

**ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KASUNGU DISTRICT**

M. Ed. (POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purpose(s). Where people's work has been used, acknowledgements have been made.

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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DEDICATION

To my son, Bright, who was born during the writing of this thesis, for he was a blessing to our family.

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ABSTRACT

The need for effective implementation of the public procurement policy in public schools is crucial for the success of schools in financial management. The Office of Director of Public Procurement in Malawi has been making efforts to improve the procurement process in education institutions but the process still displays different bases of order and compliance. This study assessed the implementation of the public procurement policy in selected schools in Kasungu District. The study was based on the institutional theory as expressed by Scott (2004) who posits that institutions are composed of regulative, normative and cultural cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources give stability and meaning to social life. This was a qualitative study that employed a case study design. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools and the respondents. The study targeted four public secondary schools and the respondents were 24. The respondents were head teachers, deputy head teachers, accounts clerks or teacher bursars and IPC members. Data was generated using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis methods. The findings of the study indicated that the public procurement policy was partly being implemented in public schools. It established that IPC members were failing to fully implement this policy due to lack of registered suppliers, lack of finances, and lack of training and cumbersome procedures in procurement. In addition, the measures that were being used to tackle the challenges created loopholes for corruption in public schools. The implication is that if the IPC members still procure goods and services using the little knowledge that they possess then there will be major losses of public funds in schools.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BSS	Boarding Secondary School
CEED	Central East Education Division
CGS	Central Government Stores
CPAR	Country Procurement Assessment Review
DSS	Day Secondary School
GDP	Gross Development Product
ICT	International Competitive Tendering
IPC	Internal Procurement Committee
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NCT	National Competitive Tendering
ODPP	Office of Director of Public Procurement
ORT	Other Recurrent Transactions
PPA	Public Procurement Act
PPP	Public Procurement Policy
PPR	Public Procurement Regulations
TTC	Teachers Training College

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview

This chapter introduces the study on the assessment of public procurement policy (PPP) implementation in secondary schools. It begins with a brief background of the procurement policy with a description of the development of internal procurement committees in public secondary schools. This is followed by the statement of the problem, purpose of the study and the research questions. It ends with the significance of the study and definition of some key terms.

1.1 Background to the study

In business management literature, public procurement is perceived as a major function of the government. Government performs major procurement activities in various sectors including education. Government entities, public procurement professionals and policy makers have paid much attention to procurement improvement. However, public procurement has been neglected in the academic and education research (Thai, 2001). It is against this background that the researcher intended to assess the PPP implementation in secondary schools.

1.1.1 The public procurement policy

There are several definitions of policy but for the purpose of this study, a policy is defined as an explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, or guide implementation of previous decisions (Haddad, 1995). Similarly, several authors have defined public policy in various ways but for the purpose of this study, only two definitions have been considered to act as a guide. Dye (2013) states that public policy “*is whatever governments choose to do or not to do*”. Cochran and Malone (1995) similarly state that public policy “*consists of political decisions for implementing programmes to achieve social goals*”. On the other hand, procurement is the activity of assessing, buying and receiving goods and services and it becomes public whenever this process is performed by public organisations or funded by public organisations. EL-Gayed (2013) defined the PPP as a statement or set of guiding rules, procedures or principles covering how procurement should be done within an organisation. From these definitions, PPP is a set of decisions, rules or procedures that guide public organisations in the purchase of goods and services. One of the organisations which use public funds to purchase goods and services is the school. The decisions regarding expenditure of public funds are made by the internal procurement committees (Mudolo, 2015).

1.1.2 Internal Procurement Committees of a School

Education institutions as public procuring entities are required by the PPR (2003) to establish IPCs to be responsible for procurement at various levels. Muchiri (2014), in his study on public procurement and disposal act and the performance of procurement in Kenyan Schools established that procurement committees are responsible for

procurement activities. The committee is constituted as follows; the deputy head teacher is the chairperson, the bursar is the deputy chairperson and at least six heads of department including the matron. The role of the internal procurement committees in schools is to ensure that there is prudence when handling school finances. As such, the IPCs are supposed to work in collaboration with other procurement units and the head teachers in accordance with the Public Procurement Act (2003). The key functions of the IPCs are to review, verify and ascertain that all procurement activities are in line with the procurement regulations (Mapulanga, 2015).

1.1.3 Global perspective on public procurement

In recent years, several countries have initiated processes of procurement of goods by following proper procedures with an aim of improving expenditure allocation on budget and management decisions thereby promoting good governance in government institutions (Stemele, 2009). Public bodies have always been big purchasers, dealing with huge budgets such that public procurement represents 18.42% of the world gross development product (GDP) (Migosi, Umbuki & Evusa, 2013). In this regard, most developed countries are engaged in public procurement reforms with the aim of increasing efficiency and improving service delivery although they do not usually require external assistance for the purpose of procurement reforms (World Bank, 2005). For instance, in the United Kingdom, public procurement has undergone various reforms aimed at enhancing efficiency and sustainable utilisation of public resources (Kiprop, Michael, Bornett & Lelan, 2015).

In developing countries, public procurement reforms were initiated by the World Bank following the need to fight corruption in the public sector, and as a condition for the

provision of development aid (World Bank, 2016). Public procurement reform is being recognised as essential in service delivery such that it accounts for a high proportion of total expenditure allocated in the national budget. For instance, public procurement accounts for 70% in Uganda, 60% in Kenya and 58% of public spending in Angola. These figures are very high as compared to the global average of 12-20 % because of their prominent role in active infrastructure developments and social programs (Migosi et al., 2013).

The Government of Uganda initiated reforms in the public procurement and disposal sector in 1997, following the enactment of the 1995 constitution and the introduction of several reforms and structural adjustment programmes. The reforms were initiated against the backdrop of lack of accountability and transparency and absence of a culture of value for money in procurement activities. The development partners also recommended to Government to put in place appropriate public procurement practices based on international standards which are fair, transparent, competitive and non-discriminatory to all potential providers of goods, services and works.

Ghana underwent extensive public sector financial reforms in 1996 with the aim of improving public financial management so that public funds could be used effectively. In Kenya, the World Bank and the Kenyan government conducted a Country Procurement Assessment Review (CPAR) in 1997 and discovered many shortcomings in the Kenyan procurement system. The shortcomings included the absence of a sound regulatory framework, lack of competition and widespread abuses and fraud in the system. The CPAR found that the approach to procurement regulation limited the efficacy of public financial management which affected the government's ability to

deliver public services and there was no enforcement mechanism to enforce the rules which existed. The CPAR was thus the beginning of widespread reform in Kenya's public procurement system and the act was developed in 2005 (Benedict, 2017).

1.1.4 Local perspective on public procurement

Malawi is one of the developing countries that have also initiated the procurement reforms as a response to donors whose considered view is that adhering to approved and appropriate procurement procedures ensures that funds are used effectively to promote development (World Bank, 2005). Recent studies conducted by the World Bank have shown that almost 70% of development and recurrent expenditure in Malawi is realised through public procurement, hence it is important to regulate, monitor, and oversee public procurement in order to improve transparency, efficiency and value for money (World Bank, 2016). Actually, public procurement in Malawi is guided by the Public Procurement Act (PPA, 2003) and is defined as “the acquisition, by any means, of goods, works or services”.

Procurement reforms in Malawi started in 2004 after the introduction of the new legal framework document, the Public Procurement Act (2003) which led to the decentralisation of the procurement process to the level of the public entity (World Bank, 2016). This implies that any public institution which is operational should always strive to spend on high quality goods and services at the lowest cost possible and maximise the use of goods or services acquired for the benefit of the institution. Basically, the reforms were done at institutional level to ensure that the general public that the institutions serve should benefit and be satisfied with the functions of the institutions (Majanga, 2015).

In 2007, the Office of the Director of Public Procurement (ODPP) designed strategies to sensitise employees in the education training and learning institutions on procurement procedures considering that these institutions get direct funding from the Ministry of Finance (World Bank, 2013). For instance, some secondary schools and approved community day secondary schools which are cost centres get funding from the treasury whose purpose is for Other Recurrent Transaction (ORT) in institutions (JICA, 2012).

Ideally, sensitisation meetings were necessary because public institutions like secondary schools collect public funds in form of school fees such that the funds are used for the running of the schools except the tuition fees which is deposited into the government account (Trigu, 2004). Thus, it was recommended that head teachers, who have the overall responsibility of managing school finances, should establish the Internal Procurement Committee (IPC) which should be responsible for the purchase of goods and services. Although the committees were established in schools, O'Neil, Cammack, Kanyongolo, Mkandawire, Mwalyambwire, Welham & Wild (2014) revealed that there were different procedures of procurement that were being followed in the education institutions. In this regard, sensitisation meetings were also conducted in 2015 such that head teachers, deputy head teachers and accounts clerks from all the schools in the divisions were trained on how to purchase goods and services following the procurement rules that require bidding and advertising to ensure effective use of financial resources (World Bank, 2016). In the Central East Education Division (CEED), the meetings were conducted at Kasungu Teachers' Training College (TTC) where head teachers were encouraged to ensure that all goods purchased at an

institution should be supported by proper documents to ensure effective use of public funds. As such, the trained personnel were given a task to train the IPCs in their respective schools to implement the PPP.

Regardless of the sensitisation meetings, public procurement practices in institutions have been characterised by huge contractual payment arrears, corruption and delay in delivery of services. In addition, audit reports showed that these institutions bypassed some procurement procedures to the extent of acquiring goods and services from non-existent suppliers at an expensive price as compared to the normal market prices. Moreover, most expenditure which was done at institutional level, especially on procurement of goods and services was not approved or not supported by proper documents (Majanga, 2015). In view of this, it was necessary to find out how public secondary schools were implementing the PPP.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is an increasing consensus among researchers in the field of business management in both developed and developing countries that PPP implementation is absolutely crucial for the success of schools in financial management (Muchiri 2014, Doherty, McConnell and Ellis-Chadwick, 2013, Patrick, 2011). These studies have indicated that, in the developed world, this recognition has led to huge financial commitments in major initiatives to streamline the procurement function. However, little has been done in the developing world about the implementation of this policy in public institutions.

Malawi is one of the developing countries in Africa. The ODDP has been making efforts for several years to improve its procurement system in the education sector (Mapulanga, 2015). Sensitisation meetings were done in 2007 to improve the procurement systems in the schools. Mudolo (2015), in his study on the role of head teachers on financial management in Mzuzu City, stipulates that the IPC is supposed to allocate and distribute funds to sub programmes and activities of the school according to the budget. However, the study revealed that the procedures that the schools were following were different and contrary to the guidelines of school financial management. In addition, O'Neill et al (2014) also revealed that the procedures that the education institutions were following were different. This revelation prompted the ODPP to sensitise head teachers, deputy head teachers and accounts clerks or teacher bursars on the need to implement the PPP in schools. After the training that was done in 2015, there is lack of documentation to show how schools have implemented the PPP. It is in view of this that the researcher intended to assess how schools have implemented the PPP.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess the implementation of the public procurement policy. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. Evaluate the procedures which were followed by the internal procurement committees when purchasing goods and services.
2. Identify the challenges that the procurement committees faced when purchasing goods and services.
3. Establish measures that were deployed to tackle the challenges.

4. Determine the perception of the procurement process by the Internal Procurement Committee.
5. Establish reasons for holding these perceptions.

1.4 Research Questions

This research sought to answer the following main and subsidiary research questions.

1.4.1 Main research question

How do schools implement the public procurement policy?

1.4.2 Subsidiary research questions

The study was guided by the following questions;

1. What are the procedures that the internal procurement committees follow when purchasing goods and services in public secondary schools?
2. What are the challenges that the procurement committees face when purchasing goods and services following procurement procedures?
3. What measures are deployed to tackle the challenges?
4. How does the internal procurement committee perceive the procurement process?
5. Why do internal procurement committee members hold these perceptions?

1.5 Significance of the study

It is expected that the findings of this study would add to the stock of knowledge on procurement practices in schools since there is little published work on procurement in public schools in Malawi. It is hoped that the findings from this study would also inform

policy makers and other stakeholders to identify areas that need their interventions with regard to designing changes to streamline the acquisition of goods and services in educational institutions as set by the PPA of 2003. Furthermore, the findings of this study would be beneficial to the head teachers and the IPC members to identify areas that can be improved for effective delivery of services in schools. Lastly, the study would also be useful to the supervisors of education management on how schools are managing their resources when it comes to purchasing of goods and services thereby ensuring prudence in the management of public funds.

1.6 Definition of operational terms

Corruption: This refers to influencing the decision making process of public officer or authority or breach of trust by a public officer in the exercise of his duty through fraudulent means like bribery and blackmail (Onyinkwa, 2013).

Cumbersome: This refers to something which is complicated because of being large, it is difficult to do or manage and it takes a lot of time and effort (Sarfo&Baah-Minta, 2013).

Fraud: This is a crime of getting money by misrepresentation of facts in order to influence a procurement process or the execution of a contract, and includes collusive practices among bidders, whether prior to or after bid submission, designed to establish bid prices at artificial, non-competitive levels and to deprive the procuring entity of the benefits of free and open competition (PPA, 2003).

Procurement: This is the process of acquiring goods, works and services, covering

both acquisitions from third parties and from in-house providers (Onyinkwa,2013).

Public funds: This means any monetary resources appropriated to procuring entities through budgetary processes, aid grants and credits put at the disposal of procuring entities by foreign donors, or revenues of procuring entities (PPA, 2003).

1.7 Organisation of the study

This study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter outlines the background of the study in terms of the general statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions guiding the study, significance of the study and definitions of operational terms. Chapter two presents the review of the related literature and the theoretical framework on which the study was based. Chapter three explains the research paradigm that was used in this study, sampling site and methods employed, how data was generated and analysed. Chapter four presents and discusses the research findings in line with the guiding questions, and finally chapter five presents the research conclusion and implications.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced the study on the assessment of PPP implementation in secondary schools. It has provided the brief background of PPP with a description of

the development of internal procurement committees in public secondary schools. In addition, it has explained the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Finally, it has provided definitions of some terms that have been used in this study. The next chapter reviews the related literature.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Chapter overview

This chapter reviews related literature on secondary school management, public procurement worldwide and in Malawi. In addition, it reviews the challenges that IPCs face when procuring goods and services and also the possible measures that can be taken to minimise the challenges. It also includes the perceptions of the IPCs towards the procurement process. Finally, it proposes the framework that locates the study within a body of literature on procurement.

2.1 Management of public funds in secondary schools

The secondary school management handbook in Malawi stipulates that head teachers have an overall responsibility of managing the school finances. To ensure proper use of public funds, it is the responsibility of head teachers to spend according to the budget, keep proper financial records and account for expenditure, auditing, and authorising expenditure (Government of Malawi, 2015). However, all these functions are not done by the head teachers alone; there are accounts clerks who are responsible for the collection of fees. In addition, the head teachers also set up an internal procurement committee which is responsible for allocation of funds to other sub-programmes at school level so that goods should be purchased following procurement procedures.

2.2 Public procurement systems across the world

The history of public procurement system dates back from between 2400 and 2800 BC as written on the red clay tablet found in Syria. In 800 BC, there was a silk trade between China and a Greek colony. In United States of America, goods and services that were needed by the government were being supplied by commissioners or commissaries. These suppliers received a commission on what they bought for administrative units. In late 1800s, the state legislature began to create boards and bureaus responsible for the purchasing of goods and services. During that time, central purchasing was a difficult practice but it became common in state and local governments. However, the system was challenged by some practitioners who contended that government should decentralise it so that support could be provided to end users (Thai, 2001). In addition, decentralization was preferred to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles and to empower managers to procure goods without problems from the central government. For this reason, there was a movement to adopt a uniform commercial procurement. This was done in 1951 and the commercial code was updated in 2000. Consequently, developed and developing countries have instituted their procurement regulations but the major obstacle is regulatory compliance.

2.2.1 Public procurement regulations in secondary schools

The PPP in schools in Kenya came into existence after the introduction of the public procurement disposal act in 2001. This was done due to mismanagement of funds by

school management boards and poor quality of work by some contractors (Muchiri, 2014). In 2002, the Ministry of Education embarked on measures to entrench provisions of the procurement regulations in academic institutions in 2002 to improve efficiency of procurement practices; thus, to enable schools manage expenditure and utilise public resources effectively. In this regard, circulars were sent to all public secondary schools, directing them to follow the new regulations to improve procurement practices and procedures. The new measures included establishment of school tender committees, training members of such committees, as well as principals, deputy principals, and staff directly involved in procurement activities. In the same year, initial training workshops targeting principals, deputy principals of national and provincial schools were organised by the Directorate of Public Procurement, with support from the Kenyan government (Kavula, Jeremiah, Kalai & Migosi 2014).

In the education sector, the procurement regulations and the Procurement Act are guided by the Public Procurement Manual for Schools and Colleges. The guide provides the primary legislative and policy frameworks for reforming procurement practices and managing procurement expenditure in public secondary schools. Actually, the regulations require public institutions to use standard tender documents, operate within set thresholds, and ensure that technical specifications meet international standards and that all bidders are treated equally irrespective of race, religion or nationality (Wambui, 2013; Ohene-Addae, 2012).

In addition, procurement regulations include the need for all tenders to be advertised widely in the print media, professional qualifications of bidders, effective record keeping, transparency in opening tenders, tender evaluation reporting, confidentiality of tender evaluation processes, as well as procurement planning and regulation of

emergency procurement. Furthermore, the regulations require school tender to have a membership of at least six heads of department or members of the teaching staff, including the Matron or officer-in-charge of the boarding facilities appointed by the school principal (Kotoka, 2012).

Even though the Government of Kenya has provided necessary legislative and policy frameworks to guide procurement reforms in all public institutions, empirical studies have shown that implementation of the PPP in public secondary schools across the country still remains a challenge. For instance, a study commissioned by the MOE of Kenya in 2006 revealed that more than half of secondary schools did not adhere to provisions of legislative and policy frameworks in their tendering processes. As a result, there was rampant corruption particularly at the administration and board levels with regard to procurement of school equipment, learning materials, supplies, and hiring of both teaching and non-teaching materials.

In Uganda, secondary school procurement is guided by the new public procurement and disposal asset guidelines of 2014. The aim of the guidelines is to create uniformity in the management of procurement and consistency using the best practices in order to achieve the value for money. Despite the guidelines, compliance to procurement policy still remains a challenge in public schools (Komakech and Machyo, 2015).

In Malawi, public secondary schools fall in the category of public entities as their procurement is funded by public funds (World Bank, 2005). In an effort to ensure that public funds are utilized effectively, Malawi has its procurement systems governed by the PPA of 2003 and public financial management act of 2003. However, there is no specific procurement manual for schools like in Kenya and Uganda. The role of

supervising and regulating public procurement in the country is carried out by the ODPP. However, depending on the institution, there are other assisting agents to ensure effective supervision. Thus for schools, the MoEST has its own supervisors who while performing their duties ensure that the procurement undertaken by the schools are done according to laid guidelines.

Public procurement regulations in secondary schools in Malawi were emphasized by the ODPP in 2007 considering that public schools use public funds to purchase goods and services (World Bank, 2013). However, O'Neil et al (2014), in their study on fragmented governance and local service delivery in Malawi revealed that education institutions were using different procedures when procuring goods and services. In view of this, sensitisation meetings were also conducted in 2015. The meetings targeted head teachers, deputy head teachers and accounts clerks or teacher bursars. This is different from what happened in Kenya whereby all individuals involved in procurement issues were trained. Although the procurement personnel were trained in Kenya and guidelines were issued in secondary schools, implementation of the PPP in schools has been criticised as inept, ineffective and corrupt and there are a number of factors that could lead to this characterisation. Considering that each country has different policy depending on its economic, social and political environment (Thai, 2001), the researcher's contention was to assess the implementation of PPP in Malawi as there was dearth of data on procurement in secondary schools.

2.3 Procurement methods

The preferred procurement methods are open tendering and request for proposal. However, there are other procurement methods which are also used. These are restricted

tendering, two stage tendering, and request for quotations and single sourcing (Kotoka, 2012; Phoebe, 2008; PPR, 2004; ODPP Desk Instruction no. 3 of 2003). Different procurement methods are used under different circumstances so that the IPC approval is required before use of any method of procurement.

2.3.1 Open tendering

This is a default method of procurement for goods, works, and routine services. It is a competitive tendering method for goods, works and consultancy services of high value (Kotoka, 2012). The two types of competitive tendering methods are International Competitive Tendering (ICT) and National Competitive Tendering (NCT). ICT is used when effective competition cannot be achieved without the inclusion of foreign firms, and when the estimated value of the procurement exceeds the threshold value set by the ODPP. NCT is used when the procurement entity decides to do so and is subject to contract value thresholds.

2.4.1.1 Open tendering principles

An invitation to tender is published in the Gazette, local press and/or other media of wide international and national circulation. It is also displayed in the head office of the procuring entity in a publicly accessible place. Bidding documents are provided to all bidders responding to the invitation to tender or those that have been pre-qualified and the minimum bidding periods are 45 and 30 days for International Competitive Bidding and National Competitive Bidding respectively (Mapulanga, 2015)

2.3.2 Request for proposal

This is the default method of procurement for consultancy services. Normally, it starts with an expression of interest. Shortlisted bidders are at least three but no more than six. The proposals written include the minimum quality rating such that evaluation of the bidders considers both technical and financial status (Kotoka, 2012).

2.3.3 Restricted tendering

This is a procurement method with limited competition. A maximum of six and a minimum of three short-listed suppliers are invited to tender. To apply this method, a procurement entity requires specific approval from the Public Procurement Authority. This method is applied mainly when there is enough evidence to show that potential suppliers are limited, and that the procurement requirement is specialised in nature. In addition, restricted tendering is used when time and cost of considering a large number of tenders is disproportionate to the value of the procurement. The procedures for open tendering also apply to restrict tendering but the minimum bidding period is 21 days (Mapulanga, 2015; Kiprop et al, 2015).

2.3.4 Two stage tendering

Two-stage tendering is only allowed where detailed specifications cannot be made available before going to tender or the optimal solution is unknown. For instance, procurement of a hydro-electric plant. In the case of services, it is used to obtain proposals or offers on various means to meet its procurement requirements (Kotoka, 2012).

2.3.5 Request for quotations

This is the process of organising a fully-fledged tendering or other competitive tendering procedures. It is normally a time consuming and costly exercise which can be dispensed with when the contract value is small. The main idea is to allow procuring entities to use a simplified procedure in those instances where the contract value is small. The method is based on comparing price quotations obtained from at least three foreign or local suppliers for goods or works that are small in value. Bidders are given at least five days to respond to the request for quotation document. Thus, the procuring entity orders the goods and services by considering the lowest priced responsive bid (Muchiri, 2014).

2.3.6 Single sourcing

This system involves procurement from a supplier without any competition supplied by one source. It is normally used for procurement of sole or single sourced requirements. The law allows this method where procurement is for justifiably urgent items. A procuring entity negotiates with the supplier when using this method on quality, quantity, terms, price and time of delivery (Phoebe, 2008).

2.4 The procurement process

An individual procurement process differs slightly depending on the method of procurement and the type of procurement, that is, goods, works and routine services (Kotoka, 2012). However, the procurement process in public schools goes through five main steps which may vary according to different perspectives of looking at procurement. Basically, the first step is identification of the need so that preparation of

the specification by the IPC members can be done in line with the budget. This is followed by the preparation of the purchase requisition. The purchase requisition is checked and authorized by the relevant authority. Quotations are then obtained from which a supplier is selected, and then the issuance of purchase orders, thereafter goods are delivered or received. The final stage involves the receipt and checking of the invoice after which the payment is authorised and effected (Kimani, 2013; Onyinkwa, 2013).

2.4.1 Procedures for procurement of instructional materials in schools

To ensure effective use of public funds, the government of Malawi recommends that institutions should follow the procedures for procurement stipulated in the guidelines for the preparation for the 2015-2016 budgets when purchasing instructional materials. Prior to conducting procurement of goods, it is the responsibility of the procuring entity to ascertain whether the required supplies are available at the Central Government Stores (CGS) or in other government depots. When the CGS does not have the relevant items, it should request the concerned institution to get three quotations for the items from private suppliers through the usual IPC process. The CGS reviews the quotations and provides a “No Objection” waiver which enables the institution to undertake the procurement. This process can take a minimum of a day, depending on whether the quotations are provided in time (Malawi Government, 2015).

Although, the procurement procedures are outlined, studies have revealed that there are different procedures that are being followed in schools when purchasing goods and services (O’Neil et al., 2014; Michael, 2014; Migosi et al., 2013; Kimani, 2013; Onsongo, Okioga, Otiene and Mongare, 2012). O’Neil et al (2014) in their study on

fragmented governance and local service delivery in Malawi found that some of the local items like chalk were purchased at primary school level while some pens were being purchased at central system thereby duplicating the functions which is wasteful to the government. However, the study did not explain on what happens in secondary schools. Basically, several studies that were done in Kenya established that there was no uniformity in the procurement system for the public sector as a whole because schools were not familiar with the new procurement rules and regulations (Michael, 2014, Migosi et al., 2013; Kimani, 2013; Onsongo et al., 2012).

2.5 Challenges facing the internal procurement committees

Most developing countries are facing a problem of rapid changes in procurements which are imparting pressure on how the procurement function performs its internal and external processes in order to achieve its objectives (Wambui, 2013). Implementation of the PPP is driven by development partners who have focussed on getting countries to introduce a standard law developed by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (World Bank, 2005). The public procurement reforms currently focus on getting countries to implement a standard procurement law and system. This is a challenge that countries ought to cope up with as pointed out by Mulwa, Kalai & Migosi (2014) that public practitioners may have to put up with contradictory and contrasting procurement requirements and objectives imposed by policies and trade agreements. Such challenges in procurement reforms include processes, methods, procurement organizational structures and workforce which are beyond procurement regulations.

Public procurement in schools in developing countries faces many challenges. Several studies conducted in schools in Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Ghana have indicated lack of training of head teachers and the IPC members, lack of support from the administration, long and cumbersome procedures of procurement, lack of funds, lack of regular auditing, and conflicts arising from the individuals as the challenges faced by the schools in the implementation of the policy (Rhamadan & Kibet, 2015, Kavula et al, 2014; Kusi, Aggrey & Nyarku, 2014; Michael, 2014; Onyinkwa, 2013; Kimani, 2013; Migosi et al., 2013; Nyakundi, Kombo, Omari & Mongare, 2012; Onsongo, et al., 2012). In addition, a study conducted by Rhamadan & Kibet (2015), on factors affecting implementation of public procurement procedures and practices in Kenya revealed that there were unethical behavioural practices done by some public officials and their friends which led to wastage of public resources and procurement of substandard goods that it did not serve the citizens appropriately.

Kusi et al (2014), in their study on assessment of PPP implementation in the education sector in Ghana established that there was a long procurement documentation process and unnecessary interference by heads of institutions which resulted in delays in the delivery of services. Similarly, Onyinkwa (2013), in her study on factors influencing compliance to procurement regulations in secondary schools in Kenya averred that some teachers who were trained as IPC members simply act as rubber stamps because some decisions concerning procurement were being made by head teachers without consulting the responsible members of the committee.

A study conducted by Nyakundi et al (2012) on challenges facing procurement committees in implementing the procurement act in secondary schools in Kenya

revealed that the procedures were still blanketed by confidentiality, disorganisation and dishonesty in various schools. This revelation is similar to the study done by Mapulanga (2015) on public procurement legislation and the acquisition of library materials in academic libraries in Malawi, who found that independent procurement lacked honesty so much that goods were procured at an expensive price. However, challenges in public schools in Malawi were not documented in his study as it only targeted libraries in higher academic institutions.

2.6 Measures that are deployed to tackle the challenges.

The secondary school committees that are responsible for procurement try their best to make the system more efficient regardless of the challenges mentioned. Several studies indicated that schools preferred to prioritise when purchasing goods and services where funds were inadequate. If funds were not available, head teachers preferred to borrow from the suppliers and this resulted in single sourcing such that goods were procured at an expensive price (Kavula et al 2014; Michael, 2014; Mulwa, et al., 2014; Onsongo et al., 2012).

A study conducted by Mulwa et al (2014) on determinants of implementation of public procurement regulations in secondary schools in Kenya revealed that the level of compliance with the regulations was very low. They established that important factors like public procurement structure, induction of key personnel, trainings to principals and procurement committees need to be considered for effective implementation of PPP.

2.7 Perception of internal procurement committees towards the procurement process

Public procurement has been perceived as an area of waste and corruption in both developed and developing countries (Thai, 2001). In agreement, Basheka (2011) contends that public procurement is an area that is most vulnerable to corruption. Thus it is essential to establish a procurement system with clearly goals and objectives. Thai (2001), in his study on public procurement found that it was difficult to find statutes of procurement in small government entities where procurement budgets are small. The absence of a procurement code, regulations, or manual in such institutions leads to unpredictable procurement problems. For this reason, it is likely that one can hold unfavourable perceptions towards the procurement process.

Komakech and Machyo (2015), in their study on public procurement reforms in secondary schools in Uganda established that IPC members perceived the procurement process as an area for head teachers to use to find their personal needs rather than the needs of the institution. This was attributed to the fact that head teachers were receiving money from suppliers before the items were delivered in schools. Upon delivery of the items, quality was being compromised such that it was difficult for the IPCs to reject the delivered goods considering the friendship that existed between the supplier and the head teacher. For this reason, the IPC members lacked interest to monitor the procurement activities.

Onsongo et al (2012), in their study on challenges facing procurement committees in implementing the procurement act in Kenya, found that the procurement process was seen to be crucial because of the efficiency expected of school heads in the management

of school finances. This is the case because public procurement is a very complicated system within which there are many conflicting interests. Such being the case, implementers proposed that there should be sound procurement regulations in order to increase public confidence in the procedures followed in public procurement, and to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all.

2. 8 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by the institutional theory which was developed by Scott (Scott, 2004). Institutions are defined as social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience. The institutional theory is a theory which attends to the deeper and more resilient aspects of social structure. It considers the processes by which structures, including rules, norms, schemas, and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour. It inquires into how these elements are created, diffused, adopted, and adapted over space and time; and how they fall into decline and disuse. Institutions are made up of diverse elements that posit different bases of order, compliance and alternative rationales for establishing legitimacy claims. They are composed of regulative, normative and cultural cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources give stability and meaning to social life.

The regulative pillar emphasises the use of rules, laws and sanctions as enforcement mechanisms, with expedience as a basis for compliance. It generally uses some type of coercive force in order to gain compliance (Scott, 2008). The normative pillar refers to norms (how things should be done) and values (the preferred or desirable), social obligation being the basis of compliance. It defines what is right and appropriate. The cultural-cognitive pillar rests on the shared understanding with reference to what is

taken for granted. Scott explained that the three pillars may take prominence over time and circumstance although they are different.

Institutional theory explains how organisations are influenced by their environmental context. Scott (2004) contends that organisations of the same type tend to adopt strikingly similar organisational designs and behaviours as they share the same stakeholders and are subjected to the same pressure. However, the theory is generally static in nature and measures that are more direct are not developed in it.

This theory is a useful lens to assess the implementation of the PPP as it suggest that achieving legitimacy requires schools to conform to the government expectations that takes primacy over achieving efficiency. Dye (2013) explained that the government lends legitimacy to policies such that they are regarded as legal obligations which government institutions are supposed to abide by. Public schools are part of government institutions and are supposed to follow public policies.

In applying the institutional theory in this study, the school is an institution which is supposed to conform to the rules or procedures when purchasing goods and services in accordance with the procurement regulations. Government requires prudence in financial management in schools. It enforced schools to follow the procurement procedures when purchasing goods and services. Regulative compliance occurs when schools adapt to the regulations. In contrast, cultural cognitive compliance may arise if the policy is not clear and resources are not available such that decisions made depend on what the IPCs consider as a best practice without considering what the government wants them to do. Normative elements can be observed as a result of increased

knowledge and skills in procurement and proper communication of the policy in school. In this case, implementation of the PPP may be effective when the pillars in which schools rest are strengthened. This can happen if the procedures that are being used are properly enforced and developed. In addition, if the beliefs and values of head teachers and IPCs members provide more benefits and proper guidance (normative) and when the knowledge that could inform decision making for the IPCs to have positive perceptions towards implementation of the PPP is adequate and sufficient (cultural cognitive).

2.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed the management of public funds in secondary schools, procurement systems across the world and in secondary schools. It has discussed the methods that are used when purchasing goods and services. In addition, it has reviewed the procedures that are followed when purchasing goods and services and the challenges facing the internal procurement committees. The measures that were deployed to tackle the challenges and the perceptions of internal procurement committees towards the procurement process have also been reviewed.

Most of the studies that explored these issues were conducted in public schools in other countries but little is known on how public schools are implementing the PPP in Malawi. Moreover, the review showed that most studies used quantitative approaches which are in themselves not adequate in as far as the need to have an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon is concerned. In view of this, there was a need to conduct the study using the qualitative approach to have a better understanding of PPP

implementation in public schools in Malawi. The design and methodology of this study will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview

This chapter describes and justifies the research design and methodology that was employed to conduct the study. It also gives a description and justification of sampling, data generation tools, analysis and ethical considerations of the study. It concludes with the limitations of the study.

3.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a cluster of beliefs that dictates the influence of what should be studied, how the research should be done and how the results should be interpreted (Bryman, 2008). The study was based on the interpretive paradigm such that it was qualitative. Interpretive paradigm was chosen for this particular study for two reasons. Firstly, it allowed the researchers to access the experiences and viewpoints of the research participants. Secondly, it recognised the role of the researcher and the research participants in knowledge construction, acknowledging interpretations as socially constructed realities. Using this paradigm, both the researcher and the respondents acquired active roles in the knowledge construction.

3.2 Research design

A research design is crucial in thinking how to guide data collection, its analysis and interpretation; how to establish a link between research question, data, analysis and conclusion; and how the research question can be addressed. For instance, Yin (2003) explained that a research design is a logical sequence that connects the empirical data to the study's initial research questions and conclusions.

The researcher used a case study design because it has several advantages. Firstly, it is able to capture and explore the complexity of phenomenon for a better understanding. This is what a large scale study like survey fails to achieve since it gathers superficial information about a phenomenon for the purpose of generalisation. Secondly, using the case study approach requires the use of multiple methods to collect data, enabling it to be validated through triangulation (Denscombe, 2003; Yin, 2003). Thirdly, it is action oriented and therefore the findings are useful for improving practice.

Considering the advantages, a case study design was used in order to develop in-depth analysis of the procurement procedures used by the IPCs in schools. Although a case study design is not a perfect design because it deals with processes that take place and their interrelationship (Kothari, 2004), it was preferred because it uses a small number of carefully selected samples to provide accurate and rich information about the topic at hand through in-depth examination of an issue. Creswell (2013) explained that a case study research is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a single case or multiple cases within a specified period of study. Though the objectives could be achieved through in-depth understanding of a single case, the researcher used multiple

case studies for the purpose of getting a broader understanding of the implementation of procurement procedures in schools.

3.3 Study area

The study was conducted in four secondary schools representing four cases which are recommended in qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). These schools were chosen because they had some common characteristics within the district. Firstly, they were very close to the division such that they had access to information regarding any changes that were necessary in schools. Secondly, they were close to the government stores where procurement of most school items was supposed to be done. In addition, these schools were also selected based on their enrolment capacity because enrolment of students determines the funds that could be collected and be used to purchase goods and services.

Kasungu District was selected because it was where the sensitisation meetings were conducted such that most representatives from the schools within the district managed to attend the meetings, thus the respondents were aware of the PPP. The area was also chosen because it was where the researcher resided, as such costs were minimised.

3.4 Target population

The target population is defined as the entire set of relevant units of analysis of data (Punch, 2005). The target population for the study was four public secondary schools. The respondents comprised all head teachers, deputy head teachers, accounts clerks or bursars and teachers who were members of the IPC.

3.5 Sample size

A sample is a portion or part of the population of interest (Kothari, 2004). The purpose of sampling is to gain an understanding about some features or attributes of the whole population based on the characteristics of the sample. Usually, the IPC of schools consist of a minimum of 3 members and a maximum of 7 members. The researcher sampled 6 respondents from each school making a total of 24. The sample consisted of 4 head teachers because they were controlling officers in all the activities that were carried out in the schools; 4 deputy head teachers who were the chairpersons of the IPCs; 2 accounts clerks from two schools and 2 teacher-bursars who were responsible for the collection of funds, and 3 teachers from each school who were IPC members because they were the ones tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the procurement process in their institutions.

3.6 Sampling techniques

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents to permit the detailed study of part rather than the whole population based on experience of the respondents and objectives of the study. In addition, purposive sampling was used to select the major schools that were close to the town and had the larger enrolment. Creswell (2003) argued that in qualitative research, it is important for the inquirer to purposefully select individuals and sites that can provide necessary information. In this case, the researcher only targeted the respondents who were involved in the procurement process at school level.

3.7 Data generation methods

The researcher used several data generation methods. According to Patton (2002), using more than one data generation method strengthens and gives credibility to the study. The data generation methods that were used in this study were semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Creswell (2013) elaborated that these methods are suitable in a qualitative study because they provide in-depth information to the research questions. These methods were used in order to have a deeper understanding of how schools were implementing the PPP.

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Bryman (2008), a semi-structured interview refers to a process in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview guide but in which the interviewer is able to vary the sequence as well as ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies. Semi-structured interviews were preferred to provide the researcher with the main questions of focus which guided her to achieve the purpose of the study.

In addition, semi structured interviews were preferred to allow the researcher to ask probing questions where clarification was needed thereby addressing richness, depth of responses, comprehensiveness and honesty that are some of the hallmarks of successful interviewing.

Actually, the researcher interviewed 24 respondents. The respondents were 4 Head teachers, 4 deputy head teachers, 2 accounts clerks, 2 teacher-bursars and other 3 IPC members from each school. The focus was on procedures, challenges of the PPP, the

measures that were put in place to tackle the challenges and the perceptions of the internal procurement committees towards the procurement process. Two sets of open-ended questions were prepared in advance for the head teachers and IPC members. However, some questions in one set overlapped with those in another set. Follow up questions were also being asked for clarifications and elaborations. After asking for permission to interview the respondents, the researcher also asked if their views could be recorded. The interviewees accepted and their views were tape recorded. Field notes were also taken. The field notes described the setting in which the interviews were taking place and the non verbal communication for in depth understanding of the responses that were provided by the respondents.

3.7.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Focus group discussions were done in all schools and the discussions targeted all the IPC members that were already interviewed. Actually, each group comprised 5 members who were IPC members. Head teachers were not part of the group because they were not IPC members. Open-ended questions were used to guide the researcher during the discussion. However, there was flexibility for follow up questions depending on the responses from the group. Focus group discussions were used to permit the researcher to collect data and insights that could be less accessible without the interaction of the group (Punch, 2005). Group discussions are important because they stimulate people in making explicit their views, perceptions and reasons thereby uncovering aspects of understanding that remain hidden. The FGDs helped to capture data on the perceptions of the IPC members and reasons for their perceptions. The results from the interviews and the FGDs were triangulated to ensure accuracy of the research findings (Creswell, 2013).

3.7.3 Document Analysis

Documents refer to those sources of data which are kept and are produced at the request of the researcher. The documents include such forms as letters, diaries, minutes, photographs, newspapers, magazines, videos, audios and autobiographies (Bryman, 2008). Such documents are important in case studies because they help to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources. In light of this, documents were reviewed to represent data to which participants give much attention although documents may not all the time be authentic and accurate (Creswell, 2003). The policy document was not available in schools. For this reason, the researcher only analysed the IPC minutes that helped in the interpretation of procedures used in procurement in schools.

3.8 Data analysis procedures

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. Through data analysis, the researcher addressed the research questions depending on the evidence collected. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyse the data as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This procedure has seven stages namely: organising the data, familiarising yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and finally writing the report. Actually, the researcher read through all interview notes and listened to the interview records to acquire in-depth understanding of the data. The researcher categorised the collected data into meaningful categories developed from the interview questions. Then the researcher reduced and rearranged the data into manageable and comprehensive forms. After completing the process, the researcher continued to explore key themes and patterns or relationships among the data units. Thematic

analysis allowed the researcher to identify the themes that emerged from the responses of the 24 participants in schools. All the themes were linked to the research objectives.

3.9 Research Ethics

In conducting a qualitative study, Creswell (2013) advises researchers to seek and obtain permission from the authorities in charge of the site of the study because it involves a prolonged and extensive data collection. Initially, a letter of introduction from Chancellor College was obtained. The researcher used the introductory letter to seek permission to collect data from the schools from the Education Division Manager in CEED. The researcher then took the letter from the Division and the college to the head teachers of the concerned schools so that participants should be prepared for what was ahead. The head teachers welcomed the researcher and informed the IPC members about the purpose of my visit. The IPC members read the letters and accepted to participate in the study. Despite the fact that the participants read the letters in advance, verbal consent was sought from all the participants during the data collection for them to be flexible in responding to the questions. When analysing the data, names of the specific schools from which the data was collected were withheld for confidentiality purposes. The schools were coded as BSS1, BSS2, DSS1 and DSS2.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Yin (2003) notes that every research study is limited by the constraints placed upon the researcher and this research is no exception. The study was limited to four schools in

Kasungu District. The results must be treated with caution as they cannot be generalized to all public secondary schools in Malawi. This was done due to limited time and financial resources. However, the results could be used as a pointer for a more comprehensive study on PPP implementation in schools in Malawi because government schools follow the same regulations. The issues featured in 4 schools are likely to be repeated in other schools.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the in-depth account of the research design and methodology employed in this study. The study was based on interpretive paradigm and the case study design was chosen to realise the research objectives and questions. The data was generated using face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documents were also reviewed. Thematic analysis was chosen as a means to analyse the data. The researcher sought the consent of all participants involved in the study. Finally, limitations of the study have also been explained in the chapter. The next chapter presents and discusses the research findings according to the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the data collected and their analyses. Themes that emerged during the analysis of data from the interviews, focus group discussions and document review were all linked to the research questions. The study answered five research questions. Hence, the presentation of the findings will follow the five questions showing how the data collected answered the questions. However, the researcher will first provide an understanding of the PPP by the participants.

4.1 The public procurement policy in schools

When respondents were asked to explain their understanding of the PPP in schools, their responses were not different in all the schools. One of the interviewees explained that:

“PPP is a set of procedures which should be followed when schools would like to purchase goods and services using public funds” (Head teacher BSS1).

Another head teacher defined the policy in this way:

“These are guidelines or procedures that are followed when purchasing items at institutional level” (Head teacher, BSS 2).

One IPC member explained that:

“PPP are guiding rules and principles on how schools should purchase their items from vendors” (IPC member, DSS 1).

Another IPC member defined the policy as follows:

“This is a policy that guides IPCs on how to purchase goods and services at an institution using public funds” (IPC member, DSS 2).

From the definitions above, it clearly shows that the interviewees were aware of the PPP. In general, the PPP was defined as a set of procedures which are used to purchase goods and services in institutions using public funds. The policy requires that each institution should have the IPC that should be responsible for the purchase of goods and services. This understanding of the policy is in line with El-Gayed (2013) who argued that it is the statement or set of guiding rules, principles or procedures on how procurement should be done within the organisation. Considering that policies are regarded as legal obligations which schools as public institutions are supposed to comply with (Dye, 2013), it was found that each school that was under study had the IPCs which were responsible for the purchase of goods and services. This agrees with the findings by Muchiri (2014) who established that schools’ IPCs are to guide in the purchase of goods and services.

4.1.1 Composition of the Internal Procurement Committees in schools

All the schools had IPCs as per the requirement of the PPA (2003).

The members of the committees comprised:

- The Deputy Head teacher as the chairperson
- The accounts clerk/ teacher- bursar
- Heads of department

This implies that IPC members were automatically chosen based on the responsibilities assigned to them. According to the institutional theory, the schools applied the

normative pillar which relies more on internalisation processes. As such, it was less likely for the IPCs to induce only lip services. However, at BSS 2, some of the heads of department were not members of the IPC. Instead, some teachers were included as IPC members. The head teacher of this school revealed that the IPC was set by the former head teacher. He explained that:

I am new in the office as the head teacher although I have been serving here for seven years as the deputy. I am not aware of why the former head teacher chose to exclude some of the heads of department as IPC members. I think he based on their dedication to duties. I am aware that heads of department are supposed to be members of the IPC (Head teacher, BSS 2).

The statement that was made by the head teacher at BSS 2 indicated that this school valued the cultural cognitive pillar which rests on a more deeply set of beliefs and assumptions to ensure that this policy was being implemented. This implies that the former head teacher used his common beliefs on how teachers were committed to their work without considering what the PPA (2003) stipulated regarding the composition of the IPCs.

4.2 Procedures that were being followed by the internal procurement committees when purchasing goods and services

The first question sought to assess the procedures that were being followed by the internal procurement committees when purchasing goods and services. During the interviews, it was revealed that the procedures that were being followed in schools depended on the procurement method that was used. This agrees with Kotoka (2012)

who established that individual procurement slightly depended on the method of procurement and the type of goods and services being procured.

At BSS1 and BSS2, the open tendering method and request for quotation method were being used to purchase their goods and services. The researcher then asked why they preferred to use these methods. One IPC member explained that:

“The school purchases a lot of foodstuffs such that it is necessary to carefully compare the prices and the quality of food from different suppliers” (IPC Member, BSS1).

This implies that the methods were preferred because they provided room for comparison of prices such that goods were purchased from the lowest evaluated supplier. One interviewee highlighted that:

I may tell you that we follow open tendering and request for quotation methods to purchase goods and services but normally some teachers are the main suppliers at this school such that it is difficult to determine what is followed on the ground (IPC member, BSS2).

The researcher further asked the respondents why teachers were supplying goods at the school instead of using open tendering method. In his response, he explained that:

Open tendering method is perceived as bureaucratic and inflexible because the prices that are offered by the suppliers are too high to cater for the fluctuations in prices of the products. This method requires buyers and suppliers to work in partnership to ensure that public funds are being used accordingly and we still have a long way to go for the school to meet the requirements (IPC member, BSS2).

At DSS 1 and DSS 2, the commonly used method was request for quotation but sometimes the tendering method was also used at DSS 1. The request for quotation

method was preferred because it provided the actual prices of goods and services at that particular period unlike the tendering method. However, single sourcing sometimes was also used depending on the need at the school although it was not recommended due to its lack of competition from different suppliers. All the respondents revealed that the revenue that was being collected per term was not enough for schools to comply with the request for quotation method every time they wanted to purchase goods and services. This means that the request for quotation method was partly being used such that some items were being purchased using single sourcing. This statement is in line with Ohene- Addae (2012) who found that most schools resort to single sourcing instead of competitive bidding. This implies that the policy was sometimes ignored due to unavailability of funds. As such, goods were being purchased on credit from one supplier.

4.2.1 Procedures that are followed using open tendering method

Before schools acquired and used any resource, they considered the importance of the goods and services to be procured. During the interviews, one respondent revealed that:

“The items are lined up according to the priorities by the department in need and the head teacher approves the document so that payment vouchers can be written by the accounts clerk” (IPC member, BSS1).

Another IPC member narrated:

“At the beginning of the term, each department comes up with the items that are needed for that particular term. The items are then scrutinized by the IPC members during the IPC meeting. The items considered are then submitted to the head teacher for approval” (IPC member, BSS2).

From the explanations above, it is clear that BSS1 and BSS2 prioritise the items needed before they purchase their goods and services. 12 respondents revealed that the first thing that IPCs considered most was advertising where by the IPC chairperson put up posters on the notice board and on trees surrounding the schools so that suppliers can apply. There is a special day which is set for opening the box containing the applications from different tenders. The respondents indicated that they announce the tenders in the presence of the tenderers or their representatives so that there should be fairness in the evaluation. Then the IPC members meet and evaluate the bidders depending on the quality and price that they have written in the tender. After selecting the bidders, phone calls are made to inform them about their success. Then letters are sent to notify them that they have qualified to be suppliers for the school within a particular period. Upon delivery of the goods, payment is done using closed cheques to ensure that accountability is adhered to.

At BSS1, it was revealed that this process was normally done in August when the students were on holiday so that suppliers should be aware before the beginning of the school academic calendar which is September. At BSS2, there was no specified period that this process was being done. The IPC members revealed that they used open tendering method when there was a need. If there was no bidder at that particular time, they used request for quotations or single sourcing to purchase food stuffs.

4.2.2 Procedures that are followed when purchasing using request for quotations

10 respondents at BSS1 and BSS2 explained that they commonly used request for quotation method when purchasing teaching and learning materials if they found that the items they wanted were not available at the government stores. On the other hand, 11 respondents at DSS1 and DSS 2 revealed that the IPC considered the need for the specified items. The three quotations were sought from vendors in town from which selection was based on the quality and prices indicated. The IPC then wrote the purchase order. When delivery of goods was done, cheques were then issued by the head teachers to the supplier. Sometimes, teachers were sent to buy the items if the suppliers could not manage to bring their items to the school. However, one IPC member at DSS1 revealed that:

The three quotations method is used but sometimes all these quotations are obtained from one supplier who is registered and has the knowledge of the public procurement policy. To ensure that they should not lose customers, some suppliers who are not even registered have three different quotation books. They write the three quotations with slightly different prices so that goods should still be bought from their shop (IPC member, DSS1).

Another IPC member explained that:

“We usually go to town and purchase most of the items from one shop. Some items are purchased from local vendors but we liaise with the shop owners to include them on the quotation” (IPC member, DSS2).

From the explanations above, it implies that there was corruption when purchasing goods and services using request for quotations method. As a result, goods might be purchased at a more expensive price than the acceptable price which was paid by the general public. This was contrary to Onyinkwa (2013) who emphasised that goods should be procured in a way that allowed for fair and open competition. In addition, suppliers might arrange with the person responsible for the purchase of items to inflate

prices so that the buyer and the supplier should also benefit from the transactions. This is corruption despite the government's commitment to reduce corruption.

At DSS2, respondents indicated that the three quotations requirement was not adhered to sometimes because it was time consuming and most of the items that were bought using this method were expensive. The head teacher at DSS2 gave this as an example:

“When we wanted to construct a classroom block, the quotations that we received from three contractors charged ten times more than the local builders. Considering that the school had meagre resources, we chose not to use this method. Instead, local builders were hired to do the work and the classroom block was constructed” (Head teacher, DSS2).

This implies that the request for quotation method was not being commonly used because suppliers were offering their goods at an expensive price as compared to the normal market price. This is in agreement with Muchiri (2014) who indicated that the request for quotation method was a costly exercise especially when the purchase was of small value. In accordance with Scott (2004), the findings have shown that BSS1, BSS2 and DSS1 were institutionalising themselves to standardize the procedures that were reinforced by the government but at DSS1, regulatory compliance was not easy due to poor resources and expensive prices that suppliers were offering. As a result, they were procuring their goods based on what they took as the best method in their own understanding. Hence, it can be argued that procurement was not being carried out as required due to the prices that suppliers were offering on the market and available resources therefore compromising the implementation of the policy.

4.2.3 Availability of written records of procurement in schools

During the interviews, the researcher sought to find out if the schools had written records for procurement transactions at the school. In their responses, all the interviewees at BSS1, BSS2, DSS1 and DSS2 indicated that they kept records for all procurement transactions that were being done in schools. The researcher then reviewed the documents that were in the procurement files in all the schools. During the review, it was noted that the IPC minutes were available in the files in all schools. The minutes showed what the IPCs discuss before purchasing goods and services. In addition, supporting documents like quotations, delivery notes, invoices were available for some items purchased at BSS1, BSS2 and DSS1. At DSS2, only a few quotations were available because they were purchasing most of the items locally.

When respondents were asked about the policy document on procurement, they revealed that there was no written document from MoEST concerning the public procurement policy in all schools. 12 respondents revealed that schools did not have the copy of the policy as it was verbally communicated during the sensitisation meeting such that the IPC members were just briefed by the head teachers. However, 3 head teachers from BSS1, BSS2 and DSS1 revealed that the documents on how schools were supposed to purchase goods and services were provided during the meeting at Kasungu Teachers Training College but they were not printed. One head teacher explained that:

I was trained at the TTC for three days. On the last day, the presenter informed us that only soft copies were available and it required one to have a flash disk. By then, I did not have that flash disk to get the information. After the training, I did not take an initiative to get the documents from my

colleagues or from the division because I was not fully conversant with procurement issues though I went for the training (Head teacher DSS2).

This showed that there were some institutional requirements which were strongly backed by head teachers while some received sympathetic responses to implement them. On the other hand, 2 head teachers from BSS2 and DSS1 revealed that most of the IPC members did not show interest to read the soft copies that were available because they had a lot of work to do. Similarly, 4 IPC members from BSS2 and DSS1 elaborated that they did not show interest in reading the documents. This prompted the researcher to find out why they did not have that interest. One IPC member from DSS2 averred that:

“I am the IPC member but I act as a figure head in the committee. Most of the items that are purchased at this school are done by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and the accounts clerk” (IPC member, DSS2).

Another IPC member explained that:

I am not actively involved in purchasing goods especially food stuffs. Most of the items are purchased from some teachers here. When I try to inquire more on how goods are being purchased, I am threatened by the head teacher and being told to wait for my time when I will be promoted to the headship position. For this reason, I remain quiet because it is the head teacher who is the controlling officer at the school (IPC member, BSS2).

This means that the IPCs were not really in a position of implementing the procurement policy due to their lack of involvement in some procurement issues. The threats they received from their head teachers were also limiting them from performing their duties effectively. This concurs with Onyinkwa (2013) who explained that some teachers who were trained as IPC members simply acted as rubber stamps because some decisions

were made by head teachers without consulting the responsible members. This implies that 3 schools had some tangible evidence and appropriate records of procurement. However, there was negligence on the part of head teachers to produce hard copies of the notes so that IPC members and teachers could easily access the information for transparency and accountability. These findings support the institutional theory by Scott (2004) who explained that institutions are influenced by the environments. The threats that the head teachers throw on the IPC members limited the members from full participation in procurement issues thereby compromising implementation of the PPP.

In addition, the IPC members were not doing their job accordingly as indicated by Mapulanga (2015). This was evidenced by the lack of interest of some IPC members to read and understand the documents that were presented by the ODPP officials during the training. This implies that some IPC members were not participating in the procurement process. They lacked strength to regulate decisions that go against institutional interest. As such, they were not in a position to fully implement the policy. This behaviour might create a leeway for manipulation of things by head teachers, deputy head teachers and accounts clerks. As such, massive losses of public funds could be incurred.

4.2.4 Benefits of implementing the public procurement policy in schools

The researcher sought responses as to what the schools benefited when implementing the PPP. The responses were transparency and accountability and purchase of goods and services of standard quality.

4.2.4.1 Transparency and accountability

Respondents at BSS1 and DSS1 argued that the policy promoted transparency and accountability such that other teachers who were not IPC members had a clear mind on what was happening at the school. However, 6 respondents from BSS2 and DSS2 revealed that the IPC's did not work for the intended purposes. Most of the expenditure was done by a few members and sometimes only the head teachers, deputy head teachers and bursars were responsible for the purchase of goods and services. One respondent revealed that:

The IPC members usually meet and scrutinize the items that are needed in different departments but when the goods or services are purchased, it is not known to all members if all the items planned for were available or not. Only a few members are aware of the transactions. In addition, the total expenditure of the goods and the receipts are not shown to some members but I know that the policy can promote transparency and accountability if it can be implemented properly (IPC member, DSS2).

This implies that the respondents were aware that effective implementation of the policy could promote transparency and accountability but they chose not to adhere to the requirements. Sometimes head teachers, deputy head teachers and accounts clerks used the regulative pillar of institutionalization which emphasized on the use of rules, laws or sanctions to implement the public procurement policy where expedience was the basis for compliance. However, this was not the intended purpose for the decentralisation of the procurement reforms which led to the establishment of the IPC. As such, there was a possibility of fraud in some schools. According to Sarfo and Ba-Mintah (2013), transparency has been defined as the creation of an environment where

information on existing conditions, decisions and actions are made visible and accessible to the individual participant. If this assertion is to go by, then procurement in schools was not really transparent since some members did not have the detailed procurement information. It implies that implementation of the policy was being taken for granted following the cultural cognitive pillar of institutionalisation to suit individual interests such that there might be misappropriation of public funds.

4.2.4.2 Purchase of goods and services of standard quality.

12 respondents from BSS1 and DSS1 revealed that the public procurement policy helped to purchase goods and services of good quality. This concurs with the study by Onsongo et al. (2014) who affirmed that goods and services that were being procured in schools by following the procurement procedures were of standard quality. However, 12 respondents from BSS2 and DSS2 argued that quality was being compromised because of late payment of school fees by some students such that goods were bought locally and favouritism sometimes existed, hence low quality things were being purchased. Thus, it can be argued that implementation of public procurement policy could assist schools to purchase goods and services of standard quality if the procedures were followed properly and if students paid their school fees on time. In addition, implementation could be effective if head teachers and IPCs worked with integrity at all times.

4.3 Challenges faced when implementing the public procurement policy in school.

The role of PPP in schools is to ensure that there is regulatory compliance and prudent financial management. Institutional theory suggests that coercive governmental pressure would push the authorities in institutions to adopt the policy. Unfortunately, the PPP implementation faces various challenges in public secondary schools. The researcher sought to find out the challenges that the IPCs faced when implementing the PPP. Respondents pointed out that lack of registered suppliers, lack of finances, lack of training and cumbersome procedures in procurement were the major challenges in all the schools. The challenges have been discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Unregistered suppliers

All respondents indicated that most of the suppliers were not registered as recommended by the PPA (2003). As such, most of them were not willing to give out quotations because they were not familiar with procurement procedures. For this reason, 15 respondents revealed that they negotiated with one supplier who was registered to write three different quotations just to fulfil the procurement procedures. However, 5 respondents highlighted that the procurement procedures did not fit with the community that the schools served. One interviewee gave an example that:

It is difficult to purchase locally available materials like brooms following the procurement procedures because most of the vendors are from the community who do not really have the necessary documents like the licence and the ODPP certificate to support their business. Such being the case, the items are purchased from the vendors but payment of cheques is done through teachers who have got identity cards and bank accounts because the requirement is that institutions

should issue closed cheques. However, open cheques are also used (IPC member, DSS1).

This indicated that it was difficult to purchase items from vendors using the procurement procedures. As such, teachers were being involved to use their accounts to withdraw money for the vendors. This behaviour may create chances of making unfavourable decisions to manipulate figures so that teachers can also benefit from the transactions considering that teachers have their own work to do rather than withdrawing money on behalf of the vendors. This concurs with the study by Ohene-Addae (2012), who revealed that the PPP created more difficulties which eventually created the chances for corruption and fraud. This finding suggested the need for appropriate procurement methodologies that can even suit the vendors whose capital for business was minimal so that implementation of the policy in public schools could be beneficial to the development of the nation. This implies that an improvement in the public procurement process could in no doubt create wealth and reduce poverty in the country as a whole.

4.3.2 Lack of finances

Many respondents at BSS1, BSS2 and DSS1 revealed that the ORT that is received from the government is minimal as compared to the needs of the schools such that schools relied on local revenue that was collected as school fees. In addition, many respondents at BSS1, BSS2 and DSS1 explained that the resources from the local revenue were not enough to procure goods following the procurement procedures because most students were not paying their school fees on time. At DSS2, respondents

revealed that the school was a non-cost centre such that it only received grants from the government. One respondent at this school explained that:

“Procurement of some goods and services sometimes is done even before the IPC met to scrutinise the budget since purchasing was based on the priorities that the school need when the term begins”(IPC member, DSS2).

This means that expenditure of public funds at DSS2 was being done without considering the budget, which was contrary to MoEST (2014) who emphasised that expenditure of public funds should be done according to the budget. From an institutional point of view, the IPC members of this school seem to be entrenched in their views. In addition, all respondents in all schools explained that there were many delays in funding such that their planning was not being accomplished. Moreover, they argued that it was difficult to pay the suppliers accordingly if most students failed to pay school fees on time. This implies that only the basics of procurement were being done in some schools. Thus the procedures were not really being followed as recommended in the PPA (2003) as evidenced by delayed funding, late payment of school fees, and purchasing of things before the IPC met to scrutinise the budget.

4.3.3 Lack of training

Many IPC members indicated that it was very difficult to follow the procurement procedures as recommended because most of them lacked knowledge on procurement. Many of the respondents said that they were trained as teachers and their job was to teach. One respondent elaborated that:

I was trained as a teacher at college and nothing was said on procurement. My expectation was only to teach the learners and nothing else on procurement. By virtue of being the head of department I was told that I am a member of IPC. Without any training, I have been purchasing goods for the school for two years such that I usually use common sense instead of the procurement procedures. I do not know how long it takes for the government to train IPC (IPC member, DSS2).

This statement means that the IPC members needed training for them to be competent. This is in agreement with Onsongo et al. (2014) who revealed that the secondary school procurement committees lacked sufficient information on procurement procedures such that goods and services were purchased using different procedures depending on the knowledge that the committee had. This implies that lack of training was a challenge in schools where there were no procurement personnel who could guide the members in the purchase of goods and services. Training the IPC members was very important so that they might be transformed from being struggling amateurs to skilled members because they would be knowledgeable, confident and more active (Michael et. al. 2014). Considering the knowledge gap that existed among some IPC members and the head teachers, there was a possibility that the procurement procedures could easily be compromised.

4.3.4 Cumbersome procedures in procurement

Respondents at BSS1, BSS2, DSS1 and DSS2 revealed that procurement procedures were cumbersome and time consuming such that IPC members spent most of the time sourcing quotations instead of teaching. One respondent revealed that:

It is difficult to use the procurement procedures all the time because it is a long process and time consuming more especially when there is an emergency case like sickness and funeral (Deputy head teacher, DSS1).

Another respondent narrated:

The procurement process is too long for a teacher to follow it. It consumes most of the teaching time whenever the school tries to follow the proper procedures especially when a child is sick during the night or death of a member of staff (IPC member, BSS2).

This implies that there was some sort of bureaucracy in the procurement process which made it cumbersome such that it was difficult for one to be assisted during emergencies. This concurs with Michael et al. (2014) who revealed that procurement procedures were cumbersome and time consuming such that teachers were spending most of their time in purchasing goods and services instead of teaching. While the government had good intentions to save public funds through implementation of this policy, the findings clearly show that there are more challenges than expected. As a result, schools tend to use their own ways provided they purchase goods and services as required without considering the actual procedures that should have been followed per the requirement of the PPA of 2003.

This implies that implementation of the public procurement policy in schools was done based on the common beliefs that the institution had. This shows that schools were using the cultural-cognitive pillar to implement the PPP because of the long process involved in procurement.

4.4 Measures that were deployed to tackle the challenges

The researcher sought to find the measures that were deployed to tackle the challenges. The findings revealed that IPCs that were responsible for procurement tried their best to make the system more efficient regardless of the challenges discussed. Respondents at BSS1, BSS2 and DSS1 revealed that the challenge of unregistered suppliers is handled by negotiations. They revealed that they negotiated with the suppliers to issue three quotations as required even though they knew that the items were purchased using single sourcing method. In one school, respondents explained that:

“Suppliers seem not to be aware of this policy. We tried to explain to them on how schools should purchase goods from their shops and they assist us with the three quotations as required” (FGD centre, BSS1).

In another school, respondents confided:

It is not easy to purchase goods and services from registered suppliers. Most of the suppliers in town are not aware about this policy. What we normally do is to negotiate with one supplier who is registered to give us the three quotations. However, most of the suppliers who are able to do this sell their items at an expensive price. We just give them as an appreciation for their assistance because these documents are very important for a school to access funding from the government (FGD centre, DSS1).

From the explanation at BSS1, it is clear that schools try their best to consider the regulatory pillar of institutionalization by explaining to the suppliers about the need to have three quotations. On the other hand, the findings from DSS1 clearly showed that there was corruption and fraud for the two parties to reach a compromise. Respondents at DSS2 revealed that they purchased most of the items locally to avoid wastage of time with the suppliers in town.

The challenge of lack of finances was being tackled by considering the needs of the school. 18 respondents revealed that they preferred to prioritise when purchasing goods and services where funds were inadequate. If funds were not available, they preferred to borrow from the suppliers even though the goods were procured at an expensive price. This concurs with reviewed studies which established that head teachers preferred to borrow from suppliers. This resulted in single sourcing such that goods were procured at an expensive price (Kavula et al. 2014; Michael, 2014; Onsongo et al., 2012). With the meagre resources that the schools collected, many respondents at DSS2 revealed that they purchased most goods and services locally. During the focus group discussions, respondents at one school explained that:

There is a common practice of emergency procurement especially at the beginning of the term at this school when students fail to pay school fees on time but the goods and services at that particular time are needed most. In this case, the IPC addresses the situation at hand by purchasing goods and services locally (FGD Centre, DSS2).

From the explanations above, it implies that the revenue that was being collected in some schools was not wisely used through the available procurement procedures. The single sourcing that was being preferred to as a solution to tackle the challenge of finances can enable institutions to save public resources if properly used. However, this practice may lead to massive loss of public funds if not used properly, for example, through inflated figures. Procurement of goods as an emergency case as indicated at DSS2 can also lead to massive loss of public funds through misguided priorities.

On the issue of training as a challenge, head teachers, deputy head teachers, accounts clerks and teacher bursars revealed that they use the little knowledge they got during

the three days training they had in 2015 at Kasungu TTC. One head teacher explained that:

It is not easy to procure goods and services following the procurement policy because I am not an expert in procurement. Some of the procedures can be followed properly if schools had experts in procurement. In addition, I only attended training in 2015. There has been no training since that time (Head teacher, DSS2).

This statement clearly shows that it was difficult to effectively implement the policy because the head teacher who was supposed to train the IPC members was not much conversant with procurement issues. As such, it was likely that the IPC members too would have problems in understanding the procurement issues. This implies that the cultural cognitive pillar dominated most when handling procurement issues in schools unlike the normative pillar which focuses on what is right and appropriate.

Lastly, 18 respondents revealed that the procurement policy is open to misinterpretation depending on how the institution perceived it. In this regard, there was little consideration to implement this policy effectively because procurement is a long process. For this reason, 4 respondents revealed that they usually purchase goods locally and get receipts from vendors to support their expenditure although this is not recommended. Such being the case, there is a need to simplify the procedures and make them clear to all the IPCs in public schools to ensure proper implementation of the public procurement policy.

4.5 Perception of the procurement process by the internal procurement committee

During the focus group discussions, the general perception of 18 respondents was that the public procurement policy is a good policy especially in this era of democracy. It is one way of dealing with corruption in institutions but the way it was being implemented in schools was contrary to what the government expected. At one school, respondents elaborated that:

Procurement is a wide topic which requires more time for us teachers to understand the necessary procedures. The head teachers, deputy head teachers and accounts clerks were trained for three days and we understood that there was much content that was delivered on these days such that those who attended the training did not manage to capture the important information clearly. When they came here, they only briefed us for some hours and yet they had several documents that were given by the ODPP officials. We think there should be proper arrangements that the whole IPC of public schools and the head teachers should be trained accordingly (FGD centre, DSS1).

Another school explained that:

The PPP should be looked at further; public procurement is problematic in schools. Look at our school, it is close to the town but we are still failing to implement the policy. What about schools in rural areas? Can they manage to follow the procedures if schools in town are failing? Corruption will still continue if there will be no changes (FDG centre, BSS2).

Respondents from BSS1 and DSS2 echoed similar sentiments that there was a need to look at the procurement system further so that implementation of the PPP can achieve its intended purpose. This implies that the PPP implementation was difficult because the people who were given the tasks in schools were not fully conversant with procurement issues and the procedures required some amendments to fit in schools.

There was a need for proper training for all the members involved in procurement so that they could work with confidence as professionalism is one of the incentives that can promote implementation. According to Scott (2004), implementation of the policy is effective if the actors are well conversant with what they are doing. The revelation that the members who attended the meeting failed to capture all the important concepts showed that the training was done for a short period of time. In addition, the short briefing that was done at school level implies that those who attended the training were not fully conversant with the procurement issues.

4.6 Reasons for holding the perceptions towards the procurement process

The fifth objective was to establish the reason why the IPCs hold their perceptions towards the procurement process. When respondents were asked to give the reasons why they hold their perceptions towards the procurement process, most of them gave reasons that were related to poor communication of the policy, lack of training, lack of procurement manuals and inadequate resources in schools. During the focus group discussions, respondents at one school uttered that:

When there is a new policy from MoEST, we are informed through circulars. There is a file which contains such documents..... We tend to wonder why this policy was only communicated to us verbally. We cannot even remember when it came into existence. Is there any reason to pay much particular attention to such policies? If the government is really serious that schools should implement this policy, we think it is better to put it in writing to act as reminder to us (FGD centre, BSS1).

Respondents at BSS1 explained that:

Yes we know the importance of the policy especially in this era of democracy but we still need some more knowledge of procurement process. It's difficult to implement this policy because we do not even have the act that guides the procurement. We wonder why the government wants us to implement this policy and yet it is not serious to train us and give us the necessary documents..... Others received money for the training they attended but as IPC members we did not have that chance (FGD centre, BSS1).

At DSS1, respondents narrated:

Policies need to be communicated to us in a proper channel before they want us to implement them. This PPP seems to be poorly implemented because we were not even involved to explain our concerns on what really happens in schools regarding school expenditure. All what came to us is that we need to follow proper procedures when procuring goods and services, some of us have never seen the PPA which can guide us on how we should purchase things. We think MoEST in conjunction with the ODPP should provide procurement manuals to schools to act as a guide. In addition, the government should increase funding and provide to us on time (FGD centre, DSS1).

At DSS2, respondents explained their reason in this way:

We hold negative perceptions towards the implementation of this PPP. We have never heard our head teacher explaining to us that there are sufficient funds available for a particular term. All we hear is that funds are always insufficient to cater for all school activities. We tend to wonder why the government wants us implement this policy and yet the funds are inadequate in schools. Moreover, the grant that we receive from the government is very minimal and most of the time there are some delays to access the funds. This

policy requires schools to have adequate funds for it to be implemented. Without this consideration, loopholes will remain in schools (FGD centre, DSS2).

From the explanations above, it was clear that the implementation of the PPP was negatively affected by lack of proper communication from MoEST to the schools, lack of proper training, lack of procurement manuals for the IPCs and inadequate finances in schools. Because of these problems, respondents felt that implementation of the PPP could not be effective in schools.

From an institutional stand point, it can be inferred from the data that head teachers considered the PPP as an important legal obligation such that IPCs were institutionalized in all schools. However, the procedure that schools were using to purchase their goods and services indicated that the pillars in which the schools rested were weak. Cultural cognitive element dominated in most of the decisions that were being used to conform to the PPP. Moreover, the perceptions that the IPCs held and the reasons they gave indicated that PPP was not fully institutionalised in schools. Furthermore, the PPP was poorly enforced by the government evidenced by lack of the circular in schools. For this reason, implementation of this policy was based on the cultural cognitive pillar because of unclear policy and poor enforcement from the government. The government placed higher coercive pressure for the institutions to undergo a process of implementing the policy but the rate of adoption in schools is generally very low. This clearly shows that sanctions cannot work better when implementation is based on what the implementers perceive as important in their own understanding.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study in the light of the analysis of the data collected. The major findings presented in this study include the procedures that were being followed in schools when purchasing goods and services. The challenges that the internal procurement committees faced when implementing the policy have also been discussed. In addition, the study has presented and discussed the measures that were deployed to tackle the challenges in the perceptions of the internal procurement committees and the reasons why they hold their perceptions towards the procurement process.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Chapter overview

The study was set out to assess the public procurement policy implementation in selected secondary schools in Kasungu District. This study was undertaken purposely not only to fulfil the academic pursuit but also to ascertain the actual procedures that were being used in public schools when purchasing goods and services to ensure prudence in financial management so that all stakeholders in education could also be informed on the matter. This chapter presents the conclusion and the implications of the study. It also highlights some areas for further research that the current study did not address.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that the public procurement policy was increasingly being recognised in schools as a policy that could play a significant role in the management of public resources in education institutions. However, the procurement procedures that were adopted in public schools were quite different and not actually in line with the procurement guidelines although public schools share same goals, regulatory environments, structures and needs. Implementation of the public procurement policy seemed to be challenging in public

schools because the ones handling the procurement activities were not fully trained and that public schools could not afford to follow all the procedures due to lack of finances. To tackle the challenges, schools were purchasing their goods and services using single sourcing such that goods were being procured at an expensive price. Moreover, there was cheating when sourcing out the three quotations because quotations were being obtained from one supplier upon agreement, instead of three different suppliers. This is also corruption. According to institutional theory, the pillars that the schools were resting on seem to be weak evidenced by a widespread use of the cultural cognitive pillar. Proper implementation of this policy could be one way of dealing with corruption in public schools thereby improving financial management of public funds. Therefore, it can be argued that the public procurement policy is partially being implemented in public secondary schools

5.2 Implications

If schools will continue using different procurement procedures when purchasing goods and services using public funds then there might be imprudent financial management. The implication is that it will be difficult to monitor and account for public funds thereby failing to achieve the national education standard of financial management.

The procurement procedures used in public schools should be reviewed and guidelines should be provided so that eminent difficulties facing proper implementation of this policy can be addressed. Basically, there is a need to specify how goods can be purchased from vendors whose capital for business is minimal so that implementation of the policy in public schools can be beneficial to the development of the nation.

Some IPC members in schools are not fully empowered to perform their duties effectively. This means there may be misappropriation of public funds by some head teachers, deputy head teachers and accounts clerks or teacher bursars who are considered as key players in public schools. This implies that IPCs should be empowered so that they should have greater control of procurement activities at school level. When the items are purchased, all the members should have access to information regarding the purchasing process so that there should be transparency and accountability in schools. In addition, IPC members and suppliers should work in partnership so that goods that are purchased should be of good quality regardless of the price fluctuations on the market. This can promote prudence in financial management.

A system to provide continuous training to head teachers and IPC members who are the ones to implement the policy is highly recommended. It is important that MoEST should develop a procurement training program for head teachers and IPCs of schools. All the IPC members need to be exposed to further training so that they should be knowledgeable, confident and more active. The training programmes are required to equip the IPC members with skills in order to achieve the procurement policy objectives. In addition, suppliers need training in order to increase transparency and reduce corruption. If some IPC members are not fully conversant with the procurement procedures then there may still be unprocedural practices when using public funds. For this reason it could be difficult to achieve the national goals of education in Malawi.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

The present study used a very small sample and the results cannot be generalised. It is necessary for future studies to explore the issues raised in this study on a broader scale to understand what the situation is like in Malawi. In this study, only schools that were close to the CEED offices and those in town were sampled. It is necessary to find out how schools in other divisions and those in rural areas are implementing the policy, and compare with those from the urban areas.

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APPENDICES

AppendixA: Authorisation letters to generate data



University of Malawi
Chancellor College
P.O Box 280
Zomba
06th March, 2017

The Education Division Manager
Central East Education Division
Private Bag 233
Kasungu

GRANTED
J. Mungu (PENMA)
6/23/17
J. E. E. E.



Dear Sir,

PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN KASUNGU DISTRICT.

I would like to request for a permission to collect data in the following schools:

- Kasungu Secondary School
- Chayamba Secondary School
- Chapkhanga Community Day Secondary School
- Chiphaso Community Day Secondary School

I am a postgraduate student pursuing a Master's degree in Policy Planning and Leadership at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. I am conducting a research for my final year project, which is a requirement of the degree programme titled "*Assessment of Public Procurement Policy Implementation in Secondary Schools in Kasungu District*" as per attached introductory letter.

The information that will be collected will solely be used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Any assistance rendered on the basis of this information will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


Beatrice Nyongolo Mangochi

Appendix B: Interview guide for head teachers

1. What is your understanding of public procurement policy?
2. Do you have the internal procurement committee?
3. Who are the members of the IPC at this school?
4. How are the members of the IPC selected at this school?
5. How often do they meet for procurement proceedings?
6. Do you keep records for the procurement proceedings?
7. What are the guidelines which support the procurement process from the Ministry of Education?
8. What are the procurement methods that are used when purchasing goods and services?
9. What steps are followed at this school when procuring goods and services?
10. What do you consider when approving procurement plans for the school?
11. What benefits have accrued from the implementation of public procurement policy in your school?
12. What are the challenges faced in the implementation of the public procurement policy?
13. How do you tackle with the challenges to ensure effective use of public funds?
14. Do you think the policy has improved financial management in your school?
15. If you had a chance of advising the government about the policy regarding procurement in public schools, what would you say?
16. Do you have any issue/s you would like to add or explain that has not been covered in the questions?

Appendix C: Interview guide for IPC members

1. What is your understanding of public procurement policy?
2. Do you have the internal procurement committee?
3. How are the members of the IPC selected at this school?
4. What are the guidelines which support the procurement process from the Ministry of Education?
5. What are the procurement methods that are used when purchasing goods and services?
6. What steps are followed at this school when procuring goods and services?
7. What benefits have accrued from the implementation of public procurement policy in your school?
8. What are the challenges faced in the implementation of the public procurement policy?
9. How do you tackle with the challenges to ensure effective use of public funds?
10. What are your perceptions towards the procurement process?
11. Do you have any issue/s you would like to add or explain that has not been covered in these questions?

Appendix D: Focus group discussions guide for IPC members

1. How often does the procurement committee meet?
2. Do you always implement the public procurement policy when purchasing goods and services at this school?
3. Why do you hold some perceptions towards the procurement process?
4. What are the major issues that are of great concern regarding the procurement process at this school?
5. If you had a chance of advising the government about the policy regarding procurement in public schools, what would you say?
6. Do you have any other thing you want to say that I have not asked you?