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UNIVERSITY

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSSINES SCHOOL

**ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
ORIENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT
MARKET: A CASE OF WOMEN OWNED SMES IN UGANDAN
CENTRAL REGION.**

MWAGALE ISAAC

Registration No: 2018/HD10/2890U

Email: mwangaleisaac123@gmail.com

Phone No: 0784303843/0752082801

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PLAN A

MARCH, 2022

DECLARATION

I Mwangale Isaac, declare to the best of my knowledge that, this report is my original work which has never been published and/or submitted for any award in any other University/ Institution of Higher Learning.

Signed **Date:**

Mwangale Isaac

2018/HD10/2890U

APPROVAL

This report has been submitted with our approval as supervisors and our signatures are appended against the respective names below:

Signed..... Date:

Dr. Benjamin Tukamuhabwa

Makerere University Business School

Signed..... Date:

Assoc. Prof. Sheila Namagembe, PhD

Makerere University Business School

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ABBREVIATIONS

RBV	Resource Based View
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EO	Entrepreneurial Orientation
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
KMO	Knowledge Management Orientation
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UNDP	United Nation Development Programs
PPDA	Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on establishing the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management orientation and participation of women owned SMEs in public procurement markets in Ugandan Central region. It was carried out because women SMEs still get 1% of the public procurement contracts and yet public procurement is a tool that can promote gender equality. The study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design and self-administered questionnaire to collect data on a sample size of 123 women owned SMEs extracted from the PPDA registered list of providers for the year 2020. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) with focus on descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, regression analyses and Sobel Test for the mediation. The findings of the study indicated a partial mediation of knowledge management orientation on entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs. The results also revealed positive and significant relationships between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement, knowledge management orientation and participation in public procurement; and entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation. Furthermore, regression analysis was used to examine the predictive power of the independent variables on participation in public procurement. It was established that both entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation were significant predictors for participation in public procurement accounting for a variance of 24.2%. Finally, the study offers some recommendations for women owned SMEs, particularly related to enhancing their entrepreneurial and knowledge management orientations.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the introductory sections of the research report and includes critical introductory items such as the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research question and other important aspects of the study such as the study scope and significance.

1.1 Background of the study

Women are indispensable in gearing socio-economic development as they are known to be dominant participants in the activities of rural economies (Fleischmann, 2013). Besides, women are among the disadvantaged or special interest groups in many developing economies. According to Blome and Schoenherr (2011). The participation of special interest groups in public procurement has attracted interest of different governments across the world. Today, women own over a third of all small and medium enterprises (SMEs) worldwide (Chin, 2017). In the U.S., women own approximately 10 million businesses, compared to 15 million owned by men (McManus, 2017). Similarly, in Uganda and Rwanda, women make up 38%, and 60% of the registered SMEs respectively (International Trade center, 2014). This indicates that women own a significant number of SMEs, which generate millions of employment opportunities, encourage local development, and also control about \$20 trillion in annual consumer spending globally (Chin, 2017).

Despite these stunning statistics, the economic potential of women owned SMEs remains largely untapped. Whilst it is indisputable that the public sector constitutes a significant market for SMEs' goods and services, it is estimated that women owned SMEs win only

1% of the public procurement contracts (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2019). This also reflected on a global public procurement expenditure estimate of US\$11 trillion (Hetland, 2012), which has remained unchanged due to lack of research in this area (Basheka & Auriacombe, 2020). Besides the abundance of procurement and investment opportunities in Uganda, the government rarely considers gender balance as a selection yardstick, which negatively affects women owned SMEs' ability to involve in public procurement and capitalize on government spending and international sourcing (UNDP, 2017). A survey on the status of women's participation in public procurement bidding in Uganda by Basheka (2018) showed that 56% of respondents never succeeded in getting a government contract/bid, 38% had never participated in public procurement bidding, 31% had done so just a few times, 14% regularly participated, and a small proportion of just 8% participated frequently.

The dire need for women SMEs' involvement in public tendering is eminent. For example, the parliament of Uganda endorsed a proposal for the review of public procurement laws aimed to ensure that 30% of all government contracts are reserved for women (The New Vision, Monday, March 18, 2019). Further, Uganda's Public Procurement and Disposal of public Assets Authority (PPDA) trained women in business on pertinent issues in the procurement process in a bid to stimulate their entrepreneurial capacities and enhanced participation in public procurement (Kirabo, 2019). Also, empirical studies revealed several characteristics like firms' age, size, tendering capabilities that play a role in SMEs' tendering with the public sector customers (Pickernell et al., 2011; Flynn and Davis, 2016). While Other researchers, such as Tammi et al. (2017) and Reijonen et al. (2016) found that SMEs with an Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) that focuses on discovering new business

opportunities and EO, especially innovativeness and proactiveness increase the likelihood that SMEs participate in public tendering. Despite the importance, much of the empirical studies of EO in Uganda show significant relationships in different field but not particularly in the context of women SME involvement in public procurement (Ahimbisibwe and Abaho, 2013; Ngoma et al., 2017; Abaho et al., 2017; Barzola Iza & Dentoni, 2020).

Similarly, women SMEs are tender ready when there is an increased knowledge on public tendering processes in Uganda (Commonwealth Secretariat Report, 2011). But, from the resource-based view, knowledge is not easy to transfer and disperse due to its characteristics of tacitness and immobility (Li et al., 2009). Knowledge management orientation (KMO) helps new ventures especially, entrepreneurial firms in creating a good learning culture, facilitating knowledge sharing and codifying the existing knowledge (Farooq and Vij, 2018). The effect of KM on business performance has been recognized widely. For instance, researchers such as Hussain, Xiaoyu, Si, & Ahmed (2011), Liu & Abdalla (2013) and Wei, Choy, & Chew (2011) provide literature that supports the significant relationships between KM and business performance. However, KMO and women owned SME involvement in public procurement in Uganda do not have common synthetic empirical rounds in the existing scientific research. Thus, various research in Uganda points out significant relationship on KMO attributes like knowledge sharing in different fields but not particularly in public procurement (Magala, Mangheni, & Miiro, 2019; Kiwelu, Tibenderana, & Ogbonna, 2020).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There exist vital business growth opportunities for women owned SMEs, especially in public procurement tenders. To exploit such opportunities, PPDA carried out women procurement training to stimulate their entrepreneurial capacities (Kirabo, 2019) and Uganda has instituted a preferential programme to assist women through parliament, which endorsed a proposal for the reservation of 30% of all government procurement for women (The New Vision, Monday, March 18, 2019). However, it was observed that women owned SMEs win only 1% of government procurement (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2019). This also reflected on a global public procurement expenditure estimate of US\$11 trillion (Hetland, 2012), which has remained unchanged due to a lack of research in this area (Basheka & Auriacombe, 2020). Further, research highlights a deficiency in knowledge and entrepreneurial skills to execute public procurement activities among women SMEs in Uganda (Basheka, 2018; Kirabo, 2019; Basheka & Auriacombe, 2020). Therefore, this study suggests that such low participation of women owned SMEs in public procurement may be attributed to women SMEs inadequate EO and KMO. Hence, researchers such as Reijonen et al. (2016), found that SMEs with EO focus on discovering new business opportunities and KMO attributes like knowledge sharing increases a firm's ability to access information which is beneficial to SMEs participation in public procurement, thus supported by Lee et al. (2013).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To establish the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management orientation and participation of women owned SMEs in public procurement in Uganda.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To establish the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation in women owned SMEs in Uganda.
- ii. To establish the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda.
- iii. To establish the relationship between knowledge management orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda.
- iv. To establish the mediating role of knowledge management orientation on entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda

1.5 Research Questions.

- i. What is the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation in women owned SMEs in Uganda?
- ii. What is the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda?
- iii. What is the relationship between knowledge management orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda?
- iv. What is the mediating role of knowledge management orientation on entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Geographical scope

The study covered the women owned SMEs in central region of Uganda in the districts of Kampala, Mukono and Wakiso. These districts contain most of the women owned SMEs extracted from the PPDA registered list of providers for the year 2020.

1.6.2 Subject Scope

The study focused on establishing the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management orientation and participation in public procurement of women owned SMEs in Uganda.

1.7 Significance of the Study

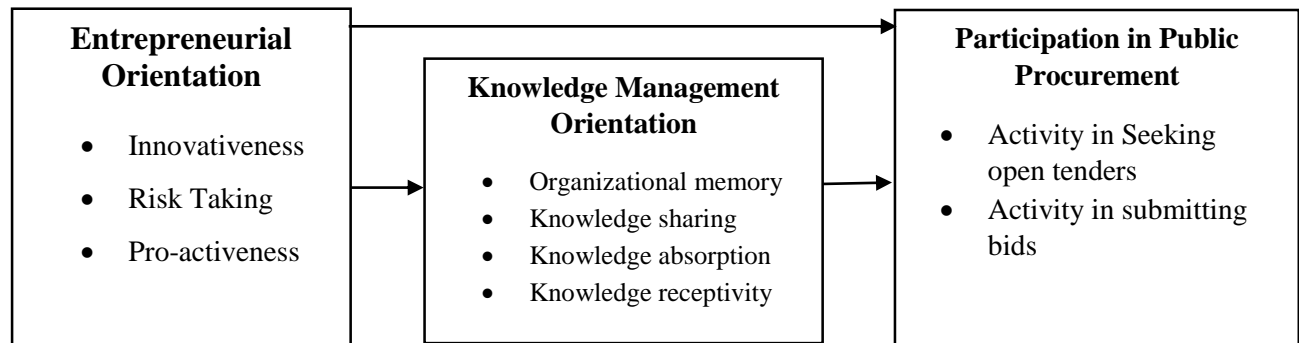
Policy makers, the study will assist policy makers in understanding deliberate policies to undertake in order to improve the participation of women owned businesses in participating in public procurement in Uganda.

Women SMEs capabilities, the study will help women owned businesses increase their capabilities through improving their entrepreneurial orientation. Public procurement presents a market opportunity that provides the chance to acquire a reliable, large-scale buyer and potentially long-term contracts thus encourage participation of women in public tendering.

Academicians, scholars and researchers: The results of the study will also add to existing body of knowledge regarding literature on the influence of entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management orientation on women participation in public procurement.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Source: Soininen, Puumalainen, Sjögren, and Syrjä, (2012b); Wang, Ahmed, & Rafiq, 2008; Reijonen, Tammi, & Saastamoinen (2014).

1.8.1 Description of the conceptual model

The model theorizes that entrepreneurial orientation significantly associates with participation of women owned SMEs in public procurement and knowledge management orientation. Knowledge management orientation also significantly associates with participation of women owned SMEs in public procurement.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of the literature on the entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management Orientation and the participation in public procurement. The literature review section in this case has been presented so as to ensure that there is adequate information for stakeholders to grasp the nature of the study variables and how it relates to their context. The literature review was mainly presented using scholarly journals which were downloaded from reputable publishers. The chapter starts off by presenting the theoretical foundation of the study.

2.1 Theoretical foundation: The Resource-Based View (RBV)

This section explores the RBV as a lens for understanding SMEs involvement in public procurement. The RBV theory, explains what resources a firm has at its disposal and how it utilizes them to determine competitive success (Barney, 1991; Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984). These resources include all of the firm's assets, capacities, organizational procedures, and informational qualities that enable it to compete (Barney, 1991), and so RBV theory is based on two assumptions (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1991; Makadok, 2001). The first is that the quantity and quality of resources owned or controlled by firms vary within and across industries. In other words, firms are heterogeneous as to their resource base. The second is that the various resource types, but particularly capabilities, are not always tradeable and can be organisation or context specific (Flynn, 2017 cited from Barney, 1991). Thus, competitive advantage within firms is achieved and sustained over time through firm sources which are valuable, rare, difficult

to imitate, and to substitute with an equivalent strategic value (Barney, 1991). A firm's resource which covers any intangible or tangible asset is considered rare when competing firms want it but cannot acquire it and it is valuable when it assists a firm in creating or implementing strategies that improve its effectiveness and efficiency (Ritter & Lettl, 2018). It is non-substitutable and inimitable only when it is perfectly immobile across firms (Klier et al., 2017). Hence, competition between firms arises from differences in their resources and capabilities (Ferreira & Fernandes, 2017). Previous scholars have postulated that SMEs possess varying bundles of capabilities and resources necessary for public procurement tendering (Flynn, 2017). Moreover, resources and capabilities such as human resource availability for tendering, experience in tendering, procedural and relational capabilities matter most when participating in public procurement. Supportive of this, Pickernell et al. (2013) demonstrated that experience is a predictor of involvement in public procurement. Thus, firms with limited tendering resources and competencies, on the other hand, will find it difficult to break into the public sector market (Pickernell et al., 2011; Withey, 2011). Reijonen *et al.* (2016) and Tammi *et al.* (2014) provide evidence of this in respect of entrepreneurial and market sensing resources, respectively. EO refers to the overall strategic posture towards entrepreneurship and is often conceived as "the simultaneous exhibition of innovativeness, pro-activeness, and risk taking" tendency towards recognition of new business opportunities (Anderson and Eshima, 2013). Such business opportunities can include the exploitation of the public procurement tendering. Through a resource-capability framework, Lee and Chu, (2011) related EO to competitive advantage of firms, supporting the resource-based perspective of entrepreneurship. Further it is acknowledged that knowledge management orientation (KMO) is a capability that

serves as a strategic resource (Hult & Ketchen, 2001). The ability of a firm to use inside-out capabilities such as KMO to exploit external opportunities is critical to its success (Wang et al., 2009) as cited from (Day, 1994). Thus, the contention is that SMEs need to possess certain capabilities if they are to be active and successful in public procurement (Flynn, 2017). Therefore, from the RBV lens, this study suggests that possession of the two orientational resources i.e., relating to knowledge management and entrepreneurship is important for enhancing women owned SMEs' involvement in public procurement and hence gaining sustainable competitive advantages.

2.2 Definition of terms SME and Women owned SME.

The term SME represent Small and Medium Enterprise and the definition of SME varies across different economic settings. In Uganda, a small enterprise is an enterprise employing between 5 and 49 people and has total assets between UGX: 10 million but not exceeding 100 million. A medium enterprise therefore, employs between 50 and 100 people with total assets more than 100 million but not exceeding 360 million (Uganda Investment Authority Brochure, 2016). Women owned SMEs refer to formally registered firms in the SME category with 51 percent-plus women's ownership, and which received loans from \$10,000 to \$1 or 2 million at commencement (Dassanou et al, 2014).

2.3 Why focus on SMEs in Uganda

SME's impact on the local and global market is evident (Du and Banwo, 2015, Fakieh et al., 2016 and Idris et al., 2017). In the context of Uganda, SMEs are regarded as an engine of economic growth, development, and transformation through innovation and wealth creation (National Development Plan II 2015/16-2019/20). Additionally, SMEs dominate much of the country's economy, for example, 10% are active in the manufacturing sector, 33% in commerce,

49% in service, and 8% in other fields (Uganda Investment Authority, 2016), and all these are contributing to approximately 90% in employment which is close to 2.5 million people of the entire private sector employment and 80% of manufactured products accounting for 20% of GDP (Uganda Investment Authority, 2016). However, SMEs are underrepresented in procurement market despite their contribution to economic growth and development. According to Eton et al., (2021), Uganda's government has prioritized the development of SMEs as one of its policy priorities in order to improve economic growth and development (Eton et al., 2021). Thus, linking public procurement and SMEs through public policy by government would be an important start, to enhancing SME growth as suggested by Ferraz et al (2016).

2.4 Women owned SME Participation in public procurement.

Public procurement accounts for a large amount of government spending in all countries and is seen as an important tool for accomplishing socio-economic goals such as gender equality (Basheka, 2018). Therefore, policy-makers are unlikely to know the extent to which women owned SMEs are able to successfully win government contracts (Kirton, 2013) and encouraging women SMEs' participation in public procurement generates two side benefits. Public sector actors are attractive customers because they can reduce perceived risk by committing to long-term contracts and prompt payments (Peck and Cabras, 2010) and in turn, women owned enterprises that are able to successfully obtain government contracts usually grow and contribute to increased job creation, GDP growth and an improved female labour force participation rate (Gonzalez, 2017). Public organizations, too, may benefit from contracting with women owned SMEs because, organizations that use a diversified supplier base benefit from enhanced supplier

availability and security; innovation through the entrance of new products, services and solutions; competition; increased market penetration and access to new markets (Chin, 2017). Organizations with diversified supply chains sometimes gain from their suppliers becoming their customers, which makes gender-responsive procurement is a win for both the organizations and the women suppliers (Chin, 2017).

However, there seems to be room for improvement regarding women SMEs' involvement in tendering. For example, the United States implemented a reservation of 5% for women SMEs. In Kenya, 30% of government procurement is set aside for economically disadvantaged groups, including women (Gathira, 2013) while South Africa uses a points-based system in favor of historically disadvantaged groups, including women (Taylor and Roga, 2009). In Chile, technology plays an important role with certification of women led enterprises (Subacci, 2018) and recently Uganda instituted a preferential programme to assist women through parliament, which endorsed a proposal for the reservation of 30% of all government contracts for women (The New Vision, Monday, March 18, 2019). Although there are different approaches to increasing women owned SMEs access to public contracts, these SMEs still face numerous impediments that might potentially hinder their participation in public procurement, such as lack of knowledge (Commonwealth Secretariate Report, 2011), little gender differentiated data available for contractors (International Trade Center, 2014). Similarly, women-owned businesses often have more family and care responsibilities; operate in less profitable sectors, such as retail and services, which has an impact on the competitive position of women-owned businesses (international trade center, 2020). Therefore, women and their businesses still require

targeted assistance to help them overcome historical discrimination in order to succeed in the market.

2.5 Entrepreneurial orientation

EO is a market-driving technique that introduces newness and changes to markets (Chen et al., 2012) and also defined as one of a company's strategic orientations that outlines the scope of entrepreneurial activity that the organization engages in (Otache & Mahmood, 2015). Entrepreneurial oriented SMEs are more likely to create ground-breaking new products, take on new challenges, and compete aggressively (Tammi et al., 2016). Therefore, for SMEs with limited resources, EO can provide a mechanism to overcome environmental and resource constraints, allowing them to become great performers (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005). Many scholars agree that EO is “a combination of Innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk taking” (Ketchen and Short 2012; Kreiser et al. 2002; Lumpkin and Dess 2001).

The tendency to pursue creativity and experimentation is referred to as innovativeness (Ketchen and Short, 2012). It indicates businesses' tendency to participate in and encourage new ideas that could result in new technical products, services, or processes (Anjani & Yasa, 2019). Moreover, innovativeness may lead to new-to-market or highly specialized offerings that might attract entirely new markets and public sector clients (Tammi et al., 2016). Proactiveness refers to firms' forward-looking perspective regarding future wants and needs in a market (Shane & Venkatraman, 2000). Firms may benefit from taking proactive measures by capitalizing on new or developing opportunities and by shaping the competitive landscape (Chirico et al., 2011). Furthermore, proactive firms are more likely to persevere despite rejected bids because of their ability to adapt and tolerate

failure (Wood, McKelvie and Haynie., 2014). Risk taking reflects a firm's readiness to commit resources in uncertain environments, exploring new segments and devoting increased resources to projects whose outcome is difficult to predict (Tajeddini, 2010). This may motivate SMEs to pursue and succeed in attracting larger scale public sector customers who are not located in the firm's immediate locality (Tammi et al., 2016).

2.6 Knowledge Management Orientation

The term KMO is derived from the basic concept of knowledge management (Farooq and Vij, 2018). KMO has been defined differently in the extant literature. KMO is defined as the relative propensity of an organization to share, assimilate and be receptive to new knowledge (Lin, 2015). KMO is also viewed as the capability to create the effective learning culture, promote knowledge sharing and store knowledge (Farooq and Vij, 2018). Further, organizational memory, knowledge sharing, knowledge absorption, and knowledge receptivity have emerged as the measures of KMO during the last decade (Yazhou and Jian, 2013; Lin, 2015; Wang et al., 2009). Organizational memory is defined as the achieved knowledge which is learned from previous experience that can be brought to bear on decisions (Moorman & Miner, 1997). In that sense, organizational memory serves both as the 'storage' of knowledge as well as the starting point for future knowledge acquisition (Hult et al., 2004). Knowledge sharing is referred to as the transfer of wisdom, skills, and technology between organizational subunits (Tsai, 2002). Further, sharing of knowledge increases a firm's ability to access information (Lee et al., 2013) which is beneficial to SMEs participation in public procurement, because access to information by SMEs is considered one of the greatest barriers hindering SME participation in public procurement (Fee et al., 2002). Knowledge absorption is defined as a firm's ability to

recognize the value of new wisdom, adapt it, and apply it (Wang et al, 2008). Therefore, in a business organization, knowledge is not only developed through internal sources but also through absorption from external sources (Hussein et al., 2018). This is evidenced by Grandinetti (2016) who noticed that the ability to exploit external knowledge is crucial to an enterprise's capacity for innovation. Public procurement for innovations could be a tool to bring together public buyers and SMEs (Reijonen et al., 2014). This is in form of direct innovation when the public sector purchases products or services that require investments in research and development (R&D) and indirectly when specifications in a tender are laid out in functional rather than production terms (Cave and Frinking, 2003). Knowledge receptivity "means a positive attitude to new ideas" and "reflects the ease with which new ideas are taken up inside a firm" (Wang, et al., 2009). Hence, the greater the knowledge receptivity in a firm, the greater the acceptance of new ideas, solutions, and systems (Wang, et al., 2009).

2.7 Entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation

The body of knowledge on KMO and EO is underdeveloped due to very few empirical studies (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2003; Li et al., 2009a; and Farooq and Vij, 2018). Madhoushi et al., (2011) studied the effect of EO on knowledge management in SMEs in Iran and proved that EO has a significant effect on knowledge management. Gupta and Moesel (2007) found that EO did not have a significant impact on knowledge creation or knowledge acquisition in key supplier alliance. EO had a significant positive impact on knowledge creation and acquisition in key customer alliances, but there was no support for a direct impact in key supplier alliances. Therefore, firms with good KMO know where to look for the opportunities, can accurately measure the value of possible opportunities, and

are better equipped to extract value from these opportunities and a firm well gifted with knowledge, skills, and abilities will perform even better if it has EO (Farooq and Vij, 2018).

Furthermore, knowledge management and EO are considered to be among the most popular common strategies for organizational growth and survival in the present competitive environment (Al-Swid & Mahmood, 2012; Jabeen, Shehu, Mahmood, & Kofar, 2014). Some research disputes that not all knowledge management activities are successful whereas others questioned the suitability of entrepreneurial orientation strategy for organizational performance (Ben & Ladib, 2015; Shehu Aliyu, Bello Rogo, & Mahmood, 2015). Knowledge management can enable companies to improve their commercialization performance (Chiang & Shih, 2011; Frishammar et al., 2012). Also, the literature suggests that knowledge is critical to the performance of various growing firms and leads to improvements in product innovation performance (Kostopoulos et al., 2011). Abd Aziz & Mahmoud (2011) and Mahmood & Hanafi, (2013) argued that SMEs need to be resilient in today's dynamic and highly competitive business environment, and this could be achieved through mobilization of resources in the form of knowledge management.

2.8 Entrepreneurial orientation and participation of women owned SMEs in public procurement.

SMEs especially, Women owned in Uganda have poor capacity to deliver bigger contracts opportunities in public procurement (Commonwealth Secretariat Report, 2011). Therefore, a critical understanding of EO can enhance SMEs' chances to identify and utilize small and bigger opportunities in the market. Researchers like Baker and Sinkula (2009) and Madsen (2007) argued that EO reflects the tendency of firms to identify and exploit opportunities in markets since it can affect their willingness and ability to participate in public tendering.

For many SMEs, the public sector is an untapped market. By 2010, 99% of European firms were SMEs and these only commanded about one-third of the awarded public sector procurement contracts. These firms were increasingly unlikely to submit winning bids when contract values increased (GHK, 2010). To curb such low participation, European Union policy makers instructed member countries to encourage greater SME participation in public tendering (European Commission, 2011). To support SMEs' participation in public procurement, planned entrepreneurship orientation may have had key roles since it represents the key and strong elements of a firm's culture which navigate firm's collaborations with markets, customers, and competitors (Woldesenbet et al., 2012).

Moreover, An SME's decision to pursue business opportunities in public procurement could be influenced by EO, and identification of entrepreneurial capabilities is an important factor in securing business with large public and private purchasing organizations (Reijonen et al., 2016 cited by Saastamoinen et al., 2017). Further, tactical entrepreneurship orientation describes activeness and passiveness of an SME with regard

to markets. The various dealings of an SME with actors in the market determine firm's consideration of public procurement as an attractive business opportunity (Reijonen et al., 2014). For any firm, before applying its significant effort in identifying public tenders and developing bids, its ability to win the bid must be assessed and this requires market insight, customer knowledge, resources, and awareness of market competition which further requires strategic EO. Therefore, its EO which guides the information gathered and utilization necessary to pursue public procurement opportunities (Reijonen et al., 2014).

Furthermore, Tammi, (2016) revealed that EO can be a successful strategy in finding a firm's competitive advantage by getting involved in public sector tendering and orienting towards national or wider level public sector customers. Hence type customer could be important in terms of performance. Therefore, entrepreneurially oriented SME higher performance is associated with supplying national or wider level (state administrative agencies, defence forces, state-owned public utilities/commercial enterprises and international public sector customer) rather than sub-national level public sector customers (municipalities, hospital districts and churches/parishes).

2.9 Knowledge management orientation and participation of women owned SMEs in public procurement

Firms that use more knowledge management activities and methods are likely to have KMO (Darroch & McNaughton, 2003). A strong KMO provides the basis of knowledge, enabling the firm to effectively interpret data on external events (Wang et al., 2009). Knowledge according to the available literature can be divided into; tacit and explicit knowledge. In the case of public procurement, explicit knowledge may include both internal regulations of public procurement the public procurement Act and the legislation

used to purchase goods, services as well as a number of rules and procedures under which units operate (K.Wyrwicka, Staniszewska and Guszczak, 2014). But tacit knowledge is very difficult to define and transfer as it belongs to a particular person, acquired from the experience, qualifications and competence of employees (K.Wyrwicka et al., 2014). The implementation of the principles of knowledge management in public procurement is a necessity broad delegation of powers, the introduction of the continuous training of workers and the creation of project teams, or creating databases (Brozdowski, Dyrlico&Leja, 2005). However, lack of knowledge of the provisions of the public procurement Act and other legislative regulations may result in preventing the conclusion of contracts (K.Wyrwicka et al., 2014).

In the specific context of SMEs, knowledge and knowledge management has become a primary source to support firms' innovation, sustain economic survival (Abiola, 2013), employees' knowledge and skills in order to build their competitive advantages instead of relying on physical and financial assets, as compared to larger firms (Castellani, and Fassio, 2019; Cardoni, Dumay, Palmaccio, and Celenza, 2018). Knowledge has also been linked to firm's advancement, and has been heralded as a key dynamic for their success (Anantatmula & Kanungo, 2010). However, the main challenges to successful knowledge sharing among SMEs and public sector include lack of management recognition, few rewards for knowledge sharing behaviour, and inadequate organizational IT infrastructure (Denner & Blackman, 2013).

The important need that should be considered in any procurement reform is to ensure that SMEs have easy access to information on procurement opportunities and on procurement outcomes because information is a necessary condition for SME's participation in tenders.

Firms must be able to ascertain why a contract was awarded to a particular bidder and understand why the winner was determined to have made the best offer. Better information transmission can be realized through adoption and use of e-procurement systems and through dedicated web portals and specialized facilities where SMEs can obtain both information and assistance in understanding both specific project requirements and more generally the benefits of participation in public procurement. Specific initiatives aimed at educating and training SME personnel and requiring procuring entities to post opportunities on a central web platform can help reduce information costs for SMEs (Ancarani, et al., 2019 and Fernandes and Vieira, 2015).

Providing knowledge to stakeholders in firms through training can help form a clearer overall picture of the firm's strategy and every person's role in implementing it (O'Regan, Stainer, & Sims, 2010). Bryan, (2006) argued that training also increases knowledge and improves the technical and other skills required to perform work tasks. Thus, training can play an important role in overcoming the hurdles that SMEs feel hinder their involvement in public sector tendering. Saastamoinen et al. (2017) associated lack of training with perceptions of resource constraints and practical skills hindering SME participation in public procurement, while a positive attitude towards training is positively connected to SME participation rates in public procurement. Therefore, through training, Women SMEs can acquire knowledge that provides them with tools to better assess the public procurement process, its requirements and skills that help them to participate in the process.

The provision of technical assistance and training services specific to SMEs interested in participating in the procurement process could include managerial training, financial

management, understanding the public procurement process, access contract opportunities, among others (Arrowsmith, 2010). Technical assistance does not influence the cost competitiveness of the bidder but only support the bidder's ability to participate in the procurement process (Linarelli, 2000). Loader (2005) argued that issues regarding lack of information and knowledge could be addressed through training whereby, through training, the perceptions SMEs hold about tendering, their practices and processes could also be shaped.

2.10 Mediating Effect of knowledge management orientation

Knowledge management orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, and their significance participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs do not have common synthetic empirical rounds in the existing scientific research. There is almost no research in the literature linking these three variables. As a certain attempt to integrate these research problems, this study gives an overview of works which combine knowledge management, entrepreneurial orientation and the performance of small and medium enterprises.

Knowledge management as a mediator in SME performance has received less attention in research. EO and knowledge management as a mediator in SMEs is crucial because it has a significant impact on SME performance (Bakar and Mamat, 2017). Therefore, SMEs may find it beneficial to focus more on EO and knowledge management in order to achieve performance (2017). As a result, SMEs must be innovative, proactive, and risk takers in order to survive, grow, and contribute to economic growth (Bakar and Mamat, 2017). Further Madhoushi et al., (2011) revealed that both directly and indirectly EO influence innovation performance through knowledge management. EO positively influences the firm's innovation performance; and knowledge management plays as a mediator to increase

these positive relationships. Knowledge management is not only an independent managerial practice, but also a central mechanism that leverages EO influence on innovation performance. Therefore, EO enables firms to effectively acquire, share and apply knowledge, which affects innovation performance positively (Madhoushi et al., 2011).

Organizations that have good KMO know where to look for opportunities and how to take advantage of them. Farooq and Vij (2018) suggested that KMO mediates EO and business performance relationship. Therefore, managers can enhance business performance by adopting an entrepreneurial posture which is supported by higher KMO in terms of an excellent learning culture, organization-wide knowledge sharing and storing information technology orientation of top management. The entrepreneurial firms, especially new ventures, should develop a good learning culture, facilitate knowledge sharing across all levels of management and codify the existing knowledge for future use (Farooq and Vij 2018). Further, Li et al. (2009) suggested that knowledge creation process mediates the relationship between EO and firm performance. While EO provides basic elements for achieving benefits in the relationship, knowledge creation process converts entrepreneurial orientation into knowledge assets shared by organizational members to achieve firm performance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the research approach and the footprints that were employed so as to ensure that the research study is affected. The chapter contains the research design, the study population, and the sample size, sources of data, and the measurement of variables for the study.

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was used. Survey data was collected from the study participants, analyzed using statistical software and inferences made on the targeted population. A cross-sectional design helped collect considerable amount of data from a relatively large sample in a short period of time.

3.2 Study Population

The researcher carried out the study among women owned SMEs in the Ugandan central region (Kampala, Mukono and Wakiso). These districts were chosen because they contain most of women owned SMEs, extracted from PPDA registered list of providers for the year (2020). The study was based on 190 women owned SMEs extracted from the PPDA registered list of providers for the year (2020) in Central region. Given the study phenomenal, each women SME involvement in procurement market, both small and medium enterprises encounter similar constraints. Thus, the justification for combining women respondents from small and medium enterprises.

3.3 Sample Size

Basing on the study population of 190 women owned SMEs extracted from the PPDA registered list of providers for the year (2020) in the Ugandan central region, a sample of 123 women owned SMEs were selected and considered adequate for the study (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The unit of analysis was the women owned SME while unit of inquiry was the procurement officers and supply chain coordinators in these women Owned SME. The procurement officers and supply chain coordinators have the knowledge on what is needed whenever there is an invitation to bid on a given tender. They thus provided expert opinions on EO, KMO and participation in public procurement.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The study adopted the lottery method of simple random sampling technique and, to enable the SMEs had an equal chance of being selected. Each women owned SME was allocated a number on a piece of paper of the same size, colour, shape and the pieces were all mixed thoroughly in the box and each picked without replacement until a total sample of 123 was reached. These formed the businesses that the researcher targeted.

3.5 Sources of Data

Primary data was obtained through the use of self-administered questionnaires to respondents following systematic and established academic procedures. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with an introduction letter from Makerere University Business School sanctioning the study.

3.6 Data collection

The questionnaire was designed according to the study variables and the responses to the closed ended questions were anchored on a five (5) point Likert scale. It is the most widely used approach to scaling responses in survey research. This scale therefore ranged from, 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree for the variables of entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation. Participation in public procurement was measured using: never, irregularly, regularly for activity in seeking tendering opportunities and never, 1-5 times, 6-10 times, 11-20 times, 21-30 times, 31-40 times, 41-50 times and more than 50 times for activity in submitting bids.

3.7 Measurement of variables

Entrepreneurial orientation was measured using a nine-item measuring scale, adopted from Soininen *et al.* (2012b), which underscored the dimensions of innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking. The scale was also used by Reijonen *et al.*, (2014) and Wales *et al.*, (2011) where pro-activeness and innovativeness were examined together and risk-taking separately.

Knowledge management orientation was operationalized using the scholarly work of Wang, Ahmed and Rafiq (2008).

Public procurement participation was measured using, activity in seeking open tendering opportunities and the activity in submitting bids as supported by the works of Reijonen *et al.*, (2014).

The questionnaire was administered to officials of the firms that are under study (study participants). The study aimed at obtaining at least two study participants from each firm.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Quality control was involved in adjusting / modification of the instruments by doing an assessment of the pre-test study in order to improve the validity and reliability coefficient to at least 0.7. This is the least value of validity and reliability coefficient generally accepted for survey studies (Cronbach, 1951 and Nunnally, 1978). This helped confirm the dimensions of the concepts under study and ensured appropriateness of the results thus constructs reliability obtained through Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. Content Validity Index was also computed as showed below.

Table 1-Shows Cronbach and Content Validity Index Results of the study

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Content Validity Index
Entrepreneurial Orientation	.705	.778
Knowledge Management Orientation	.839	.833
Public Procurement Participation	.732	.750

3.9 Data Processing and Analysis

After collecting the questionnaires, the researcher edited them to check the questionnaire for inappropriateness in filling and those that were appropriately filled were the ones considered for the study. The researcher cleaned the data, coded it and classified it into categories. The data was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software for analysis according to the objectives of the study. The researcher presented the analysis using descriptives such as frequencies for the background characteristics. Correlations and regressions were also used to establish relationships and predictive power respectively. On the other hand, the mediating role of knowledge management orientation

in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda was examined using the Sobel Test.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

All respondents were informed that they would have their identity kept confidential and this was strictly observed for the study. Further the participation of all the study respondents was voluntary. No participant was coerced to participate in the study against their will. *Plagiarism* was also avoided in the study and nothing was done to.

**CHAPTER FOUR:
RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

4.0 Introduction

The first section of this chapter presents the attributes of the business, followed by those of the individuals who participated in the study. It presents the results from analysis using correlations and regressions. The research study sought to address the following research objectives;

- i. To establish the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation in women owned SMEs in Uganda.
- ii. To establish the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda.
- iii. To establish the relationship between knowledge management orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda.
- iv. To establish the mediating role of knowledge management orientation on entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda

4.1 Response Rate

The response rate in the table below shows the response rate relative to the nature of the businesses that were targeted.

Table 2-Showing Response of the respondents

<i>Acquired</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>
103	123	83.7%

Source: Primary Data

The table 2 above shows that the response rate was 83.7%. The response rate for these businesses was deemed representative enough for the research study to proceed with the data.

4.2 Firm Characteristics

The distribution in the table 3 shows the various attributes of the firms and these included, the period for which the business has been operating and the nature of the company or business.

Table 3 – Firm Nature Attributes

<i>SME's Period of Operation</i>	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5 years	56	54.4	54.4
5-10 years	32	31.1	85.4
11- 16 years	13	12.6	98.1
Above 16 years	2	1.9	100.0
Total	103	100.0	
Nature of the company/business	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Supplies	38	36.9	36.9
Services	32	31.1	68.0
Works	6	5.8	73.8
Supplies and Services	16	15.5	89.3
Supplies and works	5	4.9	94.2
Services and works	1	1.0	95.1
Supplies, Services and works	5	4.9	100.0
Total	103	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

SME's Period of Operation: The results showed that the majority of the businesses had been operating for less than 5 years (54.4%), while those that had been operating for over 16 years, comprised only 1.9% of the sample. The results further show that there was a diverse distribution of the women SMEs so, there was an experience mix in as far as running the business was concerned.

Nature of the Business: It was noted that there was also much diversity in the nature of the businesses that were interviewed for this study. For instance, it was noted that many of the women SMEs engaged in supplies business represented by 36.9%, 31.1% in services and 5.8% in works. On the other hand, a small portion of 26.3% falling under, supplies & services, supplies & works, services & works, and supplies, services & works.

4.3 Firm Operational Characteristics

The results in the table 4 below further revealed that there were additional characteristics captured from the firms namely their workforce size and the time the firm has participated in the public procurement.

Table 4-Firm Operational Characteristics

Number of staff employed by SME	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-4	36	35.0	35.0
5-49	56	54.4	89.3
50-100	11	10.7	100.0
Total	103	100.0	
<i>Period of participation in procurement</i>	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	43	41.7	41.7
less than a year	14	13.6	55.3

1-5 years	27	26.2	81.6
6-11 years	16	15.5	97.1
Above 11 years	3	2.9	100.0
Total	103	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Workforce size: The results showed that among the women small businesses that availed the research data, most businesses were employing about (54.4%). On the other hand, the results showed that there were only 10.7% of the firms which had between 50-100 staff. The results are not surprising given that the SMEs in Uganda are mostly small businesses and as such, few can be found with over 50 persons.

Period of participation in procurement: The results showed that most of these women SMEs had never even had any participation in public procurement and these comprised 41.7% of the SMEs that were interviewed. The results are justification that when it comes to participation in the public procurement deals, the women SMEs are truly hindered by many factors and if nothing is done, the trend will continue.

4.4 Individual Characteristics

The individual characteristics in this section highlight the profile of the persons who participated in the study. These were the persons directly responsible for the sustained operations of these small businesses.

Gender Distribution: The results indicated that the majority of the women owned businesses were running under the administration of the female (64.1%) as would be expected. On the other hand, those that were running under the management of the men

were (35.9%). These men only run them on behalf of the women and, therefore all respondents were familiar with the firm’s operations and the studied orientations.

Age Group distribution: The results regarding the age of these individuals, showed that most of the respondents were actually aged between 18-30 years (35.9%) and on the other hand, 27.2% were aged between 31-35 years. This meant that 63.1% of the respondents constituted the sample and were youth, who ranged between 18-35 years and 36.8% of the respondents were 36 years and above.

Highest level of education: The results in the study showed that these businesses are owned by women, are mostly run by persons who have studied as far as diploma (15.5%), bachelor’s degree (54.4%) and master’s degree (30.1%). Therefore, officers in charge of these women SME are relatively competent in business management and also, have the potential to be competitive when it comes to participation in the procurement.

Table 5-Individual Characteristics

<i>Gender Distribution</i>	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	37	35.9	35.9
Female	66	64.1	100.0
Total	103	100.0	
<i>Age Group Distribution</i>	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-30	37	35.9	35.9
31-35	28	27.2	63.1
36-40	16	15.5	78.6
41-45	13	12.6	91.3
46 and above	9	8.7	100.0
Total	103	100.0	
<i>Highest level of education</i>	Count	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Diploma	16	15.5	15.5

Degree	56	54.4	69.9
Masters	31	30.1	100.0
Totals	103	100.0	

Source: Primary data

4.5 Relationships between the study variables.

The relationships between the study variables were explored by the researcher using the Pearson (r) correlations coefficient and the regression analysis. The Pearson (r) correlations coefficient indicates the nature of the association between the study variables. A positive relationship between any two study variables shows that these study variables change and, such that an increment in one is associated with an increment in the other. Correlations however, do not show causality but they suggest a link between the two variables which could be direct or indirect.

Table 6-Pearson Correlations Results

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Entrepreneurial Orientation-1	4.374	.759	1.000		
Knowledge Management Orientation-2	2.946	.955	.619**	1.000	
Participation in Public Procurement-3	1.960	.727	.445**	.478**	1.000

Source: Primary Data

4.5.1 Entrepreneurial Orientation and Knowledge Management Orientation.

The results show that entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation are significantly and positively related ($r = .619^{**}$, $p < .01$). The results are indicative that entrepreneurial orientation is positively and significantly associated with knowledge management orientation. The results show that a unit increase in entrepreneurial orientation increases knowledge management orientation by 0.619. Also, a strong

relationship exists between entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation based on Evans (1996). According to Evans (1996), a correlation coefficient between 0.60-0.79 is strong.

4.5.2 Entrepreneurial Orientation and Participation in Public Procurement.

The Pearson correlations further indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship between the entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement ($r = .445^{**}$, $p < .01$). The results are indicative that entrepreneurial orientation is positively and significantly associated with participation in public procurement. The results show that a unit increase in entrepreneurial orientation increases participation in public procurement by 0.445. Also, a moderate relationship exists between entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation based on Evans (1996). According to Evans (1996), a correlation coefficient between 0.40-0.59 is moderate.

4.5.3 Knowledge Management Orientation and Participation in Public Procurement.

The results in the correlations show that there is a significant and positive relationship between knowledge management orientation and participation in public procurement positively related ($r = .478^{**}$, $p < .01$). The results are indicative that knowledge management orientation is positively and significantly associated with participation in public procurement. The results show that a unit increase in knowledge management orientation increases participation in public procurement by 0.478. Also, a moderate relationship exists between entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation based on Evans (1996). According to Evans (1996), a correlation coefficient between 0.40-0.59 is moderate.

4.5 Prediction Model

Hierarchical regression was carried out with a view to identify the contribution of each predictor variable towards the Participation in Public Procurement markets in a more detailed fashion and thus draw more information for knowledge building and inform future research. Researchers are often interested in testing theoretical assumptions and examining the influence of several predictor variables in a sequential way, such that the relative importance of a predictor may be judged on the basis of how much it adds to the prediction of a criterion, over and above that which can be accounted for by other important predictors. As Cohen (2001) and Wampold and Freund (1987) noted, hierarchical regression has been designed to test such specific, theory-based hypotheses. Therefore, to ascertain the findings of the correlations results, the results in the hierarchical table 7 below were presented so as to verify the predictive effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 7- Hierarchical Regression Model

	<i>Model-1</i>	<i>Model-2</i>	<i>Model-3</i>
Participation in public procurement (Constant)	1.846**	.894**	.157
SME Workforce size	.009	.022	.057
Nature Business	.123	.023	.072
Entrepreneurial Orientation		.440**	.237*
Knowledge Management Orientation			.363**
R	.124	.446	.521
R Square	.015	.199	.271
Adjusted R Square	.004	.175	.242
Std. Error	1.151	1.043	1.000

F Statistic	.785	22.732	9.676
Sig.	.459	.000	.002

Source: Primary Data

The hierarchical regression approach in Table 7 above was used to determine the effect of entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation on participation in public procurement. Three hierarchical models were created.

In Model 1: The results revealed that the control variables which included the size of the workforce in the business and the nature of the business had no significant effect on the participation in public procurement of these women owned enterprises (β =values of 0.009 and 0.124 for SME work force size and Nature of business), therefore, model 1 was not significant (sig. 0. 459). This finding deviates from the findings by some scholars like Flynn et al. (2013) who found that firm size has a positive influence on SME tendering resources, activity, and success rate in public procurement

Model 2: When another variable (entrepreneurial orientation) is introduced in the model, a significant positive effect on the participation in public procurement is observed ($\beta = .440$, $R^2 = .199$, $p < .05$). The results show that entrepreneurial orientation can account for 19.9% of the variance in the participation in public procurement of these women owned enterprises. Entrepreneurial orientation in this case can be relied upon to establish reasonable improvements in bidding and the activity of these SMEs in the public procurement deals.

Model 3: When knowledge management orientation is introduced, the results show that the model is statistically significant and the new entrant into the model is also a significant predictor of the participation in public procurement ($\beta = .363$, $R^2 = .271$, $p <$

.05). The results show that the knowledge management orientation can account for 27.1 % of the variance in the participation in public procurement of these women SME. Therefore, the final model further shows that the knowledge management orientation has a greater effect on the public procurement participation than the entrepreneurial orientation. As such, the management of these businesses should priorities knowledge management orientation over entrepreneurial orientation to get the desired participation in public procurement.

4.6 The mediating role of Knowledge Management Orientation in the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Participation in Public Procurement.

The mediating effect of knowledge management orientation in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement was tested based on a regression procedure specified by Baron and Kenny (1986). The mediation was also tested using the Sobel Test Baron and Kenny (1986) approach was used in a three-stage process as described in table 6 below;

Table 8- Mediation Model Regression Statistics

		Beta	R ²	Adj. R Square	Sig.
Step-1	Participation in Public Procurement on Entrepreneurial Orientation	.445**	.198	.190	**
Step-2	Knowledge Management Orientation on Entrepreneurial Orientation	.619**	.383	.377	**
Step-3	Summary of Hierarchical Regression Model statistics, Dependent Variable: Participation in Public Procurement				
	Model 2 Entrepreneurial Orientation	.440**	.199	.175	**
	Model 3	Entrepreneurial Orientation	.271	.242	**
		Knowledge Management Orientation			

Source: Primary Data

Step-1: The independent variable is a significant predictor of the dependent variable. This was established using a linear regression and showed that entrepreneurial orientation is a significant predictor of the dependent variable which is participation in public procurement ($\beta = .445^{**}, p < .05$). This called for a further investigation as to whether entrepreneurial Orientation is a significant predictor of the knowledge management orientation.

Step-2: The results in step 2 of the model sought to identify whether entrepreneurial orientation is a significant predictor of knowledge management orientation. If this relationship proves to be non-significant, then it means that knowledge management orientation cannot play a mediating role in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement. However, it was noted that entrepreneurial orientation is a significant predictor of the knowledge management orientation ($\beta = .619^{**}, p < .05$).

Step-3: This was accomplished using a hierarchical regression model. Results indicate that when entrepreneurial orientation is controlled for, and knowledge management orientation is introduced in Model 3, the model is still statistically significant but a slight increment in the R value from .199 to .271 is observed and the model remains statistically significant ($p < .05$). These results suggest a mediating role of knowledge management orientation from the series of regression results presented above.

The data was further subjected to the Sobel test to establish the mediating effect.

Table 9: Mediation Model Regression Statistics

Type of mediation		<i>Significant</i>		
Sobel z-value		2.817	<i>p =</i>	0.05
95% Symmetrical Confidence interval				
	Lower	.051		
	Higher	.286		
Unstandardized indirect effect				
	a*b	.169		
	Se	.060		
<i>Effective Size measures</i>				
Standardized Coefficients			R² Measures (Variance)	
Total:		.445	.198	
Direct:		.242	.036	
Indirect:		.203	.161	
Indirect to Total ratio		.456	.817	

Source: Primary Data

The results in the table above show that the total effect was .445 which is combination of the Direct Effect ($\beta = .242^{**}$, $p < .05$) and the Standardized Indirect Effect ($\beta = .203^{**}$, $p < .05$). These results show that the total and the indirect effects were both statistically significant. The results showed that the Sobel z- value was statistically significant (Sobel Z Value = 2.817, $p < .05$) and this indicated that the indirect effect was statistically significant. Since the direct and the indirect effects are both significant, the results show that knowledge management orientation plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between the entrepreneurial orientation and the participation in public procurement.

4.7 ANOVA –Analysis of Variance Results for SMEs

ANOVA results for Business age by variable was done to test the extent to which the SMEs vary on the Entrepreneurial Orientation, Knowledge management Orientation and Participation in Public Procurement

Table 10: ANOVA –Analysis of Variance Results for SMEs

Total N = 103		N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	F	sig.
<i>Entrepreneurial Orientation</i>	Less than 5 years	56	2.634	.357	.181	3.002	.034
	5-10 years	32	3.375	.276	.226		
	10-20 years	13	3.038	.493	.414		
	Above 20 years	2	4.500	.707	.500		
<i>Knowledge Management Orientation</i>	Less than 5 years	56	2.721	.888	.119	3.823	.012
	5-10 years	32	3.069	.839	.148		
	10-20 years	13	3.400	.194	.331		
	Above 20 years	2	4.300	.990	.700		
<i>Participation in Public Procurement</i>	Less than 5 years	56	1.688	.812	.109	6.740	.000
	5-10 years	32	2.422	.333	.236		
	10-20 years	13	2.692	.300	.360		
	Above 20 years	2	3.750	.354	.250		

The results show that the SMEs that have been operating for various periods of time vary significantly on the way they perceive the study constructs ($F > 1.000$, $p < .01$). The results show that SMEs that have been in operation for over 20 years have the greatest rating on all the study constructs (Entrepreneurial Orientation, Knowledge Management Orientation and the Participation in Public Procurement), as observed from the highest mean for this business age category compared to all the other SMEs. This could be attributed to the fact those SMEs that have been in the Business for longer, tend to have a greater level of experience, knowledge base or enhanced likelihood to participate in public procurement.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the details of the study including; the discussion which contains a contrast and exploration of the findings of the study relative to the scholarly research works that have been done by the other scholars, the recommendations which are the action points that should be explored and put in action so as to ensure that the women owned SMEs can increase their likelihood to participate in the public procurement engagements. The chapter also contains the areas for further research and ends with the research limitation and how the researcher finally attempted to address them. This chapter also shows the areas for further research; a reflection of the research areas that should be pursued in order to ensure that the understanding and knowledge in entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management and participation in public procurement developments.

5.1 The relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Knowledge Management Orientation.

The results showed that entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation are positively related variables. This was confirmed by both the correlations and the regression models. It was noted that entrepreneurial orientation attributes such as the innovativeness and the pro-activeness are essential in building of knowledge management orientation in a women owned Small and Medium Enterprise. As an example, pro-activeness will push the management of the women owned SMEs to help the employees acquire more knowledge and more ideas about the market. This quest for knowledge could

be expressed in terms of the desire of management to invite consultants to train the employees in selected fields that relate to their trade. In a similar manner, providing knowledge to stakeholders in firms through training can help form a clearer overall picture of the firm's strategy and every person's role in implementing it (O'Regan, Stainer, & Sims, 2010). Bryan (2006) argued that training also increases knowledge and improves the technical and other skills required to perform work tasks. Therefore, a firm well gifted with knowledge, skills, and abilities performs better when it has entrepreneurial orientation, while knowledge management orientation helps this firm know where to look for opportunities, accurately measure the value and better equipped to extract value from these opportunities (Farooq and Vij, 2018).

Similarly, the innovativeness of the women owned SME enables the workforce within the SME to work as a team as they strive to achieve a common goal so as to advance the interests of the organization. In the way, the knowledge sharing dimension of the Knowledge management orientation shall be promoted and this shall cause the institutional workforce to ensure that knowledge management orientation variables such as knowledge receptivity are enhanced. This is partly attributed to the fact that the sharing of information regarding the innovation ultimately reminds the workforce that sharing ideas is the way to go and the individuals need to also bear in mind that they share ideas with others and not only keep them to themselves since even the other workmates share the ideas. The findings of Lee et al. (2013) suggest that sharing of knowledge increases a firm's ability to access information which is beneficial to SMEs participation in public procurement, because access to information by SMEs is considered one of the greatest barriers hindering SME participation in public procurement (Fee et al., 2002).

5.2 The relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Participation in public Procurement Market.

Entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement were noted to be significantly and positively related. The results show that women SMEs that have proactive persons and systems in place are more likely to participate in the public procurement market than those that do not. When the women SMEs develop systems that promote aspects such as market intelligence and innovativeness, they enhance their chances for benefitting from the procurement projects. The results are indicative that those SMEs which unveil and make it a point to invest heavily in developing novel offerings through products and services, or even customer relationship management conduct, are more likely to forge partnerships and acquire information which will make it possible for them to submit bids and other entities. Eggers et al. (2013) suggested that proactive firms operate in anticipation of future problems, needs and changes, and thus, are the first in the market and lead the way with their new offerings. In Support, findings of Reijonen et al. (2016) suggest proactivity/innovativeness dimension of entrepreneurial orientation influences how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) search for information on public sector tender opportunities and their subsequent bidding activity.

Further, entrepreneurial orientation dimensions such as risk taking enable the management and the workforce of the women SMEs to work diligently even in business environments with which they are not familiar. This enables businesses to exploit opportunities which they are not familiar with such as those that are to be found in government entities. Such businesses are also more likely to engage in bidding for contracts that the government offers to the public. This is a far outcry from those businesses that don't have proactive and

risk-taking management since they only seek to venture into those areas wherein, they have run business before. In a similar manner, Uncertainty is generated by lack of information and resources when choosing a target market, and SMEs often try to minimize risk by selecting a market that exhibits less uncertainty (Armario et al., 2008). They may also try to compensate for their lack of resources by relying on customer orientation and responding to expressed customer needs in order to generate immediate revenues (Eggers et al., 2013).

This lack of boldness hinders the growth of business when the businesses cannot participate in those public sector markets but only the small private sector transactions. As such, it can be noted that only those businesses that have individuals who are not afraid of what the uncertain future holds are the ones who will have nerve enough to engage in public sector markets, helping their own organizations to benefit even lose sometimes when the deal goes wrong or when there is a miscalculation. However, this only serves as a lesson for these businesses and in consequent transactions, the businesses can avoid those mistakes that have been made in the past. This deviates from findings of Reijonen et al. (2016) that suggested that proactivity/innovativeness dimension of entrepreneurial orientation influences how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) search for information on public sector tender opportunities and their subsequent bidding activity and supported bidding activity while risk taking was not. Further, for smaller firms with limited resources, it is risky to invest time and resources in acquiring the knowledge and skills required to participate in public tendering. Undertaking the time-consuming bureaucratic process associated with procurement, especially when a successful outcome is doubtful, is highly uncertain (Reijonen et al., 2016).

5.3 The relationship between Knowledge Management Orientation and Participation in Public procurement of women owned SMEs.

The findings further revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between knowledge management orientation and participation in public procurement of women owned SMEs. The results were noted from the correlation and the regression models which were presented in the previous chapter. The willingness of the workforce to share information and knowledge about market trends, happenings and the new events, with the internal and certain external staff, enables them to understand the best ways of consequently engaging in the public procurement other than when there is no knowledge management orientation in the SMEs. A strong knowledge management orientation provides the basis of knowledge, enabling the firm to effectively interpret data on external events (Wang *et al.*, 2009). In similar manner, Lee *et al.*(2013) suggested that sharing of knowledge increases a firm's ability to access information which is beneficial to SMEs participation in public procurement, because access to information by SMEs is considered one of the greatest barriers hindering SME participation in public procurement (Fee *et al.*, 2002).

Additionally, knowledge management orientation attributes such as organizational memory become instrumental when seeking to exploit opportunities in the market. Knowledge management orientation, helps SMEs avoid mistakes that have been made in the past. For example, from experience, the business can learn and determine that when it tries to use some dishonest and corrupt means so as to gain access to a tender, it causes a lot of backfire and undesirable outcomes. These may range from, causing loss of jobs for those employees who are implicated in the fraudulent transaction, generating a negative image

for the business and causing the business to be blacklisted by some public entities. Mirroring on the decisions that the SMEs have made in the past, not only helps these businesses to avoid these mistakes in future but also helps them to build their capacity in a variety of ways. When an SME lost a previous tender because it lacked the right kind of technology or certain human resources, then fast forward, the same SME can present its documents and its profile after doing the necessary changes and modifications so that it gains from the future transactions that the public markets have to offer. The findings are in line with Ancarani, et al. (2019), Fernandes and Vieira (2015) who argue that information transmission can be realized through adoption and use of e-procurement systems and through dedicated web portals and specialized facilities where SMEs can obtain both information and assistance in understanding both specific project requirements and specific initiatives aimed at educating and training SME personnel and requiring procuring entities to post opportunities on a central web platform can help reduce information search costs for SMEs.

5.4 The mediating role of Knowledge Management orientation in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement

The mediating role of knowledge management orientation in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and participation in public procurement by women owned SMEs in Uganda was investigated using a series of regression models and the *Sobel- Z* value. The results showed that knowledge management orientation plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between the entrepreneurial orientation and the participation in the public procurement. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Baskaran (2018) who confirmed that there was a partial mediation by the knowledge

management enablers, as well as by the corresponding dimensions between organizational characteristics and entrepreneurial orientation. Studies of Bakar and Mamat (2017), Farooq and Vij (2018) also supported mediation of knowledge management and knowledge management orientation on entrepreneurial orientation and business performance.

The results show that even in the presence of entrepreneurial orientation, it is worth it to ensure that knowledge management orientation is enabled by ensuring that attributes such as needful knowledge absorption and information sharing are promoted within the organization. The failure to promote knowledge management orientation within the organization will ultimately cause an organization to lose some of the benefits that come from the positive effects of the entrepreneurial orientation. In other words, some of the positive manifestations of the participation in the public procurement can only be realized if Entrepreneurial orientation is allowed to influence knowledge management orientation. This can also be realized by management having a very clear understanding of the factors that actually influence public procurement participation. Similarly, Waseem Bari et al (2016) highlight that knowledge culture and knowledge management practices increase the rate of innovation, enable organizations to enhance their market segments and improve their service quality and operational effectiveness, which requires an entrepreneurial mindset among the employees.

The other fact that is noted from the mediation results in this study is the simple notion that even without knowledge management orientation in place, entrepreneurial orientation can still influence participation in the public procurement markets. However, knowledge management orientation also has its benefits as it has been noted to be a significant and positive influencer of participation in the public procurement deals. It therefore requires

proficient and experienced business management so as to combine entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation so as to realize the desired level of public participation in procurement. In a similar manner, Li et al. (2009) suggest that a firm's knowledge creation process mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance. While entrepreneurial orientation provides basic elements for achieving benefits in the relationship, a firm's knowledge creation process converts entrepreneurial orientation into knowledge assets shared by organizational members to achieve firm performance.

5.6 Conclusion

The following conclusions in the study were presented below as the credible research conclusions that are worth fulfilling in order to enhance the level of participation in public markets;

Innovativeness, a dimension of Entrepreneurial orientation has the capacity to positively influence the level of the knowledge management orientation within the women small and medium enterprises. It is possible therefore to improve knowledge management orientation by exploiting Innovativeness, relative to the market demands so that businesses can increase their likelihood of participating in the public markets.

Risk-Taking which is a measure of the Entrepreneurial Orientation can be exploited by ensuring that the people running the business are pro-active and ready to venture into new markets including those which they have not been dealing in before. The Businesses therefore need special interventions so as to build the capacity of the independent decision making among the SME management personnel.

Organizational Memory can be exploited by the management of the women owned SMEs to enhance the Participation in the Public Procurement. Experiences that the SMEs undergo such the changes in the business environment, the advancements in technology and the growth of numbers in their sectors; which ultimately make the competition very stiff, can be exploited so as to acquire information and to also submit tenders for consideration in the public markets.

Knowledge sharing can be explored as a potential in the business efforts to participate in the Public Procurement. When Business units within the business share information or even share knowledge among the officers or personnel in the business, it serves to enable the various units to enhance the harmony. The harmony in this case would be channeled towards the sharing of the business ideas that would culminate in the Participation in Public Procurement Activities.

Knowledge management orientation dimensions such as the Knowledge absorption can be employed by the SMEs in their quest for the participation in Public Markets. The willingness to recognize that there are always new heights, will lead the leadership of the SMEs to avoid the complacency that comes with staying long in the same business with a reasonable market share. These business leaders will begin to understand that there are new measures that can be attained in their quest for greatness.

The descriptives revealed that entrepreneurial orientation was relatively high among the SMEs compared to knowledge management orientation and participation in the public procurement. The irony was that in spite of high entrepreneurial orientation among the SMEs, participation in public procurement markets remains relatively unsatisfactory; an

indication that the Entrepreneurial Orientation has not been fully exploited to enhance the Participation in the Public markets.

Knowledge management orientation is positively related to participation of women owned SMEs in the public procurement activities. The capacity of the SMEs to build understanding and learn from experiences can easily be manipulated by the leadership of the SMEs so as to bring about an improved level of participation in public procurement activities. It is therefore important for SMEs to develop such competences as organizational memory if they are to benefit better from the public procurement markets.

5.7 Recommendations

In light of the study findings and the following research recommendations are therefore advanced;

Women owned SMEs should facilitate managers and employees to embrace risk-taking as a way of nurturing their entrepreneurial orientation. Hence, should learn to avoid the bureaucracy and lengthy decision-making processes.

Additionally, the women owned SMEs should encourage their workers to venture out and seek for information about new markets so as to exploit new opportunities. This is only possible when the employees are encouraged to overcome the fear of the unknown and pursue unfamiliar business opportunities.

Managers of women owned SMEs should encourage innovativeness. For example, they support investment in developing new products, services and business practices. Employees should also be motivated to come up with new ideas for the benefit of their firms.

Finally, women owned SMEs should develop and enhance their knowledge management orientation for example by utilizing IT facilitates in their processes of capturing, categorizing, storing, and retrieving knowledge and ideas. SMEs should also to adopt usage of the latest technology advancements in the search and management of information regarding about public procurement. Further, Women owned SMEs should espouse information sharing both at firm level and with other relevant entities that can facilitate their participation in public procurement.

SME management and leadership is hereby advised to seek partnerships with those already established businesses which are operating in the area of public markets. The partnerships that the SMEs make should include those firms that have been dealing in the public markets for at least 10 years. In the course of the partnership era, the women owned SMEs should endeavor that they learn as much as possible from the established firms and transfer this experience to their own firms to increase their capacity to participate in public markets. This action shall enable the women owned SMEs to acquire experience, knowledge and build competences on how these public markets operate. This shall also help transact businesses in the long run without necessarily the help of many different partners.

5.8 Study Limitations

- i. From the conceptual framework, and research questions, closed ended questionnaires were used. Therefore, the participant's views and their opinions regarding the subject being studied were limited.
- ii. Time for the research and funds were limited otherwise the research would have covered as many other districts as possible.

- iii. The study participants were at first skeptic about the intentions of the study. However, clarity was provided that the study was actually academic and not for other purposes and the study participants availed the information there after.
- iv. The study was undertaken during the period of Covid-19, this affected data collection because of the lock down by government that limited the movement of persons from one place and also the time of operations of businesses including SMEs were regulated. Hence this made the research to take long than expected.

5.9 Areas for further research

Areas of future research can point on the performance of women owned SMEs in public procurement and their relationships with entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management orientation.

Future researches should consider studying entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management orientation and participation of women SME in public procurement in Uganda from a longitudinal point of view given that cross-sectional studies suffer from time constraints that limit them from establishing critically the causal-effect link.

This study did not cover the effect of the absorptivity capacity as a mediating variable between Entrepreneurial Orientation and participation in public procurement among women owned SMEs. Therefore, future researchers may take this up.

Future researchers may also wish to examine the effect of knowledge management orientation and entrepreneurial orientation in other types of businesses in the country.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire Form

Dear Respondent:

This study is about public procurement participation of women owned SMEs in Uganda. You have been identified as a key informant, please spare a few minutes of your busy schedules to fill this questionnaire. The information required herein will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of this study only. Do not indicate your name or any other personal detail anywhere in the questionnaire. Tick [✓] where appropriate and for any explanation please, be brief.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

A1. Gender

Male	Female
1	2

A2. Age group.

18-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46 and above
1	2	3	4	5

A3. What is your level of education?

Diploma	Degree	Masters	PhD	Other(specify)
1	2	3	4	5.....

SECTION B: BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR WOMEN OWNED SMES

A4. How long has this company / business been in operation

Less than 5 years	5-10 Years	11-16 years	Above 16
1	2	3	4

A5- How many staff does your company employ in total?

1-4	5-49	50-100
1	2	3

A6 - How long has this company/business participated in public procurement?

Never	Less than a year	1-5 years	5-11 years	Above 11 years
1	2	3	4	5

A7- Which of the following best describes the nature of your company?

Sn.	Business	Tick (√)
1	Supplies	
2	Services	
3	Works	
4	Supplies and Services	
5	Supplies and Works	
6	Services and Works	
7	Supplies, Services and Works	
8	Others specify	

SECTION C: ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION

This part has statements about entrepreneurial orientation. You are provided with a scale of five (5) options. Please tick (√) the choice that suits your view on the statement in the space provided.

Innovation and Proactivity (IP)		Please tick (√) Your choice				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
IP 1	Continuous renewal and innovation are important for our company.	1	2	3	4	5
IP 2	We invest heavily in developing new products, services, and business practices	1	2	3	4	5
IP 3	In our company, new ideas come up all the time.	1	2	3	4	5
IP 4	We aim at being at the forefront of development in our business	1	2	3	4	5
IP 5	Lately we have launched many new products/ services.	1	2	3	4	5

IP 6	Our company often acts before the competitors do	1	2	3	4	5
Risk taking (R)						
R1	In uncertain situations we are not afraid to take substantial risks.	1	2	3	4	5
R2	Bold action is necessary to achieve our company's objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
R3	The officers at this organization are able to absorb pressure that is accustomed to their work.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ORIENTATION

This part has statements about the knowledge management orientation. You are provided with a scale of five (5) options. Please tick (✓) the choice that suits your view on the statement in the space provided

Organizational memory (OM)		Please tick (✓) Your choice				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
OM1	We have systems to capture and store ideas and knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
OM2	We have systems to codify and categorize ideas in a format that is easier to save for future use.	1	2	3	4	5
OM3	IT facilitates the processes of capturing, categorizing, storing, and retrieving knowledge and ideas in our company.	1	2	3	4	5
OM4	We systematically de-brief projects, record good practices that we should extend and mistakes that we should avoid.	1	2	3	4	5
OM5	We make efforts to remember mistakes we made and avoid making similar mistakes in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
OM6	Information and knowledge stored in our systems is relevant and sufficient.	1	2	3	4	5
OM7	We constantly maintain our information systems and upgrade knowledge stored in the systems.	1	2	3	4	5
OM8	People are encouraged to access and use information and knowledge saved in our company systems.	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge Sharing (KS)						

KS1	We treat people's skills and experiences as a very important part of our knowledge assets.	1	2	3	4	5
KS2	When we need some information or certain knowledge, it is difficult to find out who knows about this, or where we can get this information.	3	4	5	4	5
KS3	We have systems and venues for people to share knowledge and learn from each other in the company.	1	2	3	4	5
KS4	We share information and knowledge with our superiors.	1	2	3	4	5
KS5	We share information and knowledge with our subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5
KS6	We often share ideas with other people of similar interest, even if they are based in different departments.	1	2	3	4	5
KS7	There is a great deal of face-to-face communications in our company.	1	2	3	4	5
KS8	We use information technology to facilitate communications effectively when face-to-face communications are not convenient	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge Absorption (KA)						
KA1	We very often use knowledge that our company possesses, either from the past experience or from external sources.	1	2	3	4	5
KA2	We use information technology to access a wide range of external information and knowledge on competitors and market changes, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
KA3	Through sharing information and knowledge, we often come up with new ideas that can be used to improve our business.	1	2	3	4	5
KA4	We have networks of sharing knowledge with other organizations on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge Receptivity (KR)						
KR1	Managers value knowledge as a strategic asset, critical for success.	1	2	3	4	5
KR2	Our company culture welcomes debate and stimulates discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
KR3	We hesitate to speak out our ideas because new ideas tend to be highly criticized or ignored.	1	2	3	4	5
KR4	In our company, new ideas are evaluated equitably.	1	2	3	4	5
KR5	In our company, we evaluate ideas based on their merits, no matter who comes up with the ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
KR6	In our company, we evaluate new ideas rapidly on	1	2	3	4	5

	a regular basis.					
KR7	There is a general culture in our company where people respect knowledge and knowledge ownership.	1	2	3	4	5
KR8	People who contribute new ideas are rewarded financially in our company.	1	2	3	4	5
KR9	People who contribute new ideas are invited to participate in future development and implementation of this new idea.	1	2	3	4	5
KR10	We are held accountable for our own actions and consequences	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION E: PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PARTICIPATION

This part has statements about public procurement participation. You are provided with different scale options. Please tick (√) the choice that suits your view on the statement in the space provided.

Activity in seeking tendering opportunities		Please tick (√) Your choice	
ASTO1	Does your firm look for public sector tender requests?'	Never	1
		Irregularly	2
		Regularly	3
Activity in submitting bids			
ASB1	How many times have you submitted a bid to public sector tender requests in a year?	Never	1
		1-5 times	2
		6-10 times	3
		11-20 times	4
		21-30 times	5
		31-40 times	6
		41-50 times	7
		More than 50 times	8

Thank You for your time