

**PROFESSIONALISM AND PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENTS**

**A CASE OF FORT PORTAL CITY, UGANDA**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

I, **Tumwine Bernard** Reg. No. 18//U/GMBA/19363/PD declare that this research report under the title “Professionalism and Procurement Performance of Local Governments. A Case of Fort Portal City, in Uganda” is my original work and has not been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for any award.

Sign..... Date.....

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## APPROVAL

This research work entitled “Professionalism and Procurement Performance of Local Governments. A Case of Fort Portal City, Uganda” has been done under our supervision and has met the research requirements of Kyambogo University and is now ready for submission with our approval.

Sign..... Date.....

**Dr. Peter W Obanda**

Sign..... Date.....

**Dr. Madina Nabukeera**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This piece of work would not have seen the light of the day if it was not the guidance, support and contribution from various people that deserve to be mentioned.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this piece of work to my beloved wife Joan and my Children: Arnold, Marylyn, Daisy, Lucy, Emma and Keije, who prepared me to handle the hurdles of this world.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CILT	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
CIPS	Chartered Institute of Purchasing and IPPU -Institute of Procurement Professionals of Uganda
FP	Fort Portal
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
GoU	Government of Uganda
HRM	Human Resource Management
KISM	Knyan Institute of Supply Management Tanzanian Procurement and Supplies
PDE's	Procuring and Disposing Entities
PPDA	Public Procurement and Disposal Authority
PSPTB	Professional and Technicians Board
US\$-	United States of America Dollars

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the effect of professionalism on procurement performance in Fort Portal City (FP City). The study was guided by three specific objectives, that is, to examine the effect of staff competence on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City, to examine the effect of staff integrity on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City and to analyze the effect of staff accountability on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey and descriptive design with a target population of 183 employees, Local Council members, suppliers and contractors of FP City. A sample of 177 was drawn using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table. Respondents were selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data was collected from 125 respondents by means of a questionnaire supplemented with 15 interviewed respondents. Regression analysis was used to examine the effects of the variables i.e. procurement professionalism and performance of procurement function. The regression findings revealed that competence, integrity and accountability as elements of professionalism each had a significant direct effect on the performance of procurement. The study concludes that if local governments consider enhancing professionalism in the procurement function, they are likely to register an increase in performance of the procurement function. Thus, the study recommends that all procurement staffs become members of Institute of Procurement Professionals of Uganda (IPPU) so that they develop high standards of professional skills, ability and integrity. The study also recommends that training and career development be extended to all internal stakeholders as well as supporting the process the procurement team in joining the professional body, so as to enhance their skills and competence to perform tasks in a way that reduces bidders' complaints by enhancing value for money, and increasing the quality of goods, services & works. The study also recommends for the scaling up measures that address conflict of interest in the procurement function.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Professional human resources are very critical in the organization's success. While executing their duties, they often demonstrate competence, high discipline, work result oriented and high integrity while performing tasks that achieve the vision and mission of the organization (Rulandari, 2017). In order to serve the public in an acceptable and satisfactory manner, FP City employees ought to put the interest of stakeholders at the forefront by demonstrating a high level of professionalism. However, there is still limited evidence on whether professionalism has a direct effect on procurement function performance. This chapter, therefore presents the background, statement of the problem, purpose of study, specific objectives, research hypotheses, conceptual framework, the significance of the study, justification of the study, and scope of the study. The background, which is presented under four perspectives, is dealt with first before other issues are covered.

### **1.2 Background of the study**

With professionalism becoming an important element across various organizations. There is a need to dig deep to understand its origin, meaning, and contribution towards driving procurement performance in organizations and most importantly within cities of Uganda. The background of this study is therefore presented in four perspectives which include; historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual.

#### **1.2.1 Historical perspective**

Professionalism in procurement can be seen throughout ancient history, including the Egyptians in 3,000 BC (Lysons, 2000). Lysons (2000) notes that though there was no designated procurement but the materials management used in the building of the pyramids

were handled by scribes who played a clerical role with professionalism. However, the professionalism in procurement's function was not truly recognized until the 1800s. According to Babbage (1832) in his book of "The Economy of Machinery and Manufactures," the 'materials man' in the mining sector who selects purchases and tracks goods and services required to demonstrate professionalism (Lewis, 2007).

Later came the period of industrial revolution where purchase and disposition of railway materials was required to be done in a more organized way hence representing detailed procurement's strategic contributions to the railroad industry. As a result, in 1886, the Pennsylvania Railroad gave departmental status to the procurement function, referring to it as the 'Supplying Department hence a birth to professionalism in procurement (Nolan, 2014).

Despite the slow progress during the World Wars that merely limited it to strictly clerical, the function once again gained its managerial role but this time, and the concept of material management became the focus during this period as well as the emergence of procurement professionals. On the other hand, according to Lysons (2000), the evolution of professionalism in purchasing has been largely influenced by the establishment of institutions concerned with the concept of promoting professional purchasing and the creation of various associations of specified purchasing knowledge and techniques.

Procurement associations like the NEVI Perspective (Netherlands), the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) UK, The American Institute of Supplies Management (ISM), and the International Federation of Purchasing and Materials Management (IFPMM), to mention but a few, have spread across with branches all over the world (CIPS, 2020; IFPMM, 2017; ISM, 2019; NEVI, 2021). Therefore, that's why today we have the CIPS Uganda chapter and the Institute of Procurement Professionals of Uganda (IPPU) (IPPU, 2022)1.2.2

### **1.2.2 Theoretical perspective**

The current study is grounded in the Principal-Agent theory, which was propounded in the 1970s by Stephen Ross and Barry Mitnick from the combined disciplines of economics and institutional theory (Mitnick, 2013). The Principal-Agent theoretical framework is used to understand elements of professionalism in procurement within Fort Portal City. This is because the theory underpins well the effect of professionalism on the performance of the procurement function in Fort Portal City. The Principal-Agent theory hypothesizes that in local governments, where share ownership is widely held by all citizens, managerial actions of public officials may depart from those required to maximize the demands of citizens (Principal) (Mallin, 2007). In the current study, the public (FP City residents) through the elected councilors are the principals on behalf of the citizens, while the city employees (members on the contracts and evaluation committees and PDU staff) are the agents (Mrope, 2017). This theory was adopted because, from the Principal-Agent theory perspective, the citizens enhance professionalism by exercising control over city employees' decision-making. After all, they are seen as the check and balance mechanism to enhance the officials' effectiveness.

However, while the Principal-Agent theory offers valuable insights into the dynamics between principals and agents, it has limitations, particularly in cases where agents prioritize their personal interests over the public good. Obanda (2010) highlighted this fundamental problem in Uganda, where public sector officials in various ministries or procurement departments often fail to act in the best interests of the government, favoring personal gain instead.

To address these limitations, Stewardship theory offers an alternative perspective. Stewardship theory describes the board and managers as good stewards of the corporation, responsible for the success and welfare of the organization as a whole. Contrary to agency theory, which views managers as self-interested agents, stewardship theory sees them as trustworthy individuals

working for high corporate returns. In the context of local government procurement, public officials, including procurement managers, can be viewed as stewards of the city's assets, responsible for ensuring that procurement activities align with the broader interests of the public. The role of boards or governing bodies, in this case, is to safeguard these assets by defining objectives, formulating strategy, and managing risks effectively.

By adopting elements of stewardship theory, the public (the Principals) and procurement officials (the Agents) in Fort Portal City could foster a more collaborative relationship, ensuring that the public good remains at the forefront of procurement activities, rather than personal interest. This approach also complements the professionalism expected in procurement, encouraging a culture where public employees see themselves as stewards of the public interest.

### **1.2.3 Conceptual perspective**

The demand for professionalism in the conduct of public procurement is critical. Kadarisman (2011) speaks of the four characteristics which could be used as indicators to determine one's professionalism. The four characteristics are: 1) the mastery of knowledge in a particular field and the diligence to keep up with the developments in the field. To this, effective knowledge and information management provides credible, reliable and timely data to make procurement decisions (Basheka, 2021); 2) the ability to put the knowledge into practice, especially for the benefit of others; 3) faithfully implementing scientific ethics and putting them in high esteem, and the capacity to comprehend and respect current social values; and 4) a great sense of accountability to God, nation and country, the public, family, and their own self during the implementation of their knowledge.

On the other hand, Wibowo (2019) highlights that the three elements inherent in professionalism are: the expertise or skills repertoire derived from science and technology;

individual or collective moralities, ethics, or behavior; and service to the public and environment. In support, Steinfeld *et al.* (2017) proposes that the characteristics of a professional worker are as follows: highly insightful and visionary, competent, honest in competitions, and holds professional ethics in high esteem.

To step up development of professionalism in procurement, there has been a call for improvement in adherence to ethical principles relevant in driving out any potential malpractices by requiring organizations to operate within strict guidelines (Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, 2014). Additionally, CIPs further highlights that it is important that organizations and procurement professionals get affiliated to their relevant professional bodies and uphold those entities' values. For instance, the Chartered Institutes of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS, 2014) has identified a way to uphold integrity, commitment and responsibility that entails developing a code of procurement ethics, comparing the code with that of the international professional procurement body (CIPS) and educating all relevant staff on ethical procurement which is capable of significantly leading to procurement professionalism.

Taylor, Grey and Checkland (2017) defined Professionalism as the demonstrated behaviors and adherence to codes of conduct. Therefore, Local Government workers often have their own definitions of professionalism, which usually encompass expected behaviors and codes of conduct. Relatedly, the General Dental Council (2015) defined professionalism as the knowledge, skills and attitudes/behaviors required to practice in an ethical and appropriate way, putting clients' needs first and promoting confidence in the working team. Taking a case of Fort Portal City, professionalism implies the knowledge, skills and attitudes/behaviors of employees required to serve masses in an ethical and appropriate way, putting clients' needs first and promoting confidence in the team.

On the other hand, the performance of the procurement function is conceptualized differently by different authors. According to CIPS (2013) performance of the procurement function connotes an entity's potential to offer reliable quality output as a result of accessing quality services and products. Therefore, at its simplest level, performance of the procurement function at Fort Portal City is typically observed through quality service delivery, timeliness and price. In the above regard, through performance measurement, Fort Portal City identifies weaknesses on the part of the supplier and gives chance for corrective actions to be taken by both parties appropriately (Accenture Global Service, 2015).

#### **1.2.4 Contextual background**

Public procurement is increasingly recognized as essential in-service delivery in Uganda. According to the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (2020) public procurement in Uganda accounts for significant proportion of total expenditure in Local Governments. Komakech (2019) asserts that public procurement in Uganda accounts for over 70% of the national budget which is quite a sizeable amount of the national budget. However, this allocation is made against a backdrop of limited demonstration of professionalism amongst staff members by violating the principles of transparency, accountability, fairness, maximization of competition, ensuring value for money and promotion of ethics, including integrity (Wanyama, 2021). Whereas, the huge amount of money involved in government procurement to professionalize the procurement staff amongst public institutions in Uganda, there is still low procurement function performance (Komakech, 2019). Consequently, the government continues to seek for all strategic approaches to improve service delivery in Public Service as stipulated in the National Development Plan 2020/2021. One of the considerations is professionalism of procurement staff which has been pushed for since the 2014 amendments of the 2003 PPDA Act-(Gumisiriza, 2019). Procurement professionals are highly required at

each level of public procurement system to handle the procurement activities especially in fulfilling government's bid deepen integrity, transparency and fairness in procurement and disposal of assets (Obanda, 2010). In spite of the reforms Wanyama (2021) notes that public procurement is still vulnerable to corruption, delayed service delivery, high costs of procurements and low-quality supplies.

In the case of Fort Portal City one of the lower local governments and administrative units of Kabarole district, the procurement function performance has continued to raise questions from the public. Despite being mandated to carry out procurement under section 175 of the Local Government Act under the guidance of Local Government (Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets) Regulations, 2006, Fort Portal's procurement function performance still continues to raise questions when contractors who defaulted on council money continuously get more contracts because they are friends to the mayor (Asimwe, 2022). Fort Portal City like other cities is in the frontline of service delivery and as a result it spends substantial sums of money in procurements. However, recently it has come under spotlight over corruption allegations such as, through the swindling of 21 million by Fort Portal City officials, mismatch on funds released amongst Fort portal City divisions, and shoddy works of Nyabweya Primary school faulting procurement guidelines (Nantamba, 2022). In 2019, the city missed out on additional funding from the Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID) project due deteriorating services quality, higher costs of procurements which raised alarm from the public (Basiime, 2019). In addition, there was a reported increase in complaints from the suppliers regarding the bidding process and procedures in 2019 which was deemed corrupt (Musekura, 2019).

Furthermore, the Local Government Auditor General Report (2019) indicated that Fort Portal City conducted a procurement of goods, services and works worth UGX. 3,546,240,840 in

2019 without following Public Procurement Regulations and guidelines contrary to the Local Government (PPDA) regulations, 2006 that calls upon all local government procurements to comply with the procurement law.

Despite the efforts to professionalize the procurement staff and ensure adherence to legal frameworks, Fort Portal City continues to struggle with its procurement performance. In contrast, other cities like Gulu, Masaka, and Mbarara are gradually improving their procurement functions by adopting better practices and addressing corruption concerns. This underscores the importance of focusing on enhancing professionalism and strict compliance with procurement laws to improve procurement outcomes, particularly in cities like Fort Portal where inefficiencies and governance issues continue to hamper progress (Ministry of Local Government, 2020; Wanyama, 2021). Addressing these challenges through targeted reforms could significantly improve service delivery in Fort Portal and bring it on par with other cities in Uganda.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Fort Portal City is currently experiencing significant challenges in its procurement function, characterized by low-quality goods and services, delayed service delivery, and rising costs (The Independent, 2021). Musekura (2019) attributes these issues to corruption, noting an increase in supplier complaints regarding irregularities in the bidding processes. Additionally, Basiime (2019) indicated that the city lost potential funding from the Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID) project due to deteriorating service quality and inflated procurement costs compared to other municipalities, which raised public concerns about the accuracy of financial reporting. The Local Government Auditor General's Report (2019) revealed that Fort Portal City conducted procurement activities worth UGX 3,546,240,840 in 2019 without adhering to the Public Procurement Regulations, in direct violation of the Local

Government (PPDA) regulations, 2006, which mandate compliance with established procurement laws. Various strategies have been implemented by Fort Portal City to enhance procurement performance, including calls for greater professionalism, integrity, and accountability among staff. However, these efforts have not yielded significant improvements; the Auditor General's Report (OAG, 2019) found that procurement practitioners in Fort Portal City continued to struggle with timely service delivery and were implicated in bribery and collusion.

Moreover, the city authorities were compelled to terminate a contract with Trino Consulting Limited due to inadequate competencies in executing road repairs. The most recent Fort Portal City Annual Report (2021) disclosed that only 38% of the annual procurement targets were achieved, leaving a concerning 68.2% unmet. If these procurement inefficiencies remain unaddressed, Fort Portal City stands to incur substantial financial losses attributable to corruption and mismanagement. It is within this context that the researcher aims to investigate the effect of professionalism on the performance of the procurement function in Fort Portal City, with the goal of identifying actionable strategies to enhance procurement outcomes.

#### **1.4 Justification for the study**

In Fort Portal City, public procurement has emerged as a critical area of concern due to its underperformance and the numerous challenges it faces. While procurement in Uganda as a whole accounts for 70% of the government's annual expenditure, Fort Portal has become a focal point for investigation because its procurement processes are marred by inefficiencies, corruption, and non-compliance with established regulations (Wanyama, 2021; Gumisiriza, 2019). Reports of procurement malfeasance, such as the awarding of contracts to contractors with a history of defaulting and allegations of favoritism by city officials, highlight a lack of professionalism in the procurement function in Fort Portal (Asimwe, 2022). This city, despite

its significant expenditure on procurement, has faced scrutiny for irregularities like overpricing of items and disregard for procurement procedures (Picho, 2017). These issues, which continue to affect service delivery and infrastructure development, beg the question of whether enhancing professionalism within the procurement function could be the solution to improving its performance.

Unlike Uganda's national focus on procurement, Fort Portal's situation demands specific attention due to repeated failures in procurement governance. The city's loss of funding from projects like the Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID) due to poor procurement outcomes further reinforces the need for a study focusing specifically on Fort Portal's procurement challenges (Basiime, 2019). Thus, this study aims to investigate the link between professionalism and procurement function performance in Fort Portal City, addressing the question of whether stricter adherence to procurement regulations and professional standards can mitigate the city's persistent procurement issues.

### **1.5 Purpose of the study**

The study examined the effect of professionalism on the performance of procurement function in Local Governments by taking a case of Fort Portal City in Uganda.

### **1.6 Research objectives**

- i. To examine the effect of staff competence on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City
- ii. To examine the effect of staff integrity on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City
- iii. To analyze the effect of staff accountability on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City

## **1.7 Research Hypotheses**

**Ha1** There is a significant effect of staff competence on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City.

**Ha2** There is a significant effect of staff integrity on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City

**Ha3** There is a significant effect staff accountability on the performance procurement function in Fort Portal City

## **1.9 Scope of the study**

The current study involved subject, geographical and time scope.

### **1.9.1 Subject scope**

The subject scope of this study covered the effects of professionalism on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City. The predictor variable professionalism was studied in terms of staff competence, staff integrity and staff accountability, while the outcome variable was procurement performance and was studied in terms of quality of goods, services & works, value for money, less bidders' complaints and fewer cases of malpractice within Fort Portal City.

### **1.9.2 Geographical scope**

The study was carried out in Fort Portal City which is one of the local government units delivering public services that requires the purchase of goods, services and works, which consumes much of the public expenditure.

### **1.9.3 Time scope**

The current study covered a period of 10 years from 2010 to date a period that has seen concerted efforts by government in creation of procurement legal frame and ever-increasing

number of qualified & certified procurement professionals where one would expect near perfect performance of procurement function.

### **1.10 Significance of the study**

This study may help public entities like FP City to appreciate that procurement professionalism is not belonging to a professional organization, follow a Code of Conduct and Ethics, or having desired levels of education and qualifications but having the professional approach in the conduct of business activities. Therefore, a need to promote and develop high standards of professional skills, ability, integrity and compliant personnel.

This study may provide an insight on how the government on fostering strategies in which professionalism, ethical values and procurement competences in procurement can be achieved in all its Disposing Entities and also contribute to enhancing knowledge on facilitating procurement professionalism and continuation of procurement capacity building.

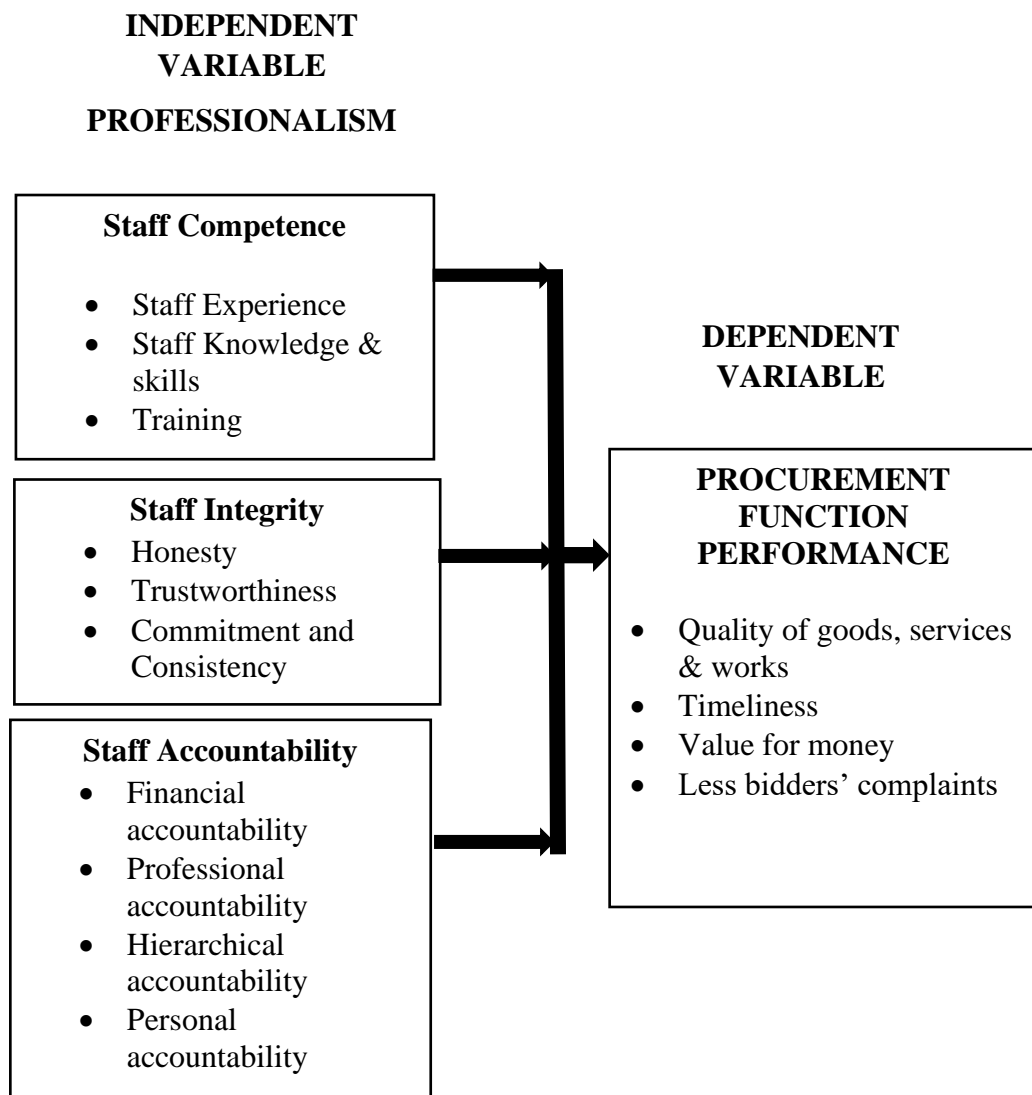
This study will not only benefit the FP City but other local governments or public entities by providing information on the benefits of procurement professionalism and compliance regulations in the public sector especially where colossal sums of public funds are being lost through procurement corruption hence a need to professionalize the procurement function and enforce compliance such that there is value for money.

The study will aid the academicians and researchers especially of Kyambogo University by providing valuable information to those seeking to explore and investigate the effect of procurement professionalism, compliance with rules and regulation, performance at all levels in any kind of institution.

The study findings will add value to the existing literature on professionalism, compliance with rules and regulation and performance of procurement function in the Ugandan context particularly local governments.

### 1.11 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the current study reflected variables of elements/characteristic of Professionalism, and procurement functional performance as depicted in the figure 1 below.



*Source:* Adapted from Öberg and Bringselius (2015) and modified by the

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework**

From the above theoretical framework, it is assumed that effective procurement function in this public entity (Fort Portal City) hinges on professionalism. In the framework, professionalism including variables of Competence, Integrity, and staff accountability are taken as contributing factors towards procurement performance. Staff competency was operationalized in terms of Staff Experience, Knowledge and skills, and Training (Elijah & Athumani, 2020). Staff Integrity was operationalized in terms of Honesty, Trustworthiness, Commitment and Consistency (Zahra, 2011). Staff accountability on the other hand was studied in terms of financial accountability, professional accountability, and hierarchical accountability, and personal accountability (Sinclair, 1995).

Finally, procurement function performance is measured in term of Quality of goods, services & works, Timeliness, Value for money, Less bidders' complaints and fewer cases of malpractice (Basheka, 2021; Wibowo 2019).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the operational definitions of the research variables, including professionalism, staff competence, staff integrity, staff accountability, and procurement performance. The chapter further illustrates how the Principal-Agent theory as the major theoretical underpinning of this study are related with professionalism and procurement performance within public institutions. In addition, this chapter presents the review of relevant literature regarding the effect of staff competence on procurement performance; the effect of staff integrity on procurement performance, the effect of staff accountability on procurement performance, and the literature gaps.

#### **2.3 Theoretical review**

The current study was grounded in the Principal-Agent theory as explained below.

##### **2.3.1 Principal-Agent theory**

The principal–agent literature deals with a specific social relationship, that is, delegation, in which two actors are involved in an exchange of resources (Zogning, 2017). The principal is the actor who disposes of a number of resources but “not those of the appropriate kind to realize the interests (for example, has money but not the appropriate skills)” (Gauld, 2016; Gailmard, 2012). He or she then needs the agent, who accepts these appropriate resources and is willing to further the interests of the principal. In this sense, Coleman is right to speak of an “extension of self” of the principal by way of delegation. The principal–agent model has been developed within the framework of the “new institutional economics” (Panda & Leepsa, 2017); Moe, 1984; Miller, 1992) and therefore shares the basic characteristics of this framework, for

instance, the assumption of rational actors striving to maximize their preferences that are ordered according to their priorities.

It defines the relationship between the principals and agents, such as company management (agent) and shareholders (principal), public officials (agent) and citizens (principal) like in the case of FP City workers and councilors as agents and the residents are principals. Principals delegate the running of business to the agents (Zogning, 2017)). According to Obanda (2010), the first is the agency problem that arises when (a) the desires or goals of the principal and agent conflict and (b) it is difficult or expensive for the principal to verify what the agent is doing. The second problem is the risk sharing that arises when the principal and agent have different attitudes towards risk (Eisenhardt1989 as cited in Flynn et al., 2020). In the current study, the public (FP City residents) through the elected councilors are the principals on behalf of the citizens, while the municipal council employees (members on the contracts and evaluation committees and PDU staff) are the agents (Obanda, 2010).

According to this theory, procurement managers and all public officials involved in public procurement activities in FP City must play the agent role for the residents. The theory shows how the actions and performance of the procuring entities (as the agent) affect the government (as the principal) and other stakeholders (Muranda, 2006).

## **2.2 Conceptual review**

### **2.2.1 Procurement**

Procurement is the activity of assessing, buying and receiving goods, works and services. It is public whenever this process is performed by public organizations or whenever it is performed on their behalf or again funded by public organizations (Mrope, 2017; Adotevi, 2004; Arrowsmith, 2010) to offer a public service. Public service Public services which are in the

form of public goods and services is the responsibility of the government and implemented by government agencies, either the central government, local government or the environment of the State-Owned Enterprises (Kalinzi, 2014). In order to ensure public accountability and value for money through procurement transactions, there is a need for professional training and practice of those personnel responsible for the procurement process and management (Baily, Farmer, Crocker & Jessop, 2015).

### **2.2.2 Procurement Performance**

Yekosofati (2019) asserted that procurement performance refers to the extent to which operational procurement results indicate high levels of value-added performance in cost, lead time, efficiency, and capacity utilization. It is therefore imperative to note that procurement performance shelters several of quantity and quality-enhancing benchmarks, which serve to reduce costs of transactions, time spent, and the quantity and quality of goods and services delivered. Van Genugten et al., (2020) expound that procurement performance within organizations entails an increase on returns on investment, reduction in transactional costs, services and supplies faster delivery, high quality goods and services delivery and supply chains that are perfectly streamlined. On his side, Decarolis et al., (2020) defines procurement performance as the extent to which the procurement function is able to realize its predetermined goals at the sacrifice of a minimum of the company's resources resulting into among others, better decision making, higher visibility, buyer motivation, operating cost reductions and internal customer satisfaction

Additionally, Kumar et al. (2005) defines procurement performance as the extent to which the procurement function of an organization is able to achieve its intended goals using a minimum organizational resource. The scholar also revealed that procurement performance has been measured using different dimensions by different scholars. This because it is difficult to

measure procurement performance individual areas, and this has made authors to use their own opinions when measuring procurement performance such as computation of transactional costs, services and quality of goods and services since there is no coherent method for measuring procurement performance.

### **2.2.3 Professionalism**

In management, professionalism (skill/expertise) has been defined in many different ways by many different people. For example, the sociological analysis of professional work has differentiated professionalism as a special means of organizing work and controlling workers, and in contrast to the hierarchical, bureaucratic and managerial controls of industrial and commercial organizations (Rulandari, 2017). On the other hand, professionalism depends on the staffing, knowledge, skills and capabilities of the human resources and on controls the system that influences human behavior (OECD, 2007). Various professions have always been linked with the notion of service and a profession has been described as a group of people organized to serve a body of specialized knowledge in the interest of society (Kalinzi, 2014).

Furthermore, according to Evetts (2006) as cited in Ahlback and Bringselius (2017) made a distinction between organizational professionalism and occupational professionalism. Occupational professionalism represent discourse constructed within the professional groups themselves, and involve issues such as collegial authority, discretionary decision-making in complex cases, based on trust in the practitioner by both clients and employers, and occupational control of the work.

On the other hand, Organizational professionalism represent discourse from above: pursuit of control by the managers in work organizations e.g. hierarchical structures of authority, rational-

legal forms of decision-making, standardization of work practices, accountability, and target-setting and performance review

In addition, all professions like medicine, law, engineering, architecture, project management, marketing, among others have a duty to protect the professionalism demanded of those professions. Procurement too, is one of the new and interesting professional disciplines with an ethical code to protect; but the profession is still in its infancy (Appelbaum & Lawton, 1990 as cited in Kalinzi, 2014).

On the other hand, procurement as a profession according to Lyson and Farrington (2012) is skilled based on theoretical knowledge, prolonged training and education, competence based on tests and examinations and adherence of professional code of ethics. However, professionalism in public procurement does not relate to the levels of education and qualifications of the workforce only, but also to the professional approach in the conduct of business activities (Dávid-Barrett & Fazekas, 2020). This is more accurate because if it was only limited to education and qualifications to would have alienated most who perform procurement functions but are not necessarily procurement professionals like those in various committees such as Evaluation, Negotiation and Contracts Committee to ensure smooth execution of the procurement function.

Furthermore, procurement professionalism according to Robert and Clifford (2004) as cited In Mrope (2017), is characterized by having a professional organization, a Code of Conduct and Ethics, a body of knowledge and research activities. In public procurement, much effort has been made to define the competencies required of those in the profession through professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) Uganda chapter, IPPU (Institute of Procurement Professionals of Uganda, Chartered Institute of Logistics and

Transport (CILT), the Dutch Association for Purchasing Management (NEVI, Kenyan Institute of Supply Management (KISM), 2006 and the Tanzanian Procurement and Supplies Professional and Technicians Board (PSPTB), 2007. among others. Today, the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) is the leading body representing the field of purchasing and supply chain management and it promotes and develops high standards of professional skills, ability and integrity among those engaged in purchasing and supply chain (Basheka, 2009; Flynn et al., 2020).

Professionalism in public procurement allows for functionality, transparency and significant savings in public expenditure and this partly explains why it should be given due attention because adherence to procurement professionalism affects the performance of the procurement function in public entities (Kalinzi, 2014, Basheka, 2021). Procurement employees' professionalism directly influences their performance in a positive and significant manner (Elijah & Athumani, 2020). This means that any improvements on the FP City employees' professionalism will improve their performance. Gesuka and Namusonge (2013) indicated that performance in most public entities has been poor due to inadequate and/or incompetent procurement staff performance. As a consequence, the established procurement regulations, rules and procedures are not consistently applied. Procurement staff and all those involved in the procurement process therefore, are required to be familiar with the procurement rules and regulations (CIPS, 2014). On the other hand, lack of professionalism leads to corruption which ultimately impedes compliance of procurement rules and regulations in procuring entities and adversely affects performance (Eyaa & Oluka, 2011).

It is urged that the procuring entity should be staffed with procurement professionals, trained and recognized by the respective procurement professional body (Basheka, 2021). The PPDA Integrity survey report (2015) acknowledges that professionalizing public procurement is the

solution to most of the challenges that public procurement faces. The report recommended that specialized skills in criminal investigation, auditing, accounting and value for money procedures as critical prerequisites be taught. Professionalization involves sharpening the skills of the targeted officials in their line of work; and instilling high ethical standards in all people handling public procurement (Kalinzi, 2014).

#### **2.2.4 Staff Competence**

According to Salman, Ganie and Saleem (2020) Staff competence refers to ‘a cluster of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affect a major part of one’s job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards and that can be improved via training and development’(Stritch et al., 2020). The scholar also highlights that staff competencies may also be defined as the personality attributes or characteristics such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, motives and self-concept demonstrated by employees that result in effective and superior performance(Kajimbwa, 2018). Along the same lines, it is therefore imperative to note that staff competences are found in the knowledge, skills and abilities of employees. Otoo and Mishra (2018) assert that staff competencies such as self-competence, team competence, communicative competence, change competence and ethical competence have been found positively related to procurement performance.

According to Mbae (2014) the impact of Staff competence on procurement performance can be evaluated through education level, procurement knowledge specialization, professional experience and skills. The scholar further highlighted that it is of little wonder that the productivity of staff regarding procurement performance is based on the level of education qualification. In support to the aforesaid notion, Muange (2013) posited that the increment in

staff motivation and standard performance is a result of having educated and qualified procurement staff.

### **2.2.5 Staff Integrity**

Rahim et al. (2020) posit that staff Integrity can be defined as a philosophy of consistency of actions, values, methods, organizational principle, expectations, and results. The scholars add that Integrity is not something staff are born with but rather something they learn and strengthen over time. According to Becker (1998) staff are said to have high integrity if they tend to be more rational, honest, and independent as compared to those with less integrity. The scholar added that staff with integrity often interact with people who want to work with them, invest in, purchase from or partner with companies they know would be available to them and treat them equally.

Additionally, Staff Integrity is a leadership trait characterized by morality and ethics (Vogelgesang et al., 2013). The scholars further acknowledge that staff integrity connotes to the appropriate behaviors of organizational members such as, being honest, faithful and caring towards the attainment of organizational procurement goals. Parry and Proctor (2002) highlighted that Staff integrity is not only desirable but also essential for the long-term survival of the organization because it will have long-term positive consequences such as positive organizational culture, reduced levels of staff turnover and improved performance. Engelbrecht et al. (2017) assert that Integrity among staff is observed through ethical language of decision-making, structural support and procedures to facilitate the decision-making process, creating an open culture, responsibility and commitment to multiple business goals and attention to employees' development.

### **2.2.6 Staff Accountability**

According to Bovens (2007) and O'Dwyer and Unerman (2007) Staff accountability refers to the relationship based on commitments of staff to demonstrate, review, and take responsibility for performance, both the results achieved in light of agreed expectations and the means used. It is not just a formal other but it includes moral, rights and obligations. Rutkowski & Steelman (2005) define accountability as compliant and meeting personal responsibilities, feeling obligated to another individual and having to justify an action to others. Normally when leaders are accountable for the feedback, they will feel obligated to use it to improve performance (Allen & Dennis, 2010; McCall, 2012). In due regard, Staff Accountability is always related to good governance which implies that staff in public organizations ought to conduct public matters, manage public funds and guarantee the realization of human rights in a way fundamentally free from abuse and corruption, as well as obeying the rule of law (United Nation Human Rights, 2012).

### **2.4 Staff competence and performance of procurement function**

According to a study conducted in Tanzania on the influence of staff competency on performance of Procurement Management Unit in public sectors by Eliah and Athumani (2020) the study used a case study design whereby a sample of 76 respondents were drawn by using Slovin's formula from the population of 120 employees. The study assessed the experienced personnel, competent personnel and training of procurement staff on performance of procurement function at Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) head office in Dar es Salaam. Primary and secondary data were collected by using questionnaire, interview and documentary review. The findings revealed that, 97.20% of the respondents agreed that procurement performance influenced by experienced and skilled procurement personnel, but 2.80% of the respondents disagreed. Likewise, 83.40% of the respondents agreed that VETA employs competent and

qualified procurement staff but, 16.6% of the respondents were neutral. On other hand, 97.20% of the respondents agreed that training of employees improves level of competency but, 2.80% disagreed. The study concluded that experience, competency and training of procurement staff had a significant effect on performance of procurement function at VETA.

A study conducted by Mola and Alemu (2018) on the effect of staff competency on procurement efficiency among Ethiopian public universities. It was undertaken with a specific objective directed at examining the effect of staff competencies such as skills and knowledge, experience and training on procurement efficiency. The study followed a descriptive research approach. The Survey study using questionnaire was used to collect data from 42 procurement staffs; in selected Ethiopian public universities. To test the hypothesis multiple linear regression model was used. Accordingly, the data analyzed from questionnaires revealed that Employee Competency had a strong impact on the procurement efficiency in Ethiopian public universities that were studied. The study concluded that staff competence was necessary if public universities were to attain procurement efficiency.

Affandi (2002) as cited in Kadarisman (2011) conducted a study on the effect of the four identified characteristics that define professionalism amongst the procurement staff. The study notes that staff competence which is termed as the mastery of knowledge in a particular field and the diligence to keep up with the developments in the field is very vital for the execution of procurement function in organizations. Similarly, Obanda (2010) also established that staff competence is one of the pre-requisite for one to perform effectively the designated duties in the procurement cycle.

In addition, Pamungkas (1996) as cited in Flynn et al. (2020) emphasized that among the three elements inherent in professionalism, staff competence is very fundamental. This is because

performance of the procurement function heavily depends on individual's expertise or skills on procurement and ability to adapt to the current changes in science and technology necessary for the procurement. In the same vein, Ma'arif (2001) also proposes that the major characteristic of a professional procurement worker is competence.

According to the following website: [www.wisegeek.com](http://www.wisegeek.com), a procurement professional is responsible for the purchasing activity of a business or organization, and for one to become professional, candidates must have a combination of education and work experience in procurement. Staff competence is therefore considered an important element of professionalism which is the required general ability to support the performance in certain offices or jobs, including essential behaviors that become the main requirement for a satisfactory performance in an office or job (Kusmana, 1989; Lippman & McMahon, 2017).

Wibowo (2019) state that competence is a set of abilities containing individual knowledge, attitude, and skills in carrying out one's tasks. In their study that sought to examine the effect of competence on performance of an employee, they established that competence plays a pivotal role in driving employee performance. Kwasira (2017) similarly says that competence consists of knowledge, skills, and expertise that increase an individual's aptitude in dealing with various tasks and as a result, it is very important that organizations raise their effort towards enhancing employee's competence.

According to Wibowo (2019), it was established that staff competence is part of an individual's deep-rooted and stable personality, measurable from their behavior at the workplace or in various situations. Suprpto (2003) further adds that competence is a worker's ability and characteristics, which encompass knowledge, skills, and behaviors appropriate to the office

held. They point out that staff competence is a necessary dimension professionalism that has a direct effect on the performance of organization's functions.

Siswanto (2003) similarly says that competence is the human capacity manifested in their creations, knowledge, skills, behavior, attitude, motives, and/or talent. According to Steinfeld et al. (2017), there are five characteristics of competence: 1) motive, 2) nature, 3) individual perception, 4) knowledge and ability, and 5) skills, or the capacity to undertake certain mental or physical tasks.

## **2.5 Staff integrity and performance of procurement function**

According to Mwiseje & Changelima, (2020) a professional is characterized by having integrity, a Code of Conduct and Ethics, a body of knowledge and research activities. Public procurement may require professionals as defined by the professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) Uganda chapter. Tasi and Syamsir (2020) assert that the efforts to improve organization and employee performance in public organizations require professionals with integrity and loyalty. In their study that sought to examine the influence of staff integrity and loyalty on employee performance, they established that staff integrity has a direct effect on employee performance.

Nefriyeni, Sodikin and Guswandi (2018) further conducted a survey on the effect of career development and integrity on organization performance among banks in Indonesia. They used path analysis and sampled 80 employees of the bank for the study. It was therefore established that integrity had a significant effect on employee performance. Similarly, Gea (2016) noted that integrity has become a growing concern especially in purchasing organizations. Organizations have been called upon to encourage professionalism and considerable effort

should be put forward to ensure the procurement function is conducted by individuals with high level of integrity.

Rahim, Omar and Kamaruddin (2020) in their survey that sought to establish the relationship between integrity and employee job performance in Malaysian noted that corruption scandals in government institutions may be curbed through emphasizing professionalism amongst procurement staff. Integrity was found to be one of the dimensions of professionalism that helps to prevent any unwanted problems in public sector. This is because integrity enables individuals to develop consensus and keep the organization in the right track.

## **2.6 Staff accountability and performance of procurement function**

According to Kalinzi (2014), professionalism in public procurement calls for accountability, transparency, functionality and significant savings in public expenditure. This partly explains why organizations should give due attention to promoting professionalism by considering improving on staff accountability, integrity, and competence. These are part of the number of indicators that clearly guide the path to professionalism. It is therefore important that all the stakeholders involved in the procurement system fully understands and coordinates work easily.

Nani & Ali, (2020)) one can be said to be a professional when he has at least the following matters: (i) accountable for all his or her actions (ii) compliance of attitude and behavior with the principles and standardization of profession or work (2) Basic knowledge and technical capabilities in according to the demands, problems and challenges of the job, and have supporting knowledge such as administration and management, leadership, social communication, law, economics, and computerization. From the above formulation of the definition of professions, the author concluded staff accountability is one of the most important

elements of professionalism that support the organizations achieve the desired performance with staff due care, diligence and skepticism.

Obanda (2010) notes that performance of procurement function largely depends on the professionalism of staff in the procurement functions who are required to portray a great sense of accountability to the nation, the public, family, and their own self during the performance of the procurement function. It is also important that they have the ability to put the knowledge into practice, especially for the benefit of others, faithfully implementing scientific ethics and putting them in high esteem.

Similarly, Suharyono (2019) conducted a study on the effect of staff accountability, transparency and supervision on budget performance among government employees in Riau Province who were selected using purposive sampling, the findings indicated that accountability had a direct positive and significant effect on budget performance in Public Sector. It is therefore important to note that staff professionals should provide accountability for their authority. In the same vein, Kelly (2018) also conducted a study to investigate the effect of accountability on employee performance in Bambuiy Engineering Services & Techniques. It was also established that accountability has a direct additive effect on employee performance.

From the above observations, one may therefore note that accountability is one of the professionalism dimensions that is highly required to improve performance of the procurement function in the public organizations. In the setting like Uganda where corruption, clientelism, and capture have become the order of the day, there is a need for professionals to be recruited to fill the procurement positions and the major areas of focus should be individuals with high level of competence, integrity and accountability.

## **2.7 Conclusion and gap**

Stemming from the above reviews and analysis, it is apparent that adherence to Procurement Professionalism significantly contributes to the performance of procurement function in the public entities. The straightforward implication has been that the government and procuring entities focused on procurement professionalism through professional training, certification and establishment of professional organization bodies in order to enhance performance of the respective entities and the overall economic development of their countries. Therefore, most studies recommend that the employment of professionally trained and qualified procurement staff should be emphasized and implemented. However, for the studies conducted in Uganda such as a study conducted by Kalubanga et al. (2013) on the Effects of Fraudulent Procurement Practices on Public Procurement Performance, a study by Yekosofati (2019) which studied the effects of E-Procurement on Procurement Performance, a study by Ahimbishibwe, and Muhwezi (2015) which looked at contract management, inter functional coordination, trust and contract performance in Uganda, and others were more interested in the critical success factors of contract management, public procurement reforms and procurement planning while those studies such as one conducted by Kalinzi (2014) on the level of professionalism in public procurement in selected districts in Uganda did not attempt to study procurement professionalism but only looked at it from the lens of level of education and qualification leaving out the critical aspect of professional approach and practice. All the aforesaid studies were not in line with the variables and the context considered in this current study hence the desire to study professionalism holistically, compliance and their impact on procurement function performance in order to close this gap.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section of the study presents the research methodology in relation to the research design, area of study and the characteristic of the population or the research methods applied in this study. It also outlines the methods that were used in collecting and analyzing the data as well as the research procedure, data quality control, it covers the research design, study population, sample population, size, sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, reliability and validity, ethical considerations, and the limitations during the process of data collection.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The researcher adopted a case study research design, which, according to Kothari (2004), effectively represents the characteristics of a population by selecting a sample that minimizes bias. This design is particularly beneficial as it accommodates a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. To collect comprehensive data, the researcher employed a combination of quantitative tools, specifically a structured questionnaire, and qualitative tools, such as an interview guide. This dual approach allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the research problem, offering broader insights into the overall issue.

O’Cathain, Murphy, and Nicholl (2010) emphasize that mixed-method strategies add significant value through integration, which enhances the credibility of the findings and conclusions drawn from the study. The chosen design was appropriate for exploring the relationships among the various factors under investigation, enabling the researcher to describe how these factors interact and influence the subject matter.

### 3.3 Study Population

The target population of this study involved the employees of deferent departments in Fort Portal City in the five divisions that form the administrative arm of the city, namely: Central division, Eastern division, Western division, Northern division and South division, the Local Council members / the political arm and the suppliers/contractors that transact business with FP City through the procurement system. This presented a total of 198 as presented in table 3.1 below.

### 3.4 Sample size

A sample size of 196 respondents were selected using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table. The sample included 11 Administrative Officers, I Mayor, 17 Finance and Audit Officers, 24 Education Officers, 5 Health Officers, 13 Production Officers, 14 Works Engineers, 10 Procurement & Contract Committee officers, 10 Division Representatives, 10 Counselors, 25 Suppliers, and 20 Support & operations officers. These are portrayed in table 3.1 below;

**Table 3.1: Target population and sample by departments/units**

No.	Unit/Section	Target pop.	Sample size	Sampling technique
1.	Mayor	1	1	Purposive
2.	Administrative Officers	11	11	Purposive
3.	Finance/Audit Officers	18	17	Purposive
4.	Education Officers	24	23	Purposive
5.	Health Officers	8	8	Purposive
6.	Production Officers	13	13	Purposive
7.	Works Engineers	15	14	Simple random
8.	Procurement & Contract Comm officers	10	10	Purposive
9.	Divisions Representatives	12	12	Stratified
10.	Counselors	26	25	Simple random
11.	Suppliers	25	24	Simple random
12.	Support & operations officers	20	19	Simple random
	<b>Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>177</b>	

\*\* *involves units of HRM, Natural Resources, Records, Trade & Commerce*

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

The study adopted a case study and simple random sampling techniques. Simple random sampling techniques involves giving all respondents an equal chance of being selected to represent the study (Saunders & Bezzina, 2015). In this case, 11 Administrative Officers, 17 Finance and Audit Officers, 24 Education Officers, 5 Health Officers, 13 Production Officers, 14 Works Engineers, 10 Division Representatives, 10 Counselors, 25 Suppliers, and 20 Support & operations officers were all selected simple randomly. As per purposive sampling, the Mayor, and the procurement and Contracts Committee Officers were selected because they were well informed about the study variables in question. This is supported by Bryman (2018) who highlighted that purposive sampling involves selection of only those participants who are well informed and meet a particular criterion.

### **3.6 Sources of Data**

The study was based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from the staffs of the municipal and Division, counsellors and suppliers and contractors in Fort Portal municipal through the use of structured questionnaires supplemented by interviews in collecting data on effects of professionalism on compliance and procurement function performance in FP City. On the other hand, secondary data was collected from both internal and external sources. From internal organizational sources, unpublished literature in form of annual, monthly and weekly FP City reports on procurement reports, financial reports were accessed, and externally, the journals, textbooks, and students' theses as well as the Internet and web were part of the literature for the current study.

### **3.7 Data collection Methods**

#### **3.7.1 Survey Method**

The study mainly used the questionnaire tool to collect data. The use of a questionnaire in this study was important mainly because the purpose of the study was to examine the effects of professionalism on compliance and procurement function performance in FP City. Such data can best be tapped on a closed ended questionnaire which allows for easy correlation and regression of the respondents' attitudinal disposition on the independent and dependent variables as suggested by (Amin, 2005). Secondly, the use of a questionnaire allowed busy respondents to fill it at their convenient time. It also allowed respondents express their views and opinions without fear of being victimized (Wasis, Oso & Onen, 2008). Besides, three (3) research assistants were engaged in distributing and collecting the questionnaires so as to speed up the process of data collection.

#### **3.7.2 Interview Method**

The study also used the interview method basically to supplement the questionnaires. Interviews in this study helped the researcher to obtain more information on the topic under investigation. This method was used because it offered the researcher an opportunity to adapt questions, clarify the questions by using the appropriate language, clear doubts and establish rapport and probe for more information (Sekaran & Bougie ,2003). 15 respondents were selected for interviews. These included the Mayor (1), 4 Procurement and Contract Committee officers, 4 Counselors, 4 Suppliers, and 2 Administrative officers. These were selected because they were regarded key informants on the topic under investigation.

### **3.8 Data Collection Instruments**

The instruments that were used in this study included; questionnaire, interview guide and document review checklist.

### **3.8.1 Self-Administered Questionnaire**

The study employed a questionnaire as a tool of data collection. The questionnaire for respondents had three sections. Section 'A' dealt with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, section 'B' focused on the concepts of Professionalism, and section 'C' tackled the assessment of procurement performance in FP City. The questionnaires had close-ended questions. Closed ended questions are developed to help respondents make quick decisions; in addition, they aided the researcher to code the information easily for subsequent analysis and narrowed down the error gap while analyzing data as observed by Sekaran & Bougie (2003).

### **3.8.2 Interview Guide**

An unstructured interview guide was also used as a tool for collecting in depth information from the key informants. The guide had a list of typical issues and questions which were explored in the course of conducting the interviews. The guide was drawn with the questions soliciting for the perception of the key informants regarding the examination of professionalism and procurement function performance in FP City. The interview guide was also preferred because it provided in-depth data which may not have been possible to obtain when using self-administered questionnaire alone (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

## **3.9 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments**

### **3.9.1 Validity**

To ensure validity, the content validity index was computed using the formula; number of items declared valid/number of items in the questionnaire. Through measuring content validity indices, experts were asked to rate each item on the questionnaire regarding the Relevancy (R) or Irrelevancy (IR) of research items. The computations of Content Validity Index (CVI) were above 0.7 threshold as illustrated in the computations below:

**Table 3.2: Content Validity**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Total number of items</b>	<b>Number of items rated as relevant</b>	<b>CVI</b>
<b>Staff Competence</b>	5	4	(4/5) = <b>0.800</b>
<b>Staff Integrity</b>	5	4	(4/5) = <b>0.800</b>
<b>Staff Accountability</b>	4	3	(3/4) = <b>0.750</b>
<b>Performance of Procurement Function</b>	5	4	(4/5) = <b>0.800</b>

The items used represented the study material and were pertinent to the phenomenon under investigation because the CVI was higher than 0.700. this is supported by Amin (2005) who acknowledged that a CVI above 0.7 is regarded relevant to the problem under investigation.

### **3.9.2 Reliability**

Reliability is broadly defined as the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore, yield consistent results (Zikmund, 2003). Reliability is computed through different methods like test-retest reliability, internal consistency reliability and equivalent forms reliability. In this study, questionnaire reliability was checked by using internal consistency method to measure the correlation between each item in the questionnaire and others. Pre-testing of the instrument was done by administering the questionnaires to 10% of the total sample size. Cronbach alpha was used to calculate for all statements in the questionnaire because the Likert scale questionnaires use Cronbach alpha method (Nunnally, 1978). The results were used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire as a research tool. According to Cooper & Schindler (2008) reliability coefficient refers to the scores obtained on a test. A reliability coefficient is a numerical value that can range from zero to one. For research purposes, tests with a reliability score of 0.7 and above is accepted as reliable, whilst for clinical decision making, test scores of between 0.8 and 0.9 are acceptable. It is because stated that reliability

coefficient of zero indicates that the test scores are unreliable but a higher value indicates more reliability or accuracy of the test scores.

A pre-test was administered on 13 of the respondents who didn't form part of the main study. Data was coded and entered into the computer. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient was generated using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) computer program to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire as presented in table 3.2 below.

The overall reliability statistics ( $\alpha = .760$ ), which was above 0.7 suggests that the instrument used in this study was reliable and adequate for generalization.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, informing conclusions, and supporting decision-making.(Coakes & Steed, 2009).

#### **3.10.1 Analysis of quantitative Data**

The statistical package that was used for analysis of data in this study was the SPSS version 23. Different statistical analyses used were correlation and regression analysis. The upper level of statistical significance for hypothesis testing is at 5%. All statistical test results were computed at 2-tailed level of significance. The descriptive statistics used in this study to analyze the demographic data of respondents included frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations representing the respondents' opinions on the effects of professionalism and procurement function performance in FP City. Data was then analyzed and correlated using Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient to establish the relationship between professionalism and procurement performance in FP City as suggested by Sekaran (2003); (Amin, 2005) and (Oso, W. & Onen, 2008).

### **3.10.2 Analysis of qualitative data**

Qualitative data collected from interviews were edited for completeness, and summarized to obtain meaningful opinions from participants about leading themes. Content analysis was the main method of analyzing data collected from interviews. This was useful in determining the adequacy of information, credibility, usefulness and consistency (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Dominant emerging opinions were considered as key points, and themes, and a basis to describe the study objectives and responses to each research question asked in interview guide. Narrative analysis was done by reporting verbatim respondents' statements (Creswell, 2018). These were directly quoted or paraphrased in study findings.

### **3.11 Measurement of variables**

The study variables were measured as adopted from the already existing studies. Professionalism was measured based on Staff competence, staff integrity and staff accountability. While on the other hand, procurement function performance was based on quality of goods, timeliness and value for money and these were rated using the Likert 5-point scale. The study preferred this scale because the 5-point scale offers a more nuanced range of responses. It includes two positive, two negative, and one neutral option, allowing respondents to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement. This can lead to more accurate and meaningful data compared to a 3-point scale, which may oversimplify responses.

Data on the respondent's views and opinions about professionalism and procurement performance in FP City was obtained using scaled variables from a self-administered questionnaire. A five Point-Likert scale of 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree was used to tap respondents' perception on the study variables. A Likert Scale was used to measure the respondent's level of agreement or disagreement on the subject matter (Likert, 1932).

### **3.12 Ethical considerations**

Finally, the researcher observed ethical issues in research like the principle of confidentiality, anonymity, consent and acknowledgement of other people's input into this study because it is important to respect the rights and dignity of the respondents (Khin, 2017). This study ensured confidentiality of respondents and the information obtained was strictly used for the intended research purpose as the instrument used in the study had no space for name or telephone number as a way of increasing confidentiality and increasing the confidence of participants to engage in the study. Further, the researcher ensured that permission was sought from the FP City, and participation in this current study was voluntary and whoever accepted to do so was provided with the instrument in private.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the findings on the response rate, background characteristics, descriptive statistics on the study variables, and findings on inferential statistics. The findings are presented in the subsequent sections below.

#### 4.2 Response rate

The response rate is the percentage of respondents in the sample who completed and returned questionnaires. It measures the level of success or quality achieved in collecting survey data (Westat, 2007). In other words, response rate is a ratio of the number of people who respond to a study to the estimated sample size for the study. The response rate in this study was summarized in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Response rate**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Target response</b>	<b>Actual response</b>	<b>Response rate (%)</b>
Questionnaire	177	125	70.6%
Interview Guide	20	15	75.0%
Total	197	140	71.1%

*Source: Primary data (2020)*

According to Table 4.1 above, 177 participants were administered with questionnaires but only 125 filled and returned them making a response rate of 70.6%. Results in Table 4 also show that out of the 20 participants that were scheduled for interview, only 15 were interviewed making a response rate of 75.0%. Finally, since a total of 140 out of the targeted (197 respondents) participated in the study, the overall response rate was 71.1%. This response rate

was regarded good enough for the study since it was above the 70% recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013).

### 4.3 Findings on the background characteristics of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents were crucial in this study since they indicated the distribution of respondents by gender, age, level of education, and the period respondents have worked with FP City. The findings are clearly presented in the subsequent sections below.

#### 4.3.1 Gender distribution of respondents in the study

The gender distribution of respondents was crucial in this study as it showed that both males and females were represented. The findings are shown in table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2: Gender distribution of respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	62	49.6
Female	63	50.4
Total	125	100.0

*Source: Primary data (2020)*

The participants in the study were told to indicate their gender status as indicated in table 4.2. The findings show that out of 125 respondents who participated in the study, 63 (50.4%) were females and they represented the majority of respondents in the study while 62 (49.6%) were males. The findings imply that there was equal representation of the views from both male and females in the survey.

### 4.3.2 Age distribution of respondents in the study

The age of respondents which was investigated in the study ranged from 18 years to 59 years. The age of respondents was integral since it showed how the knowledge on the study subjects was distributed basing on the age. The findings are indicated in table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Age distribution of respondents**

Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	9	7.2
26-33	38	30.4
34-41	33	26.4
42-49	31	24.8
50-59	14	11.2
Total	125	100.0

*Source: Primary data (2020)*

The findings show that out of the total number of respondents who participated in the study, 38 (30.4%) respondents were aged between 26 and 33 years and this represented the majority of the respondents, 33 (26.4%) respondents followed, and the minimum proportion of respondents (7.2%) were aged between 18 and 25 years. The findings show that Fort Portal City is composed majorly of the youth and these were instrumental in providing accurate information concerning how professionalism affect compliance and procurement function performance.

### 4.3.3 Education level of respondents in the study

The education level of respondents was important since it showed the extent to which the respondents were educated. Similarly, the education level showed the extent of understanding of the study subjects by the respondents. The results are summarized in table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Education level of respondents in the study**

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Post graduate	17	13.6
Graduate	71	56.8
Diploma	34	27.2
Certificate	3	2.4
Total	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Primary data (2020)*

The findings in table 4.4 show that out of the total number of respondents who were involved in the study, 71 (56.8%) were graduates and represented the majority of respondents, followed by diploma holders who constituted 27.2% of the respondents, and 3 (2.4%) respondents were holding certificates and represented the minority of respondents. The findings imply that majority of the respondents were more knowledgeable on the study subjects since they had acquired sufficient education and therefore in a position to give objective assessment of the variables of the study.

#### **4.3.4 Length of the period the respondent worked with FP City either as an employee or councilor or supplier/contractor**

The respondents were asked during the study to indicate the length of time they had worked with FP City either as an employee or councilor or supplier/contractor. The findings are highlighted in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: The length of time the respondent worked with FP City**

Length of service	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	12	9.6
1-5 years	67	53.6
6-10 years	39	31.2
11 years & above	7	5.6
Total	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Primary data (2020)*

The results from table 4.5 show that majority of the respondents (53.6%) had worked with FP City for a period between 1 and 5 years, followed by 31.2% of the respondents who had worked for a period between 6 and 10 years while the least proportion of respondents (5.6%) had worked for 11 years and above. The implication of the findings is that most of the respondents had been with FP City long enough to have substantial knowledge on the effect of professionalism on compliance and procurement function performance.

#### **4.4 Understanding level of the concept of procurement professionalism**

The respondents were asked during the study to indicate how they understand the concept of procurement professionalism. The findings are presented in table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Extent of understanding the concept of procurement professionalism**

	Frequency	Percentage
Very well	16	12.8
Well	64	51.2
Fairly	32	25.6
Poorly	11	8.8
V/poorly	2	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>
No extent	3	2.4
Less extent	20	16.0
Moderate extent	48	38.4
Great extent	25	20.0
Very great extent	29	23.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary data (2020)**

The findings in table 4.6 show that 64 (51.2%) respondents understood well the concept of procurement professionalism and represented the majority of respondents in the study, 32 (25.6%) who understood it fairly followed, and the least proportion of respondents (1.6%) perceived it very poorly. The shows that respondents perceived well the concept of procurement professionalism hence in a position to offer an objective assessment procurement professionalism and compliance and procurement performance at FP City.

#### **4.5 Extent respondents act in a professional manner at FP City**

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they act in a professional manner at FP City and the results are summarized in table 4.7.

The findings reveal that 48 (38.4%) respondents who represented the majority said that they act in a professional manner to a moderate extent, followed by 29 (23.2%) respondents who were acting in a professional manner to a very great extent, and the minimum proportion of respondents had no extent of acting in a professional manner. In one of the focus groups with suppliers, it was revealed that:

*“The procurement staff is not a problem at the FP City here, the problem are the technical staff especially the Engineering Department, who move around soliciting money from the interested contractors and end up dictating terms and conditions during the procurement process”*

This indicates that most of the staff at FP City act in a professional manner to a moderate extent.

#### **4.6 Current status of procurement professionalism in Fort Portal City**

The study thought to establish the current status of procurement professionalism in FP City. The statements were ranked on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Each statement with a mean above 3 indicates agreement by respondents and a statement with a mean below 3 indicates disagreement by the respondent. The descriptive findings on the current status of procurement professionalism in FP City are summarized in table 4.8.

**Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics on the current status of procurement professionalism in FP City**

	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
	<b>Staff competence</b>		
C1	Procurement staff in FP City have the technical competence to perform tasks effectively	4.26	.753
C2	An effective procurement system requires that the procuring entity is staffed with competent professionals	4.27	.787
C3	FP City is staffed with staffs who are trained and recognized by the respective procurement professional body	3.90	.923
C4	Staff competence in procurement contribute to towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies & rules	4.30	.764
C5	Staff competence in public procurement allows for functionality, transparency and significant savings in public expenditure	3.99	.988
	<b>Staff integrity</b>		
I1	FP City is staffed with employees with professional integrity which enables them to perform tasks effectively	4.10	.807
I2	An effective procurement system requires that the procuring entity has staff with integrity	4.23	.686
I3	FP City has code of conduct for all procurement professionals which requires them to have integrity	4.18	.652
I4	Staff integrity contributes to towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies & rules	4.55	.531
I5	Staff integrity in public procurement allows for functionality, transparency and significant savings in public expenditure	4.35	.586
	<b>Staff accountability</b>		
A1	Procurement staff in FP City are often required to provide timely accountability	2.74	1.071

A2	An effective procurement system requires that all the procurement staff be accountable for their authority	2.75	1.105
A3	Staff accountability in procurement contributes towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies & rules	2.94	1.113
A4	Staff accountability in public procurement ensures transparency in public expenditure	3.56	1.058

**Source: Primary data (2020)**

Table 4.8 presents a summary of descriptive statistics on statements on the current status of procurement professionalism in FP City. The findings on the first statement present a mean score of 4.26 and SD of 0.753 which is above the threshold of 3 which indicates that respondents were in a strong agreement that Procurement staff in FP City have the technical competence to perform tasks effectively. This finding compares with one by Appelbaum & Lawton, 1990 as cited in Kalinzi (2014) that procurement is a new and interesting professional discipline which requires staff to be technically competent to carry out the task. This during the interviews was echoed by respondent that

*“Yes procurement is a professional discipline which requires competent staff to perform otherwise not everyone can do it”*

The majority of the respondents agreed that an effective procurement system requires that the procuring entity is staffed with competent professionals (mean=4.27, Std. Dev=0.787). The findings showed that most of the respondents in the study supported the argument that FP City is staffed with staffs who are trained and recognized by the respective procurement professional body (mean=3.90, Std. Dev=0.923). This is in line with what Lyson and Farrington (2012) stated that procurement is skilled based on theoretical knowledge, prolonged training and education, competence based on tests and examinations and adherence of professional code of

ethics. In view of this, the Procurement Officer during the interviews stressed that *“Today to work as a procurement professional in most organizations, you must be a member of procurement professional bodies for example in Uganda have the Institute of Procurement Professionals of Uganda (IPPU) or a member of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) or Kenyan Institute of Supply Management (KISM) in Kenya”*

*Another respondent said: “ Even being a member in these professional bodies requires support from the employers in terms of financial support for membership fees and training which those procurement officers may not have. I think if these young women are supported, they can do better”* The study found that the bigger proportion of the respondents agreed with the statement that staff competence in procurement contribute to towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies and rules (mean=4.30, Std. Dev=0.764). The respondents agreed that staff competence in public procurement allows for functionality, transparency and significant savings in public expenditure (mean=3.99, Std. Dev=0.988).

In regards to staff integrity, the findings indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that FP City is staffed with employees with professional integrity which enables them to perform tasks effectively (mean =4.10 and SD =0.807). It was also revealed that an effective procurement system requires that the procuring entity has staff with integrity (Mean =4.23 and SD=0.686). Furthermore, the findings showed that majority of the respondents agreed that FP City has code of conduct for all procurement professionals which requires them to have integrity (Mean=4.18 and SD=0.652). Furthermore, the findings also showed that the respondents agreed to the fact that staff integrity contributes towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies & rules (Mean =4.55 and SD =.531). Lastly, the findings also showed that respondents agreed that staff

integrity in public procurement allows for functionality, transparency and significant savings in public expenditure (Mean =4.35 and SD =.586). *“ You know when people are well learned, In most cases they tend to do better than those that have not gone far in books and somehow they intend to follow their professional values and protect their integrity unless someone is a thief naturally”* this was revealed in a focus group at the central Division offices.

In regards to staff accountability, respondents disagreed that procurement staff in FP City are often required to provide timely accountability (Mean =2.74 and SD =1.071). In addition, it was also revealed that respondents disagreed with the statement that procurement system of FP City requires that all the procurement staff provide monthly accountabilities (Mean=2.75 and SD =1.105). Similarly, respondents disagreed to whether staff accountability in procurement contributes towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies & rules (Mean =2.94 and SD=1.113). However, respondents agreed that staff accountability in public procurement ensures transparency in public expenditure (Mean =3.56 and SD=1.058). It was revealed in one of the focus groups with the suppliers that:

*“Accountability is very important in the procurement function and there should be seriously penalties for these procurement officers who fail to make accountability. But in Uganda, this is not the case. People Steal Government’s money and go free after being arrested for days. So people don’t fear these days”*

#### **4.7 Performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City**

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on the statements on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City. The responses were ranked on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Each item with a

mean score above 3 indicates agreement by respondents and a statement with a mean score below 3 indicates disagreement by the respondent. The findings are summarized in table 4.9.

**Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics on performance of procurement function in FP City**

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
FP City always procures quality goods, services & works because of its staffs acting professionally	4.47	.617
There has been no value for money at FP City due to the application of unsound procurement practices	4.29	.728
FP City normally registers less bidders' complaints because of being compliant with all the procurement rules and regulations	4.01	.902
There are many cases of procurement malpractice at FP City because of unprofessional conduct of FP City staffs	4.22	.702
Ineffective public procurement practices at FP City may result in corruption tendencies	3.64	1.027
If staffs are not professionally trained and lack awareness about all regulations to procurement and related procedures, then serious consequences like breaches of codes of conduct may occur leading to declined organizational performance	3.24	.995

*Source: Primary data (2020)*

Table 4.8 presents the descriptive statistics on performance of procurement function in FP City.

The findings from the study indicate that most of the survey participants agreed that FP City always procures quality goods, services & works because of its staffs acting professionally (mean=4.47, Std. Dev=0.617). The outcomes from the survey indicate that there has been no value for money at FP City due to the application of unsound procurement practices as supported by most of the respondents (mean=4.29, Std. Dev=0.728). This reflects what Ntayi et al (2013) mentioned that although public procurement in Uganda is highly regulated by the PPDA Act of 2003, it is experiencing the highest number of corruption cases and the profession continues to suffer from high level incidence of immoral conduct (Ntayi et al. 2013; Musekura, 2020; Wesaka, 2019; Lubowa, & Bagala, 2020; Ssejjoba, 2020; Musaaazi, 2018; Kasozi, 2020). On this, one supplier interviewed had this to say *“today to get on contract on a mere basis of fulfilling the technical and financial requirements (on merit), you are just dreaming-you must and I say you must appease the technocrats and even the politicians of FP City-this is the norm*

*in FP.* Also, the bigger proportion of the respondents agreed that FP City normally registers less bidders' complaints because of being compliant with all the procurement rules and regulations (mean=4.01, Std. Dev=0.902).

The study revealed that there are many cases of procurement malpractice at FP City because of unprofessional conduct of FP City staffs since majority of the respondents agreed with the argument (mean=4.22, Std. Dev=0.702). The study established that the ineffective public procurement practices at FP City results in corruption tendencies as supported by majority of the respondents (mean=3.64, Std. Dev=1.027). The study also revealed that a bigger percentage of respondents agreed that If staffs are not professionally trained and lack awareness about all regulations to procurement and related procedures, then serious consequences like breaches of codes of conduct may occur leading to declined organizational performance (mean=3.24, Std. Dev=0.995). These results perfectly echo the views of many who remarked that regardless of all the awareness in form of training, recruitment and research in the field, the sector is continuing to exhibit unethical behaviors and outright corruption in Uganda, as reported in various local newspapers repetitively (Musekura, 2020; Wesaka, 2019; Lubowa, & Bagala, 2020; Ssejjoba, 2020; Musaaazi, 2018; Kasozi, 2020). In one the focus groups with the contractors and suppliers: It was revealed that *“there is a lot of corruption and conspiracy caused by conflict of interest, we are aware that some contractors and suppliers who regularly get contracts here due to their connections with the Accounting Officer or his staff somewhere. We know those companies that are owned by the Staff here in Fort Portal city and still get contracts. But we have nothing to do, the moment they get to know you that you have reported them, you never get anything from here.*

*These people are very greedy, they want to eat anything and everything. That is why FP will never develop, there is a lot of dirty going on”*

Interestingly, the providers who collude with the FP City officials to favour them win contracts argue that they are mere victims of the vice rather than perpetrators. According to them, as long as the officials are not fully transparent, and given the stiff competition; corruption will persist. The respondents observed, for example, that while strict regulations may make corruption high risky, may also in the long run reduce corruption, they were not sure whether corruption can ever be curbed out. As there are many ways through which corrupt service providers and corrupt officials; can communicate. They were also of the view that complicating the process may even invite more corruption as the unscrupulous officials can take

Advantage of limited knowledge of some providers. In their own opinion, interventions to curb corruption should primarily target FP City officials to observe their work ethics and professional integrity.

This study was in agreement with this view: people managing public procurement must conduct themselves professionally. One way is by demanding that they all subscribe to (enrol with) the newly created professional body of procurement professionals (the Institute of Procurement Professionals in Uganda (IPPU)). Professional bodies have been effective in instilling professional ethics in their membership.

#### **4.8 Effect of staff competence on performance of procurement function in FP City**

The study conducted a regression analysis to establish whether staff competence significantly affects the performance of procurement function in FP City. The findings are presented using a simple linear regression model as indicated in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.9: Regression findings on the effect of staff competence on performance of procurement function in FP City**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.569 <sup>a</sup>	.324	.319	.46733

a. Predictors: (Constant), Staff competence

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.820	.284		6.407	.000
	Staff competence	.520	.068	.569	7.679	.000

a. Dependent Variable: performance of procurement function

The regression results in table 4.9 show that the model is a good fit for the data ( $F = 58.966$  and  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). This implies that staff competence significantly explains the changes in the performance of procurement function in FP City. In addition, the adjusted R square of 0.319 showed in the table indicates that staff competence explains 31.9% variations in the performance of procurement function while 69.1% is explained by other factors. This implies that the study accepts the hypothesis that staff competence has a significant effect on performance of procurement function of FP City. Furthermore, the findings show that a unit increase in staff competence is likely to lead to 0.520 increase in performance of procurement function. This implies that organizations that are may consider increasing their staff competence are likely to have an increase in procurement performance.

**4.9 Effect of staff integrity on performance of procurement function in FP City**

The study conducted a regression analysis to establish whether staff integrity significantly affects the performance of procurement function in FP City. The findings are presented using a simple linear regression model as indicated in Table 4.11

**Table 4.10: Regression findings on the effect of staff integrity on performance of procurement function in FP City**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.668 <sup>a</sup>	.446	.442	.42302		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Staff integrity						
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.778	.324		2.403	.018
	Staff integrity	.747	.075	.668	9.954	.000

a. Dependent Variable: performance of procurement function

The regression results in table 4.11 show that the model is a good fit for the data implying that staff integrity significantly explains the variations in performance of procurement function ( $F = 99.082$  and  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). In addition, the adjusted R square of 0.442 showed in the table indicates that staff integrity explains 44.2% variations in the performance of procurement function while 55.8% is explained by other factors. Furthermore, the findings show that a unit increase in staff integrity is likely to lead to 0.747 increase in performance of procurement function as indicated by  $Beta = 0.747$ . This implies that organizations that are may consider increasing their staff integrity are likely to have an increase in procurement performance hence, the study accepts the hypothesis that staff integrity has a significant effect on performance of procurement function of FP City.

#### **4.10 Effect of staff integrity on performance of procurement function in FP City**

The study conducted a regression analysis to establish whether staff accountability significantly affects the performance of procurement function in FP City. The findings are presented using a simple linear regression model as indicated in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.11: Regression findings on the effect of staff accountability on performance of procurement function in FP City**

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.536 <sup>a</sup>	.288	.282	.47969	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Staff accountability

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.968	.149		19.855	.000
	Staff accountability	.337	.048	.536	7.051	.000

**a. Dependent Variable: performance of procurement function**

The regression results in table 4.11 show that the model is a good fit for the data ( $F = 49.710$  and  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). This implies that staff accountability significantly explains the changes in the performance of procurement function in FP City. In addition, the adjusted R square of 0.282 showed in the table indicates that staff accountability explains 28.2% variations in the performance of procurement function while 71.8% is explained by other factors. This implies that the study accepts the hypothesis that staff accountability has a significant effect on performance of procurement function of FP City. Furthermore, the findings show that a unit increase in staff accountability is likely to lead to 0.337 increase in performance of procurement function ( $\text{Beta} = 0.337$ ). This implies that organizations that are may consider increasing their staff competence are likely to have an increase in procurement performance.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**5.1 Introduction**

The study findings mainly focused on examining the effect of professionalism on performance of the procurement function in Fort Portal City. It sought to address specific objectives that included; (i) to examine is the effect of procurement staff competence on the procurement function performance in Fort Portal City, (ii) to examine the effect of procurement staff integrity on the procurement function performance in Fort Portal City, (iii) to analyze the effect procurement staff accountability on the procurement function performance in Fort Portal City.

**5.2 Summary of the findings**

The study focused on investigating the effect of professionalism on the procurement function performance in the Local Government perspective, a case of Fort Portal City, Uganda. First and foremost, the study established that FP City largely emphasized on staff professionalism with majority of the respondents indicating high level of agreement to existence of staff competence, integrity and accountability in FP City. Furthermore, the study established that there is a positive and significant effect of professionalism of procurement staff on the performance of procurement function. This is because it was established that staff competence, integrity and accountability all had a significant effect on performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City.

**5.3 Discussion of the findings**

The findings for this study are analysed and discussed as per the objectives of the study and research hypotheses;

### **5.3.1 Response rate and demographics**

This study examined the relationship of professionalism on performance of the procurement function in Fort Portal City. For obtaining quantitative data, the questionnaires distributed yielded a response rate of 70.6% that was found to be very good for the study (Ebert, Huibers, Christensen, & Christensen, 2018). The descriptive statistics shows that, the respondents were a true representative and well distributed in terms of age, gender, and the majority are literate and have been with FP City for more than one year, therefore competent enough to give reliable responses on the effect of professionalism on performance of the procurement function in FP City.

### **5.3.2 The effect of competence on the procurement function performance**

The study sought to establish the effect of competence on the procurement function performance in FP City. In a bid to address the objective, the study gathered responses on whether procurement staff of FP City were competent to carry out the task and whether it would have a resultant effect on procurement function performance. The descriptive findings indicated that FP City had technically competent procurement staff which was required of any procuring entity. The staff were also members to procurement professional bodies and staff competence has enabled staff to stay compliant to the professional practices. Additionally, the regression findings indicated that competence significantly affects procurement function performance. This implies that any public entity such as FP City that considers enhancing their procurement staff competence is likely to register an increase in procurement function performance.

The findings are in support of Lippman and McMahon (2017) who in his survey also established that competence is one of the four characteristics that define professionalism. The study notes that competence amongst staff is very vital for the execution of procurement

function in organizations. Similarly, findings of Obanda (2010) also indicated that competence amongst procurement staff is should be a pre-requisite for one to perform effectively the designated duties in the procurement cycles which is likely to drive entire procurement function performance.

The studies therefore continue to indicate that competence enables staff to effectively execute the procurement in a way that achieves value for money (Flynn et al., 2020). Competence has become an important element of professionalism that should be considered by most of the procuring entities. The procurement staff who are both academically and professionally competence is likely to have mastery of knowledge on how procurement can be improved over time. The staff also become innovative and creative in designing better means to achieving the procurement function goals as supported by (Wibowo, 2019).

### **5.3.3 The effect of integrity on the procurement function performance**

On the objective that sought to investigate the effect of integrity on the procurement function performance, the study findings indicated respondents' agreement that integrity amongst procurement staff increases effectiveness of procurement performance and each procuring entity should have staff with integrity. FP City was found to have code of conduct for procurement staff in which integrity has contributed to staff compliance with professional practices. Besides, the study also revealed that staff integrity has a significant effect on procurement function performance where any effort to increase staff integrity in procurement is likely to lead to an increase in the procurement function performance.

The findings are in support of the arguments presented in the Principal-Agent theory where relatedly the procurement staff are viewed as agents who should utilize the entrusted resources to achieve the interest of the principal. In public entities, the procurement staff are required to

be good stewards who should procure supplies that are cost effective, achieve value for money and meet public good. These require the staff in the procurement function to perform their tasks in professional manner for the interest of the principal through demonstrating high degree of integrity, accountability and competence.

Besides, the study findings are also in support with empirical findings of Tasi and Syamsir (2020) who asserted that the efforts to improve procurement function performance in public organizations requires the procurement staff to demonstrate high degree of integrity. Similarly, Nefriyeni, Sodikin and Guswandi (2018) in their study also established that integrity has a significant effect on the performance of an organization as established in the current study. Gea (2016) is also in line with findings of this current study where it is noted that integrity is a growing concern in the purchasing organizations. The study calls upon public entities to encourage integrity amongst staff so as to improve on procurement function performance.

#### **5.3.4 The effect accountability on the procurement function performance**

On the objective that sought to establish the effect of accountability on procurement function performance, the study revealed that there is a significant effect of staff accountability on procurement function performance. The findings indicated low level of staff accountability in FP City with respondents indicating that procurement staff often never provided timely accountabilities, the procurement systems do not often spell out clearly on whether procurement staff have to be accountable for their authority. However, in spite of low levels of staff accountability in FP City, the study revealed that should a procurement entity consider increasing efforts on ensuring staff accountability, it may have an increase in procurement function performance.

The findings are in line with Kalinzi (2014) who notes that professionalism in public procurement requires accountability, transparency and functionality. Public organizations should therefore promote staff accountability because it plays a pivotal role in ensuring that public procurement function achieves its intended objective. Similarly, Rulandari (2017) supports emphasis on accountability of procurement staff. For organizations to achieve procurement function performance, there is a need for staff to be accountable for their actions and demonstrate compliance attitude and principles. Furthermore, the findings are in support of Obanda (2010) who also asserted that performance of procurement function largely depends on the professionalism of procurement staff most especially staff who demonstrate high degree of accountability. Kelly (2018) also established that accountability of procurement staff has a direct additive effect on employee performance.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The study findings give an indication that professionalism plays a pivotal role in enhancing procurement function performance in public organizations. Considerable effort should focus on professional dimensions such as competence, integrity and accountability which in this study were established to have a significant direct effect on the performance of procurement function. The study therefore concludes that organizations that are likely to push for professionalism amongst procurement staff by calling upon them to show high degree of competence, integrity and accountability, are likely to register an increase in the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City, Uganda.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

Public procurement in Uganda is faced by a number of challenges among which include low level of compliance to procurement regulations and low demonstration of professionalism

amongst procurement staff. Given the findings of the study, the following recommendations are given;

#### **5.5.1 The effect of competence on the procurement function performance**

Although procurement profession is still in its infancy, there is a need for FP City and other procuring entities to embrace the fact that staff competence in the procurement function is very important because all employees with have technical ability to carry out the task efficiently. There should be improvement in recruitment and selection processes for procurement staff so as to eliminate those that are not competent enough.

Public entities are also recommended to extend training and career development to all procurement staff so as to enhance their skills and competence to perform tasks effectively and efficiently.

#### **5.5.2 The effect of integrity on the procurement function performance**

The study put procurement officers in the spotlight over malpractice and non-compliance to the procurement policies and procedures that led unethical practices as cited by the respondents like corruption, fraud, extortion and bribery, which necessitates FP City to enforce compliance with procurement rules, regulations and procedures e.g. the PPDA, 2003.

The study recommends that FP City employees should abide by the code of conduct for all procurement professionals which requires them to have integrity. This is deemed relevant in alleviating corruption tendencies which are breaches upon the required ethical code of conduct.

The study recommends that there should be a set of measures to address the conflict of interest, like the implementation of the procurement process transparently through clear evaluation criteria, ensure fair competition and promotion of awareness programs for the procurement

staff and the entire FP city staff on the ethics, procurement rules and regulations as a means of ensuring public trust.

### **5.5.3 The effect accountability on the procurement function performance**

Fort Portal City should develop a culture of accountability amongst procurement staff who should consider their actions if not explained to the public may call for some penalties and may not be good for the attainment of public good. This push for behavioral change amongst procurement staff may lead to value for money.

Fort Portal City should ensure all procurement staffs become members of Procurement Professionals of Uganda (IPPU). Such professional bodies have been instrumental in instilling and monitoring ethical conduct of its members. FP City must ensure that all staffs of PDEs are not only technically qualified but also registered members of the professional body bringing together all procurement personnel in the country.

Encourage service providers to form associations through which they can report their complaints other than doing it individually.

### **5.6 Suggestions for further research**

This study specifically considered Fort Portal City and left out other public institutions, such as universities, hospitals, and others. Therefore, future researchers should address such areas so as to generate new knowledge relevant in creating enhancement in procurement performance within public institutions.

The study assessed the effect of professionalism in terms of integrity, accountability, and competencies on performance of the procurement function and left out other factors such as Transparency, and many more. Future researchers should therefore consider assessing such factors so as to generate new knowledge.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Professionalism and Procurement Performance of Local Governments. A Case of Fort Portal City, Uganda.**

Dear Respondent,

I am Bernard Tumwine a Masters student of Kyambogo University conducting a research study as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of a degree in Masters in Science of Organizational and Public Sector Management. I wish to request you spare a few minutes of your valuable time and answer this questionnaire on “*Professionalism and Procurement Function Performance of Local Governments. A Case of Fort Portal City (FP City), Uganda*”. It will not take a lot of your time as it only requires you to select any answer you feel is right. More importantly, the information requested in here, is purely for academic purposes and will be treated with outmost confidentiality as there is no space where to record your name or sign. I will be very grateful for your assistance.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

.....

**(Student)**

**Instructions:**

Please kindly tick your response.

Do not write your name on the questionnaire

**SECTION A: Background characteristics of the respondents**

1. Gender: Male  Female

2. Age: 18-25  26-33  34-41  42-49  50-59

3. What is your education level?

- (a) Post graduate  (b) Graduate  (c) Diploma  (d) Certificate

4. For how long have you worked with FP City either as an employee or councilor or supplier/contractor?

- (a) Less than 1 yr.  (b) 1-5yrs  (c) 6-10yrs  (d) 11yrs & above

**SECTIONB: procurement professionalism at FP City**

5. How well do you understand the concept of procurement professionalism?

- (a) Very well (b) Well (c) fairly (d) Poorly (e) V/poorly

6. To what extent do you think you or FP City staffs always act in a professional manner?

- (a) No extent (b) Less extent (c) Moderate extent (d) Great extent  
(e) Very great extent

7.. State the extent to which you dis(agree) with the following statements of procurement professionalism at FP City Indicate your choice of answer ranging from strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) to strongly agree (5).

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Staff competence</b>					
<b>C1</b>	Procurement staff in FP City have the technical competence to perform tasks effectively					
<b>C2</b>	An effective procurement system requires that the procuring entity is staffed with competent professionals					
<b>C3</b>	FP City is staffed with staffs who are trained and recognized by the respective procurement professional body					
<b>C4</b>	Staff competence in procurement contribute to towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies & rules					
<b>C5</b>	Staff competence in public procurement allows for functionality, transparency and significant savings in public expenditure					
	<b>Staff integrity</b>					
<b>I1</b>	FP City is staffed with employees with professional integrity which enables them to perform tasks effectively					
<b>I2</b>	An effective procurement system requires that the procuring entity has staff with integrity					

<b>I3</b>	FP City has code of conduct for all procurement professionals which requires them to have integrity					
<b>I4</b>	Staff integrity contributes to towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies & rules					
<b>15</b>	Staff integrity in public procurement allows for functionality, transparency and significant savings in public expenditure					
	<b>Staff accountability</b>					
<b>A1</b>	Procurement staff in FP City are often required to provide timely accountability					
<b>A2</b>	An effective procurement system requires that all the procurement staff be accountable for their authority					
<b>A3</b>	Staff accountability in procurement contributes towards compliance with Professional practices, PPDA Act, PPDA Regulations, Code of conduct and Policies & rules					
<b>A4</b>	Staff accountability in public procurement ensures transparency in public expenditure					

**SECTION C: PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AT FP City**

8. Rate the following statements relate to performance of procurement function at FP City. For each statement, please show the extent to which you agree with it ranging from Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) to Strongly agree satisfied (5).

<b>Statements of performance of procurement function at FP City</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I</b>	FP City always procures quality goods, services & works because of its staffs acting professionally					
<b>Ii</b>	There has been no value for money at FP City due to the application of unsound procurement practices					
<b>Iii</b>	FP City normally registers less bidders' complaints because of being compliant with all the procurement rules and regulations					
<b>Iv</b>	There are many cases of procurement malpractice at FP City because of unprofessional conduct of FP City staffs					
<b>V</b>	Ineffective public procurement practices at FP City may result in corruption tendencies					
<b>VI</b>	If staffs are not professionally trained and lack awareness about all regulations to procurement and related procedures, then serious consequences like breaches of codes of conduct may occur leading to declined organizational performance					

**Thank you so much**

## **APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

- 1) In your own opinion, what do you think is the effect of staff competence on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City?
- 2) In your own opinion, what do you think is the effect of staff integrity on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City?
- 3) What do you think is the effect of staff accountability on the performance of procurement function in Fort Portal City?
- 4) In your view, do you think there is an increase in performance of the procurement Function within Fort Portal City?
- 5) If yes, why do you think there is an increase in performance of the procurement Function within Fort Portal City?
- 6) In your own observation, how is performance of the procurement function in Fort Portal City improving?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**