

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

**INSTITUTIONAL ISOMORPHISM, INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS, PROCUREMENT
COMPETENCIES AND SME ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT
TRANSACTIONS IN UGANDA**

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**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE RESEARCH
CENTRE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROCUREMENT
AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT OF
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

PLAN A

2018

DECLARATION

I, Talemwa Julian declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my original and has never been submitted for any award in any institution of higher learning.

Signature: -----

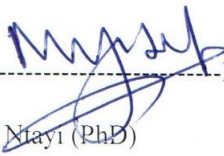
Date: 1st / 10 / 2018


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APPROVAL

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My special gratitude is extended to the Almighty God for enabling me to reach this far. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31).

I would like also to extend my sincere appreciation to my Supervisors Professor Joseph M Ntayi, and Mr. Mutebi Henry with whose guidance, support and encouragement this research project has been completed. Their professional guidance, insightful suggestions and immense cooperation was of immeasurable benefit in this project.

I am humbled by the selfless support of my dearest parents Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bigabwa, I thank them for their love and understanding during my studies, wherever I am, you are always with me. To my brothers and sisters and the entire family.

Finally, I would like to thank my class mates for their valuable views and opinions throughout this study period.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- SME : Small and Medium sized Enterprise
- PDE : Procurement and Disposing Entity
- PPDA : Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Authority
- SPSS : Statistical package for Social Science

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at SMEs engagement in public procurement transactions in Uganda. The study employed a cross sectional research design using a sample size of 364 out of 6247 SMEs registered with PPDA in Kampala district. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires to collect data from the respondents

The results revealed significant positive relationships between; institutional isomorphism and SMEs engagement public procurement transactions, institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies, procurement competencies and SME engagement in public procurement transactions, institutional logics and procurement competencies and institutional logics and SME engagement in public procurement transactions in Uganda.

In addition, results revealed that institutional logics and institutional isomorphism are significant predictors of SMEs engagement in public procurement. However, procurement competencies are not significant predictors of SMEs involvement in public procurement.

Hence recommend that SMEs should improve on institutional norms of professionalism, market and commercial logics as well as institutional pressures of following rules and regulations, professionalism and mimicking successful organizations in order to be fully engaged in public procurement transactions in Uganda.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study and the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the study

In today's business environment, success in procurement transactions depends more on full delivery of procurement contracts by providers which requires them to be engaged. Engagement of SMEs in the public sector is important because they are fundamental to economic growth and development. For SMEs have been identified as potential sources of government taxes, employment and innovations (Common wealth secretariat report, 2011). Engagement can be defined as a positive, fulfilling of contractual obligation characterized by energy, dedication and genuine willingness to contribute towards the achievement of the buyers' objective (Schneider, 2011).

However, despite the increase in the number of SMEs winning public contracts where 95% of their annual turnover is accounted for contracts won through tendering their level of engagement is low (Common wealth secretariat report, 2011). This is evidenced in case of M/s Kabila Technical Services Ltd that was contracted by Masindi district local government to construct a staff house for Kihagani Primary School but abandoned the site without completing work which caused financial loss to government which shows that these firms take work for granted hence being less engaged.

The low level of engagement is further evidenced in the case where Zzimwe Construction company was awarded a contract worth 5.4 billion to complete repairs on the Kibuye-Nateete-Busega Road and the Nakulabye-Nansana Road. Along the way the company was not committed to work, they had few employees who were not competent enough to execute such a big contract, they lacked professionalism which saw little work being done and it was unlikely that Zzimwe would complete the work within the time specified in the contract hence showing low levels of engagement. This shows that despite the fact that SMEs are given public contracts; most of them do not perform according to expected standards and time frame and this is blamed on the prevailing beliefs that SMEs lack experience, SMEs' lack of competencies, general lack of professionalism, weak regulatory frameworks from the weak institutional pressures. Therefore the study adopts institutional isomorphism, institutional logics and procurement competencies as theories in explaining SME engagement in public procurement transactions in Uganda.

Institutional isomorphism theory by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) analyses how the institutional context forces organizations to be similar to each other, in form and practice. Through three isomorphic processes of coercive, mimetic, and normative. These SMEs are constrained by the low enforcement mechanism, weak rules and regulations this is seen in the case of Zzimwe Construction Company limited that delayed repairs on the roads but no penalty was sanctioned. This makes these firms reluctant and hence being less engaged. Government can exert pressure on SMEs to execute the given contracts as required by the PDEs through putting up penalties in case of failure; this will make SMEs to work with energy, focused and dedicated to perform these contracts. With the normative pressure, SMEs can develop professional networks. However the institutional isomorphism theory does not explain the norms, cultures and practices in an

organisation that can be adopted for example professional, market and commercial logics which is explained by the institutional logics.

The theory of institutional logic builds on the premise that society consists of a set of interdependent and yet contradictory institutional logics and is rooted in seminal work by Friedland and Alford (1991), followed by Thornton and her colleagues (1999,2002, 2004, 2005, 2012).Institutional logics are derived from the institutional logics theory that refers to “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton & Ocasio,1999). The belief and perceptions that SMEs lack the appropriate expertise to perform contracts bring the low engagement level which is seen in the case of M/s Kabila technical services limited that did not complete work and abandoned the site since they had a belief that they could not handle the work anymore. This calls for professional logics. However this theory does not explain the competencies required for these SMEs to effectively perform these contracts such as operant and personal which are explained in the competency theory.

According to Boyatzis (2007), a competency is derived from the competency theory defined as a capability, ability or an underlying characteristic of an individual which is casually related to effective or superior performance. It is a set of related but different sets of behavior organized around an underlying construct, which we call the “intent”. The behaviors are alternate manifestations of the intent, as appropriate in various situations or times. According to Hutton and Moulton (2004), competencies are divided into two categories, the technical or operant competencies and the behavioural or personal competencies. Technical competencies are any

technical skills which are necessary for a job role; behavioural competencies are usually an expression of the softer skills involved in effective performance at a company. This is evidenced in the case of Zzimwe Construction Company limited that lacked technical expertise which caused delays in repairing the roads, which explains the low levels of engagement. According to (Munene et al., 2004), the diversity of the work involved in public procurement necessitates that SME staff are competent in a wide variety of generic procurement skills in addition to the specific technical skills and knowledge required when procuring for different sectors which thus helping them engage in public procurement transactions. It is upon this backdrop therefore that the study seeks to examine how institutional isomorphism, institutional logics and procurement competencies can influence SME engagement in public procurement transactions.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the increasing number of SMEs that tender for and win public contracts, a significant percentage of these SMEs are less engaged in public procurement transactions. This low level of engagement is attributed to delays in completing work, abandoning of work on site, which emanates from SMEs lack of competencies like the technical skills which these firms do not possess, SMEs beliefs, assumptions and perceptions that public sector contracts are huge and they do not have expertise to perform them, lack of professionalism, weak regulatory frameworks. The study therefore seeks to examine how institutional isomorphism, procurement competencies and institutional logics can influence SME engagement in public procurement transactions.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between institutional isomorphism, institutional logics, procurement competencies and SME engagement in public procurement.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To examine the relationship between institutional isomorphism and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.
- ii. To examine the relationship between institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies.
- iii. To examine the relationship between procurement competencies and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.
- iv. To examine the relationship between institutional logics and procurement competencies.
- v. To examine the relationship between institutional logics, and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.

1.5 Research questions

- i. What is the relationship between institutional isomorphism and SME engagement in public procurement transactions?
- ii. What is the relationship between institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies?
- iii. What is the relationship between procurement competencies and SME engagement in public procurement transactions?
- iv. What is the relationship between institutional logics and procurement competencies?

- v. What is the relationship between institutional logics and SME engagement in public procurement transactions?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Conceptual scope

The study focused on the institutional, institutional logics, procurement competencies and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

The study was conducted on registered small and medium sized enterprises in Kampala district specifically registered with Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority. This was so because most of the registered SMEs are in Kampala district

1.6.2 Time Scope

The study was conducted in a period of ten (10) months that is to say within 2017. This time was enough for the entire research process.

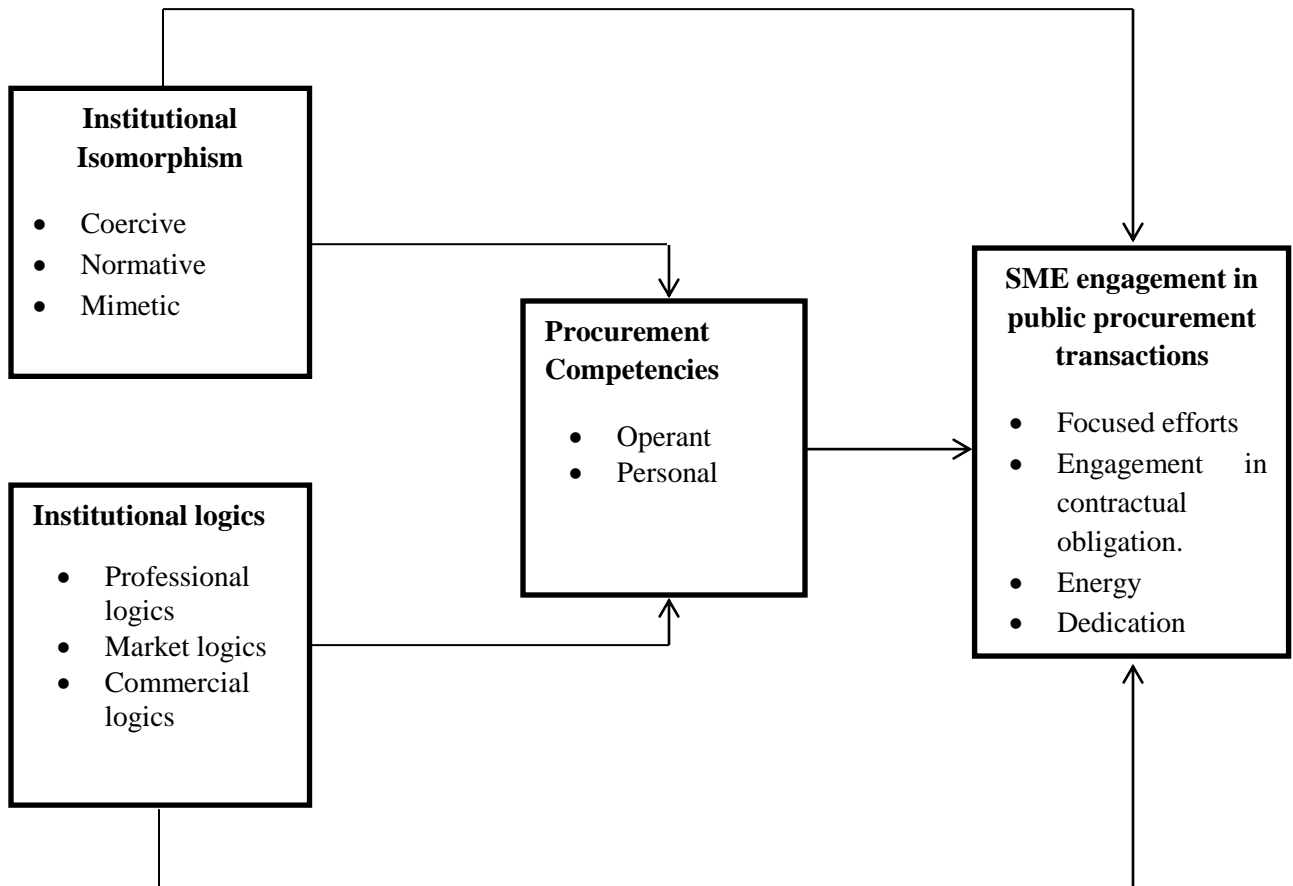
1.7 Significance of study

- i. The study will help SMEs understand and apply institutional isomorphism and institutional logics in order to improve on their engagement in public procurement transactions.
- ii. The study will help policy makers in assessing appropriate policies to improve the SMEs engagement in public procurement transactions.

iii. The study will be used by researchers for further studies on use of institutional isomorphism and institutional logics to improve SMEs' engagement in public procurement transactions.

1.8 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework that guided this study was largely be influenced by the works of (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983), Thornton and Ocasio (1999), Munene et al, (1997).



Source: Developed using literature from Meyer and Rowan, (1977)DiMaggio and Powell, (1983), Thornton and Ocasio (1999), Munene et al, (1997); Boyatzis, 1982, 2007 and Albrecht and Wilson Evered (2012).

1.9 Explanation of the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework above illustrates the relationship between the variables as described in the study. SME engagement is the dependent variable which was studied in terms of focused efforts, engagement in contractual obligation, dedication and energy while institutional isomorphism, procurement competencies and institutional logics are the independent variables. Institutional isomorphism, procurement competencies and Institutional logics affect SME engagement in public procurement transactions in Uganda.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the literature of the study regarding relationship between variables of the study which are institutional isomorphism, institutional logics, procurement competencies and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.

2.2 Institutional isomorphism and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.

The theory of isomorphism addresses the structural determinants of the range of choices that actors perceive as rational or prudent (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 149). Institutional isomorphism leads organizations to adopt similar structures, strategies and processes (Davis, 1991; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Isomorphism has emerged from the concept of homogeneity, which indicates processes that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions (Hawley, 1968). Consequently, organizational field is a key in shaping organizational forms, processes, and beliefs. Structures and processes that are institutionally derived may be idiosyncratic to organizational field and conformity is facilitated by normative, coercive and mimetic processes (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and they conforming to rules and requirements may do so not necessarily to increase efficiency but rather to increase legitimacy which in turn increases changes for survival (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggest organizations converge on similar practices and behaviours and appear similar to other organizations over time. The appearance of change towards homogeneity is explored through the institutional isomorphic change theory which identifies

three institutional pressures as coercive, normative and mimetic, influential in determining how adopted behaviours and practices become isomorphically accepted by the organizational field. Coercive pressures can also arise from government regulations, policies, industry, professional networks and associations, or in the form of competitive necessity within an industry or market segment (Tolbert and Zucker 1983). Other researchers define coercive as: “Pressures to make organizational procedures and/or structure conform to best practices, arising from the demands of actors on whom the organization is dependent for resources or even with the outright regulation and mandates” (NCSU, 2008).

Through these regulations, SMEs should be pressured to perform contracts within the specified timeframe and take them seriously and for those that do not be punished accordingly. With this SMEs are focused and dedicated to perform public contracts. Normative systems are typically composed of values (*what* is preferred or considered proper) and norms (*how* things are to be done, consistent with those values) that further establish consciously followed ground rules to which people conform (Scott, 2007). Normative institutions therefore exert influence because of a social obligation to comply, rooted in social necessity or what an organization or individual should be doing.

Mimetic isomorphism results as organizations respond to uncertainty by mimicking actions of other organizations. When technologies are poorly understood, goals are ambiguous, or when the environment creates uncertainty, organizations may model themselves after other organizations perceived to be legitimate or successful (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Due to the uncertainty that SMEs are unlikely to perform the contracts according to desired expectations (GHK, 2010); they are susceptible to be mimetic. Therefore, this brings them to a point of mimicking ideas

from big organizations for example SMEs can learn how the big organizations develop networks, which technologies they are developing which makes them more experienced thus being engaged.

2.3 Institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies.

Consequently, organizational field is a key in shaping organizational forms, processes, and beliefs. Structures and processes that are institutionally derived may be idiosyncratic to organizational field and conformity is facilitated by normative, coercive and mimetic processes (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and they conforming to rules and requirements may do so not necessarily to increase efficiency but rather to increase legitimacy which in turn increases changes for survival (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

The appearance of change towards homogeneity is explored through the institutional isomorphic change theory which identifies three institutional pressures as coercive, normative and mimetic, influential in determining how adopted behaviours and practices become isomorphically accepted by the organizational field. The theory of isomorphism addresses the structural determinants of the range of choices that actors perceive as rational or prudent (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 149). In ambiguous environments, behaviours and structures may be patterned after behaviours and structures of others.

Normative systems are typically composed of values (*what* is preferred or considered proper) and norms (*how* things are to be done, consistent with those values) that further establish consciously followed ground rules to which people conform (Scott, 2007). Normative institutions therefore exert influence because of a social obligation to comply, rooted in social necessity or what an organization or individual should be doing. Normative isomorphic pressures come from the professionalization of a field of endeavour. Members of a field are pressured, as a

collective, to adopt and adhere to defined methods and conditions of their work. Sources of normative isomorphism can involve the creation of education and certification standards, formalization of member based networks such as professional associations, or pressures of a group where the benefits derived stem from constituent connections from the state of belonging and formal membership. Coercive isomorphic pressures result from power exerted by legitimated institutions upon which the organization depends for resources. Compliance or non-compliance can alter power relations. Coercive pressures are experienced as force, persuasion or sanctions. Other researchers define coercive as: “Pressures to make organizational procedures and/or structure conform to best practices, arising from the demands of actors on whom the organization is dependent for resources or even with the outright regulation and mandates” (NCSU, 2008).

A competence is the ability to deliver expected performance results (Munene et al, 2007). According to Hutton and Moulton (2004), competencies are divided into two categories, the technical or operant competencies and the behavioural or personal competencies. According to Armstrong (2008), the diversity of the work involved in public procurement necessitates that SME staff are competent in a wide variety of generic procurement skills in addition to the specific technical skills and knowledge required when procuring for different sectors and commodities. These skills can be got through normative pressures which encourages professionalism meaning that SMES should employ professionals with skills in procurement which helps them to easily engage in procurement related transactions.

2.4 Procurement competencies and SME engagement in public procurement transactions

According to Boyatzis (2007), a competency is defined as a capability, ability or an underlying characteristic of an individual which is casually related to effective or superior performance. It is a set of related but different sets of behaviour organized around an underlying construct, which we call the “intent”. The behaviours are alternate manifestations of the intent, as appropriate in various situations or times. According to Hutton and Moulton (2004), competencies are divided into two categories, the technical or operant competencies and the behavioural or personal competencies. Technical competencies are any technical skills which are necessary for a job role; behavioural competencies are usually an expression of the softer skills involved in effective performance at a company. Technical competencies typically learned in an educational environment or on the job. On the other hand, behavioural competencies like decisiveness, integrity and dealing with pressure are learned through life experiences and form our behaviour patterns.

According to Armstrong (2008), the diversity of the work involved in public procurement necessitates that SME staff are competent in a wide variety of generic procurement skills in addition to the specific technical skills and knowledge required when procuring for different sectors and commodities and thus they can be able to meet contractual obligations since they possess technical skills hence having the dedication to executing contracts thus making them engaged in public procurement transactions.

2.5 Institutional logics and procurement competencies.

The theory of institutional logic builds on the premise that society consists of a set of interdependent and yet contradictory institutional logics and is rooted in seminal work by Friedland and Alford (1991), followed by Thornton and her colleagues (1999,2002, 2004, 2005, 2012).Thornton and Ocasio (1999) proposed a comprehensive definition of institutional logics as socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality. For SMES to fully engage in public procurement transactions they need a professional logic which focuses on personal reputation, network and growth, Thornton (2001, 2002). This can be sought though having personal competencies which focus on decisiveness, integrity and dealing with pressure, this leaves personnel in these SMES focused to execute what is required of them in dealing with procurement transactions since they are willing to work within their professions thus continued engagement in public procurement transactions.

2.6 Institutional logics and SME engagement in public procurement transactions

The theory of institutional logic builds on the premise that society consists of a set of interdependent and yet contradictory institutional logics and is rooted in seminal work by Friedland and Alford (1991), followed by Thornton and her colleagues (1999,2002, 2004, 2005, 2012).Thornton and Ocasio (1999) proposed a comprehensive definition of institutional logics as socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality. SMEs with the belief that using professionals

to execute procurement transactions can help them since they possess technical knowledge to perform the contracts according to the expected standard and within the time frame, this makes them focused and dedicated thus being engaged. Those SMEs with a belief that the public sector market is open to them and welcomes their service will make efforts to serve the public sector thus being engaged in public procurement transactions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section covered the tools and techniques which were used to investigate the research issues in the field. It covered the research design, area of study, study population, methods and techniques that were used in choosing the same and sample selection procedures, data sources and collection instrument. It also included reliability and validity analysis measurement of variables and data analysis and processing.

3.2 Research design

The study was a cross sectional quantitative research approach. It employed a quantitative research design to establish whether institutional isomorphism, institutional logics and procurement competencies effect on SMEs' engagement in public procurement transactions. Correlation design was adopted to explain the relationships between variables of the study and regression design to determine the extent to which the independent variables explain SME's engagement in public procurement transactions. The objective was to examine the relationship between variables and predictive potential of independent to be dependent variable.

3.3 Study population

The study population comprised 6274 Registered SME's with PPDA around Kampala district and was extracted from the PPDA website (List of registered providers).

3.4 Sampling procedure and sample size determination.

The sample size of 364 was determined from a population of 6274. The unit of analysis was an SME and simple random sampling technique used to select the SMEs, this was used by visiting the PPDA website and got a list of registered SME providers after generating the list I went ahead and I wrote down the names of each provider on a piece of paper, shuffled the papers and picked at random until I got the number of SMEs I wanted to collect data from. The unit of inquiry was two respondents from each SME basically focusing on business owners or managers.

3.5 Source of data.

Data were collected directly from respondents using self-administered questionnaires in the selected SMEs. This involved variables such as institutional isomorphism, institutional logics, procurement competencies, and SME engagement in public procurement transactions in Uganda. The variables were measured by a combination of different items measured on the Likert scale.

3.6 Data collection instruments.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires which were filled by the respondents.

3.7 Measurement of variables

Institutional isomorphism was measured through three indicators proposed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) which are coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism using a five Point Likert Scale that ran from strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, not sure=3, agree=4, strongly agree=5.

Institutional logics was measured through three indicators professional logics, market logics and commercial logics as adopted from Miner, (1981) and the works of Gendron, (2002) using a five

Point Likert Scale that ran from strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, not sure=3, agree=4, strongly agree=5.

Procurement competencies were measured through two indicators as proposed by Munene, (2004); Ryan, Emmerling & Spencer, 2009; Hudson, 2008; Boyatzis, 1982, 2007; which include operant and personal competencies using the five Point Likert Scale that ran from strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, not sure=3, agree=4, strongly agree=5.

SMEs engagement was measured through four indicators focused efforts, engagement in contractual obligation, dedication and energy as proposed by Albrecht and Wilson Evered (2012) using the five Point Likert Scale that ran from strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, not sure=3, agree=4, strongly agree=5.

I used a five point Likert scale because it gave respondents a wide choice and free will to express their opinions basing on the fact that it is free from bias.

3.8 Reliability and validity of the measurement instrument.

Validity refers to the ability to produce findings that are in agreement with theoretical or conceptual values to produce accurate results, to measure what is supposed to be measured.

Validity test indicate the level of ability of a scale to measure the intended concept. The questionnaire has to be clear, relevant and adequate for measuring the respective study construct.

Reliability is the ability of an instrument to produce consistent results (consistency). A method is reliable if it produces the same results whenever it is repeated. Reliability test indicate that the extent to which it is without bias or error free, and hence ensures consistent measurement across

time and across the various items in the instrument. It was measured using Cronbach Alpha coefficient test at 0.7 of internal consistency.

Table 3.8.1 Reliability and Validity

Variable	Anchor	Cronbach Alpha Value	Content Validity Index
Institutional Isomorphism	5 Point	.708	.875
Procurement Competencies	5 Point	.704	.833
Institutional Logics	5 Point	.703	.889
SME Engagement	5 Point	.750	.826

3.9 Data processing, analysis and presentation.

The data collected were edited for completeness and consistency to ensure correctness of the information given by respondents. Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for data entry and analysis of the study variables. Analysis of data included descriptive statistics by Pearson's correlation coefficient for establishing the relationship among study variables and a regression analysis to determine the relationship between institutional Isomorphism, procurement competencies, institutional logics and SMEs engagement in public procurement transactions in Uganda.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATIONS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study.

The data analysis aimed at satisfying the following research objectives;

- i. To examine the relationship between institutional isomorphism and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.
- ii. To examine the relationship between institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies.
- iii. To examine the relationship between procurement competencies and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.
- iv. To examine the relationship between institutional logics and procurement competencies.
- v. To examine the relationship between institutional logics, and SME engagement in public procurement transactions.

4.1 SME Characteristics

The table below highlights SME characteristics which include workforce size; the capital investment and the annual sales turn over.

Table 4.1.1 Business Characteristics

Number of employees	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
5 - 49 employees	22	12.1	12.1
50 - 100 employees	78	42.9	54.9
101 - 360 employees	64	35.2	90.1
Above 360 employees	18	9.9	100.0
Total	182	100.0	

The capital investment	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
10 - 100 million	6	3.3	3.3
101 - 360 million	74	40.7	44.0
Above 360 Million	102	56.0	100.0
Total	182	100.0	

The Annual sales turnover	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
10 - 100 Million	2	1.1	1.1
101 - 360 million	40	22.0	23.1
Above 360 million	140	76.9	100.0
Total	182	100.0	

Source: primary data: 2017

The results in the table 4.21 above indicated that there are 50 - 100 employees in most of these SMEs that have been prequalified with the PPDA and therefore eligible to do business with the government institutions (42.9%). It was noted that only 35.2% of these SMEs have over 101-360 employees. It was noted that 9.9% of these SMEs have above 360 employees. This implies that most of these businesses cannot independently handle large government projects but would have to partner with larger companies, which may affect the profitability of these businesses.

The results in the table 4.21 above indicated that most of these SMEs have a capital investment above 360 million (56.0%). It was noted that 40.7% of these SMEs have a capital investment of 101-360 million. The implication here is that most of the SMEs having more than 360 Million

capital investment stand a greater chance of starting contract execution even before they are given advance payment as expected.

The results in the table 4.21 above indicated that most of these SMEs that have annual sales turnover above 360 million (76.9%). It was noted that 22.0% of these SMEs have annual sales turnover 101- 360 Million and only 1.1% of the SMEs have annual sales turnover between 10-100 million. The implication here is that most of the SMEs having more than 360 Million have a high profitability from performing these contracts.

4.2 SME official characteristics

The table below highlights SME individual characteristics which include gender, age group, and highest level of education.

Table 4.2.1 Individual Characteristics.

Gender Distribution	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	172	47.3	47.3
Female	192	52.7	100.0
Total	364	100.0	
Age Group	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24 years	68	18.7	18.7
25-35 years	106	29.1	47.8
36-45 years	115	31.6	79.4
46-55 years	48	13.2	92.6
Above 55 years	27	7.4	100.0
Total	364	100.0	
Highest level of Education	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Certificate	38	10.4	10.4
Diploma	65	17.9	28.3
B.Degree	134	36.8	65.1
Masters Degree	97	26.6	91.8
PhD	30	8.2	100.0
Total	364	100.0	

Source: primary data: 2017

Table 4.2.1 Individual Characteristics - Continued

Tenure with SME	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 - 5 years	135	37.1	37.1
6 - 10 years	74	20.3	57.4
11 - 15 years	88	24.2	81.6
16 - 20 years	46	12.6	94.2
Above 20 years	21	5.8	100.0
Total	364	100.0	

Professional Training	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Procurement	105	28.8	28.8
Accountancy	86	23.6	52.5
Marketing	88	24.2	76.6
Other	85	23.4	100.0
Total	364	100.0	

Source: primary data: 2017

The results in table 4.31 above indicated that female respondents formed the majority of the respondents to this study (52.7%) compared to male respondents who formed (47.3%) This implies that majority of staff working in these SMEs are female.

The results in table 4.31 above indicated that majority of the respondents were between the age of 36-45 forming 31.6% followed by respondents between that age of 25-35 years forming a percentage of 29.13%, respondents between 18-24 forming 18.6% and the respondents above 55 years had the least percentage of 7.7%. This therefore shows that majority of the respondents were mature enough to give valid responses.

The results in table 4.31 above indicated that that 36.8% of the respondents were degree holders followed by 26.6% at a post graduate level and those respondents at diploma level formed 17.9%. The least respondents were at a certificate level 10.4% and PhD holders at 8.2% respectively. This implied that the respondents had the capacity and qualifications to react to the questions in the questionnaire.

The results in table 4.31 above indicated that majority of the respondents have worked with the respective SMEs for a period of 1- 5 years (37.1%), followed by those that have worked for a period of 11- 15 years (24.2%), 20.3% of the respondents have worked with the SMEs for a period of 6-10 years implying that majority of the respondents had enough experience in the organization and were in position to give valid responses.

The results in table 4.31 above indicated that majority of the respondents had professional training in procurement forming 28.8%, followed by accountancy, marketing and others that formed 23.6% implying therefore that the respondents had enough knowledge in the procurement field based on the training thus being an appropriate target of the study.

4.3 Relationships between the Study Variables

The table below highlights the Pearson (r) correlations results.

Table 4.3 Pearson Correlation Results

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Institutional Isomorphism-1	2.747	.957	1.000			
Procurement Competencies-2	2.992	.989	.359**	1.000		
Institutional Logics-3	2.662	.871	.292**	.559**	1.000	
SME Engagement-4	2.72	.914	.462**	.440**	.614**	1.000

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Source: primary data: 2017

4.3.1 Institutional isomorphism and SME engagement

The results in the table above indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between institutional isomorphism and SME engagement ($r = .462^{**}$, $p < .05$). The results show that when the SMEs are compelled to adhere and comply with the PPDA guidelines and regulations, then they stand a better chance of both successfully completing the PPDA assignments. In addition, when these SMEs have a reputation for professionalism, then they are more likely to anticipate changes in the work environment that will affect their performance, and take proactive measures so that they minimise losses in their business.

4.3.2 Institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies.

The results in the table above indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies ($r = .359^{**}$, $p < .05$). The results show that when the SMEs are compelled to adhere and comply with the PPDA guidelines and regulations, then they stand a better chance of both successfully completing the PPDA assignments. In addition, when these SMEs have a reputation for professionalism which breeds

technical competency, then they are more likely to anticipate changes in the work environment that will affect their performance, and take proactive measures so that they minimise losses in their business.

4.3.3 Procurement competencies and SME engagement

The results in the table above indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between procurement competencies and SME engagement ($r = .440^{**}$, $p < .05$). The results show that SMEs having competent staff are more likely to be engaged meaning they have to employ those people that have the technical skills of performing the contract since they work focused and dedicated to complete the work within the required timeframe.

4.3.4 Institutional logics and procurement competencies.

The results in the table above indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between institutional logics and procurement competencies ($r = .559^{**}$, $p < .05$). The results show that institutional logics are associated with a positive effect on the procurement competencies of the firm. The results reveal that for SMES to fully engage in public procurement transactions they need a professional logic which focuses on personal reputation, network and growth. This can be sought through having personal competencies which focus on decisiveness, integrity and dealing with pressure, this leaves personnel in these SMES focused to execute what is required of them in dealing with procurement transactions.

4.3.5 The relationship between institutional logics, and SME engagement

The results in the table above indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between institutional logics and SME engagement ($r = .614^{**}$, $p < .05$). The results for instance, reveal that when firms are motivated by the profits from contracts, they are more likely to work

with energy, dedication and focused effort of reaping these profits. The results furthermore, reveal that understanding the market information and handling the matters in a professional manner, SMEs are likely to know what is required of them to perform as expected.

4.4 Regression Model Analysis

The results in the table below show the prediction model which was presented so as to examine the level to which Institutional Isomorphism, Procurement Competencies and Institutional Logics can account for variances in the SME Engagement.

Table 4.4 Regression Model

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.195	.622		1.922	.056
Institutional Isomorphism	.371	.074	.296	5.017	.000
Procurement Competencies	.144	.172	.057	.835	.405
Institutional Logics	.706	.095	.496	7.457	.000
Dependent Variable: SME Engagement					
R	.683				
R Square	.467				
Adjusted R Square	.458				
Std. Error of the Estimate	.576				
R Square Change	.467				
F Change	51.893				
Sig.	.000				

Source: Primary Data: 2017

It is clear that Institutional Isomorphism, Procurement Competencies and Institutional Logics can account for variance of 45.8% in the SME Engagement (Adjusted R Square = .458), this implies that other factors contribute 54.2% . The best predictor of the SME Engagement was Institutional Logics (Beta = .496, Sig. <.01) followed by Institutional Isomorphism (Beta = .371, Sig. <.01). The regression model was statistically significant (F Statistic = 51.893, sig. <.01)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the discussion, conclusion and recommendations from analysis and interpretation of the results. The discussion details explanations of the results in comparison with other scholars while the conclusion deals with the final remarks as regards to the study objectives. The chapter concludes by raising the areas for further research and the research limitations.

5.2 Discussion of findings

5.2.1 Institutional isomorphism and SME engagement

The findings of the study indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between institutional isomorphism and SME engagement ($r = .462^{**}$, $p < .05$) implying that as the level of institutional isomorphism among SMEs increases their engagement also increases. The results show that when the SMEs are compelled to adhere and comply with the PPDA guidelines and regulations, then they stand a better chance of both successfully completing the PPDA assignments. In addition, when these SMEs have a reputation for professionalism, then they are more likely to anticipate changes in the work environment that will affect their performance, and take proactive measures so that they minimize losses in their business. This is supported by the works of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), they suggest that organizations converge on similar practices and behaviours and appear similar to like organizations over time. When goals are ambiguous, when the environment creates uncertainty, organizations may model themselves after

other organizations perceived to be successful (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Due to the uncertainty that SMEs are unlikely to perform the contracts according to desired expectations (GHK, 2010); they are susceptible to be mimetic. Therefore, this brings SMEs to a point of mimicking ideas from big organizations for example learning how these organizations develop networks, which technologies they are developing hence making them more experienced thus being engaged in public procurement transactions.

5.2.2 Institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies

The findings of the study indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between institutional isomorphism and procurement competencies ($r = .359^{**}$, $p < .05$). The results show that when the SMEs are compelled to adhere and comply with the PPDA guidelines and regulations, then they stand a better chance of both successfully completing the PPDA assignments. In addition, when these SMEs have a reputation for professionalism, it breeds competencies which skills help them to make decisions, set priorities and choose goals on the basis of calculated inputs and outputs, adhere to the PPDA act, collaborate showing commitment to the team, committing to make the team a success, hence performing according to expected standards.

5.2.3 Procurement competencies and SME engagement

The findings of the study indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between procurement competencies and SME engagement ($r = .440^{**}$, $p < .05$). when these SMEs have a reputation for professionalism, it breeds competencies which skills help them to make decisions, set priorities and choose goals on the basis of calculated inputs and outputs, adhere to

the PPDA act, collaborate showing commitment to the team, committing to make the team a success. This shows that SMEs having competent staff are more likely to be engaged meaning they have to employ those people that have the technical skills of performing the contract since they work focused and dedicated to complete the work within the required timeframe.

5.2.4 Institutional logics and procurement competencies.

The findings of the study indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between institutional logics and procurement competencies ($r = .599^{**}$, $p < .05$). The results show that institutional logics are associated with a positive effect on the procurement competencies of the firm. The results reveal that for SMES to fully engage in public procurement transactions they need a professional logic which focuses on personal reputation, network and growth. This can be sought through having personal competencies which focus on decisiveness, integrity and dealing with pressure, this leaves personnel in these SMEs focused to execute what is required of them in dealing with procurement transactions.

This is supported by the works of Armstrong (2008), the diversity of the work involved in public procurement necessitates that SME staff are competent in a wide variety of generic procurement skills in addition to the specific technical skills and knowledge required when procuring for different sectors and commodities. These skills can be got through normative pressures which encourages professionalism meaning that SMEs that employ professionals with skills in procurement are likely to perform the contracts to desirable standards.

5.2.5 Institutional logics and SME engagement.

The findings of the study indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between institutional logics and procurement competencies ($r = .614^{**}$, $p < .05$). The results for instance, reveal that when firms are motivated by the profits from contracts, they are more likely to work with energy, dedication and focused effort of reaping these profits. The results furthermore, reveal that understandings the market information and handling the matters in a professional manner, SMEs are likely to know what is required of them to perform as expected. In addition, firms that have a strong loyalty to our procurement profession understand rules and regulations implement them effectively, aware of the prevailing conditions in the public sector market work with the dedication of performing according to expected standards thus being engaged in these transactions.

5.3 Conclusion

In this research, the findings indicated that institutional isomorphism, procurement competencies and institutional logics contribute 45.8% towards SMEs engagement in public procurement transactions which indicated by their positive relationship this implies that others factors contribute 54.2%.

The results showed that institutional logics followed by institutional isomorphism are significant predictors of SMEs engagement in public procurement transactions though procurement competencies are not significant predictors of SMEs engagement in public procurement. Therefore, institutional norms of professionalism, market and commercial logics as well as institutional pressures of following rules and regulations, professionalism and mimicking

successful organizations should be recognized and implemented by SMEs in order to be fully engaged in public procurement transactions in Uganda.

5.4 Recommendations

From the study the following recommendations were made so as to highlight some practical solutions necessary for SMEs engagement in public procurement.

Since findings have indicated that institutional logics and institutional isomorphism have a significant positive relationship that a positive increase in them will lead to a positive increase in SME engagement in public transactions, I recommend the SMEs to improve on them.

- i. SMEs should improve institutional logics by having strong loyalty to the procurement profession understand rules and regulations implement them effectively, aware of the prevailing conditions in the public sector market work in order to execute public procurement transactions thus being engaged.
- ii. SMEs should adopt policies of leading organizations in cases of uncertainty that is to say for instance developing networks, dealing with volatile environment; this makes them more aware of how to deal with uncertainty and thus being fully engaged in public procurement transactions.
- iii. SMEs should adopt institutional logics since they provide acceptable and legitimate guidelines which gives them opportunities for negotiation and change through exploitation and control in the market place and the extremely competitive and volatile market environment

5.5 Limitations of the study.

- i. The limited time to collect data and yet the target respondents are relatively many.
- ii. Since the target respondents are busy people, there were cases of non-response as some respondents were hesitant in answering questions asked especially those with technical terms that they don't understand.
- iii. The research relied on a single source that is SMEs in gathering data on their engagement in public procurement and which reliance could cause bias.

5.6 Ethical considerations.

- i. The information provided was treated as highly confidential. The researcher guaranteed to the respondents the destruction of the acquired information by shredding or burning once the data had been analyzed and inferences drawn.
- ii. Respect of culture of the study population was highly maintained in order to get meaningful data such as the type of language used.

5.7 Areas for further research

- Further research is needed to explain why procurement competencies are not significant predictors of SMEs engagement.
- Since institutional isomorphism, institutional logics and procurement competencies contribute 45.8% towards SME engagement in public procurement, other factors that contribute 54.2% should be explored.

- A broad study of SMEs engagement in public procurement should be made to include all the SMEs in the country to be able to come up with a better conclusion on the constructs of institutional isomorphism, institutional logics and procurement competencies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL
GRADUATE RESEARCH CENTRE

Dear respondent,

Your company has been selected to participate in a study on **INSTITUTIONAL ISOMORPHISM, INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS, PROCUREMENT COMPETENCIES SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TRANSACTIONS IN UGANDA**. The study is purely for academic purposes. The information provided will be treated highly **CONFIDENTIAL**. Your candid response is highly appreciated.

SECTION A: Particulars of respondent

Please pick the most appropriate option

1. What is your gender?

Male	Female
1	2

2. What is your age group?

18-24 years	25-35 Years	36-45 years	46-55 Years	Above 55 years
1	2	3	4	5

3. What is your level of education?

Certificate	Diploma	B. Degree	Master's Degree	PhD
1	2	3	4	5

4. How long have you been working with this company?

1-5 years	6-10 Years	11-15 years	16-20 Years	Above20 years
1	2	3	4	5

5. What is your professional training?

Procurement	Accountancy	Marketing	Others
1	2	3	4

6. What is your professional qualification?

CIPS	CIMA	ACCA	CILT
1	2	3	4

7. Number of employees

5-49 employees	50-100 Employees	100-360 Employees	Above 360 employees
1	2	3	4

8. The capital investment

10-100 million	101-360 million	Above 360 million
1	2	3

9. The Annual sales turnover

10-100 million	101-360 million	Above 360 million
1	2	3

In the following section please state the extent to which you agree or disagree to a particular statement about each competence by ticking the appropriate response.

SECTION B: INSTITUTIONAL ISOMORPHISM

		Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
CI 1	Our firm complies with the legal regulations	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CI 2	The extent to which government promotes SMEs influences our engagement in public procurement	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CI 3	The competitive conditions in the public market require our firm to follow proper procedure.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CI 4	Union pressure drives our firm in to dynamism.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CI 5	Our firm goes by the PPDA regulations.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CI 6	Our firm sticks by the rules and procedures in procurement.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CI 7	Our firm complies with procurement laws.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CI 8	Our firm complies with professional standards.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CI 9	Our firm sanctions people for not following the procurement rules and regulations.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
MI 1	Learning from leading firms in the market helps perform to expected standards	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
MI 2	Continued training enables our firm to improve performance in the public market	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
MI 3	Learning from ideas of leading firms helps us deal with uncertainty of failure.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
MI 4	Tracking of the leading firms in the market helps us make responsive bids	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
MI 5	Continued training enables our firm to improve its competitiveness in the market	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
MI 6	When it comes to procurement, each person is expected to follow his/her own personal and moral beliefs	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
MI 7	In our firm, it is expected that we always do what is right for the public we serve	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

NI 1	Our firm obtained quality certification	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure(3)	Agree(4)	Strongly agree (5)
NI 2	Being a member of business association enhance our ability to perform according to expected standards of the public market.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
NI 3	Pressure from professional associations drives us in to innovation.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
NI 4	We follow the procurement norms of the firm.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
NI 5	We abide by the procurement procedures and system of the firm	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
NI 6	Our firm carries out procurement trainings to add value on us.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
NI 7	In our firm, we work towards the achievement of our procurement values.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
NI 8	In our firm, the procurement norms and values are very important to us.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

In the following section please state the extent to which you agree or disagree to a particular statement about each competence by ticking the appropriate response.

SECTION C: PROCUREMENT COMPETENCIES

		Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
OC1	We work to meet standards set by management.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
OC2	We work towards implicit standards of excellence.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
OC3	We use specific methods of measuring outcomes against a standard of excellence.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
OC4	We set and act to reach challenging goals for self or others.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
OC5	We make decisions, set priorities and choose goals	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

	on the basis of calculated inputs and outputs.					
OC6	We always adhere to PPDA Act	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PC 1	We are open to new ideas.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
PC 2	We are self-directed.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PC 3	We demonstrate a genuine interest in understanding needs and take personal responsibility for meeting these needs.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PC 4	We collaborate with colleagues, showing commitment to the team, committing to make the team a success	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PC 5	We are willing to learn from one another.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PC 6	We propose course of action and make recommendations using available information.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PC 7	We receive and give feedback to team members frequently.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Please indicate by ticking in the appropriate box to what extent you agree or disagree to the given statement below.

SECTION D: INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS.

		Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not Sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
PL 1	We have a strong loyalty to our procurement profession.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PL 2	Professional ethics provide good guidelines for work behaviour in our firm.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PL 3	We understand procurement standards, and we	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

	implement them effectively.					
PL 4	We often follow strict regulatory requirement in our firm.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PL 5	We understand rules and regulations and we implement them effectively.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ML1	Our firm considers the public sector market to be open to it.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
ML2	Our firm has the capacity to meet competition in the public sector market.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ML3	Our firm is aware of the prevailing conditions in the public sector market.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ML4	Our firm has a positive perception about the public market	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ML5	Our firm understands the public market	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CL 1	Profits in our firm enable it to invest as well as to innovate.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CL 2	If our firm does not make enough profit it will not survive in this growing competitive world.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CL 3	The success of our firm can be judged by the extent of profit earning capacity.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CL 4	Retention of profit in our firm is the internal source of funds.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
CL 5	Our firm is subject to very many risks and uncertainties.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Please indicate by ticking in the appropriate box to what extent you agree or disagree to the given statement below.

SECTION E: SME ENGAGEMENT

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not Sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
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FE 1	Our firm serves to do a good job for the contracting PDE.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
FE 2	Our firm is willing to do the best to achieve the best possible outcomes.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
FE 3	Our firm is enthusiastic about contracts.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
FE 4	Our firm is very positive about meeting goals of the contracting PDE.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
FE 5	Our firm is always prepared to meet most of the demands in contractual work.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DE 1	Our firm always perceives even when things do not go well.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DE 2	Our firm is enthusiastic about contracts.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DE 3	Time flies when our firm is executing contractual work.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DE 4	Our firm is proud of the contractual work it does.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DE 5	No matter what comes in the way in our contractual work, our firm usually is able to handle it.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EN 1	Our firm feels strong and energized.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EN 2	When executing contracts, our firm does it with a lot of energy.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EN 3	Our firm is very diligent on contractual obligation.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EN 4	To our firm, contractual work is challenging	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EN 5	Our firm has positive focus and energy to execute contracts.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EC 1	Our firm is fully involved in contracts.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EC 2	Our firm officials are delighted when working intensely.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EC 3	It is difficult to detach our firm from any contract.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EC 4	Our firm is fully immersed in contractual work.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EC 5	Our firm's past experiences in contractual work have prepared it well for future occupational dealings with PDEs	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Thank You Very Much