



# The impact of public procurement on delivery of quality education in Queensburgh secondary schools, KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa

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**Background:** The South African government is faced with the challenge of expediting the provision of basic services while at the same time complying with public sector procurement regulations. The adherence to regulations results in delays in the provision of infrastructure for public schools.

**Aim:** The article seeks to assess the impact of public procurement processes on service delivery with regard to the provision of infrastructure to public schools.

**Setting:** The article focusses on secondary schools in Queensburgh, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

**Methods:** The article employed a qualitative research method and primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with eight Public Works officials and eight contractors that conduct business with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works (DPW). Purposive sampling had been utilised to identify participants.

**Results:** The article revealed that procurement processes profoundly impact the speed and quality of infrastructural delivery, and in many cases negatively, with delays being experienced.

**Conclusion:** The study showed that the procurement processes affect the delivery of infrastructure in public schools.

**Contribution:** This can assist the South African government in designing procurement in a manner that will expedite service delivery. This is not only going to assist in the provision of schools' infrastructure in Queensburgh area but should also become a blueprint to eliminate backlogs and delays in service delivery.

**Keywords:** KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works; public procurement processes; supply chain management; service delivery; contractors.

## Introduction

The public sector relies on public procurement in responding to its developmental mandate to build houses, construct bridges and provide schools with classrooms and textbooks for South African people (Mazibuko 2018:7). Pooe, Mafini and Makhubela (2015:67) observed that government uses public procurement to grow the economy, protect the national industry against foreign competition, revive certain industrial sectors, and provide solutions for regional differences. Telgen, Harland and Knight (2007:16) supported this view and stated that public procurement can play an essential role in delivering government objectives. Sibanda and Tshikovhi (2022:2) added that public procurement contributes mainly to public spending and has an impact on the demand for an economy.

Anthony (2013:3) stated that the government procurement contributes to the growth of the country's economy; therefore, it must be managed properly. Bolton (2006a:2) observed that public sector procurement is estimated to be almost 14% of gross domestic product (GDP). Watermeyer and Phillips (2020:7) found that the National Development Plan (NDP) is aimed at achieving 10% of GDP through public infrastructure investment that is funded through tariffs, public private partnership, taxes and loans. Mazibuko (2018:118) revealed that procurement processes enable the country to build the public infrastructure that includes spaces such as offices and facilities that provide places of work for officials, schools, hospitals and clinics that provide essential services.

Luyimbazi (2014:1) observed that the government uses independent contractors to deliver services to the people and invent processes to support service delivery. This is because of the private sector's success in achieving the levels of efficiency that the government cannot achieve. Procurement is therefore, a cornerstone of engaging and managing the service providers and a failure in procurement is detrimental to the delivery of services. Basheka (2009:2) stated that the public procurement process is necessary for ensuring good governance in that all government departments entrusted with the responsibility to deliver services are dependent on this process.

Regan, Love and Smith (2015:405) postulated that the traditional method of providing public infrastructure often results in delays and waste. This is re-echoed by Ambaw and Telgen (2017:403) who stated that procurement of goods and services in developing countries is outsourced to the private sector using inefficient procurement processes. Furthermore, various major projects are behind schedule and require the government to put more money to complete. Davis, Love and Baccharini (2008:10) revealed that project duration, in the traditional method, takes long in the sense that construction commences only when the project design is completed.

Telgen et al. (2007:18–20) further revealed that public procurement is subjected to a plethora of rules and procedures, which are sometimes contradictory. The rules and regulations make it difficult for the organ of state to create relationship with the suppliers, hence the role of supplier is important in service delivery. This view is supported by Eyaa and Oluka (2011:35) who postulated that procurement practitioners are operating in an environment that is governed by several regulations, policies, directives, intense scrutiny, technological changes and demand for service improvements. Watermeyer and Phillips (2020:63) found that the myriad of legal prescripts that regulate procurement in the South African public sector make it difficult for procurement staff to understand their expectations. In some instances, this creates fear to some procurement staff in discharging their duties owing to the Auditor General's power to hold officials individually responsible to reimburse the state for the funds misapplied. The organs of state that advertise tenders has slowed down owing to strict audit procedures that warrant rigorous checking to avoid errors that can lead to qualified audits. These factors make public procurement an intricate field.

As the government estimated to invest over R750 billion in infrastructure to support economic growth and improve the lives of its citizens, an efficient and cost-effective supply chain management system must be in place to ensure that those objectives are realised. Failure to deliver on the objectives interrupts the lives of the people and the economy thereof (National Treasury Department 2016:4). It is estimated that 20.47% of the GDP in South Africa comes from public procurement expenditure (Mhelembe & Mafini 2019:1). The public sector spending on infrastructure over the next 3 years

is estimated at R812.5 billion. There are six projects to be undertaken with a total value of R96 billion. This includes massive infrastructure and construction of six new border posts (National Treasury Department 2022:3). In the 2013–14 financial year, the South African public sector spent R500 billion on goods and services and construction works. If it is spent efficiently, this large amount of money will ensure the provision of services such roads and ports, schools and health services (National Treasury Department 2015:3–4).

For the government to fulfil the needs of their people they must prioritise efficient procurement practices to ensure the elimination of unnecessary delays in the system (Pooe et al. 2015:67). In developing countries, public procurement is considered as essential in delivering services and a considerable portion of the budget is spent on procurement. However, in many developing countries, the service delivery is poor despite the massive allocation of the budget being made (Davis 2014:79). Thai (2001:28) revealed that public procurement has many conflicting interests. Therefore, sound regulations are necessary to increase public confidence as failure to enforce regulations results in malfeasance.

In light of the earlier discussion, this study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- to ensure that effective procurement management impacts positively on education service delivery in South African public schools;
- determine the linkage between procurement processes and compliance management, and how this interface impacts on public school operations;
- to improve and streamline procurement management – and the aspect of compliance management – to benefit education delivery in public schools; and
- to propose novel procurement and compliance management policy adjustments.

## Literature review

### Public procurement conceptualised

Bolton (2006a:2) described procurement as the role of purchasing goods and services from private entities. Mazibuko (2018:1) defined procurement as the supply chain system for the acquisition of all necessary goods, works and services by the government and its organs in order to promote the general welfare of society. Anthony (2013:39) revealed that as procurement refers to 'acquisition', the phrase 'contracts for goods and services' as per section 217(1) would exclude the instances where the state is providing goods and services. The author is of the view that the word 'procurement' refers to acquisition of goods or services by public bodies and not the supply of such goods or services.

According to De La Harpe (2009:27) the provisions of the constitution are the starting point to define term procurement. Section 217 of the Constitution refers to the contracting of goods and services by the state. Section 217(1) further refers to 'contracts', and uses the word as a verb. This interpretation

is narrow in that it refers only to the contractual stage of procurement, a wide interpretation is needed that should include both the pre-contractual and contractual phase of procurement. De La Harpe (2009:28) further observed that a broad interpretation to section 217 is necessary to include the sale and letting of assets or services by the state. All governments require goods and services in order to operate. These goods and services can be obtained either 'in house' or by 'contracting out'. The process whereby the government obtains goods and services from entities that trade with the state is referred to as government procurement or public procurement (De La Harpe 2009:20–21). Watermeyer (2005:1) defined procurement as a process that creates, manages and fulfils contracts in connection with goods and services, construction works, engineering, hiring, as well as disposal and acquisition.

### **The impact of procurement processes on service delivery**

In the South African context, government procurement is dealt with in terms of section 217 of the Constitution. Furthermore, this section dictates that the procurement for goods and services be performed in line with a system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective (Mkhize 2023:46). However, Supply Chain Management (SCM) staff are inexperienced and under-skilled. Furthermore, SCM is grappling with high staff turnover and low levels of motivation (National Treasury Department 2015:4). Williams-Elegbe (2014:211) revealed that insufficient attention is dedicated in building capacity for the staff employed in procurement, in South Africa. In some instances, the benefits of procurement reforms are not achieved because of poor implementation of regulation, which is caused by a lack of understanding.

According to Watermeyer and Phillips (2020:61) the baseline study conducted by the National Treasury Supply Chain Management indicated the following: most SCM staff are placed in the Logistics Management function and few are employed in SCM; 4% of staff do not have matric qualification; 2% of staff are registered with a professional body or association and 50% of staff belong to Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS); 41% of officials possess a national diploma, 19% a bachelor degree, 1% have post graduate qualification and only 19% of staff has obtained SCM-related qualifications and most of the staff has completed courses such as accounting and public management.

This view is supported by Mazibuko (2018:115) who stated that bid committee members must have skills on regulatory practices, knowledge of policies, contract management and administration, financial analysis, industry expertise, commodity-specific knowledge of potential supply base, SCM and project management. Despite the above requirements, the majority of bid committee members do not have the requisite skills required to discharge their duties; hence the outcome of the bid specifications, bid evaluation and bid adjudication is compromised. Watermeyer and Philips (2020:38) supported

Mazibuko's view that underqualified SCM staff who lack construction industry acumen, can during evaluation of bids, overlook capable and deserving tenderers. Manyathi (2019:67) reiterated that there is a lack of skill and capacity in public procurement despite training programmes developed by the National Treasury.

Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss (2012:253) indicated that decentralisation of procurement to departments and provinces results in tender fraud and poor service delivery. This is also re-echoed by Munzhedzi (2016:2), who stated that corruption is underpinned by decentralisation of procurement to individual provinces, and public entities. Thobakgale and Makgopo (2018:43) added that decentralisation of the legal framework in which SCM procedures operate makes it difficult to detect all procedures contained in the legislation. This view is supported by the National Treasury Department (2015:5), which provides that SCM policies and regulations are difficult and confusing to the emerging contractors. For instance, emerging contractors should fill out forms when they bid for tenders; hence they lack administrative capacity and support. Moreover, the procedures are also difficult for the officials to interpret and implement.

Dlova and Nzewi (2019:16) reiterated that some staff members do not understand policies and procedure because of incomprehensible terminology. This is also re-echoed by Migiros and Ambe (2008:236) who recognised that lack of contractor's knowledge about SCM regulations and policies prevents them from registering their grievances about the unethical conduct of SCM officials. In the same vein, a lack of officials with requisite knowledge heightens non-compliance with SCM procedures and guidelines. Zitha, Sebola and Mamabolo (2016:67) added that non-compliance in public procurement is attributable to complex legislative requirements that govern the processes.

Watermeyer and Phillips (2020:63) also observed that the law and policy of public procurement in South Africa is contained in a difficult and inconsistent regulatory framework. There are approximately 22 pieces of legislation dealing with public procurement and this poses a challenge for experienced individuals in aligning the laws with the duties to be carried out. Mazibuko (2018:113) indicated that there are more than 80 different legal tools that govern the public sector SCM in South Africa. She is of the view that South Africa must modify its procurement regulatory environment to create a conducive environment for suppliers and practitioners. Mazibuko (2018:114) further stated that perennial poor policy implementation and operational flaws in institutional SCM oversight are attributable to inability of staff to interpret and apply policies and standards. Saad (2018:43) added that the lack of qualified supply chain cadres and a lack of skills and expertise to perform their duties hinders service delivery.

The administration of procurement practice in South Africa is riddled with flaws in that the criteria and point systems are

not implemented when bids are evaluated. The specifications are often not adhered to. At times, the quality of work undertaken suggests that market analysis is not conducted during the planning stage to achieve value for money. South Africa still uses the old manual system despite the advent of e-Procurement (Mazibuko 2018:125). Watermeyer and Phillips (2020:60) found that the amendments to the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Standard for Uniformity in Construction resulted in service delivery problems such as project delays, inappropriate appointment of qualified professional service providers which has caused major cost overruns on projects, inefficient infrastructure being delivered, increase in the failures of structural systems in buildings, the construction of inefficient buildings, the increase of disputes and poor infrastructure delivery that requires maintenance. Louw (2010:83) identified the challenges that hinder the functioning of public procurement as follows: conflicts of interest among committee members; procurement and provisioning are rule driven in that value for money is equated with the lowest bid; failure in linking procurement to budget and failure to collect statistical data on completed projects.

According to Bolton (2006b:193) public procurement in South Africa was granted authority by the Constitution to address the effects of past discrimination. However, public procurement in South Africa is not functioning without challenges. Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss (2012:243) noted that challenges of procurement in South Africa range from non-compliance with procurement and SCM-related legislations and policies to tender irregularities. Manyathi (2019:68) noted that the non-compliance with procurement prescripts is rife despite acts and policies promulgated by the National Treasury to enforce compliance.

Munzhedzi (2016:2) revealed that prices are inflated, contracts are awarded to friends or relatives and non-disclosure of interest by bid members, tenders are not advertised and bid committees are not properly instituted. According to the Republic of South Africa (2015:5), contractors abuse the current weak public sector SCM environment and this is manifested through high prices paid for goods and services, contracts that favour certain contractors, collusion, unethical behaviour, non-performance and poor-quality products and services rendered. As stated, there are a myriad of cases of tenders awarded to officials employed by the state, which amounted to millions of rand for the 2013–14 to 2014–15 financial year (Mazibuko & Fourie 2017:111). Nkwanyana (2023:66) reiterated that there are flaws in the manner in which procurement is being handled. Moreover, procurement processes are subjected to controversy which include the use of financial resources not in line with value for money, delays in payment of service providers and violation of laws.

Mahmood (2010:285) postulated that public procurement represents 18.42% of the world GDP. Witting (2007:2) revealed that public procurement, in developing countries, accounts for approximately 9% – 13% of their GDP. However,

the rampant corruption associated with procurement warrants attention. According to Basheka (2009:2) a huge portion of the budget is spent on procurement. It is assumed that between US\$30 and US\$43 billion could be available in the public procurement marketplace in sub-Saharan Africa. This is also echoed by Mkhize, Dorasamy and Anwana (2022:1329), who stated that a large portion of government money is spent on procuring goods, services and infrastructure; however, challenges in the administration of procurement and contract management are common in many countries.

Odhiambo and Kamua (2003:11) revealed that in most developing countries the procurement process is not understood by government procuring entities and the business community as well as stakeholders such as professional associations, academic entities and the general public. Despite steps taken by various developing countries to reform their public procurement systems, the process is still riddled with secrecy, inefficiency, corruption and undercutting, which results in the waste of resources. Kirai and Kwasira (2016:44) added that procurement performance is affected by factors such as lack of proper direction, poor coordination, bureaucracy, lack of competition and transparency, differing levels of corruption and absence of trained procurement personnel.

## Research methods and design

### Data collection

The study drew multiple perspectives from eight Public Works officials and eight contractors that conducted business with the Department of Public Works. The semi-structured in-depth interviews occurred in a formal setting, at government offices, and were recorded in audio and written formats. Thus, the researchers used the qualitative method for this study. Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data (Crossman 2017:1). The researchers chose purposive sampling within the scope of non-probability sampling. The respondents in this study were intentionally selected to respond to specific questions. Kothari (2009:59) stated that non-probability sampling is known by various names such as deliberate sampling, purposive sampling and judgement sampling. In this category of sampling, the researcher selects items for the sample deliberately. In other words, the researchers purposively choose a small mass of sampling out of a huge number which in turn becomes the representative of the whole.

### Population size and sampling techniques

The population of study consists of officials from DPW and contractors that conduct business with DPW. The target population includes junior, senior and technical staff from four components of the DPW. The four components include Finance, SCM, Programme Management and Professional Services.

Purposive sampling was employed to select the staff that have access to the required information for this paper; and

they include, the Chief Financial Officer; the Chief Construction Project Manager; the Deputy Director Programme Manager; the Project Manager; the Quantity Surveyor, the Assistant Director, the Practitioner SCM as well as eight contractors that conduct business with DPW. Sewnunan (2014) described sampling as selecting a small number of objects, people and events from an entire population and this small number is referred to as the sample.

### Data analysis method

Thematic content analysis and relevant coding practices were utilised in the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Any responses clearly deemed useful were kept and considered, meaning that the unrelated comments and confusion have been eliminated, with a view to work with the reduced and appropriate data. Bakre (2015) indicated that thematic analysis is a qualitative method utilised by the researcher to identify, analyse and report patterns within the data. He further asserted that thematic analysis helps the researcher to organise and describe the set of data in a detailed manner. There are six basic phases to conducting a thematic analysis; these include: becoming familiar with data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and producing the report.

This view is supported by Conradie (2020:106–107) who stated that there are six phases in thematic data analysis, namely, preliminary organising and planning; open and axial coding; development of preliminary code book; pilot testing the code book; final coding process; reviewing the code book and finalising the themes. Thematic analysis produces a set of themes that describe the most significant patterns in the data and these themes can be identified using inductive approaches. Dlungwane (2017:62) defined content analysis as a 'detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases'.

Robson (2011:477) identified the advantages of thematic content analysis as follows: it can be utilised in all types of qualitative data; it is an easy method to use; it can be used by researchers who lack experience of qualitative research; the results derived from analysis can be easily communicated to practitioners, policy makers, and an educated public; it is an ideal method to use when the researcher has to interact with participants to collect data and in the analysis of findings; it enables the researcher to summarise a huge chunk of qualitative data and it can be used in different fields and disciplines.

### Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Durban University of Technology, Management Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) (No. 63/17FREC).

## Results

The results derived from the semi-structured in-depth interviews with officials from the DPW and contractors that conduct business with DPW are hereby presented.

### Towards data categories and emergent themes (second cycle of coding)

Data categories and emergent themes have been identified by the researchers from the further reduced data set presented as part of the first cycle of coding discussed earlier in the text. The categories and themes closely correspond to the outcome of the first cycle of coding, ensuring that a clear and a logical line of analysis is demonstrated, where there is no move away from the data generated initially. The emergent themes were identified from the respondents' suggested descriptions, causes, solutions and implementation actions in relation to the delays and default in service delivery.

The themes as applied to the case study, have direct reference and implication to whether or not procurement processes impact on service delivery:

- *General fundamentals*, that is, prioritising the impact of procurement on service delivery.
- *Causes of the problem* – Refer to Table 1.
- *Solutions to the problem* – Refer to Table 1.

## Research findings

The study found in essence the following.

**TABLE 1:** Emergent causes and solutions to delays and default to service delivery.

Causes of delays and default in service delivery	Proposed solutions to delays and default in service delivery
<p><b>Procurement processes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtaining approvals from three committees sitting in different intervals</li> <li>• Failure of committees to sit timeously to attend to cases.</li> <li>• Request for funding for project implementation from client departments</li> <li>• The lodging of appeals by aggrieved bidders</li> <li>• Award of tenders to the lowest bidder</li> <li>• Failure of contractors to submit timeously the mandatory requirements</li> </ul>	<p><b>The causes presented in the column on the left should be addressed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegation of certain functions to the region and the increase of value thresholds</li> <li>• The committees must sit frequently to attend to cases</li> <li>• Allocation of sufficient budget for project implementation</li> <li>• More transparency on the process to avoid appeals</li> <li>• The tenders must be awarded at the market related price</li> <li>• Timeous submission of necessary documents</li> </ul>
Causes of delays and default in service delivery	Solutions to delays and default in service delivery
<p><b>Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of requisite skill to do the work</li> <li>• A lack of understanding of legislative prescripts</li> <li>• Insufficient staff employed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Contractors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of working capital</li> <li>• Poor cash flow management</li> <li>• A lack of knowledge of construction industry</li> <li>• The use of substandard materials</li> <li>• Invasion of construction sites by business forum</li> <li>• Incorrect compilation of specifications</li> <li>• Poor workmanship</li> <li>• Cancellation of projects</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage staff to study SCM related qualifications</li> <li>• Organise trainings workshops on legislative frameworks</li> <li>• Employ more staff</li> <li>• Offer financial assistance</li> <li>• Impart financial knowledge through trainings and workshops</li> <li>• Impart technical knowledge through training and workshops</li> <li>• The use of material specified in the tender specification</li> <li>• Law enforcement agencies intervention to fight the crime</li> <li>• Proper compilation and rigorous assessment of specifications</li> <li>• Provide trainings and workshops</li> <li>• The artisans' schools must be brought back.</li> </ul>

Source: Ngcobo, G.L., 2021, 'The impact of procurement processes on service delivery in high schools: As case study of Queensburgh high schools in KwaZulu-Natal', M. Tech, University of Technology as adapted from Conradie, H.F., 2020, 'Reference to inner city decay and problem buildings: The case of Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, South Africa', PhD, Nelson Mandela Bay University  
SCM, supply chain management.

## Overregulation

- The time it takes to obtain approvals from committees is long and it delays service delivery.
- The committees do not sit timeously because of committee members' tight schedules and workload.
- The client departments take time to approve the requests for fundings that are needed to fund the project.
- The appeals lodged by aggrieved bidders delay service delivery in that it takes time to resolve the disputes.

## Staff incompetence

- The staff employed at the SCM Unit lack requisite skill to do work.
- The staff employed at the SCM Unit lack knowledge of legislative prescripts.

## Late and non-delivery of projects

- The awarding of tenders to the lowest bidder results in defaulting of contractors.
- The invasion of construction sites by business forum results in defaulting of contractors.

## Inability of contractors to deliver

- Most contractors lack working capital to perform work.
- Most contractors lack knowledge of cash flow management.
- Most contractors lack knowledge of the construction industry.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made by the researchers, based on the findings of this study.

### Decentralisation of powers and functions

Delays in service delivery are attributable to obtaining approvals from committees or from senior managers who are delegated with powers to sign and approve. It is recommended that powers and functions to carry out duties must be decentralised to the managers at the district level in order to fast-track service delivery. Such an initiative will go a long way in eradicating delays that are caused by centralisation of powers to committees and managers at a senior level of governance.

### Civil Society Organisations to observe and monitor procurement processes

In view of the rampant corruption in government procurement and the manner in which the public perceives procurement operations, it is recommended that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) must be entrusted with the role of observing and monitoring procurement proceedings. In Nigeria, the involvement of CSOs in government procurement has been successful in identifying the breach of procurement

rules (Quinot & Arrowsmith 2013:144–145). Such a practice may not only reduce malfeasance but it will reduce the delays that are caused by the lodging of appeals by aggrieved bidders. The public's outlook at the government procurement will change in that people will perceive procurement as clean and fair.

## Introduction of mentorship programme

A lack of technical capacity hinders the success of many contractors to perform the work. Proper knowledge of pricing the tender document increases the contractor's chance of winning the bid. Moreover, the technical know-how enables the contractor to finish the project on time and to deliver quality workmanship. In most instances, contractors are failing to price and to execute projects successfully. It is recommended that the DPW must introduce the mentorship programme to assist the contractors with vocational training programmes and cash flow management. This may assist in reducing the failure and defaults in project implementation.

## Government business loan scheme

The failure and defaults in many construction sites is attributable to the lack of working capital by contractors. Some contractors possess the technical capacity to execute the projects but they lack funding. It is recommended that the government must introduce the business loan schemes to assist the struggling contractors with access to finance. This may enable South Africa to achieve the following:

1. effective and efficient service delivery;
2. job opportunities;
3. generating revenue out of tax paid by contractors; and
4. generating revenue out of loan repayments.

## Conclusion

The study's main goal was to determine whether procurement processes impact on service delivery. To achieve the main goal, an empirical and qualitative research was conducted to examine the effect of procurement processes on service delivery. The findings indicated that procurement processes profoundly impact service delivery. The provision of infrastructure in public schools in Queensburgh area, KwaZulu-Natal is riddled with delays because of factors such as insufficient budgets, obtaining approvals from committees, lodging of appeals and a lack of financial and technical capacity. Interventions to improve the delivery of public schools infrastructure are necessary to ensure that teaching and learning take place in a conducive environment. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the decision-making powers be decentralised to the district level, CSOs must monitor the tendering processes, the government must introduce a mentorship programme and loans must be offered to the emerging businesses. The study contributed to academic knowledge by indicating that, for the sampled schools, the procurement processes affected the delivery of infrastructure. Thus, the procurement

regulations are a fundamental tool in ensuring that the basic services are rendered effectively. In future, for further research, the study of procurement processes can be extended to National Public Works (as a procuring entity) and its client departments.

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## Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

## Authors' contributions

G.L.N. wrote the article with the supervision support of Dr. H.F.C.

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## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

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