

# **Institutional Pressures and Procurement Cycle Time in Uganda's Central Government Procuring and Disposing Entities: The Mediating Role of Opportunistic Behavior**

## **Abstract**

### **Purpose**

This study focused on establishing the mediating role of opportunistic behavior in the relationship between institutional pressures and procurement cycle time (PCT) in Uganda's central government (CG) procuring and disposing entities (PDEs). The study also sought to establish the relationship between institutional pressures and PCT, between institutional pressures and opportunity behavior and between opportunistic behavior and PCT. This study was carried out because most PDEs had failed to perform well in terms of PCT, and beneficiaries had often complained of the lengthy PCT.

### **Design/methodology/approach**

The unit of analysis was 126 CG PDEs within Uganda while the unit of inquiry was three employees per PDE, namely, giving a total of 378 respondents. Using a quantitative cross-sectional survey, the study realized a response rate of 88% for the unit of analysis and 71.7% for unit of inquiry. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4 with focus on ascertaining regression and mediation results.

### **Findings**

The findings show that institutional pressures negatively and significantly predict both institutional pressures and PCT ( $\beta = -0.569^{**}$ ;  $\beta = -0.688^{**}$ , respectively). Also, institutional pressures and opportunistic behavior are significant predictors of PCT, predicting 60.6% change in PCT. Furthermore, opportunity behavior partially moderates the relationship between institutional pressures and PCT.

### **Research limitations/implications**

For Uganda's CG PDEs to reduce procurement delays and to procure within PCT, they should put more emphasis on institutional pressures and curtailing opportunistic behavior. The study recommends further amendment of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) Act 2003 to reduce delays.

### **Practical implications**

There is need for further amendment of the PPDA Act 2003 to reduce delays, especially those attributed to approvals by contracts committee and the minimum bidding period for competitive bidding.

### **Social implications**

The study explores PCT and its antecedents whose understanding is critical in exploring avenues of reducing PCT and boosting service delivery to the beneficiaries.

### **Originality/value**

The PPDA Act (2003) was amended in 2014, but still the time spent in the procurement processes has remained long, hence delaying or denying citizens service delivery. This is a matter of concern to the country at large and may spill into political unrests, and yet, there is scant literature exploring PCT and its antecedents. This makes the present study one of the pioneer empirical studies on PCT, with emphasis on Uganda. This study provides a framework for examining PCT in a context where scholarly explanation of PCT is still limited.

**Keywords:** procurement cycle time, Institutional pressures and opportunistic behaviour

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