity that determines the effectiveness of government programs in reaching their objectives around the world, and it is therefore subject to a complex collection of regulations, policies and directives (Matebese-Notshulwana, 2021). According to research done by Journal of procurement and supply chain, effective procurement regulations improve transparency, eliminate corruption and increase supplier competitiveness, resulting in improved supply chain management (Vah, 2023). Ambiguous laws can result in inadequate procurement policies, corruption and outdated practices. As a result, the government should professionalize procurement, as public procurement policies can often impede the application of procurement best practices (PBPs).

Public higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa are considered autonomous entities, which is crucial for their governance and operational performance (Meenal & Shrivastava, 2014). National treasury (2005) Stipulates that these institutions must manage their procurement according to the public procurement policies. HEIs are accountable to the public as they are mostly funded by public funds (Smith, 2025).

In South Africa (SA) Public Procurement is constituted by section 217 of the 1996 constitution. The Section stipulates that when an organ of state in the national, provincial or local sphere of government, or any other institution identified in national legislation, contracts for goods or services, it must do so in accordance with a system which is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective. Section 217 of the Constitution requires that the procurement system be fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective. Section 195 of the Constitution requires that the public administration must promote the efficient, economic and effective use of resources (value for money) in an accountable and development orientated manner (Department of higher education, 2019). The South African government advises on the effectiveness and improvement of public higher education institutions due to heavy subsidization by public funds, emphasizing cooperative governance principles for autonomy. (Mlambo et al., 2024). Thus, the government must continuously adapt its strategies to ensure that higher education yields beneficial returns for society and how to help it do better (Sedumedi, 2024). It is for this reason that procurement in SAPHEIs plays a crucial role in the country's effort of redressing the imbalances of the past (Xue et al., 2024).

Public higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa play an important role in resolving historical injustices caused by apartheid through successful public procurement processes. By prioritizing sustainable public procurement, these institutions can improve operational efficiency and contribute to social fairness thus fulfilling their duty to serve different communities (Xue et al., 2024).

As a result, public higher education institutions use the South African Constitution of 1996, Section 217 as a framework for the implementation of public procurement policies. Some of the legislature structure that guide the procurement policies of public derived from the constitution are Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 (PFMA); the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000 (PPPFA); the Managerial Finance management Act no 56 of 20023, construction industry development board act no 38 of 2000, the General

Procurement Guidelines; the Policy to Guide Uniformity in Procurement Reform Processes in Government; the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 (BBBEEA); the National Small Business Act 102 of 1996; Codes of Good Practice as published on 9 February 2007; the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000; the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004); and the Insolvency Act no. 8 of 1936, as amended and the Confidentiality Procurement Process. Below is a diagram which illustrates the relevant acts and their regulations.

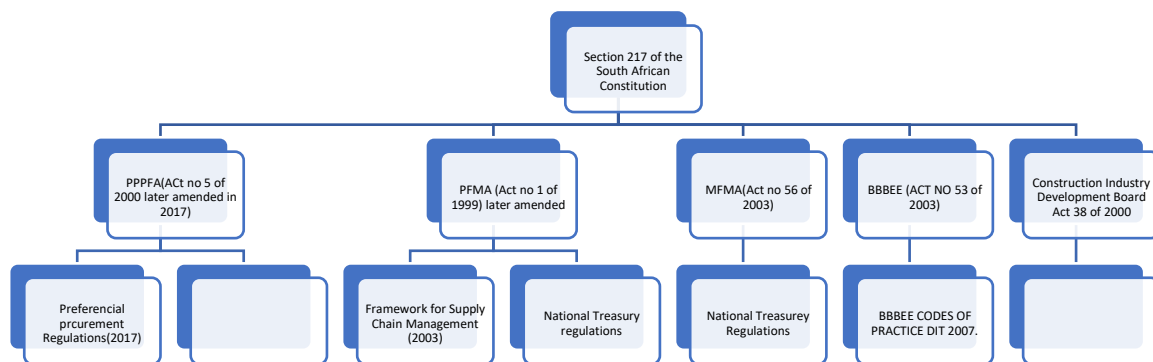


Figure 1: Relevant Acts and Regulations (Source: Author's own illustration, 2025)

Through the public procurement process, South Africa's public higher education institutions play a vital role in the country's economic development needs. Therefore, public higher education institutions use article 217 of the 1996 South African Constitution as a framework for implementing public procurement policies. Universities complying with the public procurement policies should not hinder it from practicing best practices.

Adopting best practices that have been proven by study and experience can help organizations improve their return on investment and streamline their procurement procedures (Shofiullah, 2024). These are methods that have consistently proven to produce desired results in organisational goals.

Adopting these can improve supplier spend and supplier base optimization to increase return on investment and the bottom line, to sustain and grow in the long run. Organizations that have progressed from reactive purchasing to a level of supply management utilize PBPs. The study seeks to understand whether the university comply with the Public acts and the effect it has on the institutional best practices.

1.3 Research Problem

The procurement function is a substantial component of organizational expenses, frequently constituting a large portion of total spending across many sectors, including government and private organizations (Ngigi,2021). Even though procurement is thought of as a non-strategic function that is frequently subservient to finance, new research shows that, when done right, procurement may huge impact within the organisation. Strategic procurement methods can reduce costs, promote innovation, and eliminate waste to greatly improve company performance (Ardiansyah & Susanto, 2024). As best procurement practices have been explained, applying them is beneficial to the organization. Furthermore, procurement's contribution to sustainability and innovation is becoming more widely acknowledged, indicating that it can support policy objectives beyond just cutting costs (Public Procurement ,2022). However, few companies have adopted PBP's in the public sector (Public Procurement, 2022). This shows gap between theory and practice. Compliance with recruitment procedures and fairness have always been thorny issues in the public sector (Green, 2014).

South African Public sector procurement has been faced with a lot of challenges in the past, these challenges are related uncertain procurement processes, lack of knowledge by staff procurement violations, waste of resources and money, noncompliance, supplier developments and rotation (KPMG South Africa, 2016). Institutions are presented with an opportunity to apply procurement best practices to improve their processes and to add to the south African socio-economic development.

All universities own procurement or supply chain policies, as well as, to some extent, public procurement policies and legislation have an influence the procurement in the institution. The policies give each university a framework for the procurement process and the steps to take when making purchases of products and services and if not implemented arises the abovementioned challenges. Therefore, combining the above-mentioned challenges with

current economic realities requires universities to reconsider their procurement practices in order to gain a competitive advantage and ensure sustainability. As knowledge centers, universities need to do more with fewer resources because they are non-profit organizations and are encouraged to adopt PBP (Boulton&Lucas, 2011). Universities must determine the areas of cost accumulation and formulate strategies to help them prosper and maintain long-term development (Parakhina et al., 2017). Based on the above discussion that applies to all universities, the problem statement for this study can be expressed as follows: As a university in South Africa, does UKZN implement best recruitment practices and does it subscribe to the national treasury regulations as stipulated by section 217 of the 1996 constitution.

1.4 Purpose of the study

In South Africa, the primary and secondary objectives of public procurement are entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996. This Act institutes government's policy for applying the preferential system. It also establishes requirements for the award of contracts to be lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.

A procurement system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective as stipulated in Section 217 of the constitution and policy that provides for categories of preference in the allocation of contracts and protection or advancements of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination are objectives of the public procurement in the institutions. Universities are non-profit organizations and considered autonomous and in applying the public procurement policies to maximum their performance it must do so in applying best procurement practices though most of the literature quotes the best practice theories are of for-profit organizations. This means that the university administration must accept the values of strategic management in order to push the university beyond providing services at a lower cost than the competition, and strive to adopt best procurement practices. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to determine whether the University of KwaZulu-Natal Comply with Section 217 of the South African National Constitution and regulations in Conducting Procurement and the application of best procurement practices within the institution. This study seeks to understand background data and formulate new insights that will allow development or enhancement of framework for the University to apply and maintain these practices in the long run. This will in turn ensure maximization of the organization's resources for its competitive advantage.

1.5. Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to determine whether UKZN is applying the treasury regulations (2005) and best procurement practices.

Achieving this objective, secondary objectives are as follows:

- To establish the procurement processes followed by UKZN in acquiring inputs.
- To determine the impact of the procurement function at UKZN for sustainability.
- To determine whether procurement has evolved to supply management at UKZN.
- To determine the level of compliance to the National Treasury Regulation regulations.
- To determine the understanding of PBPs at UKZN.
- To establish if public procurement influences the application of PBPs at UKZN. • To determine the challenges faced by UKZN in the adoption of PBPs

The Primary research question for this study is Does UKZN as a South African conduct their procurement according National treasury regulations (2017) of procurement and does it apply Procurement best practices?

The secondary research questions are:

- What are present processes followed by UKZN in acquisition of goods and services?
- Does UKZN community understand value and impact of Procurement for Competitive advantage?
- Has there be any procurement evolvement to supply management at UKZN?
- Does UKZN conduct purchases according to the national treasury regulations?
- Does UKZN understand PBP's?
- Do public procurement policies and regulations influence the application of PBPs at the institution?
- What challenges are faced by UKZN in applying PBPs?

1.7 Significance of the study

Procurement involves high budgetary process and it is a crucial component of the financial strategy as part of It's spending in HEI's is funded by the government. Procurement plays a strategic role in managing costs ensuring proper applications of the pillars of supply chain processes which ensures effectiveness of the processes and provide sustainability within the institution this study is imperative. The study will also contribute to the awareness of the current state of the university through analysis, findings and literature reviewed, and how the application of best procurement processes can provide a guideline of developing a structured and effective processes. The study will provide an opportunity to modify certain aspects within the institution. Informed decision making in procurement is severely hampered by the lack of defined policies and procedures which also leads to inefficiencies and inconsistent application of procurement policies (Tau et al., 2024). Best procurement methods could result in improved resource allocation and, as a result, better service delivery at lower prices. To increase the efficacy and efficiency of the institutions and all stakeholders, a study that looks at procurement processes in South African higher education institution may be valuable (parents, students, government and the tax payers).

Best procurement practices may lead to better allocation of resources and thus better service delivery at lower costs. This Study may be of value as it is first in the University of KwaZulu Natal, Best procurement practices applications in comprehensive universities were reviewed by Dlamini (2016). UKZN is set to be a traditional university and this may contribute to the organizational stakeholders by improving efficiency and effectiveness of the institution. The study May produce core benefits of applying best procurement practices, some of the benefits are cost saving, creating awareness to the stakeholders, efficient allocation of resources, highlights the strategic role that the procurement function plays in the growth and sustainability of the organization in the long term, develop understanding of Procurement practices across the university and develop framework to accommodate these practices.

1.8 Research Methodology

The methodology of research refers to "the rationale and philosophical assumptions that underlie any natural, social, or human science study, whether articulated or not". Research methodology, on the other hand, outline the procedures used to collect, process, and assess data

(Letsie, 2019). The sections provide summary of Research design, Strategy, data collecting method and analysis as well as validity and trustworthiness of the collected data for the study.

1.8.1 Design of the study

The research design is a comprehensive technique that is used to carry out the collection of data and analysis in a research study (Melnikovas, 2018). This study used an exploratory research design to gather data in order to enhance understanding of a phenomenon, formulate definitions and clearly develop concepts. The researcher conducted an inductive study to fulfil the aim of building a theory as opposed to testing an existing theory through a deductive study (Bhattacharjee, 2012). As a result, the interpretivism philosophy was adopted. The study used a pure qualitative research method, in collecting data. Through the use of this methodology, researchers can delve into the social dynamics and underlying mechanisms that mold human experiences, capturing the depth of qualitative insights that go beyond simple numerical data (Qualitative Research Design, 2023). This method produces in-depth understating of the primary data. The study is exploratory in nature and conducted in two phases. The first phase is the literature study, while the second phase entails an empirical study.

Phase 1 Literature study.

Journals, Articles, Dissertations and Thesis, Public Policy Documents, University Policy document and Procurement Guidelines. This seeks to achieve in-depth understanding of the application of Procurement Policies and best procurement practices.

Phase 2: Empirical study

Case study, Open-ended Questioners and Analysis. This section will determine the value of procurement function at the University, the influence of public procurement policies in implementing the best procurement practices, the understanding of Procurement function in the university and the Challenges faced by the university in adopting these practices.

1.8.2 Research Approach

There are three major approaches that a researcher can use to conduct a study; qualitative, quantitative and mixed (Terrell, 2016). The objective of the qualitative approach is to investigate and comprehend the individuals or groups linked with a human or societal problem in order to identify, characterize, and give it significance. The researcher could describe the characteristics and nature of a subject while interpreting and understanding an event using a qualitative research approach. The researcher can utilize texts to explain their findings (Mohajan & M PRA, 2018). A qualitative research approach could be used by the researcher to interpret and comprehend an event while describing the nature and attributes of a subject. Texts can be used by the researcher to describe their findings (Pandey et al., 2015).

Alternatively, a qualitative research approach might be used, in which the researcher interprets and makes an effort to comprehend an event while describing the nature and attributes of a subject. With this approach, the researcher can utilize texts to provide context for their findings. It is challenging to quantify outcomes using statistical processes because this research method gives the audience a mental picture of what the researcher is witnessing (Charli et al., 2022).

The quantitative approach is deductive; it starts with a particular research problem understood through the thorough review of literature (Terrell, 2016). According to Kowalczyk (2016), quantitative research methodologies employ numerical data to elucidate their findings. In order to use numbers, a researcher must be well-versed in both descriptive and inferential statistical factors, including how to calculate and interpret standard deviations. Explaining, predicting, or investigating relationships, describing the state of affairs, or looking into potential effects on particular outcomes are the main goals of quantitative research. When a researcher want to investigate the relationship between one variable and another while ignoring the influence of other factors, they would employ quantitative research methods. In order to test theories, generate predictions, and eventually depict an event using figures, a researcher may, on the one hand, employ a quantitative research approach. By using this technique, the researcher can use numbers to describe their findings and utilize them as a basis for statistical tests to make sure the data show a statistical link (Techo,2016)

The mixed approach comprises a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approach when collecting and analysing the data (Creswell, 2009). To fully explain an event, a researcher may decide to utilize a mixed approach, in which the researcher combines quantitative and

qualitative methodologies. To fully comprehend the phenomenon being studied, a mixed technique integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study. It is primarily assumed that an investigator can gain a deeper grasp of the issue by utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods rather than just one of them (Charli et al., 2022). This study adopted a qualitative methodology that was consistent with the interpretivist ideology, which recognizes the complexity of each respondent (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). This study's objective was met by utilising the qualitative research approach to gather information rather than test variables.

A case strategy approach was used to acquire the necessary data for the study since it enabled the researcher to perform empirical investigations and collect data from interviewees who are members of a single institution. (Charli et al., 2022). By using a single case, Ponelis (2015) confirms that "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single, bounded unit situated in a specific context to provide insight into real life situations" is possible. In order to enable empirical analysis of the phenomena, the study focused on the influence of the public policies in implementing best procurement practices in the institution to allow empirical investigation of the phenomenon.

1.8.3 Study Site

The location where data will be collected is the research study site. This study took place at the University of KwaZulu Natal in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Simons (2009) defines the study site as the geographical area where the study takes place and the target population exists (Simons, 2009).

1.8.4 Target Population

According to (Terrell) 2016, the target population is the total number of units that the researcher may be able to use in order to collect pertinent data for the study.

The target population for this study was made of ten (10) possible participants who form part of the buyer from junior to management roles and data saturation was reached on the 7th participant.

1.8.5 Sampling

The statistical process of reserving a portion of the target population is called sampling. Two methods of sampling are used to achieve this: probability sampling and non-probability

sampling. For the purpose of gaining a thorough grasp of the phenomenon, this study employed non-probability sampling, which enabled the researcher to select participants based on the most pertinent data (Lohr, 2021).

1.8.6 Sample Size

The total number of units chosen from the target population to take part in the study is known as the sample size (Babbie, 2014). This study gathered data through the following 7 respondents out of the target population of 10 possible respondents who form part of the buying process at the University of KwaZulu Natal: One Procurement Manager; one Buyer from Central Finance; 3 Buyers from Research; One Buyer from college of humanities and One buyer from student services.

1.8.7 Data Collection Methods

This study was carried out through a qualitative method. Individual in-depth interviews were conducted to gather data from 7 interviewees. Prior to the start of the study the researcher requested meetings with the potential participants via emails and informed them that taking part in the study was voluntary and interviews would be held via Teams with a consent given to record that was treated highly confidential.

1.8.8 Data Analysis

The process of determining what respondents meant when the data was being collected, summarizing the information, and looking for trends is called data analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). After the data had been collected, the researcher made use of thematic analysis to analyse the data and to form themes. According to Maguire& Delahunt (2017), thematic analysis is a versatile qualitative research technique that enables investigators to find, examine, and summarise patterns (themes) in their data.

This study relied on the identified themes that are underpinned by subthemes for extensive analysis of data. The coding procedure assisted in organizing and capturing the analysis to provide a flow of sequential analysis. The researcher used NVivo software, a program that helps identify connections within the data collected and gives the researcher the opportunity to understand the data's underlying meaning (Babbie, 2014).

1.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained the ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Research Committee after the University granted the gatekeeper's letter. All interviewees gave consent to participate in the study and were informed that the identity of every interviewee would be protected. The researcher ensured that the objectives of the study were well explained and that the interviewees understood prior to signing the consent form.

1.10 Dissertation Structure

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents an introduction to and the background of the study. It presents the research problem, research objectives, research questions and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature review on the concepts relating to this study, discussing different perspectives on the concepts. It will further present the conceptual framework underpinning the study.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology which comprises the research design, sampling, research tools, data collection processes and data quality control.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Presentation

This chapter presents the organised data and its interpretation and analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion of results

This chapter presents a discussion of how the research objectives connect to the literature findings, drawing from careful analysis of the data collected from the interviewees and therefore concluding that objectives have been achieved for this study.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusion

This chapter concludes the research, Research limitations and contributions of the study are discussed and it's provides recommendations and suggest possible ways of furthering this study.

1.11Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided the background of the study, study objectives, questions, problem statement, methodologies. The next chapter will provide literature of the study.

Chapter 2

2. Literature Review.

This chapter will review the academic literature on Procurement best practices and Public policies applicable in Procurement. The chapter will begin with theoretical review on development of Procurement and Supply chain concept in South Africa, Procurement best practices concept, Overview of procurement process, Application of Policies and how procurement is conducted at UKZN as well as the legal framework guiding universities in South Africa. The chapter will further look at the Empirical/ Conceptual study in Global review of Procurement in Higher education as well as South African review of Procurement in higher education and best procurement practices in south African HE.

2.1 Development of Supply chain Management Concept in South Africa

According to Turley & Perera (2014), the South African government uses procurement as a tool and a mechanism to achieve policies for socioeconomic development and transformation. In South Africa, procurement plays a significant role in the public sector and is being utilized as a tool for policymaking because of historical unjust and discriminatory practices and is used to promote social, environmental and industrial policies (Tau et al., 2024).

Public procurement reforms were started in 1995 with the goal of advancing good governance principles and addressing socioeconomic goals through the introduction of a preferred system (Jam et al., 2024). Inconsistencies in the implementation of policies, a lack of accountability, a lack of supportive institutions, and disjointed procedures were the main causes of the reform process (Jam et al., 2024). The uniform implementation approach to procurement was required in view of the findings of a report on opportunities to reform procurement processes in the south African government (Harahap, 2024).

The report was the result of 2001 study conducted by Country Procurement Assessment Review (CPAR) and the world bank National treasury (2003) which revealed that the Procurement and

provisioning processes were significantly fragmented. Tender boards were solely responsible for procurement, while provisioning was mostly governed by National Treasury driven by logistics standards National Treasury (2003) Government financial management has long been questioned for its effectiveness and efficiency (Ambe, 2019).

The implementation of the logistics system for asset management has created concerns about poor handling of mobile assets in the government environment. Since 1994, South Africa's government has used procurement to remedy previous inequities. Efforts to optimize resources include coordinated infrastructure development and unlocking government property. In response to concerns, provincial and national treasuries have implemented efficient and effective procurement Practices through a reform drive. To this purpose, a new and tactically more potent paradigm was pursued namely supply chain management (Ambe, 2019).

The introduction of supply chain management (SCM) as a tool for policy implementation in the public sector was caused by governance flaws and fragmentations, as well as inconsistent interpretation and application of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000 (PPPFA) (National Treasury, 2005). Through public procurement procedures, the government attempted to accomplish the intended strategic policy results (Herahap, 2024). The adoption of uniform procurement procedures in all areas of non-government was deemed to be largely satisfactory by the SCM Review (2015). Moreover, the absence of operational guidelines on how to apply appropriate departmental policies and consistent procurement processes hinders practitioners in charge of putting procurement policies into effect (Ambe, 2016). As a result, supply chain management (SCM) was adopted (Ambe, 2016).

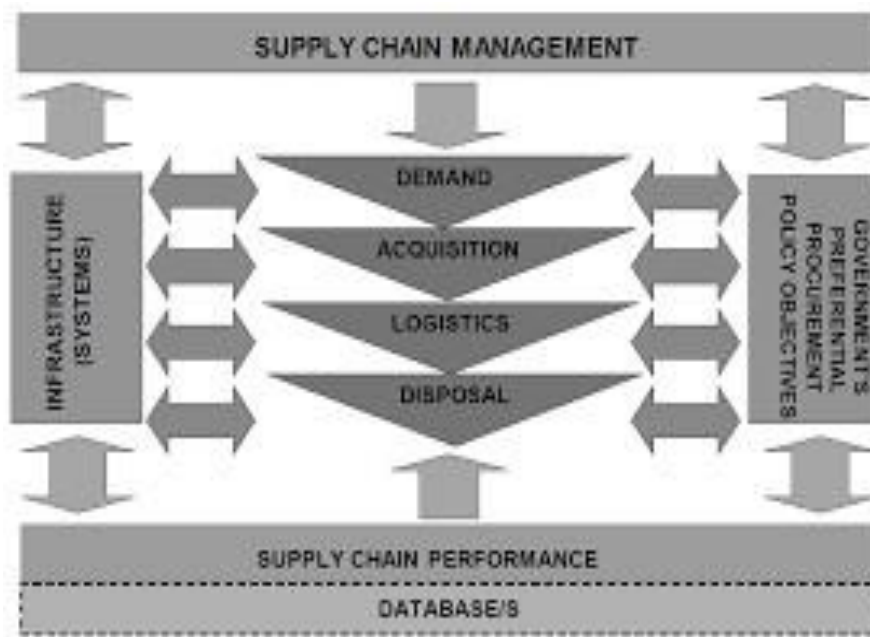


Figure 2. 1 source: “National Treasury ,2005”.

The above figure illustrates Supply chain Model in south Africa. The model consists of Demand management, Acquisition management, Logistics, management, disposal management and risk and performance management. The above is guided by preferential laws aimed at re distributing wealth and ensuring equal opportunities in the country (Ambe, 2016).

2.2 Best practices concept

A set of well-established, typical methods used by cutting-edge organizations while doing their procurement are referred to as procurement best practices (PBPs), which are regarded as a supply management philosophy (Saraswati & Mawardi, 2018). The objective is to steadily and continuously enhance spend and supplier base optimization to boost return on investment and the bottom line, to sustain and grow over the long run (Dlamini, 2016). Over the years, it has become indisputable that procurement processes have an impact on the effective and efficient provision of services inside public sector organizations (Saraswati, & Mawardi, 2018). A strong procurement system necessitates a workforce that is well qualified and has the necessary abilities for procurement tasks (Makabira & Waiganjo, 2014). The procurement procedures are regarded as an essential component of supply chain logistics that guarantee goods and services arrive at their destinations on time, within budget, and with suitable duration (Muia,2015).

The process is managed by the procurement division, which is a division within supply chain management. The specialists oversee from procuring to asset disposal. Management implements controls and systems that will be prove to be cost efficient (Nganu & Mwangangi, 2019). Organisational operating expenses can be decreased by maximizing profits through the use of essential efficiency measures (Nganu & Mwangangi ,2019). Alternative procurement methods that can improve an organization's technical, operational and structural features have been thoroughly studied. However, it appears that state businesses present implementation strategies and efficiency understanding are insufficient to address procurement processes (Muia, 2015). Utilizing the efficiency gap is necessary in order to improve procurement activities that impact state corporation performance (Muia, 2015).

According to Shaikh Shofiullah (2024) implementing green procurement strategies in engineering projects has the potential to yield large sustainability improvements. The analysis shows that procurement organizations goals have changed significantly over time, with a greater emphasis on supply chain resilience, sustainability, and regulatory compliance by 2021, having previously been primarily on risk management and cost reduction in 2019. A growing understanding of the strategic significance of sustainability in procurement is reflected in this shift (Ehrgott et al., 2016).

This transformation is an indication of improved understanding of the strategic significance of sustainability in procurement. To reach this stage procurement staff is trained, effective communication lines must be established, policies supporting sustainable procurement practices developed (Nganu D & Mwangangi P, 2019).

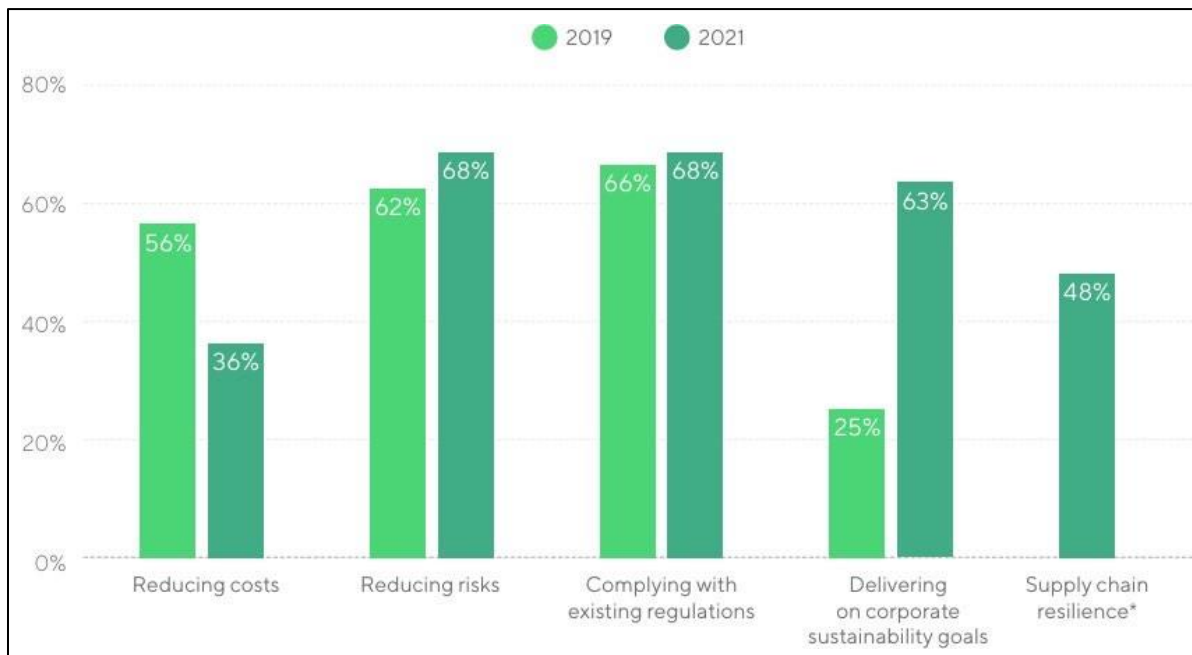


Figure 2.2 Main Priorities of Procurement Organizations 2019 vs 2021, Source:(Nganu&Mwangangi,2019)

Between 2019 and 2021, procurement priorities changed in organisations, as seen in figure 2.2. Reducing risks, adhering to current rules, meeting company sustainability objectives, and guaranteeing supply chain resilience are all given far more weight, according to the research. This change highlights how procurement strategies are placing an increasing amount of attention on sustainability and resilience (Nganu & Mwangangi ,2019).

The above scenario is proving that employing best procurement in organizations yields good results, even though not all organizations have fully embraced PBP's, in particular Higher education. The benefits are understated and full potential of is not recognized. The few that do rely on procurement experts to execute this, hence proper training is required to be able to do so (Shofiullah, 2024).

2.3 Overview of procurement processes

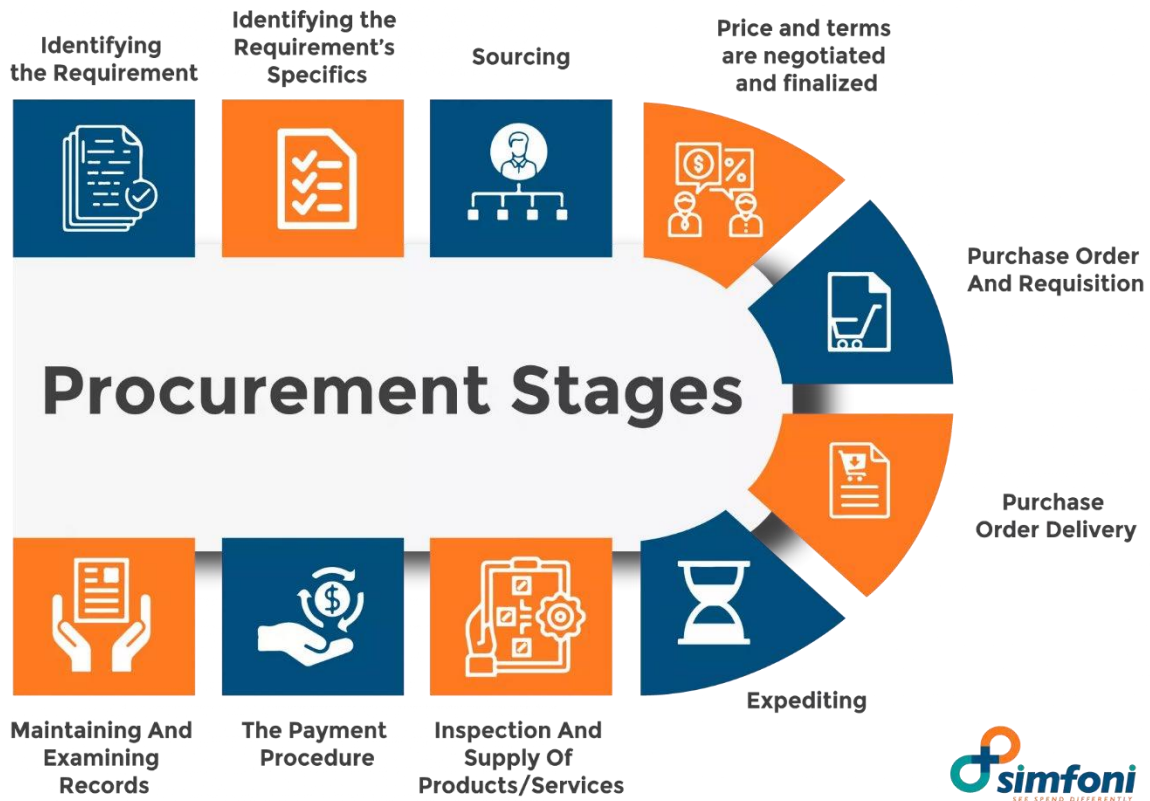


Figure 2.3 Procurement stages Source : (Simfoni, 2024)

Figure 2.3 illustrates the procurement stages, these stages are performed differently in organizations.

2.3.1 identifying the requirement/ Recognising the need

The first step in making a purchase is realizing the need. Determining if a new item needs to be bought or whether an item needs to be restocked when its stock level drops could be examples of this. This will typically involve a requisition process in businesses. At this stage, all stakeholders must be consulted in order to prevent issues later in the procurement process (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.2 Identify the requirements/need specification

The requirements for the product or service must be identified after a need has been identified. Component numbers or technical specifications are examples of this kind of data. The technical staff involved collaborates to produce a list of specifications if the item has never been bought before. In order to avoid expensive errors later on in the procurement process, thorough specifications and effective departmental cooperation are necessary (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.3 Sourcing

The procurement team must carry out the required research to identify the different vendors whenever a certain good or service is chosen to be bought. For repeated orders, a pre-existing vendor list is often accessible. It is necessary to thoroughly investigate new suppliers in order to evaluate their reputation, reliability, quality, speed, and pricing. Procurement team obtain estimates for the necessary goods and start their search. Reputation, cost, service speed, and reliability must all be considered before choosing a provider, therefore this is an important stage. Getting at least three quotes is the standard, depending on the business and their best practice application. Approval from the relevant management levels will be necessary, depending on the sourcing options and costs involved. If the order calls for a bidding or tendering process, notice of the request for proposals, bids, or tenders must be sent (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.4 Price and Terms are negotiated and finalized

Requests for quotation will be finalized after receiving at least 3 quotes. The price, equality and tax compliances will be compared. If the process leads to bidding depending on threshold of the company and their policies, A tender process is started where they are stages of evaluations according to a company policy. This process is recommended to be transparent and fair according to guidelines of this process for each organization (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.5 Purchase order and requisition

An internal purchase request will be approved by the designated authorities. A purchase order with all of the order's information and the terms and conditions will be created. It is important to make sure that both the supplier and the buyer are aware of the order details by involving the buyer in the process of developing the order requirements. The specifications must be well aligned with the supplier's offer and the purchase request to prevent errors (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.6 Purchase order delivery

Buyer is notified about shipment; the turnaround time is as agreed on the terms signed by all parties involved. Delivery is done by the agreed means, shipping or by a messenger or fax as per the agreed terms (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.7 Expediting

This stage includes planning for the delivery or allowing certain period for unforeseen delay that could occur, This stage includes payment schedule that is also on the agreed terms and the delivery schedule (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.8 Inspection and supply of goods/ services

Goods are delivered or service rendered, the buyer receives and verifies if it's matches the purchase order. This is the stage for approval or rejection of the product, this occurs according to agreed terms. When the product has been accepted payment, process starts (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.9 The payment process

The order's supporting documentation is evaluated before payment is made. A comparison is made between the initial purchase order, item receipt, and invoice for the payment request. Prior to payment, all differences are resolved. Once payment has been approved, it is made using the prearranged payment options (Simfoni, 2024).

2.3.10 Maintaining and examining records

Record keeping is essential for both parties. The process should be regularly reviewed to ensure satisfaction, avoid occurrences that were not part of the agreement and improve on performance by the supplier (Simfoni, 2024).

2.4 Application of the policy according to the Constitutional Act at the University of KwaZulu Natal

An organization's policies provide principles and procedures that must be followed when performing certain tasks (Fay & Patterson,2018). However, it's important to note that public universities in South Africa are subject to specific procurement regulations and guidelines set by the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the Treasury Regulations. These regulations aim to promote fair, transparent, and accountable procurement practices in the public sector. Additionally, certain universities may have their own unique procurement guidelines or frameworks in place to further enhance efficiency and compliance. The national Treasury regulations states in 16A3.1 that the accounting officer or accounting authority of an institution to which these regulations apply must develop and implement an effective and efficient supply chain management system in his or her institution for the acquisition of goods and services and the disposal and letting of assets including the disposal of goods no longer required.

These regulations further states that A supply chain management system must be fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective, be consistent with the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000 (Act No. 5 of 2000) the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 2003 (Act No. 53 of 2003) and provide for at least the following:

- (i) demand management
- (ii) acquisition management
- (iii) logistics management
- (iv) disposal management
- (v) risk management
- (vi) regular assessment of supply chain performance.

The university of KwaZulu Natal implements policy according to procurement principles which are stated by section 217 of the constitution (UKZN Policy,2018). These Principles are transparency, cost-effectiveness, ethically and fairly and accountability.

The University, as a public higher education institution under the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997, as amended, applies the following legislation, including any amendments thereto in order to regulate its procurement environment:

- a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996;

- b) The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No. 53 of 2003 (B-BBEE Act);
- c) The King Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa of 2002;
- d) The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act No. 12 of 2004;
- e) The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Act No. 38 of 2000;
- f) Promotion of Administrative Justice Act No. 3 of 2000;
- g) Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) No. 2 of 2000;
- h) The Competition Act No. 89 of 1998.

The University of KwaZulu Natal adopted the PPPFA and BBEE among other Acts as stipulated in section 217 of the 1996 constitution. The University of KwaZulu-Natal's procurement policy ensures that the procurement processes follow specific laws, policies, and frameworks, thereby allowing for efficiency in the process. Similarly, the policy states that Procurement at the University must be executed in a manner that conforms to best-practice procurement principles. The University prescribe that all purchasing be done in accordance with the University's Enterprise Empowerment and Development Strategy (Ukzn Policy,2018)

The University supports Small medium and Micro enterprises. The University incorporates the Preferential procurement methodology to all purchases above R50 000, These Methodologies are determined by the CFO as manuals of conducting procurement at the University. The University records its procurement expenditure (“spend”) and report annually to the (Executive Management Committee) EMC on its preferential procurement spend (Ukzn policy, 2018).

2.4.1 The policy states the following processes of procurement.

2.4.1.1 Specification of required goods, services or works

The user department must compile a proper and unbiased description of the required goods, services or works, The specification must clearly indicate the technical description of the requirement, the evaluation criteria, the weighting of each evaluation criteria, the pricing schedule and a draft service level agreement or contract or terms and conditions of the award. The specification must be reviewed and signed off by the budget holder prior to submission to the designated or central procurement office.

The following information must be included in the bid document:

- A detailed description of the scope of work and specifications of the requirements

All bid documents must include the following minimum mandatory requirements:

- Proof of registration in the form of a certificate issued by the Companies Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC).
- Proof of tax compliance in the form of a tax clearance certificate or SARS PIN and letter of authority.
- Proof of BBBEE rating level.
- ID or passport copies of all company shareholders and directors.
- Proof of registration with relevant regulatory authorities

2.4.1.2 Procurement invitation to bidders

All procurement invitations, where the procurement value is in excess of R100 000, must be placed on the University's website and All costs incurred for advertising the procurement invitation will be borne by the budget holder.

2.4.1.3 Purchase of bid documents

A comprehensive bid document that has been approved by the relevant person or committee must be made available in pdf format on the University's website.

2.4.1.4 Tender briefing of prospective service providers

The aim of the briefing session is to provide more detailed information pertaining to the University's requirements and to respond to any clarifying questions from the potential bidders. The requirement to convene a briefing session will depend on the complexity of the goods and/or services procured and will be determined by the person or committee responsible for approving the bid document. An attendance register should be completed and minutes should be compiled.

2.4.1.5 Changes to the bid document or procurement process

Any amendments to the information set out in the bid document or to the procurement process must be approved by the person or committee responsible for approving the bid document. The amendments must be subject to legal validity and the DPO or CPO must inform all bidders of the amendments. The extension of bid validity period, if justified in exceptional circumstances, should be requested in writing from all bidders before the expiration date. The extension of the bid validity period should be for a minimum period required to complete the evaluation, obtain necessary approvals and award the contract.

2.4.1.6 Procedure for receiving bid submissions

Bid submissions must be delivered as specified in the bid documents. Bids submitted after the specified closing date and time will not be accepted. A report of the bid opening, which specifies the names of the bidders and where applicable the quoted price, will be placed on the University's website within 5 working days from the bid closing date and time.

2.4.1.7 Evaluation of prequalification or mandatory requirements

UKZN will define a set of mandatory requirements which will be used to determine whether a bid qualifies for evaluation. The mandatory requirements will be determined by the MTC or BSC and will differ depending on the nature of goods or services. In order to qualify for evaluation:

- the bidders must meet all the mandatory requirements.
- The supporting documentation for the evaluation of tax compliance and CIDB registration will be obtained by the relevant procurement official on the day of the bid closing and included in the submission to the MTC or BEC.

All service providers conducting business with UKZN must be tax compliant at least on the closing date of the bid, non-compliant tax status on the closing day of the bid will disqualify the bidder. Bidders whose tax compliance status is non-compliant on the bid closing date will be allowed seven days to sort out their tax matters, should the bidder fail to sort out their tax matters within the allocated seven days, they will be disqualified from the bid process.

2.4.1.8 Evaluation of bid submissions

Bid submissions received are evaluated in accordance with the specified criteria as listed in the bid document by the Mini Tender Committee (MTC) for mini tenders or the Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC) for open tenders. Members of the MTC or BEC must prior to the evaluation of tenders, disclose any conflict of interest and they must recuse themselves at the time of the evaluation of the bid submission concerned. Points are allocated in terms of the evaluation criteria as specified and the accumulation of points based on the extent to which the technical solution and services proposed meet UKZN's requirements and are financially competitive.

The bid submissions will be assessed as follows:

- Evaluation of mandatory requirements.
- Technical or functional evaluation.
- Price and preference points evaluation: An evaluation of price and preference will be performed as set out in the policy on procurement of goods, services and works.
- The implications of the three-stage process are that the bidder, who has been successful in meeting the minimum functionality requirements, competes in accordance with the mechanism of preferential procurement regulations

2.4.1.9 Adjudication of bids

The adjudication of bids for open tenders is performed by the Bid Adjudication Committee (BAC) and in line with the objectives set out in the policy on procurement of goods, services and works. The adjudication of bids for mini tenders is performed by the Mini Tenders Committee.

2.4.1.10 Cancellation of bids

The University may, before the award of a tender, cancel a tender due to:

- Changed circumstances, where there is no longer a need for the goods or services specified in the procurement invitation.
- Funds no longer being available to cover the total envisaged expenditure.
- Non-receipt of acceptable bids.
- A material irregularity in the tender process or administration thereof.

The decision to cancel a bid must be published in the same manner in which the original procurement invitation was advertised. The University may only with the prior approval of the executive budget holder cancel a bid for the second time. The bid shall be cancelled by the same authority delegated to award the tender subject to paragraph.

2.4.1.11 Price negotiation

The University must negotiate a market-related price (determined based on market research) with the bidder scoring the highest points. If the bidder scoring the highest points does not agree to the market-related price, the University must negotiate a market-related price with other qualifying bidders in the order of their scoring from highest points to lowest points. If a market-related price is not agreed as envisaged above, the University may cancel the tender. The tender shall be cancelled by the same authority delegated to award the tender. Price negotiations shall be done in writing by the CPO or DPO.

2.4.1.12 Process for responding to appeals

The CFO may appoint an independent and impartial person or persons not directly involved in the specific procurement process being appealed or disputed to review some or all the following:

- Any decisions or actions taken in the implementation of the procurement process.
- Any matter arising from a contract awarded in the course of the procurement process.
- Any objections, complaints or queries regarding any such decisions or actions or any matters arising from such contract.

The CFO, or another official designated by the CFO, is responsible for assisting the appointed person to perform his or her functions effectively.

The person/s appointed must make recommendations, to the CFO, for the prompt resolution of all disputes, objections, complaints and queries received.

The CFO may in certain circumstances refer the appeals back to the procurement committees for further investigations. The CFO makes the final decision based on these recommendations and in line with the procurement award approval authority set out in the procurement policy.

2.4.1.13 The mini tender process

The mini tender process will be used for the procurement of goods, services and works whose procurement mechanism is the Mini Tender in terms of the policy on procurement of goods, services and works.

The mini tender process is initiated by the end user submitting the following to the DPO/CPO.

- Completed bid request form.
- MTC nomination form.
- Terms of references or specification.
- Draft contract or Service level agreement.
- Pricing schedule and evaluation criteria.
- BOQ's where applicable.

The DPO/CPO must exercise their judgement and utilise market research to assess the accuracy of the estimated budget as stipulated by the end user. In instances where there is a likelihood that the budget could exceed the threshold for mini tender the procurement should be processed by way of an open tender. The function of facilitating the mini tender process is decentralised to the finance unit of the Colleges and Research and the relevant Finance Managers are the Designated Procurement Officers. The Central Procurement office is responsible for facilitating the mini tender process of all support services divisions (excluding Research). In instances where a College or Research project is allocated to a support services division for implementation, that mini tender will fall within professional support services. The mini tender process will follow all the stages of the tender process, however the committee responsible for the mini tender will be the Mini Tender Committee (MTC) The mini tender process should be facilitated by the designated procurement office or central procurement office.

2.4.1.14 Procedure for sourcing quotations

A proper and unbiased specification must be compiled for specific requirements and proper terms of reference must be drawn up for the goods, services or works required, clearly indicating the scope of the requirement, the evaluation criteria as well as their weights and values. The user prepares a detailed draft specification document, in consultation with the designated or central procurement official, that provides complete information of what goods or services are required or, in the case of projects, what projects are to be undertaken. The

designated or central procurement official (depending on the procurement threshold) must advertise the procurement invitation on the University's website where the procurement value is in excess of R100 000. Quotations received must be evaluated, by the designated or central procurement official, in accordance with the specified criteria as listed in the specification document. Where the minimum number of required quotations is not received, a second request for quotations must be published on the UKZN website and other advertising platforms, after reviewing the original specification and addressing the reasons for the poor market response, unless there is reason to believe that there are no other available suppliers available in the market.

In instances where the quotations process has been attempted two times but did not yield a positive response from the market, a deviation memo needs to be prepared and pre-approved in line with the financial authority limits. Any conflict of interest must be disclosed and the affected person recused from participating in the evaluation of quotations. Points are allocated in terms of the evaluation criteria, as specified, and the accumulation of points is based on the extent to which the technical solution and service proposed meet UKZN's requirements and are financially competitive.

The following score card will be applicable for the three quotations process:

Area	Score
Price	80%
BBBEE	20%
Total	100%

Price and preference evaluation: An evaluation of price and preference will be performed as set out in the policy on procurement of goods, services and works.

The evaluation of BBBEE will be applicable for awards above R100 000 (including VAT). However, all suppliers that are South African registered organisations are required to submit a BBBEE certificate or affidavit. All service providers conducting business with UKZN must be tax compliant at least on the closing date of the bid, non-compliant tax status on the closing day of the bid will disqualify the bidder. Bidders whose tax compliance status is non-compliant

on the bid closing date will be allowed seven days to sort out their tax matters, should the bidder fail to sort out their tax matters within the allocated seven days, they will be disqualified from the bid process.

2.4.1.15 Approval to award contracts

The approval to award contracts must be in line with the approval authority set out in the procurement policy and financial authority limits.

After the approval of the award:

- All unsuccessful bidders will be informed in writing by the relevant procurement official of the outcome of the bid together with brief reasons for their bid not being successful.
- The preferred bidder/s will be issued with a letter of intent to award the contract.
- Unsuccessful bidders have an opportunity to lodge appeals as outlined in the procurement policy.
- Where there are no successful appeals the letter of award is issued to the successful bidder.

2.4.1.16 Engagement of professional services providers or consultants

Bid documents for the appointment of consultants must include a clause that rates of remuneration will not exceed the applicable rates contained in the following guidelines:

- Guidelines on fees for audits done on behalf of the Auditor General South Africa (AGSA) as issued by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA).
- The guide on hourly fee rates for consultants as issued by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).
- Remuneration guidelines issued by professional service organisations or regulatory bodies as may be relevant.
- National Department of Public Works rates for reimbursable expenses as published monthly.

2.4.1.17 Subcontracting

The University will advertise for services providers, who meet the definition of empowering suppliers, to express their interest to be added onto the database for subcontract work. On a rotational basis they will be given an opportunity to work as subcontractors on various projects. Rotation of subcontractors will be managed by procurement officials. A bidder must not be awarded the points claimed for BBBEE status level of contribution if it is indicated in the bid document that such bidder intends to sub-contract more than 30% of the contract value to an enterprise that does not qualify for at least the same number of points that the bidder qualifies for, unless the intended sub-contractor is an EME that has the capability and ability to execute the subcontract. A contractor is not allowed to sub-contract more than 30% of the contract value to an enterprise that does not have equal or higher BBBEE status level unless it intended to subcontract to an EME that has the capability to execute the sub-contract. All procurement activities will be conducted in an equitable, ethical and transparent manner and in accordance with the spirit of the BBBEE Act and preference will be given to procuring from the following categories of organisations:

- Empowering suppliers based on their BBBEE procurement recognition levels.
- Exempt Micro-Enterprises (EMEs) that are at least 51% black-owned.
- Qualifying Small Enterprises (QSEs) that are at least 51% black-owned.
- Empowering suppliers that are at least 51% black owned.
- Empowering suppliers that are at least 30 % black women-owned.
- Suppliers that are at least 51% owned by black designated groups.

2.4.1.18 International suppliers and service providers

If an international supplier or service provider is recommended, there should be sufficient evidence to demonstrate that local service providers were unable to provide the required service or the products are not manufactured locally. International purchasing that does not follow the required procurement procedures must be pre-approved in line with the deviations process as outlined in the procurement policy. International service providers are also required to submit South African tax clearance certificates or declarations of compliance with Tax in their countries. Failure to submit the BBBEE details is not a reason to disqualify an international supplier and should be catered for by not awarding points towards BBBEE requirements.

2.4.1.19 Lack of delivery or poor performance

Poor service delivery or the poor quality of products will constitute a breach of the contract and must be dealt with in line with the terms as stipulated in the signed agreement, service level agreement or memorandum of understanding. In the event that the poor service delivery results in the termination of contract, it is not automatic that the contract will be awarded to the next preferred bidder and the University's policies and procedures need to be followed to source another supplier. Any matters relating to poor performance should be reported to the procurement office in writing. The procurement office will facilitate a meeting between the user department, service providers and the legal office (where required). The final decision on the course of action will only be reached once all parties have presented their case for consideration by the CPO/DPO and approved in line with the University's delegations of authority.

2.4.2 The policy regulations further state the roles involved:

2.4.2.1 End Users

Initiate the procurement process by compiling specifications or terms of reference for the procurement of all goods or services to be procured.

2.4.2.2 Legal Experts

Provide legal guidance and advise on all procurement matters that may have legal consequences for the University.

2.4.2.3 Technical Experts

Translate the functional requirements of the end user into technical specifications that define the goods or services to be procured in a manner that will elicit responses from potential bidders. Provide technical guidance and advice to the end user and/or procurement committees as required.

Translate the functional requirements of the end user into technical specifications that define the goods or services to be procured in a manner that will elicit responses from potential bidders. Provide technical guidance and advice to the end user and/or procurement committees as required.

2.4.2.4 external advisors

The University may procure the services of external advisors to assist in the execution of the procurement function. These services should be obtained through a competitive bidding process except in instances where the advisor being appointed is PURCOSA.

2.4.2.5 Central Procurement Office (CPO) and Designated Procurement Office (DPO)

The CPO is under the responsibility and management of the CFO who ensures that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability, as well as performance criteria to contribute towards minimising risk, improving sourcing procedures and process. The DPOs are under the responsibility of the College Deputy Vice-Chancellors and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research who ensure that the required procurement processes are complied with.

The CPO is responsible for processing all requests for quotations, and mini tenders for support services divisions (excluding Research) and all open tenders. the DPOs are responsible for processing all requests for quotations, and mini-tenders of the Colleges and Schools and the Research Division. The CPO and DPOs may in certain circumstances conduct a benchmark exercise to obtain a realistic budget estimate. The CPO and DPOs may source additional quotations in order to ensure that UKZN obtains value for money. The CPO and DPOs will receive the specification/scope, evaluation criteria and pricing schedule from the budget holder or delegated official and set up a kick off meeting to review the documents and finalise the bid documents for submission to the Mini Tender Committee or Bid Specification Committee.

2.4.2.6 Bid Specification Committee (BSC)

The BSC reviews and approves the bid specification, bid document and advert submitted by the budget holder or delegated official to ensure that:

- The specification is drafted in an unbiased manner to allow all potential bidders to participate.

- Evaluation criteria are clear and can be objectively verified through inspection of relevant supporting documentation.
- The weighting of points allocated to the evaluation criteria is fair and reasonable and focuses on performance.
- All pre-qualification and/or mandatory requirements are clearly specified.

The BSC must also identify the points system that will be utilised for scoring the bids

2.4.2.7 Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC)

The BEC must evaluate all bids, from stage 1 to stage 3, according to the evaluation criteria in the approved bid document. The BEC must ensure that bidders or directors are not listed as restricted bidders on National Treasury's Central Supplier Database (CSD) or National Treasury's list of restricted entities. Ensure that sound reasons that will "stand the scrutiny of a court" are given for any decision made by the committee. The evaluation of functionality (stage 2) must be conducted independently by each member of the BEC and the procurement official will work out the average score. The Chairperson of the BEC must lead the discussion where there are major variances in the scores.

In instances where a technical expert is engaged in the project an evaluation report should be compiled and addressed to the BEC for consideration during the bid evaluation.

2.4.2.8 Bid adjudication committee (BAC)

The BAC must consider the BEC's recommendation and depending on the delegation may make final award or make award recommendations to the Executive Management Committee (EMC).

The BAC must ensure that:

- Recommendations of non-responsive submissions are adequately justified and that valid and accountable reasons or motivations were furnished for eliminating bids.
- Functionality scoring has been fair consistent and correctly calculated and applied in accordance with the bid evaluation criteria.
- Bidders and BAC committee member's declaration of interest have been taken cognisance of.

The BAC must consider and rule on all recommendation reports regarding amendments, variations, extensions, cancellations or transfers of contracts awarded. In instances where the BAC does not agree with the BEC recommendations the BAC should send the recommendations back to the BEC with reasons thereof. If the BAC does not approve the recommended supplier sound reasons should be provided and a legal opinion should be obtained where considered necessary.

2.4.2.9 Mini Tender Committee (MTC)

Prepares the advertisement in terms of the specification of the required goods, services and works. Approves the bid specification, advert and any form of subsequent revision to the bid specification. Ensures that a briefing session takes place for potential bidders to inform them of the nature of the goods or services required, specifications, conditions of the bid and evaluation methodology. Provides a comprehensive bid document to all potential bidders at the briefing session or electronically through the UKZN website. Attends to all queries from the potential bidders. Formally receives tenders and evaluates all bids received (stages 1 to 3). Ensures that disqualifications are justified and that valid and accountable reasons and motivations are furnished. Ensures that the shortlisting of service providers is based on the defined pre-qualification criteria. Ensures that records of all meetings are maintained.

3.9.10 Evaluates bid documents according to the set evaluation criteria.

Provides an award recommendation to the approver for acceptance and approval of the selected supplier or service provider. This includes informing the budget holder of the awarded supplier

2.4.2.10 Procurement Committees

The relevant procurement committees are responsible for the procurement process and the approval and award of contract in line with the delegations of authority. The Chief Finance Officer recommends, to the Executive Management Committee for approval, staff for appointment as members of the procurement committees for a period of 12 months. The procurement committee members must sign the procurement process declaration of conflicts of interest forms upon appointment and all other appointment documents in which they undertake to retain confidentiality and non-disclosure with respect to deliberations of the procurement committees.

2.5 legal framework guiding Procurement in South African Universities

The Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997, governs all public universities in South Africa. Institutional laws and regulations were modified in 1999, 2000, and 2001 (Department of Higher Education and Training, Higher Education Act). Policies are crucial in organisations because they establish the principles and procedures that must be adhered to when doing specific tasks ("Policies", 2023). Policies can also impede flexibility and innovation in an organisation (Dlamini & Ambe, 2012). Nationally, the procurement department is at the forefront of all HEIs in South Africa and is thought to be an essential function to the organizational structure (Cooper, 2024). The South African Constitution's section 217 of 1996 firmly establishes the procurement function of SAPHEIs. SAPHEIs adhere to South African laws and regulations by using the procurement policies (Dlamini & Ambe, 2012).

SAPHEIs adhere to South African laws and regulations by using the procurement policies. Through the Ethical Code of Conduct, SAPHEIs enforce adherence to ethical procurement practices. Because of this, the SAPHEIs implement public procurement laws like the BBBEEA 53 of 2003, the PFMA 1 of 1999, the PPPFA 5 of 2000, the General Procurement Guidelines, and the Policy to Guide Uniformity in Procurement Reform Processes in Government to assist small business owners (Paul et al., 2024). Public higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa are considered autonomous (meaning they report to councils than the government) but through code of conduct their procurement is imbedded in the constitution of the country. It is crucial for these entities to operate in an accountable manner in their governance and operational performances due to their large amounts of public funds. Public institutions rely on public funding to contribute to the country's social and economic growth by adhering to legislative and policy structures (Ambe, 2019). As a result, public higher education institutions are indirectly influenced to follow public procurement rules.

Public procurement applicable regulations are embedded In section 217 of 1996 constitutional act. This serves as a framework for implementation of policies (Gurayah, 2024). Section 217 in the institution states that “when an organ of state in the local, provincial or national sphere of government or any other institution identified in national legislation, ***contracts for goods or services***, it must do so in accordance with a system which is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective”. These are five principles of procurement in south Africa

(National Treasury, 2015). Furthermore section 217 (2) does not provide the link with section 239, which defines organs of state. Also, in section 239, there is no precise indication of where to find the scheduled list of organs of state. As a result good governance compels HEI's to adopt these regulations and account, not necessarily obliged too.

2.6 Global review

Young et al. (2016) mentions that Sustainable buying is becoming increasingly important for organisational Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability strategy. This means the long-term success of the company is also largely contributed by good practices in the procurement aspect of the organisation (Young et al., 2016). The results of this qualitative study was the dominance of price in decision making and overall challenges centred on practices (Unfairness, dishonesty, bribery, health and safety). Universities have not been held accountable for sustainability, despite its perceived benefit to them and their stakeholders (Adams, 2013). The public sector's legislative and regulatory context, as well as its focus on public benefit, add complexity to service delivery. The university sector is a significant public service supplier and consumer, offering expertise in teaching and research (Young et al., 2016).

Australian and New Zealand Government Framework for Sustainable Procurement (APCC 2007) conference have developed set of principles for procurement practitioners:

1. Strategies include reducing excessive consumption and managing demand,
2. minimizing environmental impacts, and promoting socially responsible behaviours among suppliers, including adherence to labour commitments.
3. Suppliers' social responsibility practices, including adherence to legislative obligations towards employees.
4. Value for money extends beyond the original cost of goods and services over their whole life cycle

The changes in Australian higher education sector in the last few years due to the introducing of new quality standard and regulating agency the TEQSA (tertiary education quality and standards agency) and accountability for research through excellence in research Australia has led to an intense competition amongst universities. This change attracted worldwide students and increasing the total expenditure in institutions (Worthington & Higgs, 2011). This is a clear reference of under sourced universities.

Since the 1980s, UK higher education institutions have been interested in hiring and developing procurement professionals. Additionally, the UK public procurement must incorporate social factors under an EU directive on public spending, this is a legal requirement (European Commission, 2011). UK institutions must report on contracts issued based on their environmental, social, and overall sustainability credentials.

In Australia, institutional factors include the APCC and a growing emphasis on corporate responsibility and sustainability reporting (Young & Marais 2012). Bhandari et al. (2025) argues that sustainable public procurement practices are shaped by national policies and regulatory requirements that align procurement decisions with broader sustainability goals.

The guidance originates from European directives in the UK also the public sector regulation (Young et al., 2016). The APCC collaborated with New Zealand Government during the 2007 Australian context to develop the Australian and New Zealand Government framework for sustainable procurement.

This framework aims to help governments in State, Territory, Commonwealth, and New Zealand integrate sustainable concepts into procurement for products, services, and construction (APCC, 2007). The key assumption in the paper written by Young et al. (2016) was then that the sustainable procurement does feature within procurement decision making considerations in Australian and UK universities. Based on this, a key assumption in this paper is that SP does indeed feature within the procurement decision-making considerations in Australian and UK universities. However, the application or response to these drivers is open to more investigation. Martin (2009) criticized the Australian Commonwealth and state government's method to sustainable procurement. He argued that the APCC principles and policies are ambiguous on balancing sustainable credentials with price, resulting in price dominance. Additionally, he suggests improving monitoring and reporting requirements to promote sustainability throughout government

Paper written by Khan & Zuberi (2022) was also reviewed by the researcher, Khan mentioned that Public procurement allows the government and state-owned enterprises/institutions to acquire items, services, and works. Because public procurement involves a large amount of taxpayer money, governments must carry it out effectively and with high standards of conduct,

such as transparency and accountability, in order to ensure high-quality service delivery and defend the public interest. It is seen as an indispensable tool for the growth of society and the nation (Khan & Zuberi, 2022). The focus of the research was based in three major Universities in Karachi: the University of Karachi, NED University of Engineering and Technology and Federal Urdu University.

In 2015 The Pakistan Government committed to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. This served as an awareness of the country's global commitments and national obligations. This awareness was bolstered by actions such as the unanimous parliamentary approval of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) through a resolution in February 2016, which mainstreamed them into national and provincial policy frameworks and development goals. In March 2018, the Government's National Economic Council approved the 'National Framework of SDGs' to emphasize the SDGs in Pakistan's long-term development strategy. The framework provides provinces with guidance on how to match their specific development goals with the SDGs, considering local concerns.

The United Nations Commission on International Trade and Law (UNCITRAL) was established in 1996 as the international body in charge of supervising public procurement. UNCITRAL developed a Model Law for the Procurement of Goods, Works, and Services in 1994, which was amended in 2011. This Model Law of Public Procurement outlines all of the methods and concepts for obtaining the best value for money while avoiding procurement process abuses. To accomplish these goals, the law's language promotes impartiality, fairness, participation, competitiveness, and honesty. Another key factor is transparency, which enables public confirmation of adherence with procedures and standards. Pakistan approved the Public Procurement Ordinance in 2002 and the Public Procurement Rules in 2004. Four provinces have established their own Public Procurement Acts and regulations, following the federal government's lead. These Rules are based on the UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement. In Pakistan, public procurement is becoming a specialised professional field. It has been ongoing since 2004, with the development of a regulated legislative framework at the federal level and adoption by the provinces.

The Public Procurement Rules 2004 is a very robust subordinate legislation designed in a reasonably plain manner, prescribing step-by-step procedural aspects and meeting most of the

public procurement needs. The Federal Procurement Rules 2004 are applicable to all federal public institutions using public funds, including public sector firms.

Despite being highly robust legislation, the PP Rules 2004 have some restrictions that cause inefficiency. First, the Rules limit practitioners' exercise of positive discretion, resulting in a rigid legal framework. There is no flexibility in complex and time-sensitive procurements. Procurement is seen as time-consuming due to rigid rules.

Vision 2030 Transparent and effective procurement at public sector universities helps to ensure sustainable development in the education sector and contributes to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2030. Pakistan is the first developing nation to accept these standards and prioritize its efforts to meet the UN's SDG targets. The SDGs are extremely difficult to achieve because they need extensive government competencies and competences, policy and strategy adjustments, and a paradigm shift in the country's development framework. For poor nations such as Pakistan, translating the ambitious SDG agenda into a practical action plan and identifying country-specific objectives and indicators is a big issue.

One of the sustainable developmental goals is the **Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**. The sixteenth aim of the worldwide Sustainable Development aim 2030 is to build accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, with one of the targets being to create effective transparent institutions and drastically reduce corruption and bribery. Most financial corruption occurs during the procurement of products and services in any institution. To attain this aim, the government must eliminate bribery and corruption in the acquisition of public sector universities. Pakistan can attain the following sustainable development goals if it ensures the effectiveness and transparency of public procurement at public-sector universities.

The research concluded by highlighting that adopting digital procurement platforms, continuous staff training, and rigorous compliance measures to build a robust procurement system that aligns with sustainable educational development. The authors conclude that these

improvements would not only foster trust in public institutions but also support the broader objective of educational development in Pakistan.

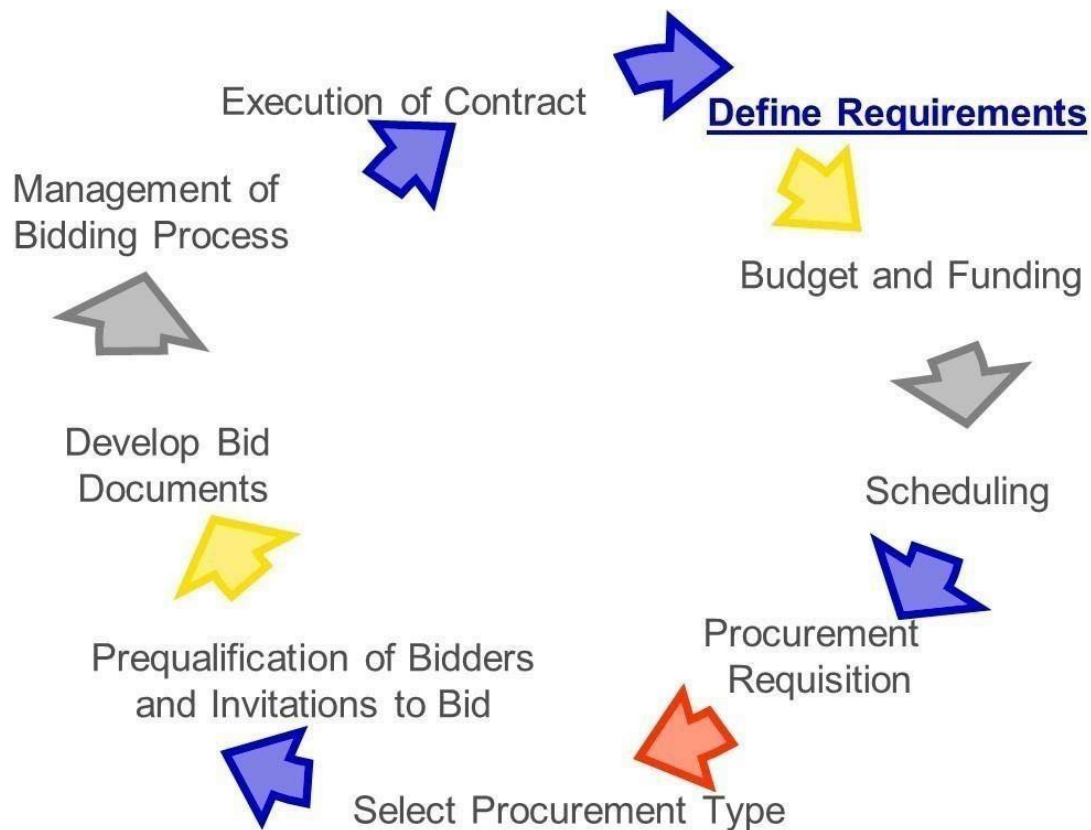


Figure 2.4 Procurement cycle Source: (Khan & Zuberi, 2022)

The above figure elaborates on the procurement cycle from inception of a need which is demand assessment to conclusion which is contract management, these were already discussed in this chapter. Research by Lieyana (2016) was reviewed, Lieyana noted the Procurement practices as vital functions in the public sector as it is the largest spent contributor in organizations. The linkage of procurement to organizational performance in particular, makes the embracing of best practices important to present organizational success. Makabira & Waiganjo (2014) define procurement procedures as activities such as planning, controls, monitoring, and staff training. This study also includes inventory management. Public or government organizations view procurement as a valuable opportunity to improve the procurement process within public sector bodies (Makabira & Waiganjo, 2014).

Kenya adopts the Principle Agency Theory (PAT) in its government, the economists developed this model to address the issue of principals and agents, in which agents are persuaded to do a task on behalf of the principal (Makabira& Waiganjo,2014). The Principal-Agency Theory (PAT) is concerned with the concept that an individual or entity (agent) must behave in the interests of another (principal).

For example, the government, which is the principal/shareholder of the University of Nairobi, selects management (agents) to operate on its behalf. As a result, procurement management is granted authority to make choices on behalf of the government. PAT outlines how procurement managers conduct procurement operations on behalf of public universities.

The study discussed Kenya's public procurement policies, such as the *Public Procurement and Disposal Act* and *Public Procurement and Disposal Regulations*, which guide procurement across government-funded institutions. These policies promote principles of transparency, accountability, and competition to ensure ethical procurement in public universities. Nairobi universities, including the University of Nairobi, adhere to these frameworks to streamline procurement practices, enhance supplier accountability, and uphold fairness in supplier selection and contract awards. The study highlights that these legal frameworks establish strict guidelines aimed at ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in procurement processes, which significantly impact the University of Nairobi. The impact of these acts in the university are:

Transparency and Accountability: The *Public Procurement and Disposal Act* requires open, competitive bidding processes, which helps the university avoid conflicts of interest and reduce corruption risks. This structured approach enforces a high standard of integrity and public accountability, as university procurement teams must document and justify procurement decisions.

Cost-Efficiency and Fair Competition: By promoting competitive tendering, the regulations support the university's goal of achieving cost efficiency. This competition ensures that the university can procure high-quality goods and services at reasonable prices, which is essential for budgetary constraints and resource allocation.

Compliance and Supplier Management: The act mandates rigorous supplier vetting processes, which ensures that only compliant and capable vendors are contracted. The

University of Nairobi, adhering to these standards, is able to improve supplier reliability and reduce risks associated with poor supplier performance.

Risk Reduction and Dispute Resolution: The regulatory frameworks provide clear procedures for handling procurement disputes and reducing risks in vendor selection and contract management. For the University of Nairobi, this mitigates potential disruptions and ensures continuity of operations.

The paper also outlined processes at the University as follows:

1.Procurement Planning and Budgeting: Proper planning aligns procurement with institutional needs, forecasting demand to avoid unnecessary costs and delays.

2.Supplier Selection: Criteria such as compliance, quality, and cost-effectiveness are central to choosing reliable suppliers.

3.Contract Management: Effective contract management is emphasized to oversee vendor performance, adherence to contract terms, and timely delivery.

4.Risk Assessment and Mitigation: Procedures for managing risks like supply chain interruptions or vendor issues are critical for maintaining consistent service quality and managing resources effectively.

Lieyana (2016) recommends procurement agents must propose workable methods for managing the procurement process, it suggests adopting advanced procurement technologies for better tracking and evaluation, updating procurement policies to meet emerging organizational needs, and ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation to improve supplier relationships and performance outcomes.

To ensure better performance, organizations need to focus not only on planning and training, but also on inventory purchasing, control, and tracking. Key revitalization of the procurement process is a requirement because it can help ensure that the organization adopts modern technology trends and methods when dealing with and solving procurement problems. The organization's management, together with other stakeholders, should adopt modern planning methods and should propose a tailor-made procurement training plan.

2.7 South African review

A paper by Vilakahle (2022) was reviewed, the paper explored procurement practices in HEI of Eastern cape in South Africa. The researcher acknowledged section 217 of the constitution and interpreted that public institutions must conduct procurement in manner that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effected. These as explained earlier in the chapter are the principles of procument in south Africa. These principles are enforced through frameworks like the PPPFA (preferential procurement policy framework) and PFMA (Public finance management Act). These frameworks emphasize the following:

1.Fairness and Equity: The institution follows policies that ensure fair competition among suppliers and prioritize procurement from historically disadvantaged groups, supporting South Africa's transformation goals.

2.Transparency: Procurement processes are designed to be open and auditable, with a focus on preventing corruption and favouritism by documenting and publicly advertising tenders.

3.Cost-Effectiveness and Efficiency: Guidelines promote responsible spending of public funds, ensuring procurement decisions align with budget constraints and institutional needs.

The paper further alluded on procurement processes in the institution which are:

1.Supplier Evaluation and Selection: A transparent process is followed to assess potential suppliers based on compliance, quality, and cost, ensuring they meet both legal and institutional standards.

2.Contract Management: Active contract oversight includes monitoring vendor performance, adherence to terms, and the timeliness of goods and service delivery, aiming to maintain continuity and service quality.

3.Risk Management: Procedures for identifying and managing procurement risks, such as delivery delays or supplier non-compliance, are part of the institution's strategy to mitigate disruptions in essential operations.

4.Monitoring and Evaluation: Continuous assessment and review of procurement activities are conducted to ensure adherence to policies and drive improvements.

Additionally, the authors advocate for periodic reviews of procurement policies to adapt to changing institutional needs and regulatory landscapes, as well as strengthening monitoring mechanisms to ensure ongoing supplier performance and policy adherence.

In summary, the study finds that while the institution's procurement practices align with constitutional and policy requirements, ongoing improvements are necessary to address evolving challenges in procurement management and ensure efficient service delivery in the higher education sector.

A paper by Gurayah (2024) was reviewed, the paper investigates the public procurement system challenges in selected higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It examines how procurement policies and legislative frameworks stemming from Section 217 of the South African Constitution affect procurement operations in universities, highlighting both the procedural barriers and their impact on institutional performance. Public procurement is crucial for service delivery and performance in south Africa, it is legally regulated and significantly impacts global economies. Procurement is critical for universities, influencing economic activities and supplier relationships. Effective procurement relies on skilled personnel, accurate processes, and modern technology.

The paper revealed that a research by PWC (2015) titled supply chain management in higher education sector stated that SCM plays an important role in developing and maintaining the value chain within institutions of higher learning, as well as serving as a method to promote more effective fund appropriation and governance. More and more businesses in both the public and private sectors are understanding the significance of SCM in ensuring they can deliver on all elements of their value chain.

This paper further noted that PFMA and PPPFA frameworks proposed strong structures in the world within the context of procurement. Lack of proper implementation is what hinders public organisations to achieve sustainability. The paper further revealed that universities are not compelled to adhere to these frameworks but should serve as guidelines in the organizational policies. Below are the acts stemming from section 217 of the constitution which mandates public procurement to be fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective. The following Acts are operating as legislative frameworks that provides interpretation and guides universities in their policy making.

1.Public Finance Management Act (PFMA): This act is critical for the governance of financial practices, ensuring accountability, transparency, and efficient use of public funds in procurement activities within universities. It sets standards for budget management and fiscal discipline, emphasizing that funds should be used responsibly to achieve institutional goals.

2.Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA): The PPPFA supports fair competition by prioritizing procurement from historically disadvantaged individuals and groups, aligning with South Africa's economic transformation objectives. In universities, this act encourages procurement decisions that support Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), promoting supplier diversity and fostering socioeconomic equity.

3.Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE): Although not exclusive to Section 217, BBBEE is a crucial policy framework that further guides procurement practices by promoting economic inclusion. It encourages universities to procure from suppliers who contribute to economic transformation, aiming to reduce historical inequalities.

4.General Procurement Guidelines: Planning and demand management, Bid solicitation and tendering, bid adjudication, contract management, financial controls and reporting as well as risk management.

The paper added the challenges faced by universities in procurement departments:

1. **Bureaucratic Delays:** Complex and lengthy procurement processes, often required for regulatory compliance, lead to delays in acquiring essential goods and services. These delays affect operational efficiency and the institution's ability to meet academic and administrative needs promptly.
2. **Skills and Capacity Gaps:** Many procurement staff members lack adequate training in best practices and regulatory requirements. This gap results in inefficiencies, inconsistencies, and heightened risks of non-compliance, which hinder effective procurement management.
3. **Regulatory Compliance Burdens:** Adherence to frameworks like the *Public Finance Management Act* (PFMA) and *Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act* (PPPFA) is essential but often limits flexibility, as strict regulations can restrict responsiveness to immediate or unforeseen institutional needs.

4. **Supplier Performance and Contract Management:** Challenges in managing supplier relationships, tracking contract compliance, and assessing supplier performance lead to potential risks of non-fulfilment and affect the reliability of procurement outcomes.
5. **Limited Supplier Diversity:** The requirement for preferential procurement practices, while supporting economic transformation, can sometimes result in limited supplier options, especially in specialized areas. This constraint impacts competitive sourcing and can lead to procurement delays.

The study concluded by mentioning that effective procurement practices are essential for achieving institutional goals and compliance, the procurement processes were similar to the study by Vikalahle (2022).

2.8 Procurement best practices in SAHEI

Winnie Dlamini's (2016) study explores procurement best practices in South African comprehensive universities, aiming to identify effective strategies for improving procurement efficiency, transparency, and cost management in these institutions. The research focuses on evaluating current practices, challenges, and opportunities for optimization in line with South African public procurement regulations and university specific needs. Dlamini (2016) mentions that In South Africa, the primary and secondary objectives of public procurement are entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996. This Act institutes government's, for applying the preferential system. It also establishes requirements for the award of contracts to be lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. Primary Objectives: A procurement system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective as stipulated in Section 217 of the constitution. Secondary Objectives: A procurement Policy that provides for Categories of preference in the allocation of contracts and protection or advancements of persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

All universities' own procurement or supply chain policies, as well as, to some extent, public procurement policies and legislation, influence procurement. Like the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act of 2003 (Act No. 53 of 2003), the Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000 (Act 4 of 2000), the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act of 2000 (Act No. 5 of 2000), the

Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act of 2004 (Act No. 12 of 2004), the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999), the Framework for Supply Chain Management of 2003, and the Construction Industry Development (Act 38 of 2000). The policies give each university a framework for the procurement process and the steps to take when making purchases of products and services.

All procurement transactions and interactions with suppliers, including supplier selection and evaluation, are subject to the provisions outlined in the code of ethics and conduct, and policies related to the prevention of fraud/corruption and other irregularities are also encouraged. These issues include ethical standards and conflicts of interest. The procurement procedure used by South African universities also incorporates the notion of the declaration of interest. To guarantee that the procurement process is respected by all parties, confidentiality and information accuracy are also included (Unisa, 2009; NMMU, 2012).

The findings of the research highlighted that the implementation of best practices can also be identified as below:

1. Standardized Supplier Evaluation: Establishing clear criteria for supplier selection and evaluation, including compliance, cost, and service quality, is recommended to maintain consistency and fairness.

2. Effective Contract Management: Regular monitoring and management of contracts help ensure suppliers adhere to agreements, promoting accountability and timely delivery.

3. Centralized Procurement Systems: Implementing centralized procurement processes improves coordination, reduces redundancies, and allows for better oversight of purchasing activities.

4. Transparent Tender Processes: Transparent bidding and tender processes prevent favoritism and corruption, enhancing trust in the procurement process and ensuring equal opportunity for vendors.

The paper further identified challenges in implementation of these practices:

1. Compliance Burden: Strict adherence to public procurement frameworks can lead to complex, time-consuming processes that affect procurement timelines and responsiveness to immediate needs.

2.Limited Supplier Diversity: A limited pool of qualified suppliers in certain categories can make it challenging to meet both quality and BBBEE requirements, potentially limiting competition.

3.Skills and Training Gaps: Insufficient training in procurement best practices among staff can lead to inconsistencies, procedural errors, and inefficient resource management.

Recommendations

Dlamini (2016) recommends increasing staff training to build procurement expertise and enhance compliance. The study also advocates for adopting digital procurement systems to streamline processes, improve tracking, and support data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, Dlamini (2016) suggests a periodic review of procurement policies to ensure they remain adaptable to changing institutional needs while still aligned with South African public procurement regulations.

2.9 Summary of the chapter

The chapter concludes that procurement globally and locally is a very important and delicate space in Universities, there are laws regulating them and universities are required some kind of accountability in their procuring. The Frameworks provided are somehow ambiguous and requires more interpretation to breach the GAP. The study by Leiyan concludes the study concluded that the University of Nairobi has adopted procurement practices to a moderate degree and there is a relationship between procurement practices and organizational performance the researcher believes sufficient training is being conducted in the university of Nairobi to implement procurement policies. The study of SDG's By Khan provided Evidence that applying best practices can yield optimal results. The section discovered that in South Africa through the reviewed study by Dlamini adopting best practices such as standardized supplier evaluation, transparent bidding, effective contract management, and centralized procurement can significantly improve efficiency and accountability in South African comprehensive universities. However, addressing challenges like the compliance burden, limited supplier diversity, and staff skills gaps is essential to optimize procurement practices fully. The findings by Dlamini (2016) revealed that South African comprehensive universities face a number of challenges in adopting PBPs, therefore do not conduct procurement according

to the best practices. The slow progress in implementing best practices can be attributed to the lack of flexibility in public procurement policies and regulations, uncertainty about whether universities must comply with public procurement regulations, lack of skills and education of employees, and lack of commitment to value and the procurement management. The study concludes that adopting best practices such as standardized supplier evaluation, transparent bidding, effective contract management, and centralized procurement can significantly improve efficiency and accountability in South African comprehensive universities. However, addressing challenges like the compliance burden, limited supplier diversity, and staff skills gaps is essential to optimize procurement practices fully. The study gap is to discover that having literature on best practices and sustainable development, how much the influence of public policies have and how they impact the application of these practices.

Chapter 3

This chapter introduces and outlines the study's research methodology. Research methodology includes the philosophical foundations and reasoning that inform scientific investigation and impact the methods for gathering, processing, and analysing data. It is essential for guaranteeing the validity, quality, and dependability of research findings, It has a direct impact on data correctness and result generalizing (Ojoboh & Igben, 2024).

The research methodology comprises acquiring and analysing data to solve the study's problem. This chapter covers research design, philosophy, population, sampling strategies, sample size, data collecting, and analysis. Data credibility and trustworthiness will be discussed as well. The term "method" describes the particular methods and techniques used to gather and examine data, while "methodology" incorporates the overall research design, which includes the theoretical framework, research questions, and research approach (De Aguiar, 2024).

3.1 Research design

The research design is a comprehensive technique that is used to carry out the collection of data and analysis in a research study (Melnikovas, 2018). Research design can be classified into three types: descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory. Because the research topic might be both explanatory and descriptive, the research study could have more than one design (Singh, 2019). A case strategy approach was used to acquire the necessary data for the study since it enabled the researcher to perform empirical investigations and collect data from interviewees who are members of a single institution. (Charli et al., 2022). By using a single case, Ponelis (2015) confirms that "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single, bounded unit situated in a specific context to provide insight into real life situations" is possible. In order to enable empirical analysis of the phenomena. This study focused on the influence of the public policies in implementing best procurement practices in the institution to allow empirical investigation of the phenomenon.

3.1.1 Exploratory Design

An exploratory research is intended to address new problems that have not before been investigated. It is the basic procedure and preliminary research kind in which the investigation is undertaken at the start of the research process. An exploratory research is an excellent medium for determining what is taking place; discover new versions, evaluate the phenomena and to ask questions (Singh, 2019).

3.1.2 Descriptive Design

Descriptive research uses an information gathering process to concentrate on contemporary concerns. To illustrate the behavior of the sample population, Extensive studies are employed (Singh, 2019). To guide an investigation in descriptive research, only one variable, anything with varying amounts or qualities is required (Singh, 2019).

3.1.3 Explanatory Design

Causal research, also known as explanatory research aims to understand the impact of specific alterations to common procedures. Explanatory studies are those that establish a causal relationship between the variables (Singh, 2019). This study used an exploratory research design to gather data in order to enhance understanding of a phenomenon, formulate definitions and clearly develop concepts. This study focused on the influence of the public policies in implementing best procurement practices in the institution to allow empirical investigation of the phenomenon. The researcher conducted an inductive study to fulfil the aim of building a theory as opposed to testing an existing theory through a deductive study (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

3.2 Research Approach

According to Creswell (2014), Research approaches are defined as methods and strategies that covers the phases from general assumptions to precise methods of data collection, analysing and interpreting data. The research method is a plan that includes of stages to follow when collecting, analysing, and interpreting data (Creswell, 2014). There are three major approaches that a researcher can use to conduct a study; qualitative, quantitative and mixed (Terrell, 2016).

3.2.1 Qualitative approach

The objective of the qualitative approach is to investigate and comprehend the individuals or groups linked with a human or societal problem in order to identify, characterize, and give it significance. The researcher could describe the characteristics and nature of a subject while interpreting and understanding an event using a qualitative research approach. The researcher can utilize texts to explain their findings (Mohajan & PRA, 2018). With this approach, the researcher can utilize texts to provide context for their findings.

It is challenging to quantify outcomes using statistical processes because this research method gives the audience a mental picture of what the researcher is witnessing (Charli et al., 2022). A qualitative research approach could be used by the researcher to interpret and comprehend an event while describing the nature and attributes of a subject. Texts can be used by the researcher to describe their findings (Pandey et al., 2015).

3.2.2 Quantitative Approach

According to Kowalczyk (2016), quantitative research methodologies employ numerical data to elucidate their findings. In order to use numbers, a researcher must be well-versed in both descriptive and inferential statistical factors, including how to calculate and interpret standard deviations. Explaining, predicting, or investigating relationships, describing the state of affairs, or looking into potential effects on particular outcomes are the main goals of quantitative research. When a researcher wants to investigate the relationship between one variable and another while ignoring the influence of other factors, they would employ quantitative research methods. In order to test theories, generate predictions, and eventually depict an event using figures, a researcher may, on the one hand, employ a quantitative research approach. By using this technique, the researcher can use numbers to describe their findings and utilize them as a basis for statistical tests to make sure the data show a statistical link (Techo, 2016).

3.2.3 Mixed Approach

The mixed approach comprises a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approach when collecting and analysing the data (Creswell, 2009). To fully explain an event, a researcher may decide to utilize a mixed approach, in which the researcher combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies. To fully comprehend the phenomenon being studied, a mixed technique integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study. It is primarily assumed that an investigator can gain a deeper grasp of the issue by utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods rather than just one of them (Charli et al., 2022). This study adopted a qualitative methodology that was consistent with the interpretivist ideology, which recognizes the complexity of each respondent (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). This study's objective was met by utilising the qualitative research approach to gather information rather than test variables. This study focused on the influence of the public policies in implementing best procurement practices in the institution to allow empirical investigation of the phenomenon.

The researcher aimed at obtaining the in-depth understanding of the influence of the public policies within the institution and the challenges of procurement best practices. The exploratory research design was the most suitable approach for this study as it allowed the researcher to discover deeper understanding of the influence and the challenges experienced.

Characteristic	Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Type of data	Phenomena are described numerically	Phenomena are described in narrative fashion
Analysis	Descriptive and inferential statistics	Identification of major themes
Scope of inquiry	Specific questions or hypotheses	Broad, thematic concerns

Primary advantage	Large sample, statistical validity, accurately reflects the population	Rich, in-depth, narrative description of sample
Primary disadvantage	Superficial understanding of participants' thoughts and feelings	Small sample, not generalisable to the population at large

Figure 3.1 A comparison of the quantitative and qualitative research approach

Source:

(Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009)

3.3 Target Population

According to Terrell (2016), the target population is the total number of units that the researcher could potentially use to collect pertinent data for the study. The target population for this study was made of 10 possible participants who form part of the buying process at UKZN.

3.4 Sampling Design

Sampling is a crucial statistical process of choosing a subset from target population, It is classified into two type; Probability and non-probability sampling. Wang (2024) & Xie (2024) have emphasized that probability sampling guarantees that each member of the population has a known chance of being chosen, improving representativeness and enabling reliable statistical inferences. For the purpose of gaining a thorough grasp of the phenomenon, this study employed non-probability sampling, which enabled the researcher to select participants based on the most pertinent data (Lohr, 2021). Additionally, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to extract the most relevant data from the people involved in the institution's purchasing process. Purposive sampling refers to the process of selecting representative units from the population to generate samples based on individual expertise.

3.4.1 Non-Probability sampling

Non-probability sampling is a technique that uses non-random factors to choose a group of participants for a study. This technique has 3 common types of sampling (Mulisa, 2022).

- **Convenience sampling:** Convenience sampling involves selecting individuals who are readily available and willing to participate in a study, rather than using a probability-based

approach. This approach is often used when acquiring representative samples from a target population is difficult due to time, resource, or other limitations (Wang ,2024). This sampling technique involves recruiting participants based on their proximity to the study site and the desire to participate. Although convenient sampling appears to be a straightforward and cost-effective method of data collection, it has a number of disadvantages. One of the primary disadvantages of convenient sampling is that it may not accurately represent the full population under study resulting in biased results (Xinyuan &Wang ,2024). Despite the disadvantages this sampling is useful in exploratory or pilot research where the goal is to gather preliminary data before conducting larger scale studies (Xinyuan &Wang ,2024).

- **Purposive Sampling:** The Process of choosing a representative unit from the population to create samples based on personal judgment, experience, and expertise is known as targeted sampling. This sampling method can utilize already existing pertinent information and allow for the subjective initiative of relevant personnel. The lack of a consistent standard for the most effective way to choose representative units or how to identify the most representative units is a disadvantage for this sample method (Wang,2024).
- **Quota Sampling:** According to the given quota, the sampler collects a sample that is generally proportional to the variety show structure in certain characteristics. It first categorizes the population based on specified characteristics and assigns a proportional number of units to investigate for each category. The sampler then does a judgment sampling for each group (Wang, 2024).

3.4.2 Probability Sampling

Probability sampling implies that each member of the target population has a known probability of being selected in the sample. Stratified sampling, cluster sampling, systematic sampling, and basic random sampling are other types of probability sampling techniques (Mulisa, 2022).

- **Simple random sampling :**Simple random sampling is a probabilistic sampling approach employed in research methods. This method is a basic method that provides an equal

chance for every member of the population to be chosen. Furthermore, all possible samples of a given size have an equal chance of being selected. This method ensures that the sample accurately represents the total population, reducing the likelihood of bias and increasing the ability to apply the findings in a broader context. However, there are certain limitations to using basic random sampling. It can be both hard and costly, especially when managing large populations (Wang, 2024).

- **Cluster Sampling:** The entire population is separated into groups or clusters and a random sample of these clusters is selected for examination in the sampling approach known as cluster sampling, which is frequently used in statistics. Ideally, each cluster should reflect a small portion of the whole population. Cluster sampling is employed when simple random sampling is not feasible owing to scale, expense, or logistical constraints (Wang, 2024).
- **Systematic sampling:** Systematic sampling is another major statistical and research sampling strategy. This method provides an alternative to random sampling, particularly when a comprehensive population list is accessible (Wang, 2024).

3.5 Sampling Size

The number of observations utilised to calculate the estimates for a certain population is known as the sample size (Mulisa, 2022). The population has been used to determine the sample size. The process of choosing a group of people from the population in order to estimate the characteristics of the entire population is known as sampling (Hossan et al., 2023). In order to gain a comprehensive insight of the population (10), this study employed non-probability sampling, purposive sampling to be specific, which enabled the researcher to select participants with the most pertinent data. This study used the non-probability sampling, purposive sampling to be specific that allowed the researcher to sample the participants with the most relevant information in order to obtain in-depth understanding of population (10). Individual interviews with participants were conducted. The selection process was based on each participant's years of experience, position, duties, and responsibilities, as well as their availability to participate in the study and as a result 7 members participated in the individual interviews. To determine the

level of expertise in the division, the research requested participants to disclose the level of education and its relevance to the field, as well as the practice experience.

The experience of the participants ranged from 2 minimum in UKZN procurement but 10 years overall procurement experience. The most experienced had more than 6-10 years in UKZN and more than 10 years overall procurement experience. These participants are involved in procurement activities within the institution and they varied in positions from manager to senior and junior buyer roles.

The aim of the research was to gather operational and strategic data hence the interviews were done using different colleges within the institution (the University of KwaZulu Natal is currently decentralised in its operations). The participation of 7 individuals in individual in-depth interviews enabled the researcher to acquire a diverse range of perspectives that were unaffected by the opinions of others. The in-depth interviews allowed the researcher gain new insights on public procurement policies and their influence in the institutions procurement policies from each college personnel and a central manager who provides guidelines to all colleges within the institution. The researcher purposively collected data from the following seven (7) respondents from a target population of ten (10) potential respondents involved in the UKZN purchasing process. After identifying respondents based on the above-mentioned criteria, data saturation for this research was obtained on the 7th participant, interviews were 1 hour long with 2 respondents provided more than 2-hour responses.

Below are the participants.

Sample size Sample Size: Seven (7) Interviewees

Job title	No. of Interviewees
Central Procurement Manager	1
Senior Procurement specialist	1
Senior Procurement officer	1
Senior Procurement officer	1
Junior Procurement officer	1
Junior procurement officer	1
Junior procurement officer	1

3.6 Data Collection and Time Horizon

In qualitative research, where comprehension of human behavior is critical, data collection instruments such as surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and observations are vital for obtaining data ("Data Collection Methods", 2024). The validity and reliability of the research findings are greatly impacted by the selection of these instruments, thus careful consideration of the aims of the study and the intended audience is required (Agbeka et al., 2024). Exploratory and descriptive research are typically conducted through interviews (Hunter et al., 2019). In depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured method; this method allowed the researcher to ask questions that answered the research questions.

A crucial consideration in study design is the time horizon, which affects the decision between cross-sectional and longitudinal investigations. Through the collection of data over a number of time periods, longitudinal research—which can be either prospective or retrospective—allows for the analysis of changes and developments within the same subjects (Ashraf et al., 2024). The study will be cross-sectional in nature. This means that data will be collected once and in-depth information will be acquired to fulfil all objectives.

The researcher utilised lunch time on a preferred date during the specified period of collecting, which is an hour in consideration of the normal duties that still needed to be performed. Data was collected over the period of 2 months (August 2023–September 2023).

3.7 Research Paradigm

A researcher's views that drive their approach to a study, including how they gather, evaluate, and use data, are known as their research philosophy. It is a researcher's perspective for understanding the world and producing knowledge (Crowther, 2008). Researchers utilize a paradigm that is in line with the study objectives. Understanding the research paradigm is essential while conducting research as it informs the exploration of the study questions and objectives (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022).

The below tables summarise the 4 philosophies.

Post positivism	Constructivism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination • Reductionism • Empirical observation and measurement • Theory verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Multiple participant meanings • Social and historical construction • Theory generation
Transformative	Pragmatism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political • Power and justice oriented • Collaborative • Change-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequences of actions • Problem-centered • Pluralistic • Real-world practice oriented

Table 3.1 Four worldviews Source: (Creswell, 2014)

The interpretivism philosophy was applied as a result of the researcher relying on the views of the respondents based on their experiences. The interpretive research paradigm prioritizes subjective experiences over objective observations in order to understand social reality. This technique aims to recreate participants' perceptions of their social realities (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022).

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The process of Transforming raw gathered data into facts and meaningful concepts that can be comprehended qualitatively or quantitatively is known as data analysis. This process analyses tabular data to determine interpretations and facts (Alem, 2020). It entails dissecting currently complex aspects into smaller components and rearranging them for interpretation. Data analysis comprises comparing the effects of various treatments on different groups and reaching a decision on whether or not the research objectives were met (Kothari, 2004).

Regardless of whether the data is qualitative or quantitative, the analysis may be used to characterize and summarize the data, discover correlations between variables, compare variables, determine the differences between variables and can also be used to forecast results (Alem, 2020).

Thematic analysis, a technique that enables researchers to find, examine, and present patterns (themes) within data, is frequently used in data analysis in qualitative research. Because of its adaptability and accessibility, this method is especially useful for a range of qualitative research (Squires, 2023). Thematic analysis requires numerous processes, including classifying data into meaningful units, generating categories, and eventually constructing themes that capture the data's core. Developing categories, classifying data into meaningful units, and finally creating themes that capture the core of the data are all processes in the thematic analysis process. This process involves identifying recurring patterns within qualitative data (Kordel & Gruber, 2024). This study utilized thematic analysis for data collection, interpretation, and analysis. The study used the NVivo software to analyse and adopted the six steps of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

The steps are as follows:

Step 1: Familiarising with data

After the data was collected, it became imperative for the researcher to understand the data by transcribing using the Teams Microsoft ware transcribing tool. Using such tool assisted the researcher to attain better understanding of information collected and analyse ay sequential patterns. The process of transcribing involves reproducing a recorded account and presenting it as written text (Saunders et al., 2016). This study used Microsoft team transcribing tool when transcribing the audio to written text. This AI tool assisted to translate to written text for the speedily transcribing phase. Although AI might provide a speedier and less expensive option to human transcription, the researcher must carefully review these transcripts to guarantee accuracy complete any missing information or make edits for readability and context (McMullin, 2023). To ensure accuracy of the information the research listened to interviews and read the transcribed data to edit where an error occurred.

Step 2: Generate initial codes

In qualitative research, identifying of themes is an essential procedure that should ideally flow naturally from the data and correspond with the study's objectives. Themes describe participants' underlying perceptions and experiences, requiring a thorough analysis of the data using methods such as in-depth interviews or focus groups to successfully extract these insights (Mishra & Dey, 2022). The researcher used the coding method to compile the data and arrange it according to the appropriate code.

Step 3: Theme Search

The concept of a theme, as discussed by Braun and Clarke (2006), is inherently flexible and context-dependent, lacking rigid definitions. A theme is defined by its significance. After evaluating the codes in this instance, it was determined that some of them matched to create a theme. By the end of the process a number of different codes were generated, the codes had been grouped into larger themes that appeared to address the research questions.

Step 4: Theme Review

Themes that were created in step 3 are then examined, adjusted and redefined to create the categorizing process. This step is important to ensure all raw data fits into a themes and codes. Nvivo 12 software was utilised to speed up achieving this step.

Step 5: Naming themes

This step as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) is the Finding the essence of each topic and the final step in refining themes. The researcher repeatedly modified each theme in order to create concise explanations and theme titles.

Step 6: Generating the report

This is the final step where a report is produced, which is to Synthesize the findings into a coherent narrative that highlights the analysis process and insights acquired (Campbell et al., 2021) The questions are restated, context and the purpose of the analysis, each theme is discussed in detail using “quotes” to illustrate the analysis. Findings are interpreted linking back to research questions and relevant literature. To conclude a summary of key insights and implications are discussed and suggestions for any future research direction are provided.

Further illustrations will be provided in chapter 4 and chapter 5 of the study.

3.9 Data Quality Control

Data quality control in qualitative research is essential to ensure the credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability of the findings. Unlike quantitative research, where statistical measures can ensure data quality, qualitative research relies on systematic strategies and best practices to maintain data integrity (Ahmed S,2024). The study used Guba’s Trustworthiness model to ensure the study’s accuracy, validity and trustworthiness.

Guba's Trustworthiness Model is a framework for evaluating the quality and rigor of qualitative research, as an alternative to traditional quantitative criteria like validity and reliability. Developed by Lincoln & Guba (1985), this model emphasizes the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of qualitative findings, providing a structured way to ensure trustworthiness. Below is a breakdown of each of the four criteria in Guba’s model, along with the strategies used to achieve them (Enworo, 2023).

Criteria	Definition	Strategies
Credibility	Confidence in the 'truth' of the findings	Triangulation, Member Checking, Prolonged Engagement, Peer Debriefing
Transferability	Applicability of findings to other contexts	Thick Description, Purposeful Sampling

Dependability	Consistency of the findings over time	Audit Trail, Code-Recode Procedure, Peer Examination
Confirmability	Objectivity; findings shaped by participants, not researcher bias	Reflexivity, Audit Trail, Triangulation

Figure 3.2 Lincoln & Guba's (1985) Trustworthiness criteria and techniques for establishing them. Source: (Loh, 2013).

During data collection, the researcher focused on trustworthiness, transferability, and reliability to get high-quality data (Mvubu, 2016). The study made use of data triangulation as a method to ensure accuracy, the method allowed the researcher to scrutinise documents, asked questions in a manner that the researcher prompt the respondents to give honest responses, this was a strategy used by the researcher to ensure the credibility of the study. Triangulation involves using multiple sources of data, methods, or researchers to validate the findings (Meydan & Akkas, 2024). This approach helps to cross-check and verify the consistency of the data collected Using different sources of information (e.g., interviews, observations, documents). By using quotes of the participants for concluding on data analysis guarantees the study to be credible. Any voice recording is accessible and available for audit trail (Meydan & Akkas, 2024).

In contrast to generalization, which frequently suggests wider application across populations, transferability refers to the capacity of researchers to apply findings from particular studies to various contexts, participants, or settings. Instead of aiming for universal generalizations, transferability is highlighted in qualitative research as a more nuanced technique that enables researchers to extrapolate lessons from specific cases to other similar situations (Drisko, 2024). The study can be proven that it can be applicable to other context and guarantee its transferability. The findings can be applicable o other Universities as well. The researcher completed transcribing over voice recordings, these are attainable and prove the authentication of the study and its dependability. All participants responses were recorded over and over the researcher ensured the accuracy if the transcribes information through the use of these recordings.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study followed the ethical protocol of the Institution. The researcher ensured that the interviewees were given informed consent declarations and understood the nature of the study by explaining the objectives of the study and explaining why their participation was required. The researcher also ensured that the interviewees were aware that the identity of all interviewees would be protected. The University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Research Committee provided the ethical clearance ref HSSREC/00004819/2022 for the study after the institution granted the gatekeeper's letter. This study does not expose the financial information of institution and adheres to institution's confidentiality policies of the target population. It refrains from exposing information that might defame the character of the interviewees and Only authorised data appears in this study.

3.10 Summary of the chapter

The Chapter lengthily discussed the research methodology. Research methods were presented and discussed and chapter further elaborated on the interpretivism philosophy used in the study. Research approach, design, target population, sample size, were discussed. The researcher carefully studied these methods and philosophies before selected qualitative method which is utilised in the study. Thematic analysis was discussed using the six steps of Braun &Clarke (2006) and the Guba's Trustworthiness Model was discussed as the model utilised to ensure data validation and accuracy. The next chapter will present data that was conducted in individual interviews.

Chapter 4

4. Research findings

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents information gathered through interview. The study aimed at Addressing all research questions and achieve research objectives that were presented in the first chapter. The subject concern being the compliance on the national treasury regulations and the Challenges facing the Institution in adopting best procurement practices. This chapter further presents an analysis of a policy that is used by the institution with the aim of enhancing operational efficiencies.

This section, Part A presents the participants' demographic data taken from the interview questions. For the purpose of preserving the anonymity of the participants and in accordance with the ethical considerations of the research project, each participant was assigned a number which was used rather than their names. Participants were assigned P1 to P7 respectively. Demographic information was collected to explore how certain demographic data factors might contribute to the understanding of procurement processes within The University of KwaZulu Natal.

4.2 SECTION A Demographics

1. Race



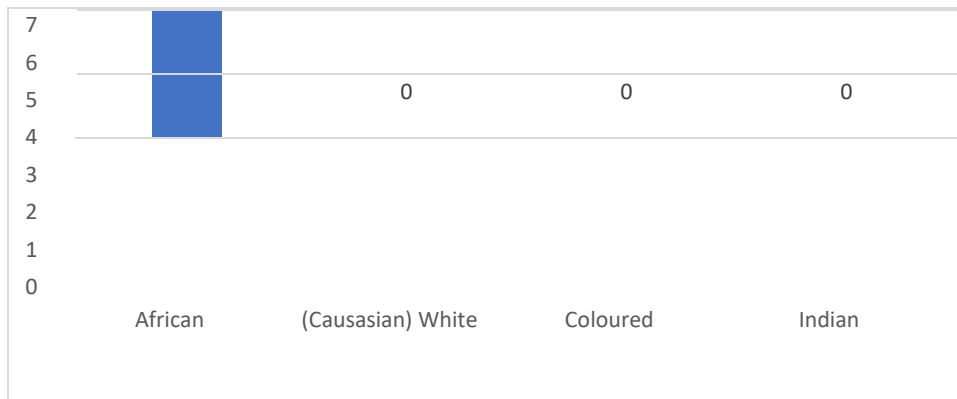


Figure 4.1 All interviewed respondents were African. This can imply diversity and Employment Equity.

2. Gender

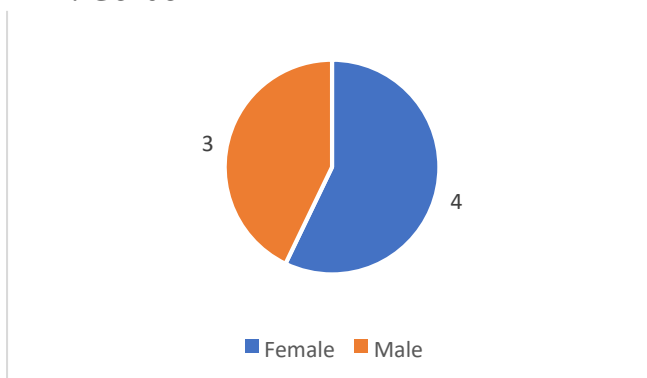


Figure 4.2 There were more female than males. This can imply female empowerment and compliance with equity in the workplace.

3. Age

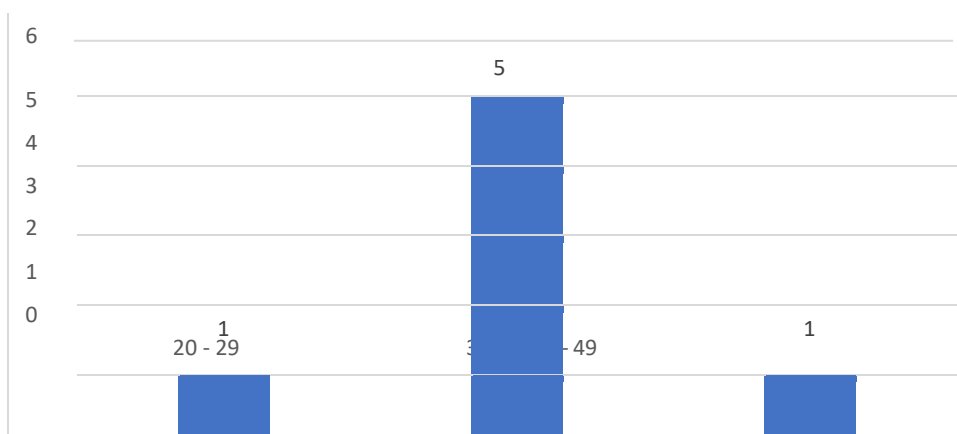


Figure 4.3 Most respondents were over 30 years of age, thereby implying maturity and experience in the workplace.

4. Qualification

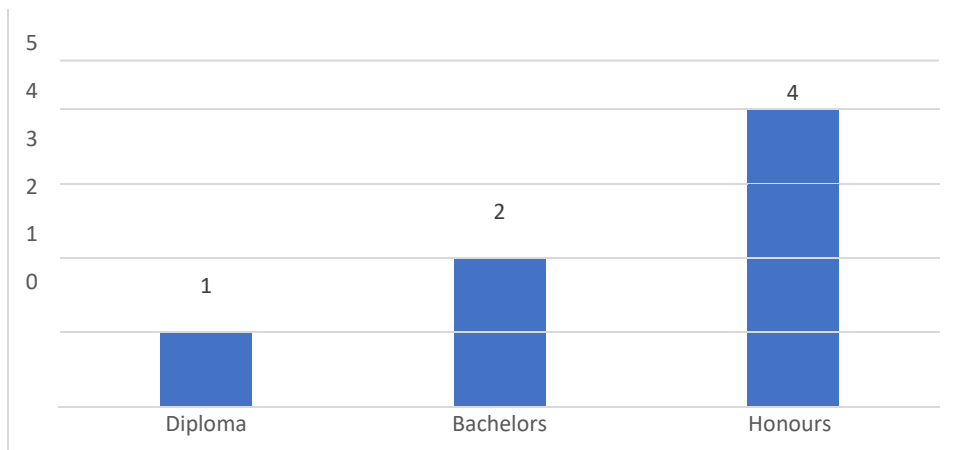


Figure 4.4 Most respondents had a degree qualification and above signifying high levels of education.

5. Years of Experience

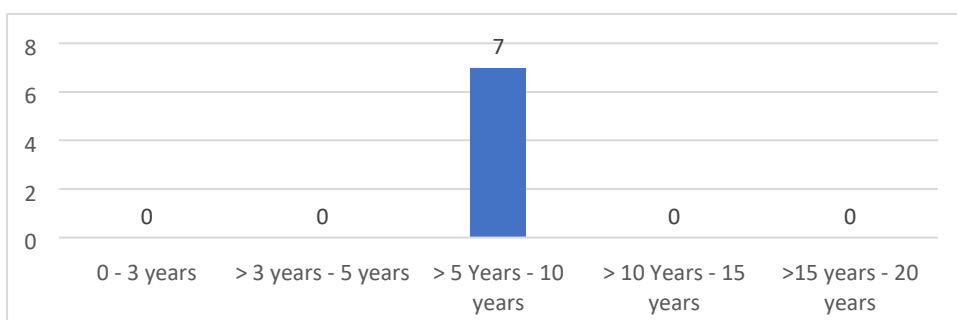


Figure 4.5 All respondents had over 5 years work experience thus indicating high levels of experience and knowledge thereof.

6. Position

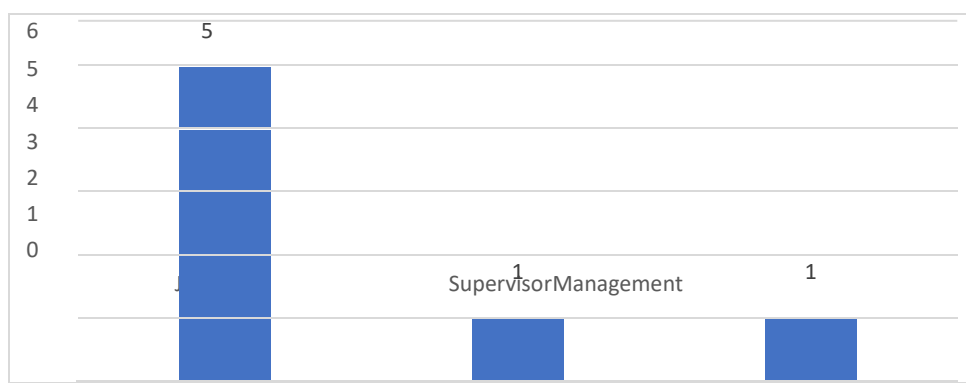


Figure 4.6 Most staff were junior, including two who were at senior levels.

4.3 Thematic Analysis

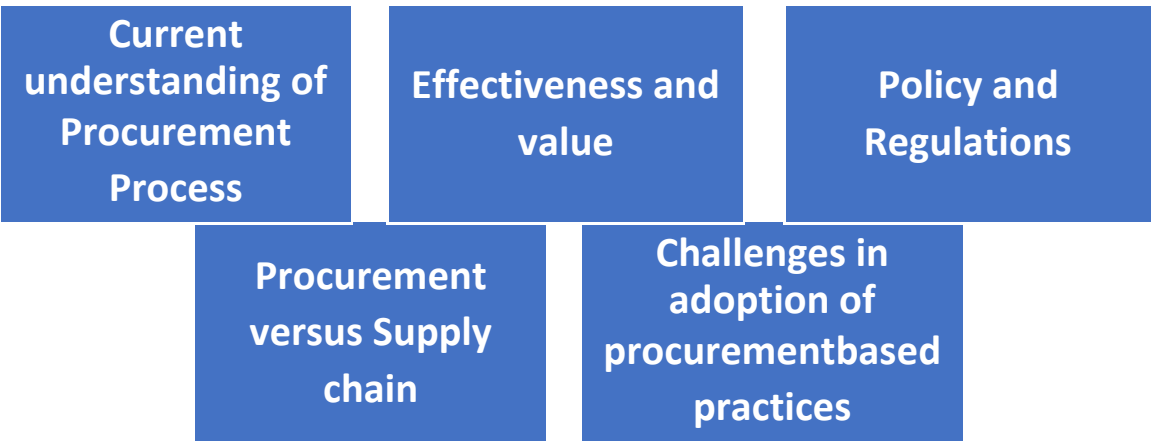


Figure 4.7 presents all the relevant themes that were generated by the NVivo software during the analysis of all the data collected.

Table 1. Analysis of Themes

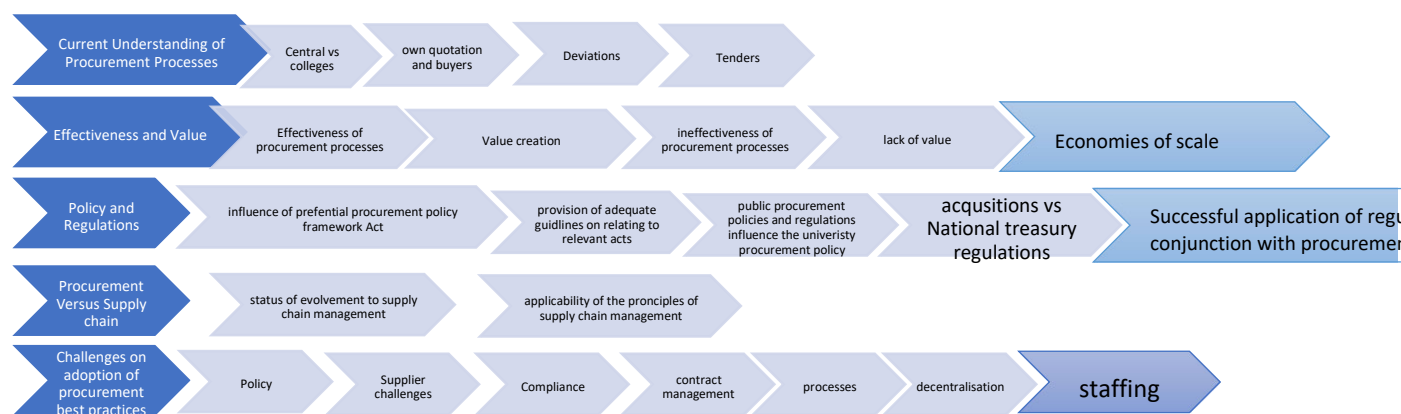


Figure 4.8 Presents 5 Themes with Sub themes.

Theme	Subtheme	category	Objective
1.Current understanding of procurement processes	Current vs central in processes	Own quotation and buyers thresholds, (quotations, requisitions) Deviations Tenders	1
	Expediting, Vetting and Approval	Policy Adherence Budgeting End user Requests and approvals Multifunctional sourcing Committees	

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	Suppliers	Master file and External suppliers CIDB	
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2.Effectiveness and value	<p>Effectiveness of Procurement processes</p> <p>Value Creation</p> <p>Ineffectiveness of processes</p> <p>Lack of Value Scale</p> <p>Economies of through purchases</p>	<p>Effective through completion of projects and end user satisfaction</p> <p>Early Involvement of procurement in purchasing research equipment</p> <p>Committees and experts involved</p> <p>System inefficiency</p> <p>Policy limitation</p> <p>College vs central disjoint</p> <p>Budget and costing</p> <p>Processes and controls</p> <p>Purco</p>	2
3.Policy and Regulations	<p>Influence of PPPFA Act</p> <p>Provision of adequate guidelines relating to relevant acts</p> <p>Public Procurement</p>	<p>Mitigate imbalances of the past</p> <p>Equality in bidding</p> <p>Subcontracting</p> <p>Enforcement</p> <p>In alignment with relevant Acts</p> <p>Partially aligned</p> <p>Influence of Public procurement</p>	4,5 and 6

	<p>Policies and regulations influence the university procurement policy</p> <p>Acquisitions vs National treasury regulations</p> <p>Successful application of regulations in conjunction with procurement practices</p>	<p>Regulations to University policy</p> <p>Subcontracting</p> <p>Ratio rule</p> <p>Not entirely aligned with regulations</p> <p>Customization, implementation and Interpretation</p> <p>Regulations vs innovation</p> <p>Quality vs cost</p> <p>Policy inclusion</p> <p>Government influence</p>	
4.Procurement vs Supply chain management	<p>Status of evolve chain supply manager</p> <p>Applicability of principles of chain supply</p>	<p>Have not evolved</p> <p>Partially</p> <p>Competitiveness, cost and effectiveness, fairness and transparency</p> <p>Compromised principles</p>	3
5.Challenges on adoption of procurement best practices	Policy	<p>Policy Awareness</p> <p>Policy delays on critical processes</p> <p>Policy change and continuity</p>	7

	Supplier Challenges	Lack of database Overuse of suppliers Supplier search issues Outdated Information	
	Compliance	SARS	contrac
	Contract Management	Absence of Management Lack of monitoring Disjuncture	
	Processes	Framework uncertainty Research request	t and
	Decentralization	Communication interpretation of information College division	
	Staffing	Morale Talent management development	and

This study comprised three research objectives and generated two additional themes. This was due to responses that the researcher received from interviewees based on questions regarding strategies utilised by the organisation to achieve operational efficiencies. The themes are presented and analysed in Table 4.1.

Fig 4.9



4.3.1.1 Current vs Central In processes

4.3.1.1.1 Quotations, Thresholds and Requisitions

Participant 7 stated that orders are completed at central but colleges have their own buyers.

Because now that most of their orders, they come to central but at the same time, they are able to do their own orders”-P7.

Quotations are uploaded to the system, and vendors are verified against the creditor Masterfile. Departments are permitted to source their own quotations, provided they comply with the institution's procurement policy. For purchases up to R15,000, only one quotation is required. As Participant 2 noted, "in terms of the procurement process here from zero to 15K, it only requires one quotation." When the purchase amount exceeds R15,000 but remains under R100,000, at least two quotations are required.

However, for amounts R100, 001- R750 000 three quotations are required to ensure fair comparison and value for money. Additionally, quotes in this range must be advertised on the institution's website to promote transparency. This stage of procurement mirrors the open tender process in terms of transparency and compliance but is executed more swiftly. Advertising on the institution's website becomes compulsory, opening the process to vendors beyond the creditor list. Furthermore, BBBEE (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment) points are factored into evaluations to promote equitable economic participation. Participant 3 highlighted that from R100,000 upwards, "we advertise... so we open it up. Not just limited to those on our creditors list," and noted the additional scrutiny applied at this level, stating, "there's a whole lot more screening... because from 100,000, we apply the BBBEE points."

4.4.1.1.1 Closed RFQ's

Closed bids are used in niche markets where there are limited suppliers or sole source providers. In such cases, the end-user must conduct market research to identify all potential suppliers and provide proof of this research along with evidence of supplier exclusivity, such as OEM authorization letters.

Participant 4 stated that proof is required when doing closed bids

Participant 4

"If the market research reveals multiple suppliers E.g 5 then they must all receive the request for quotation (RFQ) to ensure fairness and compliance. In sole source scenarios, a letter from the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) confirming exclusivity is required. For example, Thermo Fisher is the OEM for Illumina MySeq machines, and LTC is the sole authorized distributor in Africa. Therefore, any procurement of consumables for these machines must be

done through LTC, accompanied by an official letter from Demo Fisher verifying their sole distributor status.”

4.3.1.1.2 Requisitions

The process was described as, once quotations are sourced, the end-user creates a requisition, attaching the quotations along with the evaluation signed by the budget holder. The requisition must include all relevant specifications and required signatures.

Participant 1 illustrated on the process.

“Although the central procurement office handles the final processing and completes all orders, the responsibility of sourcing quotations is not limited to central procurement. Once the requisition is complete and approved, it is forwarded to the procurement office to proceed with the relevant procurement process.”

4.3.1.1.3 Deviations

Deviations from normal procurement procedures at the university are managed by the central procurement unit under a decentralized structure. Such deviations require proper documentation and approval from the Executive Management Committee (EMC) to ensure compliance. A Justification Form is used when selecting a supplier outside the Master File, especially when that supplier offers the best value despite normal processes being followed. Most common reasons for deviations include time constraints e.g., emergencies, sole-source providers (e.g., OEMs or specialized equipment), or the urgent need for vendors not listed in the Master File. As participant 3 noted, “deviations are formally reported to the EMC particularly when standard requirements like obtaining three quotations cannot be met ensuring transparency”.

4.3.1.1.4 Tenders

Tenders are usually followed for exorbitant amounts. This can include open, closed and mini tenders. Policies vary based on the nature of goods and services procured. Advertising thresholds are crucial for transparency. Compliance with BBBEE scoring is integral for amounts exceeding R100,000. This is outlined in the next subthemes.

4.4.1.1.4.1 Mini Tender

Colleges within the university goes as far as conducting procurement only up to the minitender level, any procurement beyond that threshold as stipulated in the threshold heading above must be managed by central procurement. Participant 3 confirmed that colleges are limited to mini-tender processes, with open tenders falling under central control.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) of each college serves as the executive budget holder and holds overall authority over college finances. As explained by Participant 6, the finance department reports through internal college structures and ultimately to the DVC, who oversees financial decisions. For research-related financial services, reporting is directed to the DVC for Research. All procurement activities are governed by a central policy, supported by specific regulations to guide its implementation.

Mini tenders at the university apply to procurements ranging from R750,000 to R1.5 million for standard goods and services, with higher thresholds allowed for specialized items up to R3.75 million for research equipment and R5 million for infrastructure projects. According to participants describing the process, the mini tender process closely mirrors that of open tenders but operates on shorter timelines. Colleges manage these tenders independently, including conducting their own Mini Functional Specification Teams (MFSTs) to oversee the process. As Participant 3 explained, mini tenders follow similar procedures as open tenders, including advertising and committee involvement, but the approach may vary depending on the item being procured.

4.4.1.1.4.2 Open tenders

All open tenders were done through Central Procurement.

Participant 1 stated that Central Procurement is mainly responsible for open tenders.

“At procurement, the central procurement department is responsible mainly for all open tenders of the university.”

Open tenders at the university apply to procurements starting from R1.5 million, with central procurement responsible for overseeing the entire process. These tenders must be publicly advertised in widely circulated media such as the Sunday Times and Isolezwe. The process as described by participants includes formal briefing sessions, bid closings, and the drafting of detailed specifications facilitated by senior procurement officers, who assign a project number and coordinate with stakeholders. Final decisions are made by the Executive Management Committee (EMC) following review by the relevant Mini Functional Specification Team (MFST). As noted by Participant 6, any procurement above R1.5 million, or R3.75 million for specialized items, must follow this open tender process.

Participant 6

“Then from anything that is 1.5 million and above and anything that is 3.75 million and above, then that would be the open tender process that you would follow.”

4.4.1.1.4.3 Closed Tender

A closed tender is used for high-value projects that would typically require public advertising through an open tender but are restricted to specific service providers due to justified reasons. In this process, the end-user submits a motivation to the procurement manager explaining why the tender should be limited, despite meeting the threshold for an open tender. Participant 1 made an example of Microsoft licence renewals that are done at the university.

Participant 1

“In cases like Microsoft license renewals, there are only 5 authorized resellers that are recognized by Microsoft in South Africa which are eligible to provide the service. Advertising publicly in such cases is impractical, so the tender is limited to those specific providers, with a detailed motivation justifying the deviation from the standard procurement process.”

4.3.1.2 Expediting, Vetting and Approval

The study found out that the expediting process was followed in relation to the categories below.

4.3.1.2.1 Policies Adherence

The study found out that the policy of the university's policy super-cedes funder policies unless the funder specifies otherwise.

Participant 4 stated that research unit is guided by both the internal and funders policies

"As procurement officers, we are guided by the UKZN procurement policy. And then here at research, we also use the policies from the funders because we're using the external funds in most cases, the projects are funded externally. So we use the policy and where the funders policy doesn't highlight how you should procure, we use the UKZN policy. For everything else, UKZN policy surpasses everything then procurement officer will check if it's in line with the policies in terms of the thresholds and the approvals that they need to be there, because the user can identify the need"

4.3.1.2.2 Budgeting

The study found out that departments conduct internal workshops to identify needs, which are presented during strategic planning for funding allocation.

Participant 2 stated the importance of strategic planning

" Strategic planning, that is where they just go and present the department needs that is in line with the university goals and objectives. Subsequently to that, I think budgets, it's split according to the needs. Surely sometimes you end up getting more, sometimes you get less, depending on whether, how did you state your case. Surely now, once that process is done, monies, they are being fed into cost centers.

4.3.1.2.3 End-User Role

The study found out that End-users initiate procurement by identifying needs, drafting requisitions, and sourcing quotations. They submit a bid request form with specifications to the procurement manager for processing.

Participant 2 stated the how end users begin the process.

"A process for a quotation, it's where the end user at the university, not just something which is standard here at UKZN, they will send a request. They will send a request, it's called a bid request form, together with the specification to the procurement manager who is our line manager,

The end user will create a requisition and attach those quotations together with the evaluation after, that evaluation has been signed by the budget holder.

4.3.1.2.4 Requests and Approvals

The study found out that procurement Requests involve drafting specifications, briefing sessions, and facilitation of bid evaluation and adjudication. Various types of procurement requests were identified which such as request for quotations, request for information and request for proposals.

Participant 1 stated the process of requests.

" The service providers will see the request, then they will come and buy the document. And then from there, we facilitate the briefing session, then facilitate the process of closing the RFQ. Then after the RFQ has closed, then you will do the adjudication and send it back to the end user. The end user will submit a bid request to central procurement together with now MFST nomination. People are going to serve on the committee for drafting of the specification. People are going to serve on the committee for the evaluation of the bids. We procure in different spheres or stages of which we have RFQs, which is a request for quotation, we have RFIs, request for information, RFPs, request for proposals."

4.3.1.2.4.1 Approval

Procurement approvals are determined by the contract's value, with increasing levels of authority required as the amount rises. Requisitions up to R100,000 require line manager approval, above R100,000 finance manager approval is needed, above R500,000, director approval, above R1 million, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) approval, above R3.75 million, Executive Management Committee (EMC) approval and above R7 million, Finance Committee approval. The process begins with the creation of a requisition containing detailed specifications, which is then submitted to departmental approvers. Approvals are routed according to the value thresholds, and once all necessary approvals are obtained, the procurement manager generates the order through the ITS system.

participant 4 Stated Thresholds

" but the line manager is the one to say they approve that procurement or not. the approval goes to a finance manager if it's above 100. And then if it's above 500, it goes to the director. And then if it's above a million, it goes to the DVC, be it a college DVC. And then anything above 3.7, it goes to an EMC for approval. And then everything above 7 million, it goes to finance committee for approval. So, CFO is the chair for the finance committee, and

the DVC is the chair for the EMC. They are the ones that are presenting there. So, you follow those thresholds, even if it's a deviation.”

4.4.1.2.5 Multifunctional Sourcing Team (MFST) and Committees

The study found out that MFST teams are crucial for vetting and approving large amounts. Drafting of specifications and bid evaluation involve committees or the MFST. Committees are mandatory for high-value tenders, applying both to open and closed tenders.

The MFST is responsible for evaluating, adjudicating, and approving procurements valued between R750,000 and R3.75 million. For procurements exceeding R3.75 million, the MFST makes recommendations to the Executive Management Committee (EMC), which may further escalate the matter to the Finance Committee if the amount surpasses R7 million. When necessary, the MFST also seeks specialized input for projects such as infrastructure.

Participant 1 Stated the involvement of Committees in draft specification

“People are going to serve on the committee for drafting of the specification. People are going to serve on the committee for the evaluation of the bids.”

participant 3 Stated the levels of approvals according to values

“And then if it's greater than if it's greater than 3.75 million. Then the EMC will also further make a recommendation to the Finance Committee, but it's just a build-up. There is no step that is taken away if there is further delegation. Yes, it still goes through all the channels. That's just an additional step on top and that's applies both to open and closed tender. “

4.3.1.3 Suppliers

4.3.1.3.1 Master File and external suppliers

The study found that the University does not maintain a supplier database but uses a **Master File** of previously engaged suppliers. Suppliers not listed on the Master File require a **justification form** to be added and processed for payments such as EFTs. External suppliers are those that are not on the Master File and can be added based on repeated use or business need. Market research is limited due to the Master File's lack of refinement compared to

systems like the Central Supplier Database (CSD). CSD allows for more efficient supplier searches by commodity, a feature not available in the current Master File.

Participant 4 Stated how the master file can be an effective system for searching suppliers

“According to the policy, the priority is to do business with the service providers that are on the creditor master file (data base), because we don't use the CSD like any other government institutions. We have our own credit master file. So you procure with the services on that master file.

You are doing it from the public because in the creditor master file, we've got companies that have been used before in order for it to be added in the creditor master file. Because the EFT, if the service provider is not in the creditor master file, you use them for the first time. So we've got three options. For the EFT, you paid a once off vendor. You paid for the foreign currencies. So those are the ones that you usually pay. “

So it happens like that. So when you're doing a market research, you cannot go on the UKZN database as It's still just a master file that has not been refined as yet. Because technically, if you go for CSD, for instance, if you use CSD, you've got so many options to check for service providers of which we are unable to do with the UKZN credit master file. At CSD, if you want catering, you just go there in the search button, you say search by commodity, and then you will say catering. All the companies that has catering in it, be it their name, be it their services will show up.

4.3.1.3.2 Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB)

The **CIDB system** provides an efficient database for sourcing construction suppliers by notifying suitable vendors based on specific requirements (e.g., 2GB classification).The University lacks a comparable system for non-construction-related procurement.

Participant 1 Stated that CIDB simplifies the process of identifying and engaging relevant providers

“With construction, it's much better and much easier because it's like a database of service providers. You know, the CIDPB will tell you, will give when you advertise something for 2GB, it will notify those service providers who are 2GB and above. And even the system that we, I'm talking about that we're supposed to have at the university is supposed to be like that. Supposed to, to just select, maybe you're looking for 10 service providers. You just put that 10 there, then the system will send a request to, to, to all 10 service providers. So the CIDB is much better.”

4.3.2 Theme 2: Effectiveness and Value

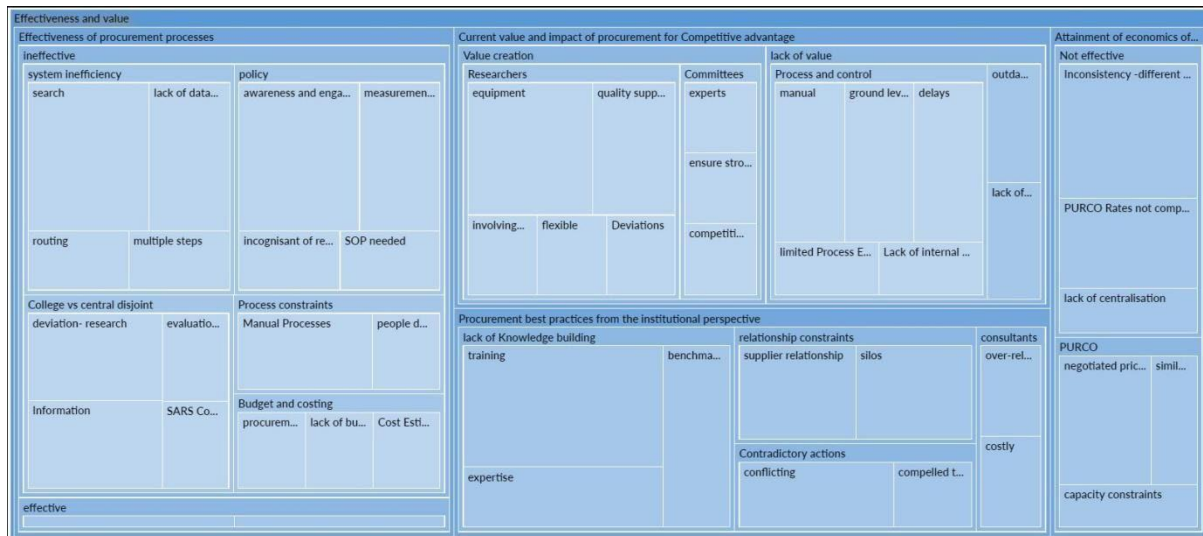


Figure 4.10 reflects the size of the nodes. The larger the size implies the more volume/concentration of responses in that area.

This primary theme examined the effectiveness and value creation of the current procurement process. The subthemes determined the effectiveness of processes and their value creation for competitive aspect. Results implied the lack of value creation within the institution.

4.3.2.1 Effectiveness of procurement processes and Value creation

Most respondents found the current procurement to be ineffective rather than effective.

4.3.2.1.1 Effectiveness of procurement processes (Completion of projects and end user Satisfaction)

One respondent highlighted that processes and projects are generally completed on time with minimal delays. Participant 7 *noted the system's effectiveness in enabling procurement, supply and delivery, maintenance, and project execution*. The same respondent emphasized the importance of end-user satisfaction with procured products and projects, highlighting this as an indicator of effectiveness.

Participant 7:

“So I'd say that it is very effective because I'm currently working on projects in terms of research, of which maybe construction, and it is effective in a way that you see that the project, it comes to a stage where it's ready, complete, and the end user, they get to make use of that end product. So I'd say that it's very effective in that manner.”

4.3.2.2 Value Creation through Procurement

Procurement at UKZN significantly supports research competitiveness by ensuring efficient sourcing, timely approvals, and the provision of high-quality equipment that is mostly imported, often funded through grants like RDE and NEP. Participant 7 emphasized that the procurement system enables high quality research projects by swiftly approving funds and supporting researchers to become the best.

Participant 7

“I'd say that it's very competitive. In a sense that, because currently, there's a big project that's well known in UKZN the IRs which is the done by research. That's a very big project, that one. So I'd say that it's very competitive. And to a point where even we have researchers within the university. So they are able to source funds. And when they get their funds, when it comes to us, then it's approved. The quality of the projects that are done. And I also emphasise that even the researchers themselves, they're of best quality.”

Participant 4

“buying equipment, RDE and NEP from NRF. So if you're doing your research, you know what you want. Once you've given grant to university as part of assisting you, they procure those machines for you with the funding from RDE and NEP. So if you need some machine to do a certain thing, they buy that machine for you so that you can use the project money to cover other things. So I would say as the research institute, they're doing very well on that side. They're doing very well.”

participant 5

“We make sure that our researchers get what they are looking for through procurement, through our procurement system. So. We are flexible as well, whereby if there is some items that are available online, we allow them to buy so that we will not bulge, we will not bottleneck the system. Like one will say, I need this by now. So we are flexible in terms of how we do our procurement. “

4.3.2.2.1 Early Involvement in Procuring Research Equipment

Researchers involve procurement early In their project planning to ensure alignment and smooth execution.

Participant 4: Discussed collaborative market research and planning for equipment procurement to avoid delays.

Participant 4

“And to minimize the issues when it comes to procuring those things, whenever they’re drafting their proposal, they want us as procurement officers to get involved because remember I told you there are thresholds? So that from the start, from when they’re applying, so that there won’t be issues, they come to us to say, okay, this is what I do. I want to get this machine and then we have them do market research, research for the machines. If there’s three providers, this provide the machine, they code for you. Those three service providers, you go through to read the quality and stuff so that when you motivate for that machine, you want know that your project is going to be on par. So I would say it’s doing a very good job on that. It really improves their value by giving them the funding options. There’s RDE, there’s NEP. So they can buy whatever they need. It’s only for research equipment, this one.”

4.3.2.2.3 Committees and experts

There are committees in place to expedite efficient procurement.

Committees: Aid efficiency, ensuring procurement decisions balance cost and quality.

Experts: Provide technical oversight, ensuring value for money and mitigating risks of weak processes.

Participant 3: Noted the critical role of committees and experts in maintaining high standards and avoiding cheap, low-quality solutions.

participant 3

“I think that’s the involvement of committees early like in the small thresholds like the mini tender and the thresholds. If you look at other organizations, there would have the mini tender but it doesn’t necessarily require a committee still being done by individuals the same way that the 3 quotation is being done and that way you find that it’s open to loopholes Especially for technical Procurement like infrastructure so I think the fact that we involve experts even at mini tender level, I think it’s a great initiative to help us ensure that we get the value for money

4.3.2.3 Ineffectiveness of procurement processes

The majority of respondents felt the current procurement processes were ineffective, citing several reasons:

4.3.2.3.1 System Inefficiency (Lack of database and multiple steps of routing)

The study found that the procurement process was significantly hindered by the absence of a comprehensive supplier database and an inadequate creditor master file system, which lacked effective search functionality by commodity or location. This forced staff to rely on manual methods such as internet searches and phone calls to identify suppliers, resulting in inefficiencies and delays as emphasized by the participants. P1 *“We don’t have a database of service providers. Everything is manual, requiring us to Google and call potential suppliers. It’s frustrating and inefficient.”* P6 *“Our system lacks a proper search function for suppliers by commodity or geographical location, making it cumbersome to serve multi-campus projects.”*

Additionally, the process involved excessive and repetitive steps, with a flawed routing system that excluded accounting officers from the initial approval stage. This often led to procurement actions proceeding without prior budget verification, further complicating and delaying the process. Participants expressed frustration over these inefficiencies, emphasizing the need for streamlined procedures and improved systems. P5 *“The process is cumbersome with too many back-and-forth steps, which could be streamlined for efficiency.”* P6 *“The accounting officer should be the first approval step to verify budget availability. Instead, they’re involved too late.”*

4.3.2.3.2 Policy Limitations (Outdated policy, Incognisant of research, Lack of SOP’s and policy awareness)

The current procurement policy was deemed ineffective due to its outdated nature, lack of alignment with evolving regulations, and insufficient review. Participants highlighted that policies were still based on 2017 regulations and had not been updated annually. P6 *“We’re still using 2017 regulations. The lack of policy review is a significant issue.”* P1 *“We are still using outdated policies, while other organizations have updated theirs to align with the PPPFA 2022”* P6 *“The policy doesn’t cater to research. For innovative projects, it assumes fixed specifications, which often isn’t the case.”*

Additionally, the policy failed to accommodate the unique and flexible requirements of research and innovation projects, applying rigid standards that hindered such initiatives. A lack of standard operating procedures (SOPs), combined with poor policy awareness and limited engagement or training, led to inconsistent application across departments.

Participants emphasized the need for regular policy review, tailored provisions for research, and the development of SOPs to ensure clarity and consistency in implementation. P4 *“Policies*

are not workshopped effectively, and decentralization leads to inconsistent applications.” P4 “SOPs would bridge gaps left by policy, providing practical guidance for consistent implementation.”

4.3.2.3.3 College vs. Central Disjoint(Information dissemination, Evaluation of model and SARS compliance)

The lack of coordination between colleges and the central procurement office resulted in operational inconsistencies and inefficiencies. Poor communication and inconsistent information flow from the central office to individual colleges hindered effective procurement operations. P2 *“There is no consistent information flow from the central office to the colleges.”*

The decentralized procurement model was not adequately evaluated, leading to varied interpretations and applications of policy across colleges. P4 *“Different colleges interpret policies differently, leading to inconsistencies.”*

“Additionally, procurement officers faced difficulties verifying supplier SARS compliance due to the absence of institutional login credentials, forcing them to use personal accounts a practice viewed as both impractical and inappropriate. P4 *“We’re required to use personal login details for SARS compliance checks, which is uncomfortable and impractical”*. These issues highlighted the need for improved coordination, clear communication, and institutional support systems.

4.3.2.3.4 Budget and Costing (Lack of budget awareness, no procurement plan and cost estimation errors)

The procurement process was hampered by a lack of budget awareness, with purchases often initiated without confirming available funds, leading to delays and complications. P1 *“We’ve had cases where procurement processes started without a confirmed budget, causing delays and complications.”* The absence of detailed procurement plans further hindered budget alignment, making it difficult to ensure that expenditures were financially viable. P1 *“There’s no procurement plan to verify whether purchases align with the budget.”*

Additionally, significant cost estimation errors resulted in major budget overruns requiring extended payment arrangement, as illustrated by a project initially estimated at R120 million that ultimately cost R166 million. P1 *“A project estimated at R120 million ended up costing R166 million. This reflects poor cost estimation.”*

These issues underscored the need for improved financial planning, accurate cost forecasting, and stronger alignment between procurement activities and budget constraints.

4.3.2.4 Lack of value

4.3.2.4.1 Process and Controls (Lack of internal controls, lack of strategic communication and Supplier evaluation and manual systems)

Most Respondents highlighted concerns over the lack of value and competitiveness in the current procurement processes, citing weak internal controls, outdated systems, and poor communication. Basic procurement controls such as tax verification and use of the Central Supplier Database (CSD) were initially absent, requiring later implementation. *P1 “They didn’t even know what a CSD was or how to verify tax affairs of bidders online. We had to introduce those measures.”*

The continued reliance on manual systems was seen as inefficient and susceptible to fraud, with a clear need for automation in payment and document handling. *P1 “We are too manual. Other organizations have systems where bidders pay and download documents directly, eliminating fraud and inefficiencies.”*

There was limited strategic communication, leaving operational staff unaware of how their work impacts overall value. *P2 “Ground-level staff aren’t aware of the impact of their work on value creation because leadership doesn’t communicate this effectively.”*

Furthermore, the absence of supplier evaluations restricted competitiveness, as staff were required to use pre-approved suppliers even when more cost-effective options were available. *P6 “We’re told to use contracted suppliers even when cheaper options exist, showing no supplier evaluations are conducted.”*

4.3.2.5 Attainment of Economies of Scale Through Purchases

This primary Sub theme examined if economies of scale are achieved through procurement.

4.3.2.5.1 PURCO

The effectiveness of achieving economies of scale through procurement processes was analyzed, with insights into PURCO’s role and limitations.

Some respondents acknowledged that PURCO effectively negotiates supplier contracts, enabling cost savings and economies of scale. *P2 “Yeah, for Purco, yes, we are benefiting in those*

negotiated prices. Because I think Purco, what they do, they negotiate prices for those suppliers that are in Purco list.” P3 “I think the economies of scale in terms of Purco we do. that's where we obtain through Purco because they negotiate contracts for all universities and colleges I think they are the best because if we were to procure our own it will be our own contract maybe wouldn't be the same as Purco who procures for more universities.”

Most respondents felt it was not fully effective in the UKZN context. Although PURCO offers negotiated supplier rates, respondents noted that these are sometimes less competitive than prices from non-PURCO suppliers, limiting cost-saving potential. P5 *“our policy says, it says that we have this threshold, and when you source quotes from the suppliers which are not on Purco database. You find that some, you get the cheaper price compared to Purco. So, then you find yourself in a situation whereby you think they're of cost saving, then you take the cheapest, because we go with the cheapest. Sometimes you find that the Purco rates are far more than the suppliers that are not even their members. So, yeah, it depends. Sometimes it's okay, I'm using the Purco suppliers, but if it's more than 15,000, then I'm obliged to look for more quotes.”*

The institution's decentralized procurement model further undermines the potential for economies of scale, with different colleges sourcing common items independently rather than coordinating bulk purchases. This fragmented approach leads to inefficiencies and higher costs, particularly for standard items like stationery. Participants emphasized the need for greater centralization, strategic planning, and system integration to truly leverage the benefits that consortia like PURCO can offer.

The institution's decentralized procurement model further undermines the potential for economies of scale, with different colleges sourcing common items independently rather than coordinating bulk purchases. This fragmented approach leads to inefficiencies and higher costs, particularly for standard items like stationery. Participants emphasized the need for greater centralization, strategic planning, and system integration to truly leverage the benefits that consortia like PURCO can offer. P1 *“Each college buys for themselves You know, I've saw some are using PURCO paper, some are using Monde paper. You see, why can't we have one person who's going to buy the photocopy paper for the whole of the university? We don't do that. So because of us not doing that, we are not saving. You know, we spend a lot on something of which we should be getting discount because we are buying in bulk purchases. So we're not doing that. Each college is independent and our processes are not “Purco is there it may be useful in other institutions, but at UKZN with the silos we are functioning in and lack of involvement and bringing people up to speed It's not working effectively, when I first came here I waited I don't know how long to get a list of suppliers that are under purco for purchases, at least if it was in ITS and see which supplier is under Purco and at what rate, and request quote to a supply according to the purco rate, so It's there or not doesn't make much difference.*

"I think those are the guidelines that they put to these policies to achieve. So, it's also outlined in this act of how do you do it in terms of those scoring of points. So, for the scope of UKZN, maybe it's just, you know, employees are not aware. Yes, they are not aware. But there are elements of goods that are in the policy. But if you ask an employee to say, do you know anything about this policy, they wouldn't tell you anything. But if you look at our policy, it does include some of the elements of this document."

4.4.3.1.2 Minimal Alignment (Lack of Comprehensive guidelines and challenges with regulations impacting on international standards)

The study found that some respondents noted that the university's exemption from certain requirements results in limited guideline provision. Certain key aspects, like BBBEE compliance for procurement over R100,000 and tax compliance, are applied. P4 *"Since I said we exempted from this, I don't think the institution should force us to do anything. So for us is to acknowledge what the institution has adopted and the document policy that we prescribe too"*. One respondent emphasized that Universities are classified as corporate entities and should balance adherence to government regulations with international competitiveness. P3 *"Universities are also classified as corporate. I also feel that if they were to be restricted and tied down to government, government acts and regulations they would have a problem in terms of competing at an international level. So in a way, I felt that OK. They have to loosen up in some of the things. For instance, even if you look at our procurement policies, there are areas where we have to loosen up a bit, especially for research equipment. It's just not practical to compete, we are trying to be at an international level with research, but if we are going to be tied down or put a red tape on our policies, government policies, we are never going to be at that level."*

4.3.3.2 Influence of Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act

This primary subtheme influence of Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act on procurement. Most influence was found to be positive. This section examined the influence of the PPPFA on procurement processes.

4.3.3.2.1 Mitigate imbalance of the past

The PPPFA is intended mitigate the imbalances caused by the past apartheid regime and therefore provides opportunities for the previously disadvantaged. This takes BBBEE into account and enhancing opportunities for previously disadvantaged individuals adding a positive influence.

Participant 3

"The PPPFA firstly It takes into consideration the BBBEE, which looks at correcting the unfair practices of the past and looking at ensuring that the economy is equally shared. So what happens at PPPFA is it's compensate those who were unfairly disadvantaged in the past."

4.3.3.2.2 Equality in Bidding

In relation to the above, it promotes equality in bidding. Currently the 80-20 (80 price and 20 BBBEE) and 90-10 systems (90 Price- 10 BBBEE) is being used for the tender process. If the tender price is below R50 million that the 80-20 is applied. In addition, for the above R50 million tender, the 90-10 is applied. This framework supports equitable participation in bidding.

Participant 2

"I don't know any content about it, but with my limited information, I know that is where they speak about those preferential points, to say that for goods and services that are less than 50 million, I think you use 80 to 20, you know. And everything that is over 50 million, then it's 90, 10. And then they also say that for the biggest tender, you need to subcontract, you know."

4.3.3.2.3 Subcontracting (Empowering smaller businesses)

It also supports subcontracting. Subcontracting clauses require large contractors to allocate portions of work to smaller businesses, preventing monopolies and fostering growth and exposure for SMEs and QSEs. P3 *"It also looks at growing small businesses because it focuses on subcontracting as well. So where you find that from an institution will commit and say that for all our tenders from a certain threshold, we commit that we will appoint a big contractors who will subcontract a certain percent up to a certain percent of the contract, to small SME's QSE's you know, because what would normally happen is that if a big company is awarded the tender for 80 million, it's selfish of them to just do everything on their own without any small business benefit from that. So if we have policies that enforce such subcontracts and it helps the small businesses to gain experience and exposure from the big businesses who have the resources which they don't have."*

4.3.3.2.4 Enforcement (Promoting Transformation)

The PPPFA enforces transformation by incentivizing companies to adopt BBBEE measures. It rewards businesses for improving ownership structures and supporting equity-driven practices. P3 *"The different categories it goes as far as, enforcing those companies to transform. Because the BBBEE Looks at the ownership of the company as well. Goes deep to look at the ownership of the company. So the fact that government went as far as ensuring that companies are rated and given a status level, which would be a benefit when they bid for government tenders, actually enforce companies to transform so the PPPFA actually looks at compensating those who participate in transformation and also those who were unfairly disadvantaged in their past."*

4.3.3.3 Public procurement policies and regulations of the national treasury (2017) and their influence the university procurement policy.

This pertinent subtheme established if there is an influence from the public procurement policies and regulations on the university procurement policy.

4.3.3.3.1 Influence of Public Procurement Policies

The study found that the National treasury policies influence the university's procurement processes by providing guidance and not enforcement. These Public procurement policies were seen to have a positive impact by providing clear guidance on acceptable practices and

restrictions, such as prohibiting the purchase of alcohol with public funds. P5 *"They guide us, that's how, this is how we should do our procurement. They give us the guideline, which, I think there are things that we cannot buy using the public funds So, I think, some are also mentioned in our policy, and are listed as one of the guidelines from the public finance Act, that this is what we cannot buy And this cannot be disclosed, even when you're claiming you cannot disclose, like alcohol, this is also mentioned in our policy. These policies also ensure tax compliance by requiring suppliers to meet their tax obligations. P1 We make sure that whoever we are doing business with is tax compliant. So we do, although we are not complying, fully complying with those public procurement policies, but we do adopt. I'll use that word because I was told that we adopt.*

Additionally, they help mitigate risks and prevent irregularities by aligning with public procurement standards and learning from issues identified in other public entities, such as municipalities. The university's approach, while not fully compliant with public procurement policies, strives to adopt and align with them where possible to avoid common problems. P 7

"Because we get to learn, let's say, for instance, National treasury when it comes to irregularities, they are posted on their website , Auditor and general they post on their website. So we are in line with the policies that you guys did not comply, certain municipalities did not comply based on this and that. And as a university, so now our policy, we draft our policy, looking at the public procurement policies, and try by all means that we combine, even though we're not combining everything, but we try and match what we can so that we are able not to make the same mistakes or the irregularities that some municipalities made before. So I'd say that it affects us positively in a way even though we do not comply fully with the public policies

Furthermore, the policies support economic transformation by promoting compliance with BBBEE, PPPFA, and CIDB regulations, especially in infrastructure procurement, reinforcing the institution's commitment to equitable and lawful procurement practices. P3 *"I think like I've explained on top that our policies, it's guided by the PPPFA and the BBBEE and also by the Section 217 of the Constitution. So our police is very much guided by those. we also have CIDB, We also apply CIDB in our procurement of infrastructure, it's a body of contractors. That body guides the procurement of infrastructure in the public sector. So our process is in terms of infrastructure guided by CIDB. We are very much influenced."*

4.3.3.4 Acquisitions versus National treasurer regulations of 2017

This primary subtheme examined if the University conducted acquisitions according to National treasurer regulations of 2017.

4.3.3.4.1 Subcontracting

One respondent asserted that the subcontracting aspect was current conducted in accordance of the regulations and that the regulations have changed to 2022. P3 *“There are other the reason why I mentioned the 2022 regulations, there are issues of subcontracting which will also implement From a certain threshold and I'm not sure what the threshold is, especially for infrastructure procurement. I think the policy does have things of issues of subcontracting because they're regulations also Emphasize the issue of subcontracting. When I give you the regulations, you look at Chapter 29, We actually supports the issue of Subcontracting and the EME's QSE's, so PPPFA is embedded in our policy.”*

4.3.3.4.2 Ratio rule

Some respondents felt that the eight- twenty and ninety-ten rule was being applied effectively. Participant 1

“For procurement below 50 million, we use the 80-20 of which 80 is for the price and then 20 is for the BBBEE level. And then for procurement below, for procurement above 50 million, we use the 90-10 of which 90 is for the price. And then 10 is for the BBBEE level when we're doing our evaluations.”

Participant 7

“I'd say that we would not fully subscribe or follow the national treasury regulations. You mentioned the PPPFA of which it was changed, of which now there are specific special goals. We still use the 80 20 rule or the 90-20 rule, not in a way that it was changed, but the way that previously it was used in terms of calculations”.

4.3.3.4.3 Not entirely Aligned with the National treasury Regulations.

The university is not fully aligned with National Treasury regulations due to exemptions under Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). Some of regulations are listed in the procurement policy, however, the university is not compelled to adhere to all of them.

P4 *“We're not compelled to. We're exempted schedule 3A because in the PPPFMA, the policy itself, when you read through it, it shows there are schedules. “The university is not obligated to follow all regulations and has policies that align with but are not entirely based on Treasury guidelines. Compliance depends on PFMA schedules, with the university leveraging its Schedule 3A status for*

flexibility and National Treasury only serving as a guiding framework rather than an enforcement tool in the institution. P2 *“Surely, for UKZN, they do take those guidelines from National Treasury, and then they streamline their policies and then they kind of choose to say we can take this and that But it remains a guideline, you know. That is my understanding, it remains a guideline. It’s not enforced to say universities must go according to this.”*

4.3.3.4.4 Customisation, implementation and interpretation

Whilst not all of the public policies and regulations are fitting to the university. However, aligning to them can promote the overall institution’s alignment to national strategies. However, there should be some degree of customisation as each university is different.

While not all public procurement policies and regulations are fitting for the university, aligning with them can support institutional alignment with national strategies. However, policies should be tailored to reflect the unique context and operational needs of each university. P6 *The influence is there but not to great, as much as we are not adhering to those regulations, a policy should be tailored to your institution, the policy should enable you to not function better so not everything the public issues will suite the university. But it does serve as a good benchmark, but if we were to adhere to them more it would help us achieve our societal goals and be in line with what our government.* Consistent and standardized implementation and interpretation of policies across the university is essential to ensure coherence, fairness, and regulatory compliance throughout all departments and campuses.

4.3.3.5 Successful application of regulations in conjunction with procurement-based practices

This primary subtheme described how these regulations then can be applied successfully in conjunction with procurement-based practices. Application should be based on the flowing.

4.3.3.5.1 Regulations vs. Innovation

One respondent emphasized that regulations should not stifle research and innovation; discretion is needed for unique projects. P6 *In terms of the regulations, it depends on the case and what type of research you are doing, where there is innovation and research and development, it wont be to every project so as far as possible where we can adhered it’s great because there are the safe guard and the national treasury is like an authority in terms of the procurement policies because they benchmark across all the government departments and state owned entities and they are there to protect and they are good but they make it difficult sometimes for innovation to happen because there’s a component of working with a supplier to get your*

output of research and then makes it difficult with the framework of the national treasury because the whole drive there is transparency fairness and competitiveness and sometimes that doesn't work with innovations.

4.3.3.5.2 Quality vs. Cost

A respondent stated that Emphasis should be placed on quality alongside cost considerations, it should not only be about cheaper cost as per the regulation's recommendations. This is because quality of products and services are important. One cannot procure the best equipment at a cheap cost. Hence there must be a balance between quality and cost. Therefore, the cheapest supplier should not always be the first option. *P3 "It's not something that you would buy, it's another department and it's just unique to education institution and you want the best when you have the best equipment research equipment It means you students are getting the best from the institution, so if you can only procure the best equipment from Japan and it's the most expensive, then the one you would probably find in China or maybe in another Europe country. If you still think that you would want to compare all those three countries, you're wasting your time because the fact remains that Japan is giving you the best regardless of the value."*

4.3.3.5.3 Policy Inclusion

Relevant sections of National Treasury regulations should be incorporated into university policies. This can in turn provide clear direction on procurement practices thereof. In order to promote the necessary standardisation and application then the necessary section of the National Treasury regulations should be incorporated within the university procurement policy. This can in turn provide clear direction on procurement practices thereof. *P5 "Because if there's no proper guideline or best practices, then people will end up doing their own thing. So, maybe what I can suggest, Is that I, not all, maybe most of the National Treasury regulations must be included in our procurement policy, so that one will know that this is how we should conduct our business in terms of procurement."*

4.3.3.5.4 Government Influence

A respondent shared that the university's reliance on private funding (60%) justifies less government influence on procurement practices. The respondent made a unique statement that since the university receives only 40% of funding from government and 60% from private, this negates the need to be fully compliant and instead can leave room for more flexibility in procurement to stay competitive. Therefore, there should be lesser government influence.

P4 "Government policies shouldn't influence procurement best practices. The university is receiving 40% of the funds from government, 60% of the funds, they come from private. Of which is those funders for research. So for someone who's giving you 40%, why would you account to them compared to the ones that giving you more? So government was only subsidizing 40% of the institutions money. Then 60% is private. "

We don't have demand, which talks to planning. We don't have stores or inventory. If we have, it doesn't form part of supply chain. I've talked about contract monitoring, which is supplier performance. We don't do that. So, we have not changed to supply chain. We're still procurement. We only do procurement. We don't do the other elements of supply chain."

Supplier management is also weak, as there is no structured database and suppliers are added on an ad-hoc basis by end-users. P6 *"Currently the way that a supplier gets loaded onto the system is that an end user would find the supplier of what needs to be purchased and then they would ask for that supplier to be added and that should be a function of supply chain if we have a demand management department."*

The decentralized procurement model further fragments operations, with colleges handling smaller purchases independently, undermining the potential for strategic sourcing and economies of scale. Budget verification is manual and may not be accurate reflection of the budget in the respective cost centre. This leads to incorrect projections increasing the risk of initiating procurement without sufficient funds. P1 *"So say we are budgeting for this cell phone. So, when it comes to me, because I don't have any plan where I can verify whether that thing was budgeted, remember we are manual. Maybe if we had a system where we could go and verify to say we have funds on this cost centre, but with us, you just see a request written 5 million, that's it. And they write cost centre balance. Okay, cost centre balance, you'll find that wrote 5 million, cost centre balance is 1 million, you see, and we don't check those things. They will say, no, that thing has been budgeted for. So, it's a risk that we can start the procurement process of something of which we do not have enough money. Yes. So, we really need to have a fully functional supply chain because even when I talk about asset, because I don't know how do they account for assets, I believe they have a system they use, but for them, it's a nightmare. I can tell you, they always send us emails looking for documents because it's not within the chain. Remember supply chain, it's a chain."*

4.3.4.1.2 Partially (Only procurement element and Research department purchases)

One respondent mentioned that SCM comprises five elements, but the university focuses primarily on procurement, neglecting demand management, supplier performance, inventory/logistics, and asset management. P1 *"We have not evolved to supply chain management. Remember, supply chain is having, I think it's five elements, you have demand, which I've just talked about in terms of procurement plan. We have the acquisition process, which we're currently doing, which is procurement. What we're doing is procurement. It's parts of the elements of supply chain. Then you have your supplier performance, and then you have your inventory, which is logistics management, of which we don't do. So, we have not evolved. We do procurement, because even assets management and disposal doesn't form part of the supply chain of the procurement portfolio, or doesn't form part of the portfolio from our director's side, forms*

part of another director's portfolio, of which in a normal environment, asset management goes under supply chain.”

Some respondents noted progress in research related SCM functions, such as efficient cost center management, asset tagging, and structured contract management, all operated at the research office with well-structured process. P4 *“that research cost center will come with a contract of how much they are awarded will come with the budget with the line items. Because when we procure for projects, it has to be in the, in the budget line item to say, maybe we, you're going to sleep in the hotel for five days and then you're going to be collecting some data in Jhb. So that thing, as much as they will not be the correct one, but it has to be there in the approved budget that goes with the contract. So those are the things that guide us to go and see. And if we're procuring assets, we've got our own, asset officer. So when we're sending an order, we include the asset officer and then we'll forward the form to those people to capture. Once they receive the assets itself, they need to open it and test if it's working for him to provide the asset take, and then they put all the details and then you issue an asset. So, in terms of the subsection involvement here, I would say it's working very smoothly for us here at research office because we've got all the data from the awarding and then to the procuring section.”*

4.3.4.2 Applicability of the principles of supply chain

This primary Sub theme examined the applicability of the principles of supply chain. These principles included Fairness, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective. The most applicable were found to be fairness, transparency, competitiveness and cost effectiveness.

4.3.4.2.1 Fairness

Fairness was the most highly ranked factor. This was informed by Tenders Being Open to all, ensuring equal opportunities for suppliers above certain thresholds. P3 *“We only deal with those on our database up to a certain threshold up to 100,000 and then from above 100,000 we open it up to everyone so that they have an equal chance as those who are on our database, even with those who are on our database it's a creditors list actually. But we will use the common term database, even those who are on our data base, we don't just go to one supply, I get a consultation and process. We will still expect them to compete depending on the threshold. But for above 100,000 we advertise for everyone to see it and Bid. “The university applies Rotation to suppliers for minor works which ensures inclusivity and fairness. P5 “because currently, because we have no database, what happens is that those suppliers that we are frequently used, then we encourage them to rotate between around those suppliers”. Multiple quotations are sourced to prevent bias and ensure consistency. P3 “The policy is there. They are delegations And I cannot decide today for this process, I'm going to acquire 3 quotations and then tomorrow i decides on the very same threshold*

that no, I'm only going to acquire 1 quotation. Two more other service providers who are not being given an opportunity to compete. So, the fact that we have a policy, we are ensuring that there's fairness. What we do, we rotate suppliers. And the delegation of duties, like now in my college, I'm not sourcing quotations. The finance administrators are the ones who source quotes, so there you find fairness because I cannot source quotes and place all requisition and place orders on behalf of any department." Bidders have opportunities to appeal decisions, fostering transparency and improvement. P3 "We also allow bidders and opportunity that last five days when we do, when we have finalized the process, we will inform them this is the service, this is the contractor we intend to award the tender they've quoted so much and this is the company obviously they would have known how much they saw that from the opening register and we allow the contractors five days to appeal our decision. If they are not satisfied, they can also ask inquire. They don't necessarily have to appeal. They can also inquire why did I not make it to stage three? Where did I go wrong?"

4.3.4.2.2 Transparency

Transparency was also a highly ranked factor. This was informed by Information Dissemination Tenders outcomes are shared on the university website, and unsuccessful bidders can request debriefings. P3 "we will post it in the website. We will also inform the bidders of the outcome. Who was the successful bidder and How much did they tender." P4 "We have reports, even though we cannot just give an adjudication report to a service provider that was not awarded, but we do debrief them should they feel like they need to be debriefed or for that certain tender so that they would see that there was no, nothing that happened behind their back, which made them to be at a disadvantage or not. So that's the transparent, our process is all transparent. And competitiveness, we make sure we do our market research. So, there is a bid request we do." The university conducts briefing sessions to ensure equal access to information for all bidders. P3 We have briefing sessions where the project or the tender is technical. it needs to be Explain to bidders, we will have a briefing session where and information is given to all pillars and they ask questions. They are given information equally they don't have to buy the information or they now don't have to be given the information just because they know someone. University provides clear tender document outline processes and criteria. P3 "We advertise that is being transparent. We have tender documents that will outline the tender process, stage one. We will actually explain on the tender document what will the process be, how will the process unfold. We are very transparent we inform the bidders on the document in terms of stage one we will screen you in terms of all these items when you pass that one you will move to stage two."

4.3.4.2.3 Competitiveness

The process was seen as competitive and this was informed by the Multiple quotations encourage competitive pricing. P3 "Competitive in a manner that obviously we will acquire number of

quotations from a certain threshold we look at they compete by us acquiring more than one quotation there's competition there we go out and advertise because we want competition. So we open it up to more than one bidder based on the threshold. That is how we apply competition. "Evaluations are conducted to prioritize functionality alongside cost to ensure quality. P7 "But we allow competitiveness, not just in price, but in the whole part of the document, the functionality, which is very important. Because when it comes to construction, let's say building a residence, we have to make sure that you'll be able to complete this residence and it will be able to last for 10 years, five years, 20 years Yeah, because just to mention one, I don't know if I should mention, but looking at new res, it was a residence that was built, I don't remember the year, but it got to a point where there were issues and issues of which it came to a point where it's closed now. So such things, it's because of the functionality part. So, we consider the whole of the document. Not just one part." Public tender advertisements promotes competition. P2 "the policy itself of UKZN as I said, it does state these things. I think we are complying because in terms of the tender process, we will advertise and there will be that competition. "

4.3.4.2.4 Cost effectiveness

The institution practices being cost effective by Emphasizing on value and quality over the cheapest bid to avoid long-term costs. P4 "We don't let them end up giving us cheap stuff like cheap quality because we're the one who wanted a cheaper price. So you need to do your own market research to make sure that the price when you go to the market, how do you know it's going to be able to measure the competitiveness of it? "Experts are contacted to validate prices to ensure value for money. P3 "Also, in terms of competitive, we have a market price for every item that you procure for infrastructure project, we have an expert that would have done an accuracy estimate we call it a quantity surveyor estimates .So an expert would have done an estimate in terms of how much this this Dome should actually cost us to build, they would have done a research in terms of the cost of the whole infrastructure, each and every material that will be used to build the Dome the engineer would have done a detailed research in terms of actually how much material costs and how much they labour would cost and depending on the duration of the contract over the whole period of the contract. And they also draft the bill of quantity for the contractor to bill us to, to show us how they will be in each item. So the competitiveness there, we ensure that they charging us what we expect them to charge us. It also talks to the issue of value for money. We can't say just because you have charged us 40 million for this tender which we had expected It to cost us 80 million."

4.3.4.3 Compromised due to lack of database

However, whilst the above is found to be positive in terms of supply chain principles, the principles are being compromised due to the lack of a supplier database. The lack of a comprehensive database leads to a compromise in the following areas

4.3.4.3.1 Limits market reach, fairness, and transparency, especially for smaller contracts.

Participant 2 *“In terms of our database, it remains a weakness in the issue of fairness, because now not everyone has an equal opportunity. But for those that are participating, the process does apply. But those that are not invited, they have a problem. So, I don't know how to best answer this question. So I think it's safe to say it applies on bigger values, like 750,000 and more which is a mini tender, because that is advertising.*

fairness and equitability and all those other principles are applied. Other than the normal quotations, if you are taking from the list of suppliers that are there, we are not giving the others a chance. So, we can say for a price range over 750K, this one, we can say, truly does apply. But for less than 750K for quotation process, it does not, because of the database process.”

4.3.4.3.2 Relies on internet searches or personal connections, which compromises equity and fosters favoritism.

Participant 1 *“And in this case, in order for a bidder to be on the master file, there should be a justification. Now, who's going to justify for everyone? They justify for those that they want. They don't justify for those that they do not want. And in most cases, we find that they justify for the people that they know. So, if you don't know anyone, then you might end up not being on that master file, you know. So, a database makes much easier to say it is your responsibility to make sure that you are on the database. When we do the procurement process, the process is transparent, you know, we source on those service providers. The process is competitive because we took service providers that are on our database. But now, because it's manual, you know, you cannot trust the fairness of something which is manual. What if it's 15,000 Rand, I call my friend and say, hey, please come submit a quotation. Is that process fair? Is that process transparent?”*

4.3.5 Theme 5 : Challenges in adoption of procurement-based practices

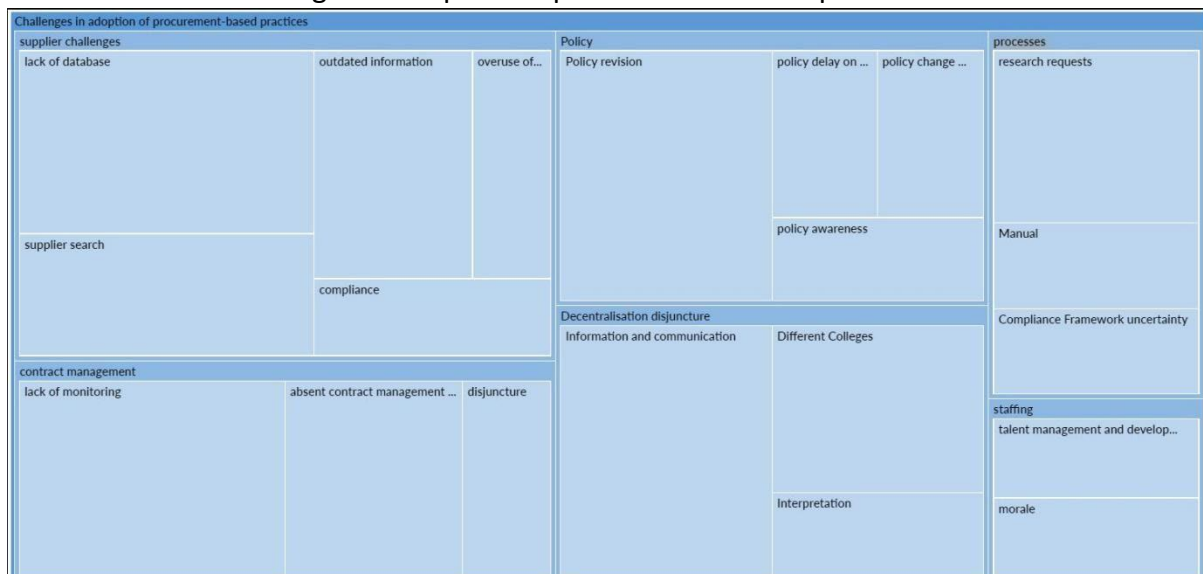


Figure 4.13 reflects the size of the nodes. The larger the size implies the more volume/concentration of responses in that area.

This primary theme focuses on the current challenges in the in adoption of procurement-based practices. It was informed by a plethora of subthemes. The adoption of procurement-based practices is hindered by several challenges grouped into policy, supplier issues, and compliance.

5.3.5.1 Policy

Policy challenges were seen to be the most highly ranked. This was informed by the following.

5.3.5.1.1 Policy revision

The current procurement policy is outdated and not tailored to research needs, creating frustrations and inefficiencies. The policy is awaiting review in 2025

Participant 4 *“We addressed even our concern regarding this policy because some other things, they just, not okay for us, but they say we must wait for a review. That's going to be in 2025 for this policy.*

it should work well because here at research, most of our things are tailored, even the suppliers, we even have deviation reports that we do every month because our thing, the policy, the UKZN is it and policy is tailored for general stuff, not for research. If I was a CFO one day, or maybe I would say we must develop a new policy to cater for the researchers because the current policy frustrate the researchers. It really frustrate them because it doesn't speak about research. So that's, I think that's why it's not ideally here. We have everything we need to make sure that everything works for the research because they have deadlines to meet.”

5.3.5.1.2 Policy Delays on critical processes

Strict policies cause delays in projects with tight deadlines, such as construction during student breaks. A compromise needs to be reached.

participant 3 *“We have tight time frames to say, for instance, we have brakes for students where there is certain work that cannot be done while the students are at the campus walking around, you know, attending classes. It may be dangerous to have a construction site on site while the students are attending.*

Maybe what they would require this for certain time for students. So there are things that are just delayed by policies. They will be request that will come in to say that this work has to be done during the a winter break, when the students are away, because maybe that break is about a month, a month or six weeks. So some sometimes they want to take advantage of that period to fix the student residences and stuff. So the policy can just delay, you know, and then we end up not meeting that the target deadline.”

5.3.5.1.3 Policy Change and Continuity

Frequent leadership changes disrupt policy implementation and revisions, leading to inefficiencies.

Participant 7 *“Okay, I'd say benchmarking, it's always done probably almost every day. But the issue here is that, because I remember my first manager when I started working in procurement I was based at central, she came and tried to change the policy in a way that it practices the best practices. So it took more than three to four years trying to change that, because that you'll find that at the same time, there are changes within the management. So if I'm here, I will try and change the system. But if it takes time, then I leave, then someone else comes again, that person may not try, and another person comes, tries to change. So eventually, I'm not sure if it's going to happen, but it's going to take a long time. Because people come and they leave, they come and they leave, and they come and they leave. Because we find that most of the time, for instance, for directors or CFOs, it's a contract of five years. You can't change a policy within five years, you have to wait. A policy, you can change it after five years, and your contract is five years. So, it's very difficult for them.”*

5.3.5.1.4 Policy Awareness

Lack of communication and workshops on the policy results in inconsistent understanding and application.

Participant 4 *“If they wanted to implement this in the proper way, because there's always university notices for even the closure, it's something that we don't even care about. But this one was the core. They should have communicated it so that everyone would be prepared and digest to the policy, but they never did. They never even workshopped it. Because you know, when you've got a new policy, you need to workshop the new policy. So the whole university community, because as procurement officers, we don't procure. We're just processing. So the actual people that are procuring, they are the one who are supposed to be workshopped about the policy, but it never happened to UKZN. They never workshop.”*

5.3.5.2 Supplier challenges

Lack of Supplier Database: The absence of a comprehensive supplier database slows down procurement processes and increases manual effort. This challenge has various implications as alluded in other themes. This has been an ongoing challenge for sourcing suppliers.

Participant 1 *“I so wish that we as the university can have a system in place at procurement, you know, it will reduce the turnaround times as well. And it will make our lives much easier. It's very manual. So, we need something for UKZN. Specifically, for UKZN, a system for, which is customised for UKZN to meet the requirements of the university. We don't have a database.”*

Overuse of Suppliers: Reliance on a few suppliers due to lack of alternatives or favoritism exacerbates inefficiencies.

Participant 2 *"So, it seems like that process, no one is in control of that. The only thing that has happened is to rely on my colleagues to say, look, if I'm requiring this kind of service, these are the suppliers that are, of course, on our database that we are always using. Whether those suppliers are the only ones that are, I don't know. Because, really, suppliers, they are not differentiated. Also, I think, one more thing also, other suppliers, they've also kind of changed over time. We find that maybe Walton initially was only providing stationery, but now they've migrated to coffee and all sorts of things. So, you think they might be using the same suppliers over and over again because you just source from who they normally use."*

Outdated Information: The supplier master file is outdated, lacking critical details like tax information, BEE scores, and product offerings.

Participant 4 *"That's because our credit semester file is very old, as I've said, I don't know how they were captured. You would find a company that we're using now, but when you try and check it on the system, it doesn't even have a tax number, we've got some like that. We don't even have a tax number. So, we don't have a credit semester file or should I say a database that is updated because these things in order for you to be able to calculate those BBBEE, you need to have the spending."*

Supplier Search Issues: Inefficient search capabilities make finding suitable suppliers timeconsuming and prone to errors.

Participant 7 *"Yeah. It's very hard to find suppliers on our system because now you can't search, let's say, in commodities. For instance, you want catering and company A is, let's say, what can I call it? Precious and Co. Yes, Precious and Co. So, because it's catering, you go to the system and search catering and then catering companies will come up but you, your company is also doing catering but because of its name, we won't be able to pick it up. So, we won't be able to send you a request for quotation. So that's the disadvantage of the system."*

Tax Compliance Oversights: Requisitions are sometimes processed without verifying supplier tax compliance, contravening national treasury regulations.

Participant 7 *"And also when it goes to, because now, according to national treasury, we shouldn't be working with service providers or suppliers that are non-compliant in terms of tax. Maybe they do not submit their returns or it's like that. So now the issue that happens is that in most of the colleges, when you receive a tax clearance certificate, and it's expiring next day, you just process the requisition, but you don't verify because now it can*

expire next day. But when you verify it, it can come as non-compliant, even though it's expiring next day. So those are the things that as a university, we don't really look at."

5.3.5.4 Contract management

There are challenges relating to contract management processes.

Absent Contract Management System: Contracts are not consistently formalized, leading to difficulties in tracking performance, payments, and expiration dates. Procurement lacks a centralized system for monitoring contracts.

Participant 1” *Another challenge that we have is that here at UKZN, once we finish the award, in a normal environment, we're supposed to finish the award and facilitate the process of contract, you know, that's where contract management comes into part, but with UKZN, we end at the award stage and sometimes most of the service providers, they proceed with starting work without having the contract. Because at the moment, I saw yesterday, CFO was sending contract management principles, but I feel that we as procurement don't have a proper contract management system where, remember, whatever I am doing will go to the buyer when they are processing the purchase order. So now if there is no contract in place, you know, it becomes a challenge in terms of the buyer knowing exactly whether he is processing this purchase order according to the agreed terms and conditions, whether according to the agreed payment terms, you know, because there is no contract.*

We don't have, I wouldn't say we don't have, maybe the contract management is not part of us, which creates a frustration for us because we don't have someone who's monitoring those contracts in terms of payment terms, in terms of supply performance, in terms of when the contract is expiring. We just don't know. Sometimes there was a time where I had to extend something which has already expired, you know, because there was no record which was saying that contract has expired because we don't have a contract management. No one could locate that contract. I didn't even have the full title of that contract because I didn't know what was the title of that contract."

Lack of Monitoring: Procurement does not monitor contracts, supplier performance, or compliance with terms. The role of contract management is fragmented and should ideally be centralized under Procurement, not Legal Services. This role should be a key procurement role that includes tracking contracts and BBBEE scores. Currently this seems absent with no accountability for the monitoring of contracts process.

Participant 1 *"Legal just draft the contract, the contract is signed by both parties, then they keep a record that it's when, to know when is the contract expiring, whether the supplier is performing according to the contracts. I don't think they check that. Hence, I'm saying it's supposed to be sitting in procurement, you know, contract management is supposed to be part of procurement because it's our role, you know, to check when the contract is expiring, you*

know, it's our role and to inform the end user to say restart the procurement process because this contract is coming to an end. It's our role, but it's not the case with UKZN. You'll find contracts expiring and we have a lot of renewals, we have a lot of extensions because we don't have a person who will sit and monitor the contract.

Sometimes there was a time where I had to extend something which has already expired, you know, because there was no record which was saying that contract has expired because we don't have a contract management. No one could locate that contract. I didn't even have the full title of that contract because I didn't know what was the title of that contract. “

Disjuncture: The division of responsibilities between Procurement and Legal Services creates confusion, inefficiencies, and challenges in ensuring contract compliance and performance.

Participant 1 *“So we're having a problem of contract management. I know they said it's managed by legal service, but I believe it shouldn't be sitting at legal service. It should be sitting at procurement. Legal service should be assisting us in drafting the contract, but in terms of monitoring the contract, monitoring the performance of the bidder, checking the validity of the contract in terms of when is it expiring, you know, in terms of us notifying the end user to say your contract is coming to an end, please restart the procurement process. That should be sitting with us, but it's not the case. So it makes our life very difficult when the end user is creating a purchase requisition and then they say, but this was done by you. We'll say we ended that, we ended the process at that stage.”*

5.3.5.5 Processes

Process challenges also continue to remain in the following ways.

Research Requests: Research equipment procurement often requires deviations due to gaps in the existing policy, highlighting the need for tailored processes.

Participant 3 *“I think we do have cases where you find that especially research department. We really battling there, because really the most times it doesn't make sense for research equipment when we procure research equipment that really doesn't make sense.*

Also, with research equipment, it's just a debate to say that you will apply a policy for research equipment. Where is the professor says this is what I need. You know, for this research you can't compare it with any other equipment. So those are some of the challenges, but we have means of getting around it through deviations, of course. We do have means of getting around it.

Compliance Framework Uncertainty: Uncertainty about the institution's regulatory identity (government entity, state-owned enterprise, or private) complicates adherence to financial and procurement regulations.

Participant 1 Our challenge that we have is that we don't know where we are standing, whether we are a government entity, we are state-owned or we are a private company. So immediately when you don't know where you are standing, there is a problem because we don't have a statutory requirement that we need to comply with. Whether we fall under PFMA, whether we fall under MFMA, where do we fall? I don't know. So immediately when you don't know where you are standing, it will create challenges in terms of compliance and accountability. Yes. So at the moment, those are the challenges we face because we can't say we're using the PFMA.

5.3.5.6 Decentralization Disjuncture

As also alluded in other themes, the current decentralized model brings about challenges.

Information and communication: Poor communication between central offices and colleges leads to inconsistent practices.

Participant 2 And also, in terms of new information that is provided, I don't think they've mastered the way of ensuring that they filter information to all stakeholders.

participant 5 The challenge is there's a breakdown between central and the colleges. There's no proper communication there, but if that can be improved, maybe we can do better. We find that some of the new innovations, they have just been forwarded to us. This is how it needs to be done, without consultations.

Yeah, it's like the deviation from what it was just forwarded to us. Now, we must use it without being told it should be used from who, what, when, by who. There's no communication. There's no constant communication between the colleges and the central.

Colleges Division: They operate independently with differing procurement methods, resulting in a lack of standardization.

Participant 1 And then these things of decentralising is also a challenge in terms of a consistency of our procurement processes because they are not the same. We find college A is doing things in a different way than college B. So yeah, those are all our challenges that we face.

Participant 6 The lack of coordination amongst finance departments, each college is doing things as they see fit,

Interpretation: Policy interpretation varies, causing inconsistent implementation across the organization.

Participant 6 *“interpret the policy as they see fit and that’s the main thing that makes instituting these best practices hard to implement, because if one college does them and they are not instituted across the board it won’t make any significance, the organogram as whole needs to be revisited to make it more useful and strategic.”*

5.3.5.7 Staffing

Staffing at procurement are inevitably subjected to challenges even at developmental level.

Talent Management and Development: Insufficient investment in employee development limits knowledge sharing and optimal use of staff capabilities. Participant 2 *“UKZN is not investing enough. They are indirectly, because they are giving tuition, remission tuition. And also, they are allowing staff to attend these conferences. But when they’ve gathered such information, whether do they use it optimally? Do they have a channel or way to ensure that such latest information is being filtered through to the institution? I doubt they are doing that. Yeah, so the primary challenge is, you know, if I can just sum it up, it’s just the investment on employees. You know, it’s just not done enough. Even Internally the talent, I don’t think they’ve got a capability to say, look, I think from that worker, I can get more, you know? They are unable to identify talent*

Low Morale: The lack of talent recognition and effective development leads to demotivated employees who perform minimally and are not proactive. Participant 2 *“Even if they do recognise talent, they are unable to utilize it fully to make sure that you kind of get more from your staff. That’s why I think the morale at UKZN is that people are just doing as little as they can. They are not providing an environment where people would be proactive and source information from maybe National Treasurer So they provide such information to the institution. I don’t think they’ve got that platform and that is the challenge.”*

Conclusion

The procurement process at UKZN faces numerous systemic challenges, including inconsistent application of policies, lack of information sharing, decentralized operations, the silos working and the low sharing of information, the gaps in the processes and the minimum effort in emphasizing the constitutional acts as well as limited investment in talent development. Interviewees emphasize that addressing these issues is essential to achieve efficiencies and improve organizational performance

CHAPTER 5

5.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.2 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the data analysis and interpretations of the data that were collected through interviews. This chapter presents how the objectives of this study have been achieved through critical analysis of the information obtained throughout this research. Upon the fulfilment of the research objectives of this study, conclusions on the phenomenon will be drawn and recommendations presented to contribute to the literature that already exists.

The following discussion attempts to identify the Gaps in the procurement at the University of KwaZulu Natal. The chapter utilised the line of sight concept in discussing the research objectives connect to the literature findings, drawing from careful analysis of the data collected from the interviewees and therefore concluding that objectives have been achieved for this study. The imaginary line that connects an observer and a target is known as the line of sight (LOS). Line of sight in communication refers to the direct path from a transmitter to a receiver, as well as any impediments that may exist along that path (Zhang et al., 2023).

5.2.1 Objective 1: Establishing the procurement processes followed by UKZN in acquiring inputs

Emanating from the UKZN policy and literature on procurement processes presented in literature review section, the policy states the stages of procurement process as follows:

- Specification of required goods, services or works.
- Procurement invitation to bidders.
- Receiving of bid submissions. • Evaluation of bid submissions.
- Approval to award contract.

The study found that the stages of procurement are aligning with the policy and the roles involved are as stated in it. The study discovered that the institution is decentralized in nature and the different reporting lines. There is a DVC and CFO office, the College (Designated Procurement officers) reports under the College Deputy vice chancellor and the Central Procurement officers reports under the CFO's office. All procurement processes are in line with the university procurement policies and procedures, research however is guided by the internal policy and external funders policy

The roles and responsibilities for all including committees are embedded on the policy. The process starts from the end user of the respective department. They would plan procurement based on their budgets. They would identify the need and there create the necessary requisition. The end-user played a key role in sourcing quotations based on specification required. Colleges sources their own quotation and routed to a designated buyer and vetted at Central office for completion of the order the study found that validation which was done to ensure that there is no missing information before an order is generated and completion of orders are done at central only. The approvals and vetting were also emphasised. According to the value of the contracts, there are different levels of approval. Project numbers are allocated by the procurement manager. The requisition is sent to an approver in the department, and any of the necessary approvers must approve. Once approved, it goes back to the procurement manager who is responsible for drawing up an order using ITS.

There are different approval levels which are determined by the procurement value. If it's above R100 000 then it goes to the finance manager. If it is above R500 000 it goes to the director. If above a R1 million then it goes to the DVC and above R3.7 million to the EMC. Anything above R7 million will have to get approval from the finance committee. Colleges can also procure up until a mini tender Process which is 750 000. According to the policy a mini tender committee is formed and it's overlooks the entire process of procuring, this is from the specification to advertisement and Provides an award recommendation to the approver for acceptance and approval of the selected supplier or service provider. Stages of procurement as elaborated in literature were found to be a standard framework and differ in legislations and governance. The quotation process revealed the differences in application and understanding of the 2 or more quotations.

5.2.1.1 The Quotation processes

With regards to the one quotation process, participants indicated that the threshold for this process is well understood, and there was no confusion in obtaining the required quote.

However, two or three quotation are needed for any quote exceed R15 000 and going up to R200 000. Obtaining quotations had to also be advertised on the University website. Participants 1 3 and 4 revealed from 15k to 100k is three quotations and from 100k and above

it is advertised on the website. Participants stated different amounts in requirements of 2 to 3 quotations, In the University policy stated in literature reviewed, it is clear that For purchases that exceeds R15,000 but remains under R100,000, at least two quotations are required and for amounts R100, 001- R750 000 three quotations are required to ensure fair comparison and value for money. Additionally, quotes in this range must be advertised on the institution's website to promote transparency.

This states the lack of updated relevant information to all buyers. Different buyers interpret and apply the policy differently. This can lead to inconsistencies in procurement practices and potential non-compliance with the established policy. Without a shared understanding of available suppliers, negotiated contracts, and procurement best practices, different departments may duplicate efforts, leading to inefficiencies and wasted resources.

5.2.1.2 The tender process

The tender process as per the policy is differentiated into three types according to their values and their speciality, a Mini tender a value of 750k-1,5 Mil, an open tender from 1,5 mil and above for any normal purchases with an exception for infrastructure which is 750-5mil a mini tender process and research equipment 750k-3.75mil as a mini tender process.

An open tender is above 1.5mil for normal purchases and above 5mil for infrastructure and above 3,75mil for research equipment's. Open tenders are done at CPO only. Closed tenders can be any value because those are for any amounts provided the

The end users obtain written evidence that one supplier possesses the unique and singularly available capacity to meet the University's requirements; being the original equipment manufacturer; the original licence holder; the publisher; or the intellectual property owner.

Overall, the evidence in data collected suggests that the university's procurement processes, across all tender types, are executed according to the university procurement policy. These processes are designed to ensure fairness, competitiveness, and compliance with broader legal frameworks, including BBBEE regulations and contribute to the integrity and efficiency of financial governance.

5.2.1.3 Deviations in the policy

All deviations are subject to approval in line with the financial authority limits and should be reported to the University's Finance Committee through the CPO. Deviations in the College procurement however were still handled by Central Procurement Office. A Justification Form is used when selecting a supplier outside the Master File, especially when that supplier offers the best value despite normal processes being followed. Most common reasons for deviations include time constraints e.g., emergencies, sole-source providers (e.g., OEMs or specialized equipment), or the urgent need for vendors not listed in the Master File. As participant 3 noted, "deviations are formally reported to the EMC particularly when standard requirements like obtaining three quotations cannot be met ensuring transparency". The study discovered that Research college has millions of deviations reported quarterly because the policy is not tailor made for the college. Research equipment procurement often requires deviations due to gaps in the existing policy, highlighting the need for tailored processes

5.2.1.4 Suppliers

Currently there was no supplier databased, but more of a supplier Masterfile. Hence the procurement system was linked to the Creditors Masterfile and suppliers were ideally sought from such file. However, if the supplier was not on the master file, then a justification form needed to be supplied along with an EFT payment. Some suppliers will be external and not on the Masterfile. However, for such suppliers to be added to the Masterfile, a process has to be followed based on how often their services are required as well as their compliance to requirements.

The policy stated that If an international supplier or service provider is recommended, there should be sufficient evidence to demonstrate that local service providers were unable to provide the required service or the products are not manufactured locally. International purchasing that does not follow the required procurement procedures must be pre-approved in line with the

deviations process as outlined in the procurement policy. The research discovered that this is applicable as per the policy for foreign transactions.

For construction related procurement, the Construction Industry Development Board system is very effective in sourcing potential supplier due to its ease of use. The University does not have such a system specifically for construction.

The absent of Data base can pose several risks and challenges that may impact the efficiency, transparency, and compliance of procurement processes. The absence of a centralised database can cause of lack of approved supplier visibility and poses risk of departments/ colleges sourcing supplies independently leading to a lack of transparency.

For universities aiming to promote supplier diversity, a lack of an effective database makes it challenging to monitor and track diversity initiatives. This may hinder efforts to engage a diverse range of suppliers.

5.2.2. Objective 2: Determining impact of the procurement function at UKZN for sustainability.

Effective procurement processes and understanding of procurement best practices plays a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of a South African university and adds value to the constitution therefore ensuring the long-term sustainability of the institution. effective procurement processes are integral to the sustainability of a South African university by promoting financial stability, compliance with regulations, risk management, innovation and sustainability. A strategic and sustainable approach to procurement contributes to the overall success and resilience of the institution (Paul et al., 2024). The research discovered that the University Procurement Processes are effective and Ineffective to some areas, below is the discussion.

5.2.2.1 Effective procurement processes and value adding

The study found that research projects were being completed and end users receives what they need to perform their duties and are satisfied with end products.

Researchers are given enough support through research funds to purchase high quality equipment and machinery allowing competitive research to take place and of high standards.

Procurement ensures proper procedures are followed in purchasing these equipments as some are required to be purchased internationally. Evidence in the university policy utilised as part of literature in this study reveals that the university caters for international purchases by following procedures of pre-approval in line with deviations. An evidence must be produced to demonstrate that local service providers were unable to provide the required service or product.

The research also discovered that Involving procurement at early stages of procuring research equipment Assist in ensuring maximum value of the projects within the University.

The Researcher do involve procurement officials from the onset as so to create awareness of the type of equipment they will be needing. This allows for procurement to plan ahead.

The University policy states that the institution may procure the services of external advisors to assist in the execution of the procurement function. These services should be obtained through a competitive bidding process, Experts are brought into committees to ensure that the processes are competitive and obtaining value for money. They also serve to eliminate loophole and grey areas. There are also committees in place to expedite efficient procurement. Such committees don't always focus on the lowest cost but also a cost/quality balance.

5.2.2.2 Ineffective and Non-value adding processes

5.2.2.2.1 System inefficiency

Literature reviewed on the National treasury regulations in Section 16A3.1 point outs that Accounting authorities must develop and implement an effective and efficient supply chain management system in his or her institution for the acquisition of goods and services and the disposal.

These regulations further states that A supply chain management system must be fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective, be consistent with the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000 (Act No. 5 of 2000) the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 2003 (Act No. 53 of 2003).

The study found out that the current procurement systems were seen as inefficient. There is a lack of a comprehensive database of suppliers. Currently there was just a Masterfile that is

difficult to do a search on. The lack of database slowed down the procurement process as one had to search outside the organisation at times and hinders supplier evaluation process. The current “system” was not user-friendly. It did not allow for a proper search functionality. Hence supplier searches could not be filtered by type and geographical location among others. The lack of such a system hinders the university from following the regulation that all procurement systems must be considered to be fair and competitive as some suppliers that could be potentially evaluated are excluded.

The current manual system was seen as time consuming and problematic. It further hinder competitiveness. Payments cannot be properly verified and this can lead to fake payments. There needs to be an upgrade to a highly automated system where documents can be purchased and payments made online eliminating the need manual email and proof of payment. The lack of a procurement database poses several risks and challenges, affecting various aspects of procurement management and overall institutional efficiency.

Some of the key risks include: Inefficiency in supplier management due to poor management of supplier information that can cause difficulties in managing the spent of the institution. A procurement database is instrumental in analysing spending patterns, identifying cost-saving opportunities, and negotiating favourable terms with suppliers the absence of such a database may result in missed opportunities to optimize costs and improve the university's financial position.

Compliance issues which can results in penalties or legal challenges as well as reputational damage. The lack of database can create opportunities for fraud and corruption. Without proper controls and transparency provided by a database, it becomes easier for unethical practices to go unnoticed, potentially leading to financial losses and damage to the university's reputation.

Lack of Strategic procurement planning due to inaccurate data. This hinders the identification of areas of improvement and aligning Procurement activities with broader institutional goals. Supplier diversity and economic transformation through promotion of participation of historical disadvantaged suppliers is essential to keep up with the south African laws, lack of accurate supplier database makes this difficult to attain.

5.2.2.2.2 Policy

The current procurement policy was deemed ineffective due to its outdated nature, lack of alignment with evolving regulations, and insufficient review. The study found through participatory that the national treasury regulations were updated in 2022 and the Institution still utilizes the 2017 outdated regulations in their policy. The study about Kenya's public procurement policies in the University of Nairobi revealed that adhering to these standards the institution is able to improve supplier reliability and reduce risks associated with poor supplier performance. The frameworks provide clear procedures for handling procurement disputes and reducing risks in vendor selection and contract management. For the University of Nairobi, this mitigates potential disruptions and ensures continuity of operations. This is evidence that adhering to the frameworks that are guiding procurement in the country can yield good results. Although the Institution accommodates research through deviations, Procurement policies does not cater for their projects, there was a need for a regular policy review and a tailored provision for research. There was a need for SOP's to the existing policy, this would make the policy easier to follow and comply with and providing practical guidance, currently this was absent which led to confusion in interpreting the policy at times. Initiatives such as policy awareness or training are recommended to ensure consistent application across departments.

5.2.2.2.3 College vs central disjoint

The lack of coordination between colleges and the central procurement office resulted in operational inconsistencies and inefficiencies. Poor communication and inconsistent information flow from the central office to individual colleges hindered effective procurement operations. The decentralized procurement model was not adequately evaluated, leading to varied interpretations and applications of policy across colleges.

The study of Procurement best practices in SAHEI by Dlamini indicated evidence that Implementing centralized procurement processes improves coordination, reduces redundancies, and allows for better oversight of purchasing activities.

Some of the Risks associated with the Decentralised structure are that in a decentralized model, there may be a lack of centralized oversight and control over procurement activities. This can lead to inconsistencies, inefficiencies, and difficulties in enforcing compliance with university policies and regulations. Different departments may interpret and implement procurement policies differently, increasing the risk of non-compliance with relevant regulations and enforcing university wide policy becomes challenging as departments may prioritise their individuals needs leading to deviations from established policies.

A decentralized model may hinder the ability to leverage the university's collective purchasing power. Centralized procurement allows for strategic sourcing, negotiation, and bulk purchasing, which can lead to cost savings and improved supplier relationships.

5.2.2.2.4 Budget and costing

The lack of budget knowledge and/or awareness leads to situations whereby the procurement process is expedited but without the necessary monies allocated. In some instances, the cost exceeds expectations thereof. In addition, sometimes there is no budget for even advertising. Therefore, more budget planning and awareness is needed. Cost estimation issues can and do arise. There was an example when an estimation was only at R120 million yet the supplier charged R166 million. Arrangement had to be made for further payment of the shortfall over a period of 5 years. This does not contribute to good procurement practice.

The university policy reviewed in Chapter 2 indicates that central or designated procurement officers rely on estimated budgets provided by budget holders to guide procurement activities. Any discrepancies whether underestimation or overestimation are the responsibility of the respective budget holders. Such variances highlight shortcomings in the planning process and suggest that budgeting is not being conducted with sufficient accuracy. The study about Kenya's public procurement policies in the University of Nairobi revealed that Proper planning aligns procurement with institutional needs, forecasting demand to avoid unnecessary costs and delays.

A lack of a procurement plan may lead to suboptimal resource allocation, with departments making independent procurement decisions without a coordinated approach. This can result in

duplication of efforts, wasted resources, and increased costs. A procurement plan helps ensure compliance with relevant regulations, policies, and laws. Without a plan, there is an increased risk of non-compliance, exposing the university to legal and regulatory challenges.

These issues underscored the need for improved financial planning, accurate cost forecasting, and stronger alignment between procurement activities and budget constraints.

5.2.2.3 Attainment of economics of scale through purchases

Consortium Purchasing is one of the cost savings that the university implements, the university uses Purco. PURCO assists in negotiating prices with suppliers in order to be cost effective and potential gain economies of scale. The lack of centralisation for common items leads to a lack of planning in bulk buying and gaining economies of scale.

There should be a centralised approach to bulk buying of common items. In addition, the PURCO method doesn't work well in the decentralised model due to such inconsistencies. Sometimes, there are more competitive prices from those that are not registered PURCO suppliers. Hence outsourcing of procurement to PURCO is not often the most cost-effective method. The institution should therefore encourage suppliers to provide better rates internally.

5.2.3 Objective 3: Determining whether procurement has evolved to supply management at UKZN.

The findings indicate that the Institution has not fully evolved into a comprehensive Supply Chain Management (SCM) system, with only partial elements in place. Key functions such as demand planning, logistics, supplier and asset management, and a central stores or inventory system are absent. This results in inefficiencies, limited accountability, and missed opportunities for cost savings and operational integration. The absence of asset tagging, record keeping, and demand forecasting further weakens the system's effectiveness. Other participants stated that the Institutional constraints such as the university's relatively small size, sectorspecific limitations, and high implementation costs also pose challenges to adopting a full SCM model. Additionally, responsibilities across the supply chain are fragmented, with

procurement functions ending once goods are acquired, leaving logistics and contract management to enduser departments. Despite these challenges, some respondents noted partial SCM practices, particularly within research departments, where procurement, asset management, and contract processes are more integrated and effectively managed.

A research by PWC (2015) titled supply chain management in higher education sector stated that SCM plays an important role in developing and maintaining the value chain within institutions of higher learning, as well as serving as a method to promote more effective fund appropriation and governance. More and more businesses in both the public and private sectors are understanding the significance of SCM in ensuring they can deliver on all elements of their value chain. Therefore, it is important for institutions to utilize all or key components of supply chain to achieve their organisational goals.

Operating without an integrated supply chain approach can lead to inefficiencies and suboptimization of procurement processes. Staff members may focus solely on purchasing activities without considering how their decisions impact other aspects of the supply chain, resulting in increased costs and operational inefficiencies. Without integration across supply chain components, there is limited visibility into end-to-end processes. This lack of visibility makes it difficult to track inventory levels, monitor supplier performance, and identify opportunities for cost savings and process improvements.

5.2.3.1 Applicability of the principles of supply chain

Research found that the principles of supply chain are applicable at the university but not practised to their maximum level and there were contradictions on the applications of these principles. These principles included Fairness, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective. The most applicable were found to be fairness, transparency, competitiveness and cost effectiveness.

These principles were explored in the paper by Vilakahle (2022) in his study of procurement practices in HEI of Eastern cape South Africa. Fairness in the literature reviewed emphasized the implementation of procurement policies that promote equal opportunity, open competition and support for historically disadvantaged groups, aligning with South Africa's broader transformation goals.

In this study, **fairness** emerged as the highly ranked factor influencing procurement practices. This was evident through their open tenders where they were advertised publicly allowing all interested suppliers to participate rather than limiting opportunities to those listed on the Masterfile. Secondly, due to the absence of a comprehensive supplier database, users were encouraged to rotate service providers including for minor works, which not only enhanced fairness but also promoted cost effectiveness. The quotation process was also structured to prevent bias by ensuring that multiple suppliers had the opportunity to submit quotes, thereby promoting transparency and equal treatment.

Furthermore, delegation of procurement responsibilities to various administrators helped prevent centralized control and potential favouritism. Finally, the appeal process provided bidders with the opportunity to challenge tender outcomes, with unsuccessful bidders given five working days to lodge an enquiry and seven working days to formally appeal a rejected award. This not only supports fairness but also empowers suppliers to improve and compete in future procurement opportunities.

Transparency in the literature reviewed referred to procurement processes that are open, auditable, and aimed at preventing corruption and favouritism by ensuring clear documentation and public access to tender information. In this study, transparency was also identified as one of the most highly ranked factors influencing procurement practices. This was evident through several practices implemented by the institution. Relevant tender and bidding information is made easily accessible on the university's website, allowing all stakeholders to remain informed. Additionally, debriefings are conducted with unsuccessful bidders, providing clarity on the outcomes and contributing to openness. Information sessions are also held to share key details with all potential bidders, giving them the opportunity to ask questions and ensuring equal access to information. Furthermore, all relevant tender documents are clearly structured to explain each stage of the procurement process, and these are made available to bidders to promote understanding and transparency throughout.

Competitiveness in the literature referred to the practice of soliciting reasonable and competitive bids from multiple vendors with the aim of securing the best value in terms of both

quality and price. In this study, competitiveness was not limited to pricing alone but also encompassed the functionality and suitability of the goods and services procured. This broader approach ensures that the university not only obtains cost-effective solutions but also maintains high standards of quality. The competitive nature of the procurement process was evident through several key practices. One such practice is the consistent use of multiple quotations, which allows for the comparison of prices thereby encouraging suppliers to submit their best proposals and fostering both competitiveness and cost savings. Additionally, the use of Purchasing Consortium Southern Africa (PURCO) rates further supports competitive procurement by leveraging pre-negotiated rates and established supplier agreements that are benchmarked against industry standards. These practices collectively ensure that procurement decisions are made with both efficiency and value for money in mind.

Cost-effectiveness as illustrated in the literature refers to the responsible use of public funds by ensuring that procurement decisions are aligned with budget constraints and institutional needs. In this study, cost-effectiveness was not solely determined by selecting the lowest-priced option, but rather by finding a balance between cost and quality. Choosing the cheapest quote without considering the quality of goods or services could lead to higher long-term costs due to poor performance or early replacement needs. Therefore, evaluating cost in relation to quality was essential. To further support cost-effective procurement, market price validation is conducted with the assistance of experts such as quantity surveyors and engineers, ensuring accurate costing and preventing overpricing by contractors. Additionally, having a thorough understanding of the value of goods and services empowers the institution to negotiate better prices and make informed purchasing decisions, ultimately achieving the best possible value for money.

5.2.3.2 Compromised due to lack of database

However, whilst the above is found to be positive in terms of supply chain principles, the principles are being compromised due to the lack of a supplier database. The lack of a comprehensive database leads to a compromise in the following areas.

The absence of a comprehensive supplier database poses significant challenges to fairness and transparency in the procurement process. Without such a database, market reach is limited,

particularly affecting smaller contract opportunities, as not all potential suppliers have equal access or visibility. This lack of inclusivity undermines fair competition, as only those known to procurement officials or already within the system are likely to be considered. Moreover, the need to rely on internet searches to identify suppliers for certain projects further compromises transparency, as it introduces inconsistency and subjectivity into the selection process.

One of the most concerning consequences of this gap is the increased risk of personal connections influencing supplier selection. When procurement decisions are based on familiarity or informal networks, it opens the door to favoritism and exclusion, disadvantaging those without personal ties to the institution. A centralized and accessible supplier database is therefore essential to promote fairness, enhance transparency, and ensure equal opportunities for all potential vendors.

5.2.4 Objective 4 :To determine the level of compliance to the National Treasury

Regulation regulations.

Procurement National Treasury regulations serve as a legal framework that governs how public institutions, including universities, conduct their procurement processes. Ensuring compliance with these regulations helps the university avoid legal penalties, fines, or reputational damage resulting from non-compliance. The study through literature and participants discovered that schedule 3A entities are not obliged to fully comply to the national treasury regulations as long as they prove application of supply chain principles as discussed in the above objective.

The literature studied on legal framework guiding SAHEI's elaborated that it is only Through the Ethical Code of Conduct that SAPHEIs enforce adherence to ethical procurement practices. Because of this, the SAPHEIs implement public procurement laws like the BBEEA 53 of 2003, the PFMA 1 of 1999, the PPPFA 5 of 2000, the General Procurement Guidelines, and the Policy to Guide Uniformity in Procurement Reform Processes in Government to assist small business owners (Paul et al., 2024). Compliance is dependent on schedules. Hence, the PFMA has various schedules applicable to different entities and dependant on various factors. As mentioned above, the university falls under Schedule 3A thereby being exempted from certain conditions and regulations.

The findings of the study revealed that These Acts are being adhered to by the university as stated in the university policy reviewed in chapter 2 of the study. Subcontracting which is part of the PPPFA was found to be applicable at the university according to the 2017 regulations but changes has been made to the 2022 new Regulations that the university has not implemented as yet.

Other respondents felt that the eight- twenty and ninety-ten rule was being applied effectively as alluded in chapter 4 of the study. The study found that there are changes in this rule based on the 2022 new set of PPPFA regulations. The university remains autonomous and adheres to its own policy. But this policy is not entirely distant from the national treasury legislation. Therefore, the Treasury regulations serves as a guideline as not as an enforcement tool.

Gurayah (2024) was reviewed, the paper investigates the public procurement system challenges in selected higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The paper revealed that adherence to frameworks like the *Public Finance Management Act* (PFMA) and *Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act* (PPPFA) is essential but often limits flexibility, as strict regulations can restrict responsiveness to immediate or unforeseen institutional needs. This was also alluded by a participant that these frameworks can cause compliance burdens and limit the flexibility of the institution.

5.2.5 Objective 5: Determining the understanding of PBPs at UKZN

Procurement best practices as described in the literature reviewed are a set of well-established, typical methods used by cutting-edge organizations (Saraswati, C & Mawardi, M. 2018). The objective is to steadily and continuously enhance spend and supplier base optimization to boost return on investment and the bottom line, to sustain and grow over the long run (Dlamini, 2016).

Young et al. (2016) conducted a study for sustainable processes in universities across UK and Australia, the study was reviewed in chapter 2 and the authors mentions that Sustainable buying is becoming increasingly important for organisational Corporate Responsibility and

Sustainability strategy. This means the long-term success of the company is also largely contributed by good practices in the procurement aspect of the organisation.

Understanding and implementing Best procurement practices in the institution does not only meet legal and financial requirements but also strategically add value by enhancing the institution's reputation, promoting innovation, and contributing to long-term sustainability and community development. However, the results of this study reveal a significant lack of such practices within the institution. A key issue is the limited provision of training for finance and procurement staff, including training on procurement policies, which impedes knowledge development and compliance. Participants noted that training is often inconsistent and reactive rather than regular and structured. Additionally, there is a lack of procurement and financial expertise among end-users, particularly within the Multi-Functional Sourcing Teams (MFST), where technical staff dominate and procurement officers play only a limited, administrative role. This absence of specialized knowledge weakens procurement decisions. The institution also lacks engagement in benchmarking or conducting procurement related research, resulting in outdated and uncompetitive practices. Furthermore, there is an over-reliance on external consultants, especially for technical tasks, due to the lack of internal capacity. While consultants may offer expertise, they are costly and place a financial strain on the institution. This dependence on outsourcing, coupled with insufficient internal capability building, undermines the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of procurement operations.

5.2.6 Objective 6: Establishing if public procurement influences the application of PBPs at UKZN

Public procurement policies often outline standardized procedures and guidelines for procurement processes. By following these standardized practices, The university can ensure consistency and uniformity in their procurement operations, reducing the risk of errors, inefficiencies, and discrepancies. The linkage of procurement to organizational performance in particular, makes the embracing of best practices important to present organizational success (Lieyana, 2016).

The study through data collected found that the public procurement regulation has a neutral impact in the application of procurement best practises. The positive outweighing the negative

as the public procurement policies serves as a guideline in the institutions practices, protecting them from non-compliance status that can result in penalties.

According to Gurayah (2024) the public procurement policies can have an impact of the **Bureaucratic Delays** : A Complex and lengthy procurement processes, often required for regulatory compliance, lead to delays in acquiring essential goods and services. These delays affect operational efficiency and the institution's ability to meet academic and administrative needs promptly. The literature also raised regulatory compliance burdens as flexibility can be limited due to strict regulations that restricts the responsiveness to immediate or unforeseen institutional needs.

The PPPFA as one of the applicable public acts is intended mitigate the imbalances caused by the past apartheid regime and therefore provides opportunities for the previously disadvantaged. This takes BBBEE into account and therefore seen as positive influence in support local businesses. The act promotes equality in bidding. Currently the 80-20 (80 price and 20 BBBEE) and 90-10 systems (90 Price- 10 BBBEE) is being used for the tender process. if the tender prices is below R50 million that the 80-20 is applied. In addition, for the above R50 million tender, the 90-10 is applied. This support equality in bidding.

It also supports subcontracting. This is whereby for large contracts; the larger service provider may outsource a certain portion to subcontractors. This serves to prevent monopolisation by large contractors and provides experience and exposure opportunities for the smaller businesses.

5.2.7 Objective 7: To determine the challenges faced by UKZN in the adoption of PBPs

The structure of the university, compliance, policy interpretation and application, processes, staff morale and supplier challenges were the most identified areas for challenges faced by staff members.

5.2.7.1 Policy

All universities' own procurement or supply chain policies. The policies give each university a framework for the procurement process and the steps to take when making purchases of products and services (Dlamini, 2016). The current procurement policy is outdated and not

tailored to research needs, creating frustrations and inefficiencies. There is a lack of communication and awareness about the policy which has created challenges in understanding and practice which has led to inconsistency. More workshops are needed to address this gap. The current policy is not cognisant of research-related procurement and this can hinder research activities which is a key output of the institution. The policy is awaiting review in 2025. Due to a continuous change in management and leadership, the implementation of a policy becomes hindered as well as the procurement practices thereof. therefore, the lack of continuity in this regard leads to inefficiencies. There are some urgent projects with tight deadlines that are getting delayed with the current policy. Such include times when some construction projects are subject to only when students are on break and not whilst on campus. this can affect deadlines. A compromise needs to be reached. The interpretation of the policy leads to ongoing varying practices which are not instituted across the board. This should be revisited in line with the relevant organograms.

5.2.7.2 Supplier challenges

All procurement transactions and interactions with suppliers, including supplier selection and evaluation, are subject to the provisions outlined in the code of ethics and conduct, and policies related to the prevention of fraud/corruption and other irregularities are also encouraged.

These issues include ethical standards and conflicts of interest. The procurement procedure used by South African universities also incorporates the notion of the declaration of interest. To guarantee that the procurement process is respected by all parties, confidentiality and information accuracy are also included (Unisa, 2009; NMMU, 2012).

The absence of a comprehensive supplier database slows down procurement processes and increases manual effort. This has been an ongoing challenge for sourcing suppliers. The supplier master file is outdated, lacking critical details like tax information, BEE scores, and product offerings. Inefficient search capabilities make finding suitable suppliers timeconsuming and prone to errors.

The lack of a supplier database has had various implication As alluded to in chapter Hence this remains an ongoing challenge in sourcing of suppliers. Due to a lack of database, some

suppliers are being overused due to favouritism. However, some suppliers have also expanded on their offerings thereby also leading to being used more often. However, a database is needed to properly administer the supplier process. The current supplier master file is outdated with many suppliers on the system lacking essential information such as tax details, product listings, BEE scoring and related. This leads to confusion when selecting suppliers. The current system does not even allow for a proper supplier search facility thereby taking up much time an effort in finding suppliers.

5.2.7.3 Decentralisation disjuncture

The study found that Poor communication between central offices and colleges leads to inconsistent practices. There is a division in the institution as colleges are operating independently with differing procurement methods, policy is interpreted differently resulting in lack of standardization.

Dlamini & Ambe (2012) highlight that centralized procurement policies strengthen compliance with best practices across public universities and support strategic goals. The institution is encouraged to Invest in policy training and benchmarking initiatives to support staff to ensure consistent execution of processes.

5.2.7.4 Staffing

Paper written by Khan & Zuberi, 2022 highlighted that adopting digital procurement platforms, continuous staff training, and rigorous compliance measures to build a robust procurement system that aligns with sustainable educational development.

Staffing at procurement are inevitably subjected to challenges even at developmental level. Talent management currently lacks and there is insufficient development investment and development of employees. This can hinder the knowledge base of the procurement department. Due to the lack of effective Talent management and development of staff, this leads to low staff morale. Hence staff become demotivated and may not be as enthusiastic or proactive in their respective roles.

5.2.7.5 Contract management

There are challenges relating to contract management processes. There seems to be an absent Contracts Management Systems within procurement. After awards are made, the service provider can commence works without a formal contract in place. the lack of such a contract leads to challenges in monitoring of completion, performances, payments and contract expiration. There is current disjuncture in the role of contract management. Currently it is solely managed by the University's Legal services. It should ideally be handled by the Procurement department. the current disjuncture can lead to confusion, inefficiencies and conflicts in the contract management processes. There seems to be a lack of proper contract management and this should be a key role of Procurement Department. This must include monitoring and tracking contracts, BBBEE scores and supplier performance. Currently this seems absent with no accountability for the monitoring of contracts process.

5.3 Conclusion

The chapter presented findings of the study and how the data fulfilled the objectives of the study. The rise in mismanagement of funds in public institutions created the need for the study. Procurement being the biggest spent function in institutions encouraged this study and how the public policies influence the processes of the institution. Applying best procurement practices as proven by the literature reviewed increases efficiency and long-term sustainability of the institution. The findings revealed that while public policies play a huge role in shaping the policies of the institution, they can also hinder the competitiveness of the institutions to research studies. The higher education institutions are not obliged to implement the National treasury regulations as they are schedule 3A. The institution is guided by these regulations and therefore adopts certain portion of it. Challenges of staff and miscommunication hindered the application of best procurement practices in the institution. The structure of the university appeared operating in silos and creating strenuous relationship within the employees of the institution. A more Centralized model is recommended to maximise on Efficiency & Process Optimization.

Chapter 6

6.Recommendations and conclusion

The study presented research statement, questions and objectives in chapter 1, Chapter 2 presented literature and chapter 3 presented the research methodology, Chapter 4 presented the data collected and themes were created, chapter 5 analysed and reported the data including the findings reflecting back to the research objectives, this chapter will provide recommendations based on data analysis and discussions and literature, study limitations and conclusion.

6.1 Contribution of the study

This study contributes to the awareness of Procurement Best practices and how they can be implemented within the institution, the study also clarifies the confusion within the national treasury regulations and their implementations. The study discovered areas of concern as challenges within the Division and discovered that the model is causing a disjoint between college and central, a centralised approach is the one to obtain more efficiency and achieve maximum results in any implementation.

Shifting focus to best procurement practices can provide value to the institution by emphasizing the importance and influence of the procurement function in the growth and sustainability of procurement encouraging workers to keep abreast of current knowledge and share creative approaches for implementing PBPs. This could lead to waste reduction, streamlining processes, and introducing cost-cutting initiatives across the university, as universities are expected to achieve more with less resources. Shifting focus to the effective and efficient management of the procurement division, which accounts for a major amount of overall organizational cost.

6.2 Limitations of the study

The study highlights the gap between theory and practical, this study was conducted as alluded on the literature review section for overall comprehensive universities, The University of KwaZulu is a traditional university in the category of universities hence the research for it. The framework developed could not work as per the recommended by the previous study and the above recommendations are for the University of KwaZulu Natal.

Recommendations below will assist to develop a framework that will clarify the stand in the national regulations and the application of procurement best practices within the institution.

6.3 Recommendations

With the absent of a policy that will accommodate research it is recommended to the University *to develop and regularly update tailor-made procurement policies* that align with the needs for the department. This will contribute to the overall success and credibility of the university in the long run.

Create a separate procurement policy that will encourage innovation or add a dedicated section within the existing policy specifically addressing the unique requirements and risks associated with research and development procurement. And involve stakeholders Integrate flexibility into the R&D procurement policy to accommodate the dynamic nature of research projects. This includes allowing for changes in project scopes, budgets, and supplier requirements as projects evolve. Establish a schedule for regular reviews of the R&D procurement policy to ensure that it remains aligned with evolving research needs, compliance requirements, and best practices.

With the absent of database and procurement system, *the study recommends that A user friendly centralised database* that will support supplier relations management and in line with the south African regulations to ensure compliance of suppliers is recommended, this database could be integrated with finance systems to ensure efficient payment of suppliers and create effective workflow by eliminating manual processes. To address these dangers, it's essential for the university to invest in a robust procurement management system, implement standardized data entry and validation procedures, conduct regular audits, and ensure that procurement staff are adequately trained on database management and compliance with procurement policies and regulations. Invest in procurement technology solutions that facilitate centralized data management, reporting, and communication. Procurement software can streamline processes and improve visibility.

With the lack of strategic procurement *planning the study recommends the university to Engage key stakeholders, including department heads, finance teams, and end-users, in the development of the procurement plan.* Collaborative input ensures that the plan addresses the diverse needs and priorities of different university units then Establish a comprehensive

procurement plan that outlines the university's procurement objectives, strategies, and key performance indicators. This plan should align with the institution's overall goals and priorities. The university is encouraged to Consider to centralizing strategic sourcing activities to leverage the university's collective purchasing power. This can lead to cost savings, improved contract terms, and better relationships with key suppliers.

With the lack of policy awareness, update the study *recommends Implementing a regular communication channels* such as internal newsletters, emails and staff members within all departments channel to consistently share information about policy changes and updates and disseminate information about the procurement policy, Also Provide training sessions to ensure that all buyers are aware of and understand the recommended policy and Ensure that they are familiar with university policies, regulations, and best practices, fostering a culture of compliance. Establish regular review cycles for the procurement policy to ensure that it remains aligned with current regulations and best practices. This helps in staying proactive and adaptive to changes in the external environment and creating value for the organisation. Solicit feedback from departments to address specific needs and challenges.

With the overreliance on external experts, the university *is encouraged to Invest in training programs for the university's procurement* team to develop and enhance internal expertise. This can include workshops, seminars, and certifications to keep the team abreast of the latest industry trends and regulations.

With the lack of benchmarking and the *study recommends a Regularly evaluate and update procurement processes based on feedback*, lessons learned, and industry advancements. This ensures that the university's procurement practices remain efficient, compliant, and aligned with institutional goals. Conduct regular benchmarking exercises to compare the university's procurement practices with those of peer institutions. Identify areas for improvement and adopt best practices to enhance efficiency and effectiveness

6.4 Recommendations for future research

1. Comparison across Universities

This study concentrated on one institution, the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Future research could broaden its scope to cover several HEIs from different provinces. Comparative analysis could assist evaluate whether the highlighted challenges such as regulatory ambiguity,

capacity constraints, and inefficiencies are sector-wide or context-specific. Such studies would also enable benchmarking and the identification of best-performing institutions, whose models might inform sector-wide reforms.

2. Examine practical implication of constitutional ambiguity

The misalignment of Sections 217 and 239 of the Constitution emerged as a significant challenge. Further research could look into the legal and practical implications of this uncertainty, such as how universities perceive their commitments and how this influences compliance outcomes. Legal analysis combined with practitioner data could assist propose better definitions or legislative adjustments.

3. Capacity development future research could investigate the competences required for effective procurement in higher education institutions, such as strategic sourcing, contract administration, risk analysis, and digital literacy. Existing training programmes could be evaluated, gaps identified, and competency frameworks customized to the higher education setting recommended. This would help to professionalise procurement functions across the Sector.

4. Supplier relationship management

There is little empirical study into how universities manage and evaluate suppliers. Future research can look into how supplier performance monitoring, feedback mechanisms, and strategic supplier partnerships impact cost-effectiveness, service delivery, and innovation. This would be especially useful for categories that directly impact academic continuity, such as facilities and laboratory supplies.

Conclusion

6.4 Summary of the chapter

The chapter Presented the limitations, contributions and recommendations of the study. The study contributes to the awareness of Procurement Best practices and how they can be implemented within the institution, the study also clarifies the confusion within the national treasury regulations and their implementations. The chapter provided recommendations aimed at improving procurement practices within the University of KwaZulu Natal, Chapter 4 and 5 revealed that the higher education institutions are schedule 3A in the schedule of entities are therefore not obliged to implement the Public Procurement policies, these can be utilised as guidelines in the institutional policies. The study has highlighted critical gaps, including policy deficiencies, the absence of a centralized procurement system, weak strategic procurement planning, lack of policy awareness, overreliance on external experts, and insufficient benchmarking practices.

To address these challenges, the study recommends the development of tailored procurement policies, investment in procurement technology, improved communication and training initiatives, and the adoption of strategic sourcing and benchmarking practices. Implementing these recommendations will not only streamline procurement processes but also foster compliance, innovation, and cost efficiency within the institution.

Ultimately, shifting the focus to procurement best practices will strengthen the university's procurement function, ensuring sustainable growth and resource optimization. By integrating these recommendations, the institution can create a more efficient and effective procurement framework that aligns with its strategic goals and regulatory requirement

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List of Appendices **Appendix A: interview Guide**

Appendix A2

Questionnaire on the exploration of the procurement processes and best practices application in terms of the National Treasury's regulation and section 217 of the 1996 constitution on procurement policy at the University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.

PLEASE NOTE

This questionnaire should only be completed by employees of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the province of KwaZulu Natal, who are involved in the procurement processes.

All information will be treated with **CONFIDENTIALITY** and will only be used for academic purposes.

Instructions for participants

1. Please answer the questions as objectively and honestly as possible.
2. Please answer all the questions, as this will provide more information to the researcher so that an accurate analysis and interpretation of data can be made.

SECTION A

Demographic information

The personal information is required for statistical analysis of data of respondents. All your responses will be treated with confidence. The researcher appreciates your support in providing this important information.

Mark the applicable block with a cross (X). Complete the applicable information.

A1	Please state your gender					
	Male					(1)
	Female					(2)
	Other					(3)

A2	Please indicate in which age group are you?	18-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 years or more
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

A3	What is your highest level of educational qualification?					
	Matric (Grade 12)					(1)
	Certificate					(2)
	Diploma					(3)
	Bachelor's Degree					(4)
	Post Graduate Diploma/ Degree					(5)

A4	Please state number of years as a role player in Procurement.					
	Less than one (1) year					(1)
	1-3 years					(2)
	4-5 years					(3)
	6-10 years					(4)
	More than 10 years					(5)

A5	Indicate your population group	African	Colored	Indian	White	Others
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

A6	What is your present position at the University of KwaZulu-Natal	
	Middle Management and above	(1)
	Supervisor	(2)
	Junior Staff	(3)

SECTION B

This section focuses on the understanding of Procurement Processes in the institution.

1. Please provide your understanding of Procurement within UKZN as an institution and elaborate on the current process of acquiring Goods and services (Inclusive of roles involved)

2. Please provide insight on the effectiveness of Procurement Processes in the institution.

3. How does UKZN Procurement Improve value and impact of Procurement for Competitive advantage?

4. Can you describe if the Institutions' procurement has evolved to supply chain management?

SECTION C

South African National treasury has issued Preferential Procurement Regulations (2017) on Preferential Procurement Policy Framework act 5 of 2000. This section focuses on the understanding of These regulations and section 217 Constitutional act of 1996 on Procurement values and elements of best practices (Benchmarking, Supply chain management training and innovation, Consortium purchasing, Improving Supplier Relations, strategic sourcing and sourcing teams, Risk management,

Cost management are amongst the few) The section seeks to understand if the institution prescribe to these regulations.

1.Does the university conduct acquisitions according to National treasurer regulations of 2017? Please Describe how the university conducts acquisitions according to these regulations?

2.Please elaborate on the understanding of The Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act

3.Fairness, equitable, transparent , competitive and cost effective are values of supply chain according to section 217 of the constitution of 1996,How does the institution apply these values to their supply chain processes?

4. Do you think the institution has provided adequate guidelines on PPPFA,PFMA acts? Please elaborate.

5.Please elaborate on the understanding of Procurement best practices from the institutional perspective Please Provide examples of any applied at the institution and how they can be improved.

5.How do public procurement policies and regulations influence the University Procurement Policy.

6. Please Describe how regulations issued by the National Treasury can be applied successfully in conjunction with Procurement Best practices?

8. How does UKZN obtain economies of scale when conducting purchases? Are you using PURCO?

9.What are primary challenges faced by procurement staff/departments at UKZN in adoption of Procurement Best Practices?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix B: Informed Consent

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Mcom Research Project

Researcher : Precious Nosipho Nxumalo (██████████)

Supervisor : Dr Vangeli Gamede (██████████)

Co-supervisor : Dr Mathew Kimanzi (██████████)

Research office: Mariette Snyman (0312608350)

Date: 01 August 2023

Dear Respondent

I am **Precious Nosipho Nxumalo**, an Mcom student at the school of Management, IT and Governance, of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled **Dynamic of procurement processes and application: the case of UKZN**.

The study selected 4 colleges from support services at UKZN and is expected to include 10 participants in total. 2 buyers from each selected college, 1 buyer and a Manager from central procurement. The study will be conducted in open-ended questionnaires. The duration if you choose to participate will take 20 minutes to complete.

The aim of this study is to understand procurement processes of the university and whether the University of KwaZulu-Natal subscribes to the constitutional procurements acts and regulations and best practices of procurement.

Through your participation I hope to understand background data and formulate new insights on the implementations of these regulations and best practice of procurement.

The results of the focus group are intended to contribute to:

Provide information that will allow development or enhancement of framework for the University to apply and maintain these practices in the long run. This will in turn ensure maximization of the organization's resources for its competitive advantage.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number __00004819__).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at () or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey/focus group. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the School of Management, IT and Governance, UKZN for a period of 5 years and disposed thereafter.

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I () have been informed about the study entitled **(Dynamic of procurement processes and application: the case of UKZN)** By **(Precious Nosipho Nxumalo)**

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (0312602865).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Signature of Participant

Date

**Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)**

Date

Voluntary Questionnaire Consent letter



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, IT and GOVERNANCE

M-COM Dissertation Researcher: Precious Nosipho Nxumalo (0789450665)

Supervisor : Dr Vangeli Gamede ([REDACTED])

Co-Supervisors : Dr Mathew Kimanzi ([REDACTED])

Research Office: Mariette Snyman (0312608350)

CONSENT I..... (Full names of participant)
confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the study, and I
consent to participate voluntarily in the research project. I understand that I have the
right to withdraw from the project at any time, should I wish to do so.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT: DATE:

Appendix C: Ethical Clearance



06 March 2023

Precious Nosipho Nxumalo (211525871)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Westville Campus

Dear PN Nxumalo,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00004819/2022

Project title: Dynamic of procurement processes and application: The case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 12 September 2022 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 06 March 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

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