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**The Influence of Governance on Implementation of the Public Procurement Act No.
15 of 2015: Case Study of Oshana Regional Council**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how the principles of good governance transparency, accountability, participation, and fairness have shaped the implementation of Namibia's Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 within the Oshana Regional Council. Employing an exploratory and predominantly qualitative research design, the study combined thematic analysis of 12 procurement files and five audit reports (Financial Year 2022–2024) with non-participant observations of five Bid Evaluation Committee sittings. Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted with a purposive sample of 36 stakeholders directly involved in public procurement, including procurement officers, bid evaluation committee members, auditors, finance managers, policy advisors, and suppliers. This sample size was determined to ensure data saturation and to reflect heterogeneity across roles and perspectives. Descriptive analysis of the frequency with which themes occurred was employed to complement the thematic analysis. This quantification highlighted prominent themes, thereby enriching the explanation of operational and governance challenges within the public procurement system.

Governance literacy clustered among procurement officers and auditors, while suppliers and administrative staff demonstrated significantly lower levels of awareness. Rules such as strict competitive bidding, enforcement of conflict-of-interest policies, transparent disclosures, and thorough supplier evaluations were consistently upheld. Good governance yielded measurable benefits, including shorter procurement cycle times, cost savings, and improved vendor relations. However, procedural drift manifested in 58% of sampled contracts bypassing open-advertising thresholds, conflict-of-interest forms missing or delayed in one-third of cases, and inadequate post-award monitoring of social-value clauses remained common. Capacity deficits, ad hoc staffing of the Procurement Management Unit, corruption risks, and resistance to change emerged as chief impediments to full compliance.

Stakeholders proposed five key remedies: formalising the PMU, instituting mandatory role-specific training, strengthening independent oversight, accelerating the roll-out of e-procurement, and linking social-value clauses to quarterly impact reports. The study concludes that robust statutory frameworks alone are insufficient without parallel investments in human capital, digital infrastructure, and strong enforcement mechanisms. By situating local evidence within contemporary governance literature, this research offers

context-specific insights and actionable policy guidance for enhancing procurement effectiveness in Namibia and comparable settings.

Keywords: public procurement, governance, effectiveness, accountability, capacity building, social value, Oshana Regional Council

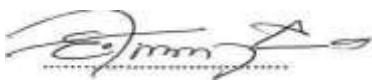
DECLARATION:

By submitting this thesis, I affirm that the entire work presented is my own and original, with me as the sole author (unless explicitly noted otherwise). It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the University of Science and Technology, Namibia.

As a multicultural and proactive specialist in the Public and Development Sector, this research embodies my dedication to tackling socio-economic disparities. I believe that the findings of this thesis will aid in fulfilling organisational goals through strategic policy implementation.

Additionally, I confirm that the reproduction and publication of this work by the Namibia University of Science and Technology will not violate any third-party rights, and I have not submitted this thesis before, in whole or in part, for any other qualification.

Signature:



Date: 31 July 2025

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my late father, Tomas Amunyela (1947-2001), and my late grandmother, Mathilde Sem (1921-2011), who championed the transformative power of education as a vital pathway to success.

Their enduring teachings and mentorship have profoundly influenced my life, instilling in me a commitment to uphold these values for future generations within our family.

I am immensely grateful for my father's investment in my future and often reflect on how much I wish he could witness the outcomes of his dedication.

Their guidance has paved the way for my continued achievements. This dedication serves to honour the legacy of those who have significantly shaped my career.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
CPBN	Central Procurement Board of Namibia
BEC	Bid Evaluation Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MoEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORC`	Oshana Regional Council
PMU	Procurement Management Unit
PPCs	Public Procurement Committees
PPS	Public Procurement Service (South Korea)
PPPFA	Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (South Africa)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SVP	Small Value Procurement
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

With the evolving landscape of government operations, public procurement assumes a central role, driven by essential principles such as transparency, efficiency, and fiscal responsibility (Primanda, 2019). Public procurement is defined as the process through which government agencies and other public sector organisations acquire goods, services, and infrastructure to fulfil their responsibilities to the population they serve (Addo, 2019). Globally, public procurement accounts for a significant portion of government spending, ranging from 12% to 15% of gross domestic product (GDP) in developed countries, and often exceeding 20% in developing nations (OECD, 2020). This underscores its pivotal role in ensuring effective service delivery, fostering economic growth, and enhancing governance practices.

Public procurement is guided by the fiduciary duty of public administrations to prioritise the interests of citizens and communities, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and equitably (Endicott, 2018). In Namibia, public procurement constitutes approximately 20% of the national budget, making it a critical tool for socio-economic development and poverty reduction (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). The introduction of the Public Procurement Act, No. 15 of 2015, was a major milestone, designed to promote transparency, accountability, and fairness in procurement processes, while fostering inclusivity and economic empowerment (Kraai, 2023).

As societies increasingly recognise the importance of citizen engagement in governance, public procurement processes are being redefined to incorporate broader participation and accountability. This shift enhances transparency while empowering citizens to actively engage in decision-making regarding resource allocation, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility toward community development (Selviaridis, 2023). Effective governance relies heavily on transparent and accountable practices within governmental organisations, particularly in public procurement, which ensures efficient resource allocation while addressing broader social objectives that contribute to community well-being (Hafsa, Darnall, & Bretschneider, 2021).

Public procurement involves more than just economic transactions; it also encompasses critical principles such as accountability, transparency, non-discrimination among potential suppliers, and adherence to international obligations (Addo, 2019). Regulations governing public procurement exist in all countries to safeguard public interests, enhance compliance, and ensure value for money. However, corruption and inefficiencies continue to undermine procurement systems globally, with an estimated \$1 trillion lost annually to corruption in procurement processes worldwide (Transparency International, 2021).

Background of the Study

Despite the introduction of regulatory frameworks such as the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015, Namibia continues to face significant challenges in public procurement governance. Persistent issues, including corruption, lack of transparency, and inadequate capacity building, have been shown to undermine effective governance and the integrity of procurement processes (Tjirera, 2017; Procurement Tracker Namibia, 2021). For instance, a 2021 compliance report revealed that only 19% of public entities in Namibia adhered to the Act's requirements, underscoring widespread non-compliance and systemic inefficiencies (Asheela-Shikalepo, 2021). Moreover, the overreliance on small-value procurement methods, which accounted for 36% of all transactions, exacerbates these challenges by reducing competitiveness and limiting transparency in the bidding process (Procurement Tracker Report, 2021). These findings highlight ongoing governance gaps and the critical need for improved oversight, capacity development, and adherence to procurement regulations within Namibian public entities.

Regional councils, including the Oshana Regional Council, are tasked with overseeing public procurement and ensuring adherence to legal regulations, ethical standards, and best practices (Procurement Tracker Report, 2021). However, limited capacity and weak monitoring mechanisms have hindered the effective implementation of procurement policies at the regional level. For example, a study by Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala (2021) highlighted that regional councils often lack the skilled personnel and resources necessary to conduct competitive bidding and manage procurement processes effectively.

Incorporating social value assessments into procurement processes is increasingly recognised as a vital strategy for ensuring that public spending not only achieves economic efficiency but also delivers community benefits (Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014). Social value considerations include enhancing employment opportunities, supporting small and marginalised businesses, and promoting skills development. The Public Procurement Act, No. 15 of 2015, explicitly emphasises the importance of these objectives, aligning procurement activities with Namibia's broader socio-economic goals (Government of Namibia, 2015). However, achieving these objectives requires significant improvements in governance practices. Robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks are essential to the success of social value initiatives, as weak or underdeveloped M&E systems significantly diminish their effectiveness and limit positive outcomes for community development (Smith & Lewis, 2022; Thompson et al., 2023). Strengthening penalties for non-compliance and introducing new enforcement mechanisms are essential for ensuring that procurement processes deliver both economic and social value (Robert & Black, 2008).

The Oshana Regional Council plays a central role in managing procurement processes that directly impact regional development. The Council is responsible for acquiring goods, services, and infrastructure necessary for implementing projects in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and transportation. However, governance challenges such as corruption, weak oversight, and limited capacity have significantly hindered the effectiveness of these processes. A 2021 report by the Namibia Statistics Agency found that 25% of procurement projects in Oshana exceeded their budget allocations, while delays affected 35% of the projects. These inefficiencies have undermined the region's ability to deliver timely and cost-effective public services, emphasising the need for enhanced governance practices and capacity building (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach, including specialised training for procurement officers, improved monitoring systems, and the integration of digital tools such as e-procurement platforms (Kraai, 2023).

The present study critically examined the influence of governance on the implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 at the Oshana Regional Council. Specifically, it explored how governance dimensions, including compliance, accountability, and social value, shape the practical realisation of the Act's objectives within a regional council context. Through a qualitative case study approach, the research addressed persistent knowledge gaps regarding the ways governance mechanisms and stakeholder engagement affect

adherence to procurement regulations and ethical standards at the local government level. The findings provide an evidence-based assessment aimed at informing targeted improvements to the Council's procurement framework, to promote inclusivity, economic empowerment, and sustainable development, as emphasised in the Public Procurement Act (Government of Namibia, 2015).

By integrating relevant theoretical perspectives and drawing on context-specific qualitative insights, this study contributes to the broader discourse on public procurement governance in Namibia. It offers actionable recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars seeking to strengthen governance systems and procurement outcomes at the regional level. The research underscores the critical importance of effective governance not only for achieving compliance and accountability, but also for advancing transparency and maximising the social value generated through public procurement activities under the Act.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The 2021/2022 compliance report highlights low adherence to procurement regulations at Oshana Regional Council, with limited access to annual procurement plans and suspensions of companies for failing contractual obligations (Asheela-Shikalepo, 2021). Non-compliance with Quarterly Implementation Reports further weakens transparency and competitiveness.

The analysis of 263 Ministry of Finance reports for 2020/21 shows over N\$4.6 billion in procurement transactions, with 36% using less competitive Small Value Procurement methods, while open-advertised bidding accounted for only 1%. This overreliance on non-competitive methods, often without justification, undermines the Act's goals of fairness and accountability.

Operational challenges, including poor planning, staff's unclear roles, overlapping responsibilities that limit participation in key procurement activities, miscommunications, and last-minute supplier refusals, cause delays and inefficiencies in budget execution, reflecting governance weaknesses.

Although research and monitoring reports highlight significant administrative compliance challenges in Namibia's public procurement system following the Public Procurement Act of 2015 (IPPR, 2021; Shikongo, 2022) including low compliance rates, limited staff capacity,

and inadequate enforcement governance factors such as accountability, compliance culture, and social value remain underexplored in relation to the Act's implementation.

The current study addresses this gap by examining these governance dimensions in procurement implementation at the Oshana Regional Council to improve compliance and enhance social and organisational outcomes.

These challenges hinder the council's ability to enhance compliance, strengthen accountability, and maximize social value, emphasising the need for improved practices and adherence to bidding procedures (Asheela-Shikalepo, 2021)

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective

Main objective: The study assessed how governance influences public procurement at the Oshana Regional Council, identifying barriers and proposing actionable strategies to enhance procurement effectiveness.

Sub-objectives

1. To explore the governance mechanisms in place to ensure compliance, accountability, and social value in the public procurement processes at Oshana Regional Council.
2. To assess the level of awareness among internal stakeholders regarding procurement regulations and guidelines at Oshana Regional Council.
3. To examine adherence to procurement procedures, including bid evaluation, contract award, and supplier selection at Oshana Regional Council.
4. To recommend strategies to enhance compliance, accountability, and social value in the public procurement processes via automation and reporting workflows.

1.4 Research Question

Main Research Question

To what extent does governance influence the Public Procurement Act 15 of 2015's effectiveness at the Oshana Regional Council?

Sub Questions

1. How do governance mechanisms in place ensure compliance, accountability, and social value in the public procurement processes at the Oshana Regional Council?
2. What is the current level of awareness among stakeholders about procurement rules and guidelines at the Oshana Regional Council?
3. To what extent do procurement practices at the Oshana Regional Council align with established procedures during bid evaluation, contract award, and supplier selection?
4. What strategies can be implemented to enhance compliance, accountability, and social value in public procurement processes via automation and reporting workflows?

1.5 Relevance and Significance of the Study

Practical Significance

This study is highly relevant as it addresses the critical issue of governance in public procurement, which is fundamental to achieving efficient resource allocation, developmental goals, and social value. Public procurement in Namibia has accounted for a substantial portion of government expenditure, representing approximately 20% of the national budget (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). This significant share underscored the potential of procurement processes to drive economic growth and social development if implemented effectively. The Oshana Regional Council, as a key administrative body, was central to the execution of procurement projects that directly impacted regional development, including infrastructure, education, and healthcare services. However, persistent governance challenges such as a lack of transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation continued to undermine the effectiveness of these processes, thereby limiting their ability to deliver tangible benefits to the community (MoEAC, 2023).

In addition to addressing resource inefficiencies, the present study highlighted the role of public procurement in delivering social value. Social value in procurement involved not only ensuring fair and equitable processes, but also promoting broader societal benefits such as job creation, support for marginalised groups, and skill development. For instance, the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 prioritised local supplier participation and economic empowerment, aligning with Namibia's goals of inclusivity and community development (Government of Namibia, 2015). The practical recommendations derived from this study aimed to operationalise these priorities by addressing governance gaps and proposing actionable solutions to enhance procurement processes.

From a practical perspective, the study provides policymakers, regional councils, and other stakeholders with insights into reforming governance mechanisms to ensure efficient, transparent, and socially beneficial use of public resources. By identifying specific barriers to effective governance, such as inadequate monitoring systems and weak accountability frameworks, the research offered targeted solutions to foster compliance and public trust. Moreover, the findings contributed to the objectives of Namibia's Public Procurement Act and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16, which focuses on building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions (UNDP, 2020). Strengthening public procurement governance also directly supports SDG 8, which emphasises decent work and economic growth, by creating opportunities for local businesses and marginalised communities.

Theoretical Significance

Timely detection and prediction of compliance violations are not only essential for fostering accountability but also for enhancing social value within public procurement processes. Compliance with procurement regulations ensures that public resources are used efficiently and ethically, promoting fairness and equity in service delivery. By assessing compliance within the Oshana Regional Council, this study identifies deviations from established regulations and offers proactive strategies to address these issues. These efforts go beyond ensuring adherence to legal standards; they cultivate a culture of transparency and ethical behaviour, which are crucial for building trust among stakeholders and delivering social value (Grandia & Volker, 2023).

Furthermore, the current study contributes to addressing significant deficiencies in the theoretical understanding of public procurement. While existing frameworks such as Stakeholder Theory, Legitimacy Theory, and Institutional Theory explore aspects of governance, they often overlook the intersection of compliance, accountability, and social value. For example, Stakeholder Theory emphasises the importance of balancing diverse stakeholder interests but does not fully address how governance mechanisms can align with social value goals in public procurement (Addo, 2019). Similarly, Institutional Theory highlights the role of regulatory compliance in promoting accountability but fails to explore the broader societal impacts of procurement decisions (Zia Ul Haq, Khan, & Ali, 2023). By filling these gaps, this research enriches the theoretical framework surrounding public procurement and governance.

The 2024 IPPR Procurement Tracker Namibia report reveals persistent barriers to effective procurement governance, such as inadequate institutional capacity, insufficient data systems, and weak compliance oversight. However, it also highlights that comprehensive, actionable strategies to address these issues have yet to be fully developed or implemented.

This study bridges that gap by offering practical recommendations informed by the specific challenges faced by the Oshana Regional Council. For instance, it examines how the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, shapes governance practices, providing empirical insights into how legal instruments influence compliance, accountability, and social value outcomes (Government of Namibia, 2015). By doing so, the research contributes to the development of a more nuanced and actionable theoretical discourse on public procurement. This study aims to influence policy decisions by demonstrating how good governance in procurement can align with broader social and economic goals. By integrating compliance, accountability, and social value into its analysis, the research not only addresses academic gaps but also provides a framework for real-world application. This dual focus ensures that the study is both theoretically significant and practically impactful, offering valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers alike.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on assessing the influence of good governance on public procurement effectiveness within the framework of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015, specifically in the context of the Oshana Regional Council. The research examined key governance principles, including transparency, accountability, stakeholder participation, compliance, and social value enforcement as outlined in the Act. It explored how these governance mechanisms shaped procurement decision-making, contract awarding, supplier engagement, and overall procurement effectiveness. While the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 encompasses several important principles governing procurement in Namibia, including integrity, efficiency, legality, consistency, and value for money, this study will not focus on these principles.

However, the study deliberately also excluded certain specialized domains of the Public Procurement Act, such as defense and security procurement, emergency procurement, and international trade agreements. These areas were omitted due to their unique regulatory frameworks, sensitive and classified nature, and limited relevance to the procurement governance context at the regional council level. Instead, the research concentrated on

standard procurement procedures applicable to regional councils and public institutions, particularly those aligned with national development goals and economic empowerment initiatives.

The selection of the Oshana Regional Council as the study focus was informed by its distinctive procurement structure, prevalent governance challenges, and economic significance within Namibia. Oshana serves as a strategic regional hub, exhibiting diverse and substantial public procurement activities, making it a suitable and representative case for evaluating governance practices. Moreover, documented procurement inefficiencies and governance gaps identified in the Ministry of Finance reports (2021) provided a compelling justification for concentrating on this region. Other regional councils were excluded due to logistical constraints, limited accessibility of relevant data, and the necessity of conducting an in-depth, context-specific analysis within a single administrative unit to ensure comprehensive and actionable findings.

By narrowing the geographical and thematic scope to Oshana, the study effectively balances breadth and depth, allowing for a detailed examination of the governance dynamics that influence procurement processes. This focused approach aims to generate nuanced, contextually relevant insights that can inform policymaking and enhance procurement governance both within Oshana and more broadly across similar regional settings nationally.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Data Limitations

This study encountered challenges commonly associated with public procurement research in developing contexts, particularly the lack of comprehensive and reliable data in Namibia. It is widely recognized that document analysis often faces obstacles including inaccuracies, incomplete records, and inconsistent reporting, which affect the strength of research findings. To address these limitations, regular data audits were conducted to ensure that the data used for assessing social value and compliance remained current and comprehensive, thereby enhancing accountability and accuracy in reporting (Nkurunziza, Lipinge, Mishra, & Smit, 2021). Furthermore, the study leveraged digital tools to facilitate real-time data processing and integration, supporting efforts to strengthen compliance and accountability (Mwinga, 2022). Collaboration with local organisations and stakeholders also improved data collection processes by utilising existing knowledge and institutional resources. The

overarching goal was to foster a data environment that prioritises quality so that the resulting insights were both credible and actionable.

Sample Size and Self-Reporting Bias

The study's reliance on qualitative data collection presented additional limitations related to sample size and potential self-reporting bias. Given the case study design and the context-specific focus on Oshana Regional Council, the relatively small and purposively selected sample size may have limited the generalisability of the findings (Stuart & Rhodes, 2017). To mitigate this, the study intentionally ensured diversity among stakeholders involved in procurement, ensuring representation from different roles and perspectives. Potential biases arising from self-reporting and the sampling process were openly acknowledged, with diversity and inclusivity prioritised to avoid over-reliance on a homogenous participant group.

Language and Translation

The multilingual nature of Namibia adds another layer of complexity, as participants communicated in English and Oshiwambo dialects. This raised potential risks of misinterpretation or loss of meaning during data collection and analysis. To minimise these risks, interviews were conducted in participants' preferred languages whenever possible, and care was taken to ensure accurate translation and interpretation throughout the data management process (Soylu et al., 2022). This approach enhanced participants' comfort and contributed to the overall quality and credibility of the findings.

External Factors

External factors such as policy changes, economic fluctuations, and natural disasters have often been intensified by periodic economic downturns, which in turn affect budget allocations for regional governments. Times of fiscal constraint or recession have resulted in cuts to procurement funds or a shift in resources toward urgent social and economic relief efforts. These sudden emergency procurements usually require bypassing the standard competitive bidding processes, causing disruptions in record-keeping and weakening governance oversight (Iipinge & Likando, 2020). In Namibia, droughts and floods have repeatedly delayed procurement timelines and disrupted supply chains during emergency responses, adding further difficulties to managing procurement at the regional level (Iipinge & Likando, 2020).

To address these external factors, the research design included ongoing monitoring of Namibia's political, economic, and environmental context, allowing for timely anticipation

and management of disruptions (Bryman, 2016). Contingency plans and flexible data collection strategies, such as remote interviews and document analysis, were created to help ensure continuity whenever possible (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Keeping regular communication with key contacts at the Oshana Regional Council was crucial for staying updated on developments that could impact the study (Weible et al., 2020). This flexible, adaptive strategy helped strengthen the study's overall resilience and validity in a changing research environment.

1.8 Assumptions

Compliance Assumption: The study presumed that adherence to the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 is critical for effective governance, with non-compliance negatively impacting accountability and social value (Ochurub, Jeremiah, & Ochurus, 2021).

Stakeholder Awareness Assumption: It was assumed that stakeholders within the Oshana Regional Council have differing levels of knowledge about procurement regulations, which influence their compliance and accountability.

Data Reliability Assumption: The research operated under the assumption that the information gathered from stakeholders would be dependable and accurately reflect their experiences and views on procurement practices.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

This section defines key terms crucial to understanding the governance principles and public procurement processes underpinning the implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 within the Namibia context, particularly in the Oshana Regional Council.

Public Procurement

Public procurement is the process by which governments and public entities acquire goods, services, and works essential for delivering public services and fulfilling societal needs. It plays a crucial role in the effective functioning of societies globally (Ambe, 2019). In Namibia, public procurement is governed by the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015, which aims to promote integrity, accountability, transparency, competition, efficiency, and fairness (Shikongo, 2022). Historically, procurement reforms in Africa, particularly in the 2000s, focused on decentralising functions, professionalising the workforce, and establishing legal frameworks and specialised procurement units.

Good Governance

Good governance encompasses the systems, processes, and principles that guide political and administrative authority to ensure transparent, accountable, participatory, and effective management of public resources and service delivery (UNDP, 2020; Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014). In public procurement, good governance entails adherence to ethical, legal, and operational norms that minimize corruption, wastage, and inefficiencies (Transparency International, 2021). It is understood as the necessary practices for efficient and fair management of public resources, ultimately contributing to developmental goals, minimizing resource leakages, and ensuring effective utilisation of public funds (UNDP, 2020).

Transparency

Transparency in public procurement refers to the openness and accessibility of procurement-related information, including tender notices, bid evaluations, and contract awards. This enables public oversight, fosters trust among stakeholders, and helps reduce corruption (Macharia, Mchopa, & Ntangeiki, 2023; Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). In Namibia, e-procurement systems have been a significant step towards promoting transparency by providing real-time access to transaction statistics for stakeholders (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021).

Competition

Competition is the principle that encourages suppliers to participate in procurement processes by offering their best prices and quality, typically through competitive bidding. It promotes efficiency, fairness, and innovation in public procurement (Christianson & Hillman, 2014). The Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 emphasises competitive bidding as a key tool to ensure fair pricing and prevent favouritism.

Accountability

Accountability is the obligation of individuals and public institutions involved in procurement to answer for their actions and decisions, ensuring responsible management of public resources. This is facilitated through mechanisms such as audits, performance evaluations, and independent oversight (OECD, 2020; Harnovinsah et al., 2020). Regulatory agencies and effective coordination among entities are crucial for enhancing public sector performance and upholding integrity (Mwagike & Changelima, 2022).

Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder participation involves the inclusive engagement of diverse groups such as government officials, suppliers, civil society, and local communities in procurement decision-making processes. It ensures that procurement activities reflect the needs and priorities of affected groups and fosters transparency and legitimacy (World Economic Forum, 2021; Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021).

Effectiveness

Effectiveness in public procurement denotes the extent to which procurement activities achieve desired outcomes, including timely delivery, cost efficiency, and quality, in alignment with organisational and developmental objectives (UNODC, 2020).

Social Value

Social value refers to the broader societal benefits generated by procurement beyond mere economic efficiency. This includes job creation, economic empowerment, support for marginalised communities, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion (Mascagl-Croone, 2021; Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014). Namibia's procurement framework explicitly integrates social value objectives by prioritising local content and the economic empowerment of disadvantaged groups, contributing to national developmental goals (Government of Namibia, 2015).

Compliance

Compliance entails conformity with legal, procedural, and ethical standards established by procurement laws and policies, such as the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015, to ensure integrity, fairness, and accountability in procurement processes. Non-compliance can undermine accountability and social value (Government of Namibia, 2015; Mutali & Makokha, 2020).

E-Procurement

E-procurement is the use of digital platforms and technologies to conduct procurement activities, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and monitoring capabilities. It provides real-time access to procurement data and reduces human interference, thereby improving oversight (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021; World Bank, 2020).

1.10 The Study Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduces the research problem, objectives, significance, and context of public procurement governance at Oshana Regional Council.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Reviews relevant literature and presents the theoretical framework, with a focus on governance, compliance, accountability, and social value in public procurement.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Describes the qualitative case study design, data collection methods (document analysis, interviews, and focus groups), sampling strategy, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

Presents and analyses empirical findings, organized by key themes such as governance awareness, transparency and accountability, procedural compliance, and social value outcomes, with links to the literature.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Summarises the main findings, discusses theoretical and practical implications, offers recommendations for improving procurement governance, acknowledges study limitations, and suggests areas for future research.

1.11 Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 established the groundwork for this inquiry by situating public procurement at the Oshana Regional Council within Namibia's post-2015 legislative reforms and global transparency standards. It surfaced the gap between statutory intent and recurrent non-compliance, articulated four focused research objectives and aligned questions spanning regulatory awareness, operational adherence, capacity limitations, and socio-economic value creation, and underscored the academic, empirical, and practical significance of the study. The Chapter further clarified delimitations to the 2019–2024 procurement cycle while acknowledging limitations such as data accessibility. Concluding with a structural overview, it charted the research trajectory from thematic literature review through qualitative

methodology, empirical findings, and policy-oriented recommendations, thus providing a coherent platform for subsequent analysis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter examines the existing body of knowledge on governance mechanisms in public procurement, focusing primarily on two theoretical frameworks: Stakeholder Theory and Principal-Agent Theory. These theories provide valuable lenses for understanding how governments can improve governance through procurement processes by addressing challenges such as corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability. Additionally, the review identifies gaps in the current literature, particularly regarding regional governance and public procurement practices in Namibia, underscoring the importance and relevance of this study to fill these knowledge gaps.

2.2 Good Governance Principles in Public Procurement: Concepts and Context

Transparency: A central principle underpinning Namibia's procurement governance is transparency. This is pursued through the regular publication of procurement plans, bid invitations, evaluation results, and contract awards, all of which aim to foster trust, promote oversight, and reduce opportunities for corruption (Shikongo, 2022; Macharia, Mchopa, & Ntangeiki, 2023). Nonetheless, only a minority, roughly 30% of public procurement entities, have fully implemented e-procurement systems. Obstacles such as limited infrastructure and insufficient training for procurement staff continue to impede full digital adoption (Shikongo, 2022; MoF, 2021). Increasing access to training and improving ICT infrastructure, therefore, remain priorities for advancing transparency. Drawing insights from international best practices, such as the Philippine e-procurement platform, which has delivered substantial savings through improved efficiency and reduced graft, could inform Namibia's ongoing efforts to digitise and streamline procurement (OECD, 2020).

Accountability: Accountability within Namibia's public procurement framework is maintained by means of periodic audits, functioning procurement committees, and independent control bodies established under the Act (OECD, 2020; Anti-Corruption Commission, 2022). Despite these efforts, several challenges persist. The Anti-Corruption Commission has documented issues, including bid rigging, budget overruns, and project delivery delays. In certain regional councils, these issues have resulted in budget excesses of up to 25% and notable slippages in project timelines, ultimately eroding public trust and

diminishing the effectiveness of service provision (ACC, 2022; Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021).

Social value: The pursuit of social value is explicitly enshrined in Namibia's procurement regime, which underscores support for local enterprises and the empowerment of disadvantaged groups as means of driving inclusive growth (Government of Namibia, 2015; Mascagl-Croone, 2021). However, the attainment of these social aims is contingent on robust governance structures, consistent stakeholder involvement, and the strategic use of technology throughout the procurement cycle (Agyekum et al., 2023). Efforts to raise public awareness and expand stakeholder participation remain crucial, given that current levels of engagement are relatively low (World Economic Forum, 2021; Shikongo, 2022).

2.3 Conceptualising Good Governance in Public Procurement

Good governance is a comprehensive understanding of the necessary practices and principles for effective, efficient, and fair management of public resources (Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014). The principles of good governance, i.e., transparency, accountability, fairness, and value for money, are the basis for public procurement activities (Transparency International, 2021). This study aims to familiarise oneself with the achievements of good governance in public procurement, emphasising how it triggers the effectiveness in service delivery, how it helps to minimise corruption, and how it leads to the public money's effective utilisation (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021).

a) Defining Good Governance in Public Procurement

The quality of governance in public procurement means adherence to the ethical, legal, and operational norms that are necessary for the efficiency of the process, as well as the transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation in the procurement activities (Transparency International, 2021). Transparency International (2021) states that public procurement systems based on good governance are more likely to achieve the goals of the developmental process while at the same time reducing corruption and wastage. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020) is concerned that a good governance process for procurement should take into consideration the minimisation of resource

leakages and that procurement activities contribute to the intended goals, such as infrastructure development, poverty alleviation, and economic growth.

The Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, in Namibia gives life to these principles by providing the necessary legal framework and settings for a fair and competitive procurement process. The Act calls for an equal share of procurement opportunities and formulates competitive bidding as a major tool to fight against favouritism and to provide a better price (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). To give an example, 20% of Namibia's 2021 national budget was funnelled to public procurement, which just goes to show how the resource pocket can be effective in the realm of governance (MoF, 2021). Governance in public procurement is typically assumed to be a straightforward venture, yet there are obstacles. A case in point is the laxity in surveillance and law enforcement, which has led to misunderstandings like cases involving, for example, bid tampering and non-adherence to rules, like regionally (Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC], 2022). Easy access to these opportunities is to be achieved via making clear procurement practices that correspond with the principles of good governance.

2.4 The Role of Governance in Enhancing Public Procurement Effectiveness

Governance is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of public procurement by establishing clear principles and processes that promote transparency, fairness, and accountability. Strong governance mechanisms reduce risks such as corruption and inefficiency, while fostering trust among stakeholders and aligning procurement activities with broader development goals. This foundation helps to maximise value for money and improve service delivery, which are critical for achieving institutional and socio-economic objectives (Basheka, 2017; OECD, 2023).

2.4.1 Empirical Evidence on Governance and Procurement Effectiveness

Empirical studies worldwide highlight the vital role of governance in improving public procurement effectiveness. Countries with strong governance marked by transparency, accountability, and robust institutions tend to achieve better outcomes such as cost savings, reduced corruption, and improved service delivery (Transparency International, 2021; Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014). Examples from countries like New Zealand, Denmark, and South Korea demonstrate how governance practices and digital tools like e-procurement

enhance compliance and efficiency (OECD, 2020; Hassan et al., 2021). This section reviews these insights to contextualise governance challenges and opportunities in Namibia's public procurement.

a) *Global Perspectives on Governance and Procurement Effectiveness*

Regarding the question of governance and the effect of procurement, quite a few scholars have dealt with the matter in their articles and books. According to Transparency International (2021), the research has unveiled that the nations with high transparency in procurement experience notable cost efficiency and service quality. For instance, studies by Amann, Baeten, and Boon (2014) emphasise that integrating transparency mechanisms in procurement leads to reduced corruption and improved public trust. To be more precise, New Zealand and Denmark, which were among the least corrupt countries, have made good progress in the field of official procurement. They utilised the tools of e-procurement to ensure the transparency of processes and to make available the tender information to the public and the winning contracts (Hassan, Ismail, Ahmad, & Mutalib, 2021). These measures have decreased corruption and enhanced competition, which has resulted in significant cost savings and timely project delivery (World Bank, 2020).

One of the findings of the OECD research, as highlighted by Leonardo et al. (2020), was that the presence of a rigid institutional framework is of great importance for procurement. The study revealed that countries that have clearly stated laws and directives along with independent oversight authorities, usually have fewer procurement irregularities and losses. Additionally, Mrope, Changelima, and Mdee (2017) note that institutional compliance and regulatory frameworks significantly influence procurement performance in developing countries. In one specific case, the Public Procurement Service of South Korea (PPS), on the other hand, acts as a single controller that uses digital techniques to oversee and manage the purchasing process through procurement, thus reaching 90% compliance with the regulations and saving 2 billion dollars per annum (OECD, 2020). This kind of evidence is a signpost proving the role of institutional governance as a driver of procurement effectiveness.

b) *Regional Experiences: Sub-Saharan Africa*

The problem of governance remains a significant challenge. Numerous studies have highlighted that issues such as corruption and lack of accountability persist, severely

impacting the timely and cost-effective provision of public services. Ameyaw et al. (2021) found that 60% of procurement projects in Ghana suffered cost overruns due to violations of procurement regulations and inadequate monitoring mechanisms. Similarly, in Kenya, procurement inefficiencies have been linked to the lack of transparency and weak enforcement of anti-corruption laws, as noted by Transparency International (2020). These findings align with observations made by Changalima, Matto, and Tinali (2022), who assert that compliance with procurement regulations is directly tied to the effectiveness of accountability systems.

However, some countries have established remarkable benchmarks in recent years. For example, Rwanda has implemented a performance-based procurement system that emphasises accountability and stakeholder involvement (UNDP, 2020). This system requires continuous reviews and public declarations of results, leading to reduced project delays and cost overruns. Almagtome, Khaghaany, and Önce (2020) argue that such governance innovations highlight the potential of accountability-driven reforms in fostering procurement efficiency. Additionally, Ambe (2019) emphasises that the integration of good governance principles, such as transparency and stakeholder participation, is crucial for the success of procurement systems in sub-Saharan Africa.

c) Governance and Procurement Effectiveness in Namibia

Namibia faces challenges in governance and procurement effectiveness, creating a scenario of light and shadow. On the one hand, the country's Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, marked a significant milestone in addressing procurement issues, to reduce errors, inflated costs, and corruption. The Act introduced groundbreaking transparency measures, including the publication of tender notices and the awarding of contracts through competitive bidding, which are designed to prevent corruption and ensure fairness (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021; Government of Namibia, 2015; Kanyinda et al., 2021). These measures align with global standards, highlighting Namibia's commitment to accountability and effective governance (UNDP, 2020; Ambe, 2019).

Despite these advancements, various shortcomings persist in the Act's implementation, particularly at the regional level, which is critical for local development. Governance gaps have been identified as significant impediments to procurement effectiveness. For instance, Kanyinda et al (2021) reported that 35% of procurement projects in Namibia experienced delays, primarily due to inadequate planning, insufficient oversight, and limited technical capacities (Bandy, 2023; Agyekum et al., 2023). These delays undermine the timely delivery

of services and infrastructure development, further widening the gap between policy and practice (Amann et al., 2014). Moreover, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC, 2022) has uncovered multiple cases of bid manipulation and favouritism, particularly in regional councils such as the Oshana Regional Council, where vested interests have often influenced procurement processes. Such practices not only inflate costs but also erode trust in the procurement system (Amupanda, 2019; Almagtome et al., 2020). Weak institutional oversight and the absence of robust accountability mechanisms exacerbate these challenges, leading to inefficiencies and undermining the credibility of the public procurement framework (Addo, 2019)

Good news about e-procurement is that efforts such as e-procurement platforms are becoming effective and are starting to generate the desired results. In compliance with a study by the Ministry of Finance (2021), e-procurement systems in Namibia have become more transparent through instantaneous monitoring and vetoing of the bid process, thus providing fewer avenues for corruption to happen. Moreover, the slow rate of adoption of these systems, particularly in remote areas, remains the most significant hurdle. Solving the above-mentioned difficulties requires several specific activities, such as empowering and enhancing the regulation enforcement and the virtual infrastructure in terms of the technology sector.

2.5 Transparency, Accountability, and Participation in Public Procurement Systems

Transparency

Transparency is the bedrock of good governance that ensures that the procurement process is open to everybody and that there are all the necessary means to gain all the relevant information (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). In the context of public procurement, transparency takes the form of the release of the necessary and timely information, including tender notices, bid evaluations, and contract awards that are pertinent to the public. Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala (2021) explain that trust is developed among the different parties through transparency, and the chances of corruption diminish by bringing the procurement processes under surveillance and making them public accounts. In Namibia, establishing e-procurement systems has been a great stride for the promotion of transparency. These databases give live access to the transaction statistics, which enables the stakeholders to oversee the process of the tender and raise issues (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). Nonetheless, substandard information and communication infrastructure

and the low level of training among procurement officials often render the inefficiency of e-procurement. A study done in 2021 pointed out that out of the total 100% procurement entities in Namibia, a mere 55% had e-procurement systems that were fully implemented, which emphasises the need for technology and capacity building, which should be steered in the right direction (MoF, 2021).

At the global level, procurement transparency is seen as a factor of positive development. Today, PPS is using an advanced electronic procurement platform to be transparent and save at least \$1.4 billion a year because of better effectiveness and less corruption (OECD 2020). Namibia should adopt similar international best practices to achieve greater satisfaction in procurement.

Accountability

Accountability ensures that public officials and procurement officers are held responsible for their decisions and actions, preventing injustices and corruption while ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards (Harnovinsah, Ibrahim, Nyanyofio, & Obieje, 2020). According to the Institute for Government Report (2024), public procurement is a crucial area governed by such rules as accountability, which can be reinforced through regular audits, performance evaluations, and independent oversight. These key factors are there to avoid the misuse of public money and increase the procurement procedure's efficiency (OECD, 2020). In most public procurement governance structures, the issue of the lack of accountability turns out to be the major one. For example, the ACC State of Namibia (2022) has noted that transparency and accountability are aspects of procurement that remain a major challenge. An instance is the case of the lack of accountability frames that were partly to blame for the 25% cost overruns and delays of procurement projects in the Oshana Regional Council, as indicated in the Annual Performance Appraisal Report of the Anti-Corruption Commission. These deficiencies have not only marred the quality of public service but also reduced the confidence of citizens in the government and its institutions.

Namibia's existing Public Procurement Act stipulates the mandatory setting up of procurement committees and independent review panels that would manage the procurement operations and address complaints. Even when these mechanisms are put in place, the distribution of these remains sporadic. The main source of the problem, particularly at the regional level, is the limitation of staff, which is why the system works effectively; the management should ensure that resources are available by adhering to the regulations (MoEAC, 2023). Strengthening accountability requires different activities, such

as regular auditing, capacity building of procurement officers, and imposing fines on non-compliant practitioners.

Stakeholder Participation

The process of procurement is fair and inclusive when stakeholder participation is guaranteed. They go beyond one group representing the stakeholders and include different organizations from the government, civil society, private sector, and the list goes on. The World Economic Forum (2021) demonstrates that personal choices become easier when the societal ones include the part of the underprivileged people and guarantee transparency and accountability.

Public hearings and consultation forums have been established in Namibia to enable the participation of all stakeholders as may be necessary. By using these platforms, stakeholders give their views, and thus procurement will be aligned to the needs and priorities of the communities (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). But very often stakeholders lack awareness and commitment, hence the learning of such kind of initiatives. A report released by the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (MoEAC) in 2023 disclosed that only 40% of procurement projects saw the presence of non-trivial stakeholder involvement; hence, the main issue was the need for outreach and capacity building.

Participation by stakeholders across countries provides a means of strengthening procurement, an activity that is vital to peace and development. A case in point, Rwanda is among the African countries that use community monitoring techniques in its procurement projects and has been among the best performers; thus, there has been a remarkable transformation in service provision and cost savings (UNDP, 2020). The idea holds that if Namibia borrows a leaf from Rwanda, it will be able to improve its procurement system by promoting stakeholder inclusiveness and engagement.

Social Value in Public Procurement

Social value in public procurement has emerged as a vital consideration, transforming procurement from a purely economic activity into a mechanism for driving societal benefits. Social value encompasses a range of outcomes, including job creation, economic empowerment, support for marginalised communities, and environmental sustainability

(Mascagl-Croone, 2021). Public procurement systems designed with social value objectives not only fulfil economic goals but also contribute to social cohesion and equity (Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014).

2.6 Institutional and Regulatory Frameworks for Public Procurement in Namibia

Public procurement in Namibia is guided by a comprehensive institutional and regulatory framework designed to promote transparency, accountability, and the creation of social value in the management of public resources. The primary legal foundation is the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015, which outlines key principles such as integrity, accountability, transparency, competitiveness, efficiency, and social value to direct procurement practices. Procurement activities are coordinated across various levels of government and specialized entities, including regional councils such as the Oshana Regional Council. These councils play a critical role in implementing the Act, ensuring compliance, managing procurement processes, and upholding good governance standards.

Public Procurement Systems in Namibia

Namibia's public procurement system is structured around the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015, which serves as the primary legislative framework guiding the acquisition of goods, services, and works by state entities (Shikongo, 2022). The main objectives behind the Act's introduction include strengthening transparency, accountability, and competitiveness in the procurement process. The Act also signals Namibia's broader policy focusing on leveraging procurement for socio-economic development, such as reducing poverty, empowering historically marginalised groups, including women and youth, and expanding opportunities for local suppliers (MAPS Assessment, 2024; Shikongo, 2022). Given that a substantial share of Namibia's national budget is utilised through public procurement, effective oversight of these processes is crucial for prudent national resource management (MoF, 2021).

Structure and Operations of the Procurement System

The way the public procurement system in Namibia is organised requires both national, regional, and local government and institutions to build, thereby decentralizing the

procurement authority. The Central Procurement Board of Namibia (CPBN) is the highest procurement body that supervises the most value-related tenders and seeks to ensure compliance with procurement laws. At the regional level, authorities like Oshana Regional Council are responsible for the procurement sector at the local level, whose tasks are focused, among other things, on the realisation of the development projects, such as the construction of roads, educational facilities, and healthcare delivery (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). Among public entities, the Public Procurement Committees (PPCs) are set up to assess tenders and allot contracts by which procurement decisions are made in compliance with legal and ethical standards. In addition, Independent Procurement Review Panels (IPRPs) are one of the sources to be used to handle grievances raised by suppliers to promote transparency (OECD, 2020).

Legislative Frameworks for Public Procurement

The governance of public procurement in Namibia relies on several specialised bodies: the Procurement Policy Unit (PPU), the Central Procurement Board of Namibia (CPBN), and the Review Panel. The PPU is responsible for monitoring the overall effectiveness of procurement processes, developing standardised bidding documents, supporting capacity-building initiatives within state agencies, and implementing digital procurement tools (Ministry of Finance, 2021). The CPBN manages high-value procurement projects for public entities that surpass specified thresholds and oversees both evaluation and award processes, ensuring that activities remain compliant with relevant legislation and protocols (MoF, 2021). The Review Panel, for its part, addresses and resolves disputes, complaints, and appeals within the procurement system, thereby acting as an important mechanism for accountability (MoF, 2021).

2.7 Challenges and Opportunities in Public Procurement Governance in Developing Contexts

Public procurement governance in many developing countries is challenged by weak institutional capacity, political interference, corruption, and limited stakeholder engagement, all of which undermine transparency and accountability (Basheka, 2017; Transparency International, 2021). Nevertheless, reforms such as e-procurement, transparency initiatives, capacity-building efforts, and the integration of social value offer promising opportunities to

strengthen ethical and sustainable procurement practices (OECD, 2020; Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014).

2.7.1 Challenges in Public Procurement Governance

Public procurement governance is a domain that is very complex, especially in developing countries, where institutional weaknesses and systemic inefficiencies often hinder effective resource utilisation. Despite having introduced legal frameworks such as the 2015 Public Procurement Act in Namibia, many problems exist in making sure that the processes are transparent, accountable, and efficient. This section, under the subheading of corruption, delves into major challenges in public procurement governance, which are capacity constraints, lack of transparency, stakeholder participation, and lack of technological adoption, with examples from Namibia and other comparable contexts.

Corruption and Mismanagement

One of the severe governance problems that exists in public procurement is corruption, and it has been seen globally. Transparency International (2021) explained that one of the principal cases of abuse of government functions is procurement because of the large sums of money and the power of authority to give the contract to a particular business. Namibia's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC, 2022) declared that there were many cases of bid rigging, price-fixing among bidders, and favouritism in the award of tenders in Namibia. These corrupt activities not only cause the prices for the projects to be high, but they also make service delivery very low in quality. For example, it has repeatedly emerged that the procurement of the construction of infrastructure in Namibia had experienced fraud, where the country lost millions of Namibian dollars annually (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021).

Globally, procurement corruption often does not stop because there is weak enforcement of anti-corruption laws and light penalties for violations. In contrast, in Kenya, procurement corruption raises issues of delays in health facilities and infrastructure construction, exerting erosion of public trust (Ameyaw et al., 2021). To fight corruption successfully, it is important to develop sound legal regulations, create independent control institutions, and devise an efficient scrutiny system, which is the fundamental basis for accountability and disallowing malpractices in procurement procedures (OECD, 2020).

Lack of Transparency

Openness stands as one of the key pillars of good governance through public procurement, especially in systems where its absence creates significant challenges. In Namibia, while the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, advocates for transparency, its implementation has been inconsistent. The Namibia Statistics Agency (2021) reported that only 60% of public entities consistently published tender notices and contract awards, creating significant barriers for public access to procurement information. This lack of transparency fosters an environment where corruption and inefficiency can thrive due to stakeholders being unable to properly oversee procurement activities (Amupanda, 2019; Agyekum et al., 2023).

The lack of clear communication and accessibility is exacerbated not only by inadequate technology but also by resistance to open data policies. For instance, many procurement processes are criticised for limited public involvement, which generates scepticism and burdens contractors (Transparency International, 2020; Ambe, 2019). A concrete example of progress is the adoption of digital tools to enhance transparency in other regions. For instance, Leon County Government's implementation of the Street View application allowed stakeholders, including citizens, to actively monitor projects and voice their concerns. This kind of initiative demonstrates the value of fostering transparency through technology, a practice Namibia can learn from (World Bank, 2020; Hafsa et al., 2021).

2.7.2 Implementation Challenges in Public Procurement

Although the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, introduced significant reforms to improve government performance in procurement, its implementation has faced numerous challenges. Chief among these is corruption, with many cases of bid rigging, favouritism, and inflated project costs being reported (Amupanda, 2019). The Anti-Corruption Commission (2022) revealed that approximately 30% of procurement projects in Namibia were found to be irregular, including violations of tender rules and a lack of proper documentation. These issues are exacerbated by weak enforcement mechanisms, which fail to effectively penalise those who breach regulations (Asheela-Shikalepo, 2021). Capacity constraints also undermine the efficiency of Namibia's procurement system. The Oshana Regional Council, for example, has long struggled with a shortage of skilled and technical personnel in procurement (Balaeva, Gorbunov, & Shcherbakov, 2022). These capacity gaps result in inefficiencies such as poorly conceived projects, budget overruns, and delays in service delivery (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). A study conducted by

Dryad, an innovative equality company in Namibia, found that 35% of projects in the Oshana region experienced significant delays, largely due to incompetence and failure to adhere to planning and monitoring procedures (Balaeva, Gorbunov, & Shcherbakov, 2022).

Furthermore, the lack of necessary technology has hindered the adoption and effective use of e-procurement systems, which are essential for enhancing transparency and efficiency in procurement operations. According to a 2021 study, only about 30% of procuring units in Namibia had fully implemented e-procurement platforms, highlighting a significant gap in digital infrastructure and the urgent need for capacity-building investments (Ministry of Finance, 2021). Despite these challenges, the principles outlined in the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, provide a solid foundation for addressing governance lapses and improving service delivery (Government of Namibia, 2015). Strengthening institutional capacity, advancing digital infrastructure, and implementing robust accountability mechanisms are critical steps toward ensuring the proper enforcement of the Act's provisions (Adewumi-Audu et al., 2018; Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021).

Monitoring systems

One of the major challenges in Namibia's public procurement system is the presence of weak monitoring and evaluation systems. Without effective mechanisms to track and measure the social outcomes of procurement projects, it becomes challenging to determine whether public spending is achieving its intended objectives. For instance, although the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, prioritises local supplier participation, the absence of robust reporting frameworks makes it difficult to evaluate the extent to which this objective is being realised (Government of Namibia, 2015). Transparency International (2021) stresses that robust monitoring and evaluation are crucial for ensuring accountability, enhancing public trust, and demonstrating the tangible impact of procurement activities on communities.

Capacity constraints

Another pressing challenge is the persistent capacity constraints at the regional level (Government of Namibia, 2015). Many regional councils, including the Oshana Regional Council, struggle with the lack of skilled personnel and resources to implement developmental initiatives effectively (Government of Namibia, 2015). Procurement officers often face challenges in interpreting and applying the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, leading to inconsistencies in implementation and limited progress in achieving these developmental objectives (Government of Namibia, 2015). Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala

(2021) highlight that these capacity constraints are further exacerbated by inadequate training programs and insufficient access to technical support, leaving public entities ill-equipped to align procurement practices with social and economic development goals. Similarly, Agyekum et al. (2023) emphasise that building institutional capacity through targeted training and resource allocation is vital for bridging these gaps and ensuring that procurement contributes meaningfully to developmental outcomes.

Corruption

Corruption and inefficiencies further complicate the implementation of developmental objectives in Namibia's procurement system. The Anti-Corruption Commission (2022) has reported multiple instances of bid manipulation, favouritism, and inflated project costs, which divert public funds away from projects that could deliver meaningful community benefits. For instance, it is found that 25% of procurement projects in Oshana exceeded their budgets, and 35% faced delays, highlighting the systemic inefficiencies that undermine the delivery of intended outcomes (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). Addressing these issues requires stronger enforcement mechanisms, enhanced accountability frameworks, and the adoption of digital tools such as e-procurement systems to increase transparency and reduce opportunities for corruption.

Resistance to Change and Institutional Weaknesses

Resistance to change among stakeholders is another obstacle. The shift toward incorporating social value into procurement processes requires a cultural transformation within public entities, which can be met with resistance from officials accustomed to traditional procurement methods (Kraai, 2023). Stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising initiatives are critical for fostering a shared understanding of the importance of social value and building consensus around its implementation (Huynh et al., 2022). The lack of public awareness about social value in procurement limits the demand for accountability and transparency (Agyekum et al., 2023). Communities often lack the knowledge and tools to hold public entities accountable for delivering social value, weakening the feedback loops necessary for improving procurement practices (Transparency International, 2021). To address this, the government must invest in public education campaigns and create platforms for citizen engagement in procurement processes (Kraai, 2023; Ambe, 2019).

It is only possible to cope with the institutional fissures by joining forces of sufficient leadership, the provision of sound reasons for compliance, and regular enforcement of laws. This is shown in the fact that Botswana's governance has improved owing to the

establishment of independent oversight bodies and the adoption of performance-based accountability systems (OECD, 2020). Namibia can choose to use similar techniques to break the resistance against the culture of accountability and steer its procurement institutions in the right direction.

Insufficient Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder participation is a fundamental component that ensures the involvement of relevant parties and fairness in public procurement processes. In Namibia, however, meaningful engagement with civil society organisations, the private sector, and local communities remains a significant challenge. According to the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (2023), only a small percentage of procurement projects involve consultations with external stakeholders, resulting in decisions that often fail to address community needs. This lack of inclusivity undermines public trust in procurement decisions and weakens accountability (Ambe, 2019; Amupanda, 2019). Across multiple African nations, a significant barrier to citizen involvement in procurement processes is insufficient public knowledge and the limited capacity of organizations that represent communities. For instance, in Tanzania, efforts to involve communities in decision-making processes have faced setbacks due to a lack of accessible data and insufficient expertise among stakeholders (UNDP, 2020; Changalima et al., 2022). To enhance stakeholder participation in procurement, public entities must prioritise educational campaigns, foster partnerships with NGOs through targeted capacity-building programs, and establish effective feedback and communication mechanisms (Agyekum et al., 2023; Amann et al., 2014).

Slow Adoption of Technology

The slow adoption of technology, particularly in procurement departments, remains a significant challenge, especially in developing countries. Despite efforts to establish e-procurement systems, the Namibian government's implementation, particularly in rural areas like Oshana, has been sluggish. According to the Namibia Statistics Agency (2021), only 30% of procurement bodies utilise digital tools to manage procurement processes efficiently, while the majority still rely on outdated manual and paper-based systems. This dependence on antiquated techniques not only facilitates corrupt practices but also increases the likelihood of errors and delays (Ambe, 2019; Amupanda, 2019).

In contrast, Rwanda has demonstrated the transformative potential of technology in public procurement. By implementing an electronic procurement platform, Rwanda has significantly reduced costs, enhanced efficiency, and promoted transparency in its

procurement processes (World Bank, 2020; Agyekum et al., 2023). Namibia can draw inspiration from Rwanda's success and accelerate the adoption of digital technologies. Prioritising infrastructural investments, providing extensive training, and engaging stakeholders will be critical to ensuring the successful implementation of e-procurement systems (Hassan et al., 2021; UNDP, 2020).

2.7.3 The Role of Good Governance in Addressing Public Procurement Challenges

Enhancing the provision of public procurement in Namibia is the linchpin of good governance that strives to bridge the gap of the long-existing problems. Engaging governance provisions, through visible oversight and the use of cutting-edge technology, is of utmost importance for building trust, reducing corruption, and ensuring effective resource allocation in the public sector (Ambe, 2019; Transparency International, 2021). Deciding, for instance, to inform the public of information such as procurement plans, tender documents, and contract awards is a process of transparency that allows the public to monitor activities and build trust among stakeholders (Kraai, 2023). Outcomes of studies have repeatedly revealed that transparent procurement systems lessen the risk of corruption, stimulate competition, and improve procurement results (World Bank, 2020; Addo, 2019).

Another inevitable part of good governance is accountability, which ensures that government procurement officials and public entities are held responsible for their decisions and actions. Audits, independent reviews, and robust oversight mechanisms are the most important features in this context (Ambe, 2019; UNDP, 2020). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020) asserts that accountability frameworks not only prevent corruption but also send a strong signal that procurement regulations must always be adhered to. For instance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020) observes that countries with sound accountability systems experience fewer irregularities in their procurement processes and achieve higher efficiency. Conversely, Namibia faces significant challenges due to the absence of robust accountability systems, leading to slow processes, inflated budgets, and underperforming service deliveries, particularly at the regional level (Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC], 2022; Balaeva, Gorbunov, & Shcherbakov, 2022).

Digital modern technology has made e-procurement a means to tackle the governance problems. The procurement system can be made more transparent by e-procurement

platforms through the real-time sharing of procurement data, reducing human intervention. The World Bank (2020) pointed out that countries that are using e-procurement systems have experienced a huge enhancement in procurement efficiency with up to 15% cost savings. In Namibia, there is still an issue with e-procurement as it is moving slowly due to the lack of digital infrastructure, insufficient technical skills, and the stakeholders' resistance (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). Namibia must invest a lot in digital infrastructure and provide educational programs for procurement workers to solve these problems.

Good governance involves not only cutting corruption and inefficiencies but also aligning procurement to wider economic and social development objectives (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). By using governance tools that allow transparency, accountability, and technology integration, Namibia can build a more efficient and fair public procurement system that will result in public trust and thus, sustainable development.

2.8 Enhancing Procurement governance: The Impact of Governance on Procurement and development goals of ORC

There has been a consistent empirical emphasis on the positive effects of governance on procurement results. The UNODC (2020) study showed that countries that follow high standards of governance report significantly fewer cases of procurement fraud and waste. The study underlined that such governance practices as regular audits, independent reviews, and stakeholder consultations are the reason for better project planning and execution (Ambe, 2019; Hafsa et al., 2021). In Botswana, for instance, a procurement board, which worked on an independent basis, has caused procurement complaints to be 50% less over the last ten years. This, in turn, in the context of governance reforms by the State, has become the most effective mode of operation (World Bank, 2020; Changelima et al., 2022).

In Namibia, the issue of governance is not far removed from the concern of reaching developmental goals. Public procurement comprises up to 20% of the national budget, making it a valuable instrument for economic development (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021; Government of Namibia, 2015). Developing this resource without waste of funds and ensuring transparency is fundamental to the materialisation of national priorities, which include the provision of infrastructure and the reduction of poverty (Agyekum et al., 2023; UNDP, 2020). Namibia must focus on improving governance mechanisms regarding

procurement on a regional basis to deliver services effectively and gain public confidence (Amann et al., 2014; Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC], 2022).

2.8.1 Exploring Social Value in Public Procurement: Concepts, Practices, and Barriers

a) Defining Social Value in Procurement

Social value refers to the broader societal benefits that result from procurement processes, such as improving the quality of life for citizens, fostering economic inclusion, and addressing social inequalities (Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014). According to Huynh et al. (2022), public procurement can act as a "multiplier" by directing public spending toward initiatives that deliver measurable social outcomes. In Namibia, the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, integrates social value considerations by prioritising local supplier participation and promoting economic empowerment (Government of Namibia, 2015). These provisions aim to ensure that public spending contributes to long-term developmental goals, including poverty reduction and skills development.

b) Social Value in Practice: Global and Regional Perspectives

Globally, social value has become a pivotal consideration in public procurement practices, with governments recognising its potential to drive not only economic efficiency but also societal and environmental benefits (Jain & Karaba, 2020). Social value initiatives have transformed procurement into a strategic tool for addressing broader developmental goals. For instance, the United Kingdom's Social Value Act of 2012 requires public sector organisations to consider social value during the commissioning process. This legislation has resulted in substantial improvements in the delivery of community-focused projects, such as the creation of affordable housing, job opportunities for marginalised groups, and investment in renewable energy solutions (Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014). Notably, public spending in the UK has increasingly prioritised contracts that generate measurable social benefits, demonstrating how procurement can be leveraged to achieve societal outcomes alongside economic goals.

In the European Union, social value considerations are integrated into procurement policies under the EU Public Procurement Directive (2014/24/EU). The Directive emphasizes the importance of environmental sustainability, workforce diversity, and social inclusion in public procurement. Studies indicate that EU member states that actively incorporate social value in their procurement practices report higher levels of community engagement and satisfaction with public services (Huynh et al., 2022). These findings highlight the role of clear legislative frameworks and strong governance mechanisms in embedding social value into procurement processes.

In sub-Saharan Africa, social value considerations in public procurement are gradually gaining prominence. South Africa's Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA) prioritizes procurement contracts for small, medium, and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) owned by marginalised groups, including women and previously disadvantaged communities (Kraai, 2023). This approach has contributed to economic empowerment by enabling these groups to access public sector contracts and grow their businesses. Similarly, Kenya has adopted policies that promote local content in procurement, ensuring that public spending supports local industries and creates job opportunities (Agyekum et al., 2023). However, despite these initiatives, the integration of social value into procurement practices in the region remains inconsistent due to capacity constraints, weak governance structures, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021; Ambe, 2019).

Namibia offers a unique context where public procurement accounts for approximately 20% of the national budget, presenting significant opportunities for integrating social value objectives (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). The Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, emphasises the importance of supporting local suppliers and fostering economic empowerment, aligning with the government's broader developmental goals (Government of Namibia, 2015). For instance, the Act encourages preferential treatment for businesses owned by previously disadvantaged groups, creating pathways for inclusive economic growth (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). However, achieving these objectives requires the active involvement of stakeholders and the development of robust governance systems. Effective governance is essential to ensure that social value considerations are prioritised and operationalised throughout the procurement lifecycle, addressing challenges such as capacity constraints, weak accountability frameworks, and inconsistent policy enforcement (Agyekum et al., 2023; Ambe, 2019).

Challenges in Implementing Social Value in Namibia

Despite its potential, the implementation of social value in public procurement in Namibia faces significant challenges. Weak governance frameworks, limited technical capacity, and insufficient resources are among the key barriers to realising social value objectives. A compliance report by the Namibia Statistics Agency (2021) revealed that only 19% of public entities adhered to the social value provisions outlined in the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015. This non-compliance undermines efforts to align procurement practices with the government's socio-economic goals, such as job creation, poverty reduction, and economic empowerment.

One of the major challenges in Namibia's public procurement system is the presence of weak monitoring and evaluation systems. Without effective mechanisms to track and measure the social outcomes of procurement projects, it becomes challenging to determine whether public spending is achieving its intended objectives. For instance, although the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, prioritises local supplier participation, the absence of robust reporting frameworks makes it difficult to evaluate the extent to which this objective is being realised (Government of Namibia, 2015). Transparency International (2021) stresses that robust monitoring and evaluation are crucial for ensuring accountability, enhancing public trust, and demonstrating the tangible impact of procurement activities on communities.

Another pressing challenge is the persistent capacity constraints at the regional level (Government of Namibia, 2015). Many regional councils, including the Oshana Regional Council, struggle with the lack of skilled personnel and resources to implement social value initiatives effectively (Government of Namibia, 2015). Procurement officers often face challenges in interpreting and applying the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, leading to inconsistencies in implementation and limited progress in achieving social value objectives (Government of Namibia, 2015). Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala (2021) highlight that these capacity constraints are further exacerbated by inadequate training programs and insufficient access to technical support, leaving public entities ill-equipped to align procurement practices with social and economic development goals. Similarly, Agyekum et al. (2023) emphasize that building institutional capacity through targeted training and resource allocation is vital for bridging these gaps and ensuring that procurement contributes meaningfully to social value outcomes.

Corruption and inefficiencies further complicate the implementation of social value in Namibia's procurement system. The Anti-Corruption Commission (2022) has reported multiple instances of bid manipulation, favouritism, and inflated project costs, which divert public funds away from projects that could deliver meaningful social benefits. For instance, it was found that 25% of procurement projects in Oshana exceeded their budgets, and 35% faced delays, highlighting the systemic inefficiencies that undermine the delivery of social value (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). Addressing these issues requires stronger enforcement mechanisms, enhanced accountability frameworks, and the adoption of digital tools such as e-procurement systems to increase transparency and reduce opportunities for corruption.

Resistance to change among stakeholders is another obstacle. The shift toward incorporating social value into procurement processes requires a cultural transformation within public entities, which can be met with resistance from officials accustomed to traditional procurement methods (Kraai, 2023). Stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising initiatives are critical for fostering a shared understanding of the importance of social value and building consensus around its implementation (Huynh et al., 2022). The lack of public awareness about social value in procurement limits the demand for accountability and transparency (Agyekum et al., 2023). Communities often lack the knowledge and tools to hold public entities accountable for delivering social value, weakening the feedback loops necessary for improving procurement practices (Transparency International, 2021). To address this, the government must invest in public education campaigns and create platforms for citizen engagement in procurement processes (Kraai, 2023; Ambe, 2019).

Enhancing Social Value through Good Governance

Good governance is essential for integrating social value into public procurement processes, making sure that public spending not only promotes economic efficiency but also delivers meaningful societal benefits (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021; Transparency International, 2021). The core principles of good governance, such as transparency, accountability, stakeholder participation, and the rule of law, establish the framework for aligning procurement practices with social value goals. This alignment is vital for creating jobs, encouraging economic empowerment, and supporting sustainable development (Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014).

Transparency as a Catalyst for Social Value

Transparency plays a pivotal role in enhancing social value in public procurement. By making procurement plans, tender documents, and contract awards publicly accessible, governments can foster trust among stakeholders and minimize opportunities for corruption (Transparency International, 2021). Transparency mechanisms also ensure that procurement decisions are subject to public scrutiny, encouraging adherence to social value commitments (Ambe, 2019). According to Transparency International (2021), countries with higher levels of transparency in procurement report better outcomes in terms of inclusivity and equity. For example, South Korea's advanced e-procurement system, which provides real-time access to procurement data, has been instrumental in reducing corruption and ensuring that contracts deliver tangible community benefits (World Bank, 2020). Transparency initiatives such as publishing procurement opportunities and disclosing award decisions are mandated under the Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015 (Government of Namibia, 2015). However, challenges such as incomplete reporting and inconsistent implementation undermine these efforts (Huynh et al., 2022). Strengthening transparency requires the adoption of digital tools, such as e-procurement platforms, to provide stakeholders with real-time access to procurement data and facilitate monitoring of social value outcomes (Huynh et al., 2022). Additionally, capacity-building programs are needed to ensure that procurement officials understand and adhere to transparency requirements.

Accountability as a Mechanism for Delivering Social Value

Accountability frameworks are essential for ensuring that procurement processes deliver on their social value objectives. Regular audits, independent reviews, and performance evaluations enable governments to track progress and identify areas for improvement. For instance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020) highlights that accountability mechanisms such as public procurement audits have been effective in ensuring that contracts prioritise local suppliers and marginalized groups, fostering economic empowerment. The lack of robust accountability frameworks has been a significant barrier to achieving social value in public procurement. The Anti-Corruption Commission (2022) has reported numerous cases of bid manipulation and favouritism, which divert public resources away from projects with substantial social benefits. To address these issues, Namibia must establish stronger oversight mechanisms and enforce penalties for non-compliance with social value provisions. Establishing independent social value monitoring bodies could enhance accountability and ensure that procurement practices align with community needs and developmental goals.

2.8.2 Legal and Institutional Frameworks Supporting Social Value

A robust legal and institutional framework is critical for embedding social value into public procurement. The Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, provides a strong legal foundation for prioritising social value, mandating public entities to promote local supplier participation and economic empowerment (Government of Namibia, 2015). However, the implementation of these provisions often falls short due to capacity constraints and weak enforcement mechanisms. Strengthening institutional capacity through training programs and technical support can enhance the ability of public entities to deliver on their social value commitments (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). Moreover, integrating social value into procurement policies and guidelines can provide clarity and consistency, ensuring that all public entities align their practices with the national developmental objectives. For example, South Africa's Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act provides clear guidelines for prioritising historically disadvantaged groups in procurement decisions, demonstrating how legal frameworks can operationalise social value objectives (Kraai, 2023).

2.8.3 Technology as an Enabler of Social Value Delivery

The integration of digital tools into procurement processes is essential for enhancing social value delivery. E-procurement platforms, for instance, enable better tracking and monitoring of social value outcomes by providing real-time access to procurement data. These platforms also reduce human interference, making procurement processes more transparent and efficient (World Bank, 2020). In Namibia, the slow adoption of e-procurement systems has hindered the effective implementation of social value objectives. To address this, the government must invest in digital infrastructure and provide training programs to ensure that procurement officials are equipped to use these tools effectively (Huynh et al., 2022). Leveraging data analytics and artificial intelligence can improve decision-making by identifying opportunities for creating social value and predicting the long-term impact of procurement decisions (Rejeb et al., 2024). For instance, predictive analytics can help assess the potential social benefits of different procurement options, enabling governments to prioritise projects that deliver the greatest value to communities (Amann et al., 2014).

2.8.4 Stakeholder Participation as a Driver of Inclusivity and Equity

Stakeholder participation ensures that diverse perspectives are included in procurement decisions, making them more responsive to community needs. Involving stakeholders such as local businesses, civil society organisations, and marginalised groups helps identify opportunities for creating social value and ensures that public spending benefits all segments of society (Agyekum et al., 2023). The World Economic Forum (2021) emphasises that stakeholder engagement fosters inclusivity, builds trust, and improves decision-making. Moreover, participatory approaches enable the identification of social priorities, ensuring that procurement aligns with broader development objectives (Huynh et al., 2022). Initiatives such as public hearings and consultation forums have been introduced to engage stakeholders in procurement processes (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is often limited by low levels of awareness and participation. Addressing this gap requires targeted outreach programs to educate stakeholders about the importance of social value and their role in achieving it. Additionally, creating platforms for continuous dialogue and feedback can strengthen stakeholder participation and ensure that procurement decisions reflect the priorities of local communities (Kraai, 2023).

2.9 Public Procurement Systems in Namibia

Public procurement in Namibia is at the heart of the government and social services; thus, it plays a key role in the realisation of such development and the provision of such services. Equally, the Namibian government stands as one of the most significant buyers of goods and services in the national economy, and through public procurement, it also represents a strategic tool towards the allocation of resources, the development of infrastructure, and the alleviation of poverty. The Public Procurement Act, No.15 of 2015, which administers the procurement framework, was brought forth to ensure that there is transparency, accountability, fairness, and value for money in public spending (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). This legal instrument represented a notable reform agenda which was aimed at the combat of inefficiencies and corruption, which previously were the main players in the regulatory sector. Despite its modern orientation, Namibia's public procurement system still has some obstacles in its way to deliver the desired results.

2.9.1 Legislative Framework of Public Procurement

The 2015 Public Procurement Act of Namibia was meant to re-engineer the country's tendering system by eliminating the old methods and introducing current legal and

institutional frameworks. Additionally, the use of information technology was meant to make the system more efficient and accountable (Public Procurement Act, 2015). A Public Procurement Authority, on the other hand, was also introduced as part of this Act to standardize the standing practices by acting as a referee and monitoring the compliance of the regulations of the Act. This ensures that there is good governance in the awarding of contracts. The Treasury under this law has been given the responsibility of enforcing the correspondence of the Public Procurement with the local financial policy and the administrative framework, as the Minister of Finance is entrusted with the implementation of this law. It was from the contestation of these facts that one of the features was the establishment of a Public Procurement Authority, which would be the procurement regulator.

The Act mandated that public entities prefer local suppliers and contractors by spending first. This requires companies to adhere to compliance and enforcement by the authorities. This was expected to do the trick by enhancing economic growth, employment opportunities, and the engagement of local businesses in public procurement procedures (Ministry of Finance, 2021). Consequently, public procurement permeates almost 20% of the Namibian economy's output, which signifies its prime sector in steering socio-economic development into the future (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021).

Even the Progressive Act, albeit implemented, was met with some bottlenecks that were prevalent, especially in the regions. Regional councils such as the Oshana Regional Council have been found to be the weakest link in the supply chain system due to their limited capacities and inadequate resources. On the other hand, one of the findings from the Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala (2021) study revealed that in most cases, the regional councils largely lack the necessary expertise and infrastructure to strictly adhere to the procurement regulations, a situation that causes long-running delays and inefficiencies. These are the very challenges that bring about the necessity of targeted capacity-building initiatives and augmented resource allocation so that the provisions of the Act can be properly implemented.

2.9.2 Structure and Operations of the Procurement System

The way the public procurement system in Namibia is organised requires both national, regional, and local government and institutions to build, thereby decentralising the procurement authority. The Central Procurement Board of Namibia (CPBN) is the highest procurement body that supervises the most value-related tenders and seeks to ensure compliance with procurement laws. At the regional level, authorities like Oshana Regional

Council are responsible for the procurement sector at the local level, whose tasks are focused, among other things, on the realisation of the development projects, such as the construction of roads, educational facilities, and healthcare delivery (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). Among public entities, the Public Procurement Committees (PPCs) are set up to assess tenders and allot contracts by which procurement decisions are made in compliance with legal and ethical standards. In addition, Independent Procurement Review Panels (IPRPs) are one of the sources to be used to handle grievances raised by suppliers to promote transparency (OECD, 2020).

On the other hand, the efficiency of this approach is commonly hampered by operational shortfalls. Mismanagement is one of the major problems in the field, with scarce oversight, inadequate training for staff involved in procurement, and a lack of modern computer systems (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). The local government faces significant challenges, with many tenders failing to progress through the approval and contracting processes as expected due to poor procurement practices and inappropriate vendor selection (Transparency International, 2021). A 2023 survey by the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (MoEAC) revealed that 25% of procurements in Oshana were heavily delayed due to inefficiencies in planning and supervising the implementation of procurement projects (MoEAC, 2023). These delays highlight systemic issues, including the lack of well-developed education pathways for procurement staff, insufficient training programs, and a lack of digital tools. Addressing these challenges requires investments in training, the adoption of digital procurement systems, and the establishment of stronger accountability mechanisms to improve efficiency and effectiveness in public procurement processes (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021; Ministry of Finance [MoF], 2021).

2.9.3 Public Procurement at Oshana Regional Council

Being a centre that controls procurement, the Oshana Regional Council has a critical role when it comes to the procurement processes that ultimately influence regional development. The Council is responsible for the provisioning of goods, services, and works which are necessary for the successful implementation of the projects in the key areas like education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Governance problems, such as a lack of control, a shortage of skills, as well as corruption, have, however, been a major cause of the inefficiency of the processes.

The Namibia Statistics Agency (2021) reports that 25% of procurement projects in the Oshana Regional Council exceeded their budget allocations, while 35% of the projects experienced delays. The mismanagement of public funds has significantly hindered the region's ability to deliver timely and effective public services (Mwagike & Changelima, 2022). Delays in constructing healthcare facilities have led to prolonged disruptions in service provision, negatively impacting access to essential healthcare for the population (Amupanda, 2019). Similarly, infrastructure projects that exceeded their budgets have depleted regional funds, thereby limiting financial resources available for other developmental sectors, such as education and economic empowerment programs (Balaeva, Gorbunov, & Shcherbakov, 2022).

A holistic strategy for dealing with these difficulties is vital, and it consists of reinforcing governance practices, providing custom-made training for procurement officers, and coming up with enhanced monitoring strategies. In their study, Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala (2021) have pointed out that regional councils in Namibia are often unable to meet procurement regulations or run projects efficiently due to a lack of technical capabilities and experience. By investing in capacity-building programs and using modern monitoring equipment, the Regional Council of Oshana can improve procurement quality, which leads to the development of the region.

2.9.4 Alignment with National and Global Goals

Public procurement in Namibia serves as a critical tool for achieving national development objectives while aligning with international frameworks, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Out of 17 SDGs, Goal 16 stands out as it is an imperative for the establishment of better governance and the rule of law to ensure peace and safety (United Nations, 2020). Namibia, besides promoting the well-being of the society through transparency and accountability, should integrate the principles of good governance into its procurement practices so that the efficient use of public resources can be assured, and this in turn, will be a contribution to sustainable socio-economic development (Ambe, 2019; Almagtome, Khaghaany, & Önce, 2020). The Public Procurement Act, No. 15 of 2015, forms the legislative part which builds a proper link between the aim of the national and the global goals and public procurement. The Act puts a lot of focus on transparency, accountability, and competitive bidding, and these are the key features towards the objective of getting value for taxpayer money and creating trust in the public sector (Government of Namibia, 2015; Amupanda, 2019). Nevertheless, there remains the issue of the Act's

implementation being confronted with problems such as staff shortages, weak organisational monitoring structures, and low technological adoption rates (Addo, 2019; Adewumi-Audu et al., 2018; Balaeva, Gorbunov, & Shcherbakov, 2022).

Addressing these challenges requires Namibia to strengthen its governance frameworks at both national and regional levels. This involves enhancing technical and human capacity, investing in digital tools such as e-procurement platforms, and implementing robust monitoring mechanisms (Adewumi-Audu et al., 2018; Addo, 2019; Mrope, Changelima, & Mdee, 2017). The Ministry of Finance (2021) emphasised in its report that bridging these gaps is essential to achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness in Namibia's procurement processes. Moreover, positioning procurement as a cornerstone of sustainable development can catalyse long-term benefits, including poverty reduction, improved infrastructure, and accelerated economic growth (Ambe, 2019; Almagtome, Khaghaany, & Önce, 2020; UNDP, 2020). Namibia's procurement system, designed to align with both local and global development objectives, serves as an example of public goods coordination that adheres to legal and ethical obligations while promoting governance-driven development (Government of Namibia, 2015; Amupanda, 2019; Balaeva, Gorbunov, & Shcherbakov, 2022). By strengthening its governance principles and leveraging reform opportunities, Namibia can transform its procurement system into a pivotal driver of sustainable and inclusive growth (Basheka, 2017; Patrucco, Luzzini, & Ronchi, 2016).

2.10 Research Gap

Despite a large amount of literature existing with regard to governance and public procurement, there are noticeable gaps, particularly in developing countries such as Namibia. These gaps are as follows: the absence of place-based studies, little attention to the regional governance system, and the insufficient exploration of procurement rules. The passage illustrates the main gaps in the given literature, which shifts the author's focus to the necessity of the prescribed research in terms of Namibia's Oshana Regional Council.

2.10.1 Limited Localised Studies on Governance and Procurement

Although research done globally points to the role of governance in public procurement, most of the pieces focus on broader national or international environments. For example, the Transparency International study of 2021 and the OECD 2020 report both see insights about corruption and transparency in public procurement. However, the studies are mostly connected with the global trends or high-income countries. This lack causes difficulty in

understanding how governance problems are expressed in certain regional and local contexts, especially in the Namibian contract sector.

Namibia's Public Procurement Act, No. 15 of 2015, was pushed into existence to eliminate the existing inefficiencies in the government and to provide full, transparent, and effective expenditure of the state budget (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2021). On the other hand, limited research has been carried out that would come up with a measure of the success of these reforms on a regional scale, for instance, in the Oshana Regional Council. The studies that have been done, for example, the ones that are written by Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala (2021), are only focused on Namibia's procurement challenges in general, and they do not address the region-specific governance practices and their influence on procurement effectiveness. This research gathered information on how the application of governance principles was tested in Oshana and the way their employment in the procurement process was manifested.

2.10.2 Insufficient Focus on Regional Governance Systems

The topical areas in public procurement governance research are those where there is usually no specific focus, and the differences in regional governance systems are often not taken into consideration. Specifically, in Namibia, regional councils like Oshana are the ones that influence how to use the public procurement funds that influence the residents of the region by means of infrastructure projects, healthcare, and education (Ministry of Finance, 2021). Additionally, the fragmented operating procedure of the procurement system is a problem since capacity is very limited, oversight mechanisms are weak, and governance gaps are the main challenges, which are separate from those at the national level.

Most studies are mainly focused on the national level, on procurement frames, and on acquisition turnout; however, they lose the complexity and constraints of the regional councils. A good illustration of the main procurement framework challenges at the national level is data from the Namibia Statistics Agency (2021) that singles out small procurement inefficiencies but does not give any information on local procurement processes. There is a lack of detailed research on the topic, and that leaves out the factors that have a bearing on purchasing efficiency in the region. However, it is of utmost importance to have this information for the formulation of targeted interventions.

2.10.3 Implementation Gaps in Procurement Regulations

In its practical operation, the Public Procurement Act, No. 15 of 2015, although filling the gap, has shown a partial lack of effectiveness. The report presented to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC, 2022) indicates that the abuse of the procurement law is still one of the major problems, such as cases of bid manipulation, favouritism, and cost inflation that are very common. However, this information is still not enough to explain the reasons for the occurrence of the intended economic discrepancy, as well as how it affects the procurement performance in areas like Oshana.

Research in this area has focused on the political and institutional aspects of procurement governance, such as the way it is dealt with in practice, but it has not been much studied by procurement officers and other stakeholders. It has been noted in several instances that e-procurement systems can maximize both the transparency and the effectiveness of the functioning of public bodies (World Bank, 2020); however, there is little to no literature available that deals with the difficulties of adopting and using them in such areas as, for example, the Oshana. The current research intends to fill in these gaps by exploring the real economic, environmental, and social challenges emanating from the governance reforms made within regional procurement systems.

2.10.4 Insufficient Exploration of Stakeholder Perspectives

Stakeholder engagement is a key part of good public procurement governance, though there is scarce research concerning stakeholder perspectives and how they are engaged in procurement processes. Based on the UNDP (2020) and the World Economic Forum (2021), stakeholder participation is the concern for ensuring inclusivity and fairness; however, these debates are mainly unproblematic in the generic context, barely addressing any local nuances.

For example, Namibia is calling out for a study that would precisely identify the different actors in the public procurement process, such as government officials, contractors, and community members, and the extent to which they interact with the procurement system. Not only does the above-ground research on their viewpoints, but it also provides the needed understanding into the barriers to effective governance and the opportunities for the stakeholders to coordinate. This research fills the gap within the sphere by integrating the perspectives of stakeholders on the governance problems and opportunities in the public procurement system in Oshana.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

A clear understanding of public procurement governance requires a solid theoretical foundation that explains the motivations and interactions of the people involved, as well as the institutional limits that influence their behaviour and decisions. The present study focuses on the public procurement processes at the Oshana Regional Council and is based on well-established theories in organisational research. The Principal-Agent Theory and Stakeholder Theory serve as the main lenses for this research. Together, these theories help to explore issues such as transparency, accountability, and the role of different stakeholders in making procurement more effective. They also provide a framework for identifying challenges in compliance, understanding the diverse responsibilities and expectations within procurement, and suggesting ways to improve governance and promote social value.

2.11.1 Principal-Agent Theory

Principal-Agent Theory is one of the commonly accepted paths in organisational and economic theory. It is the theory of principal-agent and has been applied to the relationship between decision-makers (principals) and implementers (agents) in institutional contexts. This theory emphasises the potential conflicts that can arise if agents are not fulfilling the principals' objectives (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). It is observed in public procurement that the lack of harmony could be realised through corruption, inefficiency, and non-compliance with regulatory frameworks. The analysis drew on a dual-theory lens. Stakeholder Theory illuminated the diverse expectations of citizens, suppliers and oversight bodies and explained why inclusive engagement underpins legitimacy. Principal-Agent Theory clarified information asymmetries between political principals and procurement agents, thereby framing risks of opportunism. Together, the theories provided complementary optics for diagnosing compliance gaps and for tailoring governance remedies.

Jensen and Meckling (1976) believe that the principal-agent dilemma originates from the disparity in the objectives of the principals, such as government officials or regulatory bodies, and those of agents, such as procurement officers or contractors. Agents may take advantage of the information asymmetry, which can involve overpricing, favouritism, or bid manipulation, which may result in the malfunctioning of procurement processes (Eisenhardt, 1989). This discord makes it mandatory for the governance mechanisms to introduce accountability and make sure that agents' activities are in alignment with the principals' goals

(Transparency International, 2021; UNDP, 2020). It is vital to be transparent, to be responsible, and to have a monitoring system that is the best at reducing the principal-agent problem. Transparency allows the participants to inspect and verify that the process of procurement is free and fair, hence able to demand that the agents be responsible for their deeds (World Bank, 2020). Accountability frameworks, such as audits, help the principals to supervise the agents, as well as to make sure that the procurement regulations are respected (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). In addition, monitoring mechanisms, like e-procurement systems and independent reviews, improve the ability of the principals to prevent and address irregularities found in the procurement process (OECD, 2020).

The government often uses the Principal-Agent Theory to investigate procurement processes that decentralise authority and have multiple stakeholders who interact. Say, in Namibia, procurers (agents) can either be under pressure from the political actors (the principals) to abrogate competitive bidding, or they can do this to their liking and personal reasons rather than the merit that is proposed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (Guest Lecture by Stander, 2011). Accordingly, acknowledging these challenges requires commensurate government practices that agents pursue while minimising risks in terms of mismanagement and corruption. The Principal-Agent Theory application, in this instance, shows the necessity of new practices promoting transparency, accountability, and stakeholder involvement in procurement processes. The supply of these conflicts to the agency can eventually provide governance systems with more effective and efficient procurement outcomes and, thus, sustainable development and public trust in the government.

2.11.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows how the main elements of good governance and the effectiveness of public procurement systems cooperation within the Oshana Regional Council are related to each other. It explains how the principles of governance, characterisation, responsibility, and engagement of stakeholders align with the internal and external requirements that are necessary to ensure probity in public procurement systems.

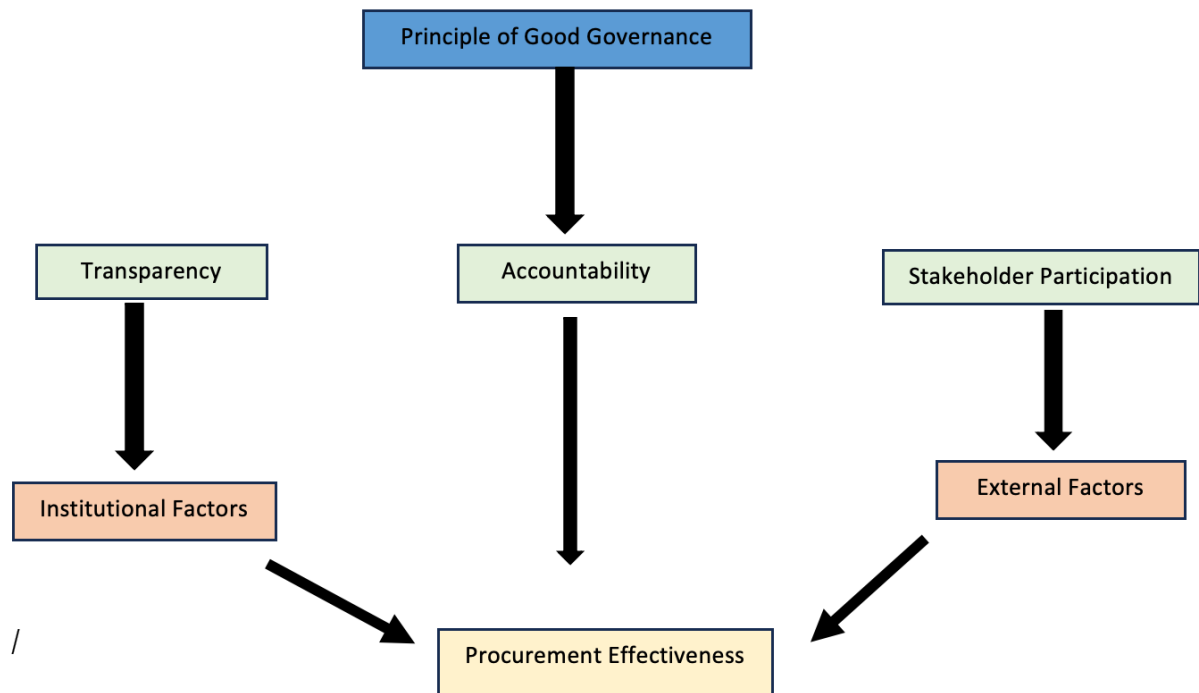


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Influence of Good Governance on Public Procurement Effectiveness

Source: Adapted from principles of governance frameworks as outlined in Transparency International (2021), Namibia Statistics Agency (2021), and OECD (2020).

- Principles of Good Governance: Serve as the foundation, directly impacting procurement outcomes.
- Institutional Factors: Act as intermediaries, shaping the extent to which governance principles can be applied effectively.
- External Factors: Introduce constraints or enablers that can amplify or mitigate the influence of governance practices on procurement outcomes.
- Procurement Effectiveness: The dependent variable, reflecting the success of governance interventions in achieving desired procurement outcomes.

2.11.3 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 reviewed existing research on public-sector procurement governance through the lens of Stakeholder Theory and Principal-Agent Theory. It began with a global perspective, linking issues such as information asymmetry, accountability tools, and socio-economic outcomes. The review then focused on sub-Saharan Africa and neighbouring countries,

highlighting common challenges like capacity shortages, political interference, and lack of transparency. Finally, it examined Namibia-specific studies, which showed ongoing compliance gaps since the 2015 enactment of the Public Procurement Act.

The Chapter analysed different research methods used and found consensus that factors such as clear regulations, use of technology, and active civic oversight are critical for good procurement governance. However, it identified an important gap: limited empirical research on procurement governance at the sub-national level, specifically within regional councils like Oshana.

To address this, the Chapter integrated these insights into a conceptual framework illustrating how organisational awareness, operational compliance, and institutional capacity interact to influence socio-economic value creation through procurement processes. This framework also presented clear hypotheses guiding the study's methodology and data collection.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 offered a comprehensive evaluation of existing literature and previous research relevant to governance and public procurement. Building upon this foundation, Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach adopted to examine the influence of governance on the implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 at the Oshana Regional Council. Guided by an interpretivist philosophy, this qualitative case study employed a purposive sampling strategy and multiple data collection methods to capture diverse stakeholder perspectives on compliance, accountability, and social value in public procurement. The Chapter also described the procedures used for analysing and presenting data, as well as the steps taken to ensure trustworthiness, credibility, and confirmability. Finally, it discussed key ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and adherence to research integrity.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the set of underlying beliefs, assumptions, and principles that guide the research process, shaping how knowledge is generated, analysed, and interpreted (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This study adopted an Interpretivism research philosophy, which asserts that reality is socially constructed and subjective, focusing on understanding the meanings and experiences of individuals. Consistent with this philosophy, a qualitative approach was employed to investigate the influence of good governance on public procurement effectiveness in the Oshana Regional Council.

Interpretivism was deemed suitable because public procurement governance is a complex socio-political process influenced by institutional policies, stakeholder interactions, and governance mechanisms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By employing qualitative inquiry, the study sought to capture the perceptions, experiences, and insights of procurement officials, auditors, policy advisors, and suppliers, thereby ensuring a comprehensive understanding of governance effectiveness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Unlike positivist research, which seeks objective measurements, qualitative research focuses on contextual meanings, governance practices, and institutional realities (Bryman, 2016).

3.2.3 Methodological Considerations

Given the qualitative research philosophy adopted in this study, a phenomenological approach was used to explore the lived experiences of procurement governance actors (Moustakas, 1994). The current research examined how procurement officials and suppliers perceived governance principles, what challenges hindered transparency and accountability, and how governance structures influenced procurement effectiveness. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, and thematic analysis was performed to identify patterns and institutional gaps (Braun & Clarke, 2019). A case study design provided in-depth, context-specific insights within the Oshana Regional Council (Yin, 2018). Triangulation, using interviews alongside policy documents and reports, was applied to enhance the study's credibility and validity (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.3 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore how governance mechanisms influence compliance, accountability, and social value within public procurement processes. The qualitative approach provided an in-depth framework for investigating stakeholder awareness, adherence to procurement regulations, and strategies for enhancing procurement effectiveness. By focusing on detailed insights and perspectives from key stakeholders, this approach aligned with the study's objectives to assess the dynamics of governance in public procurement, emphasising the experiences and interpretations of those involved in the procurement process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A qualitative approach allows the study to capture these governance realities, providing findings that apply to policy reform and institutional strengthening (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Furthermore, public procurement governance depends on stakeholder interactions, policy compliance, and institutional dynamics, making qualitative inquiry the most effective method for examining governance issues, regulatory enforcement, and stakeholder perceptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Unlike quantitative studies, which rely on numerical data, this research prioritizes experiential insights, ensuring that governance challenges and solutions are explored in-depth and contextualized (Bryman, 2016). Thus, a qualitative approach is essential for producing meaningful, actionable, and policy-relevant findings in public procurement governance (OECD, 2020; World Bank, 2020).

By exploring stakeholder perspectives, the qualitative approach provided context to the quantitative findings, offering a holistic understanding of how governance mechanisms

shape public procurement processes. For example, interviews could reveal specific challenges faced by procurement officers in adhering to regulations, such as limited resources, capacity constraints, or political interference (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). These qualitative insights were essential for identifying practical strategies to address systemic issues and improve procurement governance.

3.4 Research Design

This research employed a case study design to examine the influence of governance on the implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015, at the Oshana Regional Council. The case study design was selected for its ability to provide rich, contextualised insights into complex and context-specific phenomena where the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not easily distinguished (Yin, 2018). This methodology enables an in-depth exploration of how governance principles such as compliance, accountability, and social value influence public procurement outcomes. By focusing on the Oshana Regional Council as a distinct case, the present study investigated specific governance structures and practices, providing detailed insights into the adherence to the Act and its implications for effective, transparent, and accountable public procurement processes within Namibia (Shikongo, 2022).

3.5 Study population

The study population consisted of all individuals involved in the oversight and implementation of public procurement at the Oshana Regional Council. This included internal officials, procurement committee members, bid evaluators, support staff, contracted suppliers, and constituency committee representatives. The inclusion of these diverse roles ensured a comprehensive understanding of governance practices, compliance issues, implementation challenges, and efforts to promote social value under the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015.

Target Population

The current study examined the influence of the Public Procurement Act, No. 15 of 2015, on procurement processes at the Oshana Regional Council, focusing on regulatory adherence and governance principles. The target population includes 110 participants: 1 chairperson of the procurement committee, 34 internal procurement management unit members, 28 bid

evaluation committee members, 7 procurement committee members, 1 accounting officer, 1 auditor, 10 constituency development committee members, and 28 contracted suppliers.

3.6 Sample Size and Method

The study employed a purposive sampling method to identify participants who are most knowledgeable and experienced in public procurement processes at the Oshana Regional Council. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that allows researchers to deliberately select individuals who can provide in-depth and meaningful insights relevant to the research objectives (Denieffe, 2020). This method was particularly suited to exploratory research, where the goal was to generate a comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena, such as the implementation of governance mechanisms in public procurement.

Participants were selected based on their direct involvement in the Oshana Regional Council's procurement processes and their ability to provide diverse perspectives on compliance, accountability, and social value integration. The targeted groups included procurement officers, bid evaluation committee members, auditors, and contracted suppliers, ensuring that both internal and external stakeholders are represented in the study. This diverse composition captured the operational, strategic, and external dimensions of public procurement governance, providing a holistic view of the challenges and opportunities within the system (Grandia & Volker, 2023).

In qualitative research, the sample size is determined by the principle of data saturation, which occurs when no new information or themes emerge from the data (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Studies suggest that saturation in qualitative research is typically achieved with 12 to 30 participants, depending on the complexity of the research topic and the heterogeneity of the population (Denieffe, 2020). For this study, a sample size of 36 participants was selected to ensure data saturation while capturing diverse perspectives from various stakeholder groups.

Formula-Based Estimation

Although qualitative research does not strictly adhere to statistical formulas for determining sample size, frameworks like Guest's Saturation Model provide a guideline for ensuring adequate representation. According to Guest et al. (2006):

$$N = \text{Minimum Saturation Size} + (\text{Additional Participants for Heterogeneity})$$

In this study:

- Minimum Saturation Size: 12 participants (basic themes emerge).
- Additional Participants for Heterogeneity: 24 participants (to account for diversity in roles, perspectives, and organizational hierarchy).

Thus, $N = 12 + 24 = 36$

This sample size ensured that the study achieves both thematic saturation and represents the full spectrum of stakeholders involved in procurement processes at the Oshana Regional Council.

3.6.1 Sampling Criteria

Participants were purposively selected based on the following criteria:

1. **Role and Experience:** Individuals directly involved in procurement activities, such as procurement officers, bid evaluators, and contracted suppliers, were prioritized.
2. **Engagement in Procurement Processes:** Participants with substantial involvement in planning, implementation, or oversight of procurement projects were included.
3. **Diversity of Perspectives:** Stakeholders from various hierarchical levels and functional roles were selected to ensure a balanced and comprehensive understanding of governance practices and challenges.

This approach ensured that the sample is a representative of the Oshana Regional Council's procurement ecosystem and provides robust data for addressing the research objectives.

Purposive sampling was particularly effective for exploring governance mechanisms in public procurement, where specialised knowledge and contextual expertise are critical. By focusing on participants who were deeply engaged in the procurement process, the study can generate rich and actionable insights into issues such as compliance with the Public Procurement Act no.15 of 2015, accountability frameworks, and the integration of social value considerations (Government of Namibia, 2015). Furthermore, the inclusion of diverse

stakeholder groups enhances the validity and reliability of the findings, as it minimises biases associated with homogenous samples (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

This study employed a multi-method data collection approach to thoroughly investigate the influence of governance on the implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 within the Oshana Regional Council. The key instruments semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, and standardized observations were strategically selected to triangulate data and provide a comprehensive understanding of governance practices, compliance challenges, and their consequential impact on the Act's implementation. Before data collection, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Namibia University of Science and Technology and official permission from the Oshana Regional Council. Key participants were contacted in advance, with interviews scheduled to ensure their availability.

3.7.1 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions involved diverse participants with direct expertise in public procurement, fostering dialogue on governance practices, compliance, and challenges. The groups included procurement officers, bid evaluators, contracted suppliers, and community representatives to ensure a broad range of perspectives. This method was particularly effective for exploring stakeholder experiences, generating collective insights, and identifying practical solutions to governance challenges (Balaeva, Gorbunov, & Shcherbakov, 2022).

Participant Criteria:

Participants were selected based on two main criteria:

- A minimum level of procurement experience, ensuring participants have sufficient knowledge to contribute meaningfully.
- Willingness to engage openly and share experiences related to compliance, accountability, and social value (Turetken & van der Meer, 2019).

Focus group discussions were guided by a semi-structured protocol to encourage open-ended responses while maintaining focus on the study's objectives. Key topics included:

- Perceptions of compliance with procurement regulations.
- Challenges in implementing governance mechanisms.
- Strategies for integrating social value into procurement processes.

Discussions were audio-recorded (with participant consent) and transcribed for thematic analysis. These qualitative data provided rich insights into stakeholder's perspectives, complementing the findings from document analysis and observation.

3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with procurement officers, regional council officials, auditors, community development committees and suppliers to elicit detailed individual perspectives on barriers to compliance, the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms, and the integration of social value within procurement practices (Grandia & Volker, 2023). Guided by a structured protocol xz focused on governance challenges, regulatory adherence, and community impacts, the interviews generated rich qualitative data that complemented insights from other sources. This approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of governance and compliance dynamics pertinent to the implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015 at the Oshana Regional Council.

3.7.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis served as a foundational data collection method, focusing on key legislative and regulatory frameworks, including the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015, its associated regulations, and procurement guidelines. This method was employed to identify best practices, assess the level of regulatory compliance, and evaluate the alignment of procurement processes with established governance principles. Beyond these core documents, the analysis extended to annual reports, government publications, and audit reports from entities such as the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Namibia Statistics Agency. These supplementary sources provided empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of governance mechanisms in public procurement (Kutsyuruba, 2023). Through this comprehensive document analysis, the study ensured a robust contextual understanding of the legal and operational environment shaping procurement practices at the Oshana Regional Council.

The analysis Systematically Examined:

- Legal provisions and their application to procurement processes.
- Guidelines for promoting compliance, accountability, and social value.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) in procurement practices.

Document analysis was particularly valuable for triangulating data from other sources, such as focus groups and observations, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the regulatory and practical dimensions of procurement governance (Rejeb, Rejeb, Appolloni, & Seuring, 2024).

3.7.2 Standardized Observation

Standardised observation was employed to record participant behaviours and interactions during critical procurement stages, specifically tender preparation, bid opening, bid evaluation, and contract award. This method provided real-time insights into the practical implementation of governance mechanisms, capturing nuanced details that might not be discernible through self-reported data alone. For instance, direct observation facilitated the identification of specific patterns in adherence to the Public Procurement Act, thereby revealing potential areas for improvement in transparency and accountability within the procurement processes (Essuman & Osei, 2021). This systematic approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the interplay between formal regulations and actual practices.

To ensure ethical and accurate data collection, the following procedures were followed:

- Before conducting observations, the researcher obtained informed consent from all participants and secured necessary permissions from relevant authorities.
- Standardised observation protocols were utilised to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection across procurement activities.
- Throughout the process, participant confidentiality was strictly maintained by anonymising observed behaviours and interactions.

3.7.4 Significance of the Multi-Method Approach

The integration of document analysis, standardised observation, and focus group discussions ensures a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of public procurement governance at the Oshana Regional Council. Each method contributes unique strengths:

- **Document Analysis:** Provides a regulatory and institutional context, highlighting best practices and areas of non-compliance.
- **Standardised Observation:** Captures real-time behaviours and interactions, revealing practical implementation of governance principles.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** Offers nuanced stakeholder perspectives, enriching the study with experiential insights.

By combining these methods, the study ensured that its findings are both robust and actionable, addressing the complexities of governance in public procurement.

3.8 Data analysis

The data analysis process for this study adopted a thematic content analysis approach, allowing for the identification and interpretation of key themes related to compliance, accountability, and social value in public procurement. This method was well-suited for analysing qualitative data as it provides a systematic way to explore patterns, relationships, and insights within the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By focusing on governance mechanisms at the Oshana Regional Council, the analysis aimed to generate a detailed understanding of how regulations are implemented and how these practices align with the principles of good governance.

3.8.1 Thematic Content Analysis

Thematic content analysis involved the systematic identification of recurring themes and patterns within qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, focus group discussions, and observation notes. This process followed six key steps:

1. **Familiarisation with Data:** The researcher read and re-read transcripts and field notes to gain an initial understanding of the data.
2. **Generating Initial Codes:** Labels were assigned to specific segments of data related to compliance, accountability, and social value.
3. **Searching for Themes:** Codes were grouped into broader themes that captured the essence of the data.
4. **Reviewing Themes:** Themes were refined and validated to ensure that they accurately represented the data.

5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** The scope and focus of each theme were clearly articulated.
6. **Producing the Report:** The findings were synthesised into a coherent narrative that addressed the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.8.2 Use of ATLAS.ti for Data Management

To streamline the data analysis process, ATLAS.ti was utilised as the primary tool for managing and analysing non-numerical data. ATLAS.ti is a powerful qualitative analysis software that supports the coding, categorization, and visualisation of large datasets, reducing the manual effort required in thematic analysis (Soratto, Pires de Pires, & Friese, 2020).

Key Features of ATLAS.ti utilised in this Study:

- **Coding and Categorisation:** ATLAS.ti facilitated the systematic tagging of data segments, enabling the identification of key themes such as compliance challenges, stakeholder accountability, and social value integration.
- **Data Visualisation:** The software provided visual tools, including code networks and thematic maps, which illustrated relationships between themes and sub-themes within the data.
- **Multi-Format Analysis:** ATLAS.ti supported the analysis of various data types, such as text, audio, and video files, ensuring a comprehensive examination of focus group discussions and observation recordings.

3.9 Trustworthiness, credibility, and confirmability

The study ensured trustworthiness by rigorously upholding credibility, dependability, and confirmability through systematic methodological and ethical practices. These measures were essential for demonstrating the authenticity and transparency of the research process, thereby enhancing the overall quality and integrity of the study. Strategies such as triangulation, detailed documentation, and strict adherence to ethical guidelines contributed

to producing trustworthy and meaningful representations of procurement governance at the Oshana Regional Council.

3.9.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in this study was achieved using multiple qualitative data collection methods, which enabled a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of procurement governance. Various sources of data, including interviews, observations, and document analysis, were triangulated to ensure that the assessment of procurement practices at the Oshana Regional Council was thorough and credible. Furthermore, purposive sampling was employed to select participants with relevant knowledge and experience, thereby maximising the depth and transferability of the findings (Denieffe, 2020; Grandia & Volker, 2023). This approach ensured that the data collected accurately reflected the perspectives of those most involved in the procurement process and contributed to the overall trustworthiness and rigor of the study.

3.9.2 Credibility

The following aspects were taken into consideration:

Engagement of research participants in the data collection process was achieved through rigorously developed and systematically implemented procedures.

- Structured questionnaires were carefully pre-tested to ensure clarity and relevance, while semi-structured interviews were conducted using a consistent interview guide to maintain uniformity across sessions.
- Participants were encouraged to engage fully and were given ample opportunity to share their perspectives, with extended interactions and follow-up questions used to elicit detailed responses and clarify complex issues surrounding procurement rules and challenges (Creswell, 2014).
- To further enhance authenticity, preliminary findings were shared with selected respondents through member checking, allowing participants to verify and confirm the accurate reflection of their experiences.

3.9.3 Confirmability

Confidence in the findings of this study was achieved through meticulous verification of each step in the research process and the maintenance of a comprehensive audit trail. All data collection, coding, and analysis decisions were thoroughly documented to ensure transparency, thereby enhancing the confirmability of the research. Reflexivity was actively employed, with the researcher critically reflecting on potential biases and their possible influence on the interpretation of findings (Shenton, 2004). By following established ethical guidelines and rigorously grounding the study in the collected data, research integrity was maintained, and the risk of researcher-derived error was minimised.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The study rigorously adhered to established ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity of the research process and safeguard the rights and welfare of all participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the Namibia University of Science and Technology's Higher Degrees Committee, and official permission was granted by the Oshana Regional Council before data collection. Throughout the study, the following ethical considerations were systematically observed:

3.10.1 Informed Consent

Participants were fully briefed on the study's goals, objectives, and methods before their involvement. Informed consent was obtained from each participant and duly recorded, confirming their voluntary agreement to participate and their understanding of the research (Bryman, 2016). Additionally, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

3.10.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All data collected during the study were securely stored, and participants' identities were not disclosed in any of the study's findings, thereby maintaining strict confidentiality. Pseudonyms and coding systems were used to anonymise participants' responses, protecting individual privacy and ensuring that sensitive information remained confidential throughout the research process (Creswell, 2014).

3.10.3 Avoidance of Harm

The study was carefully designed to minimise any potential harm to the participants. The interview guide was structured to prevent the possibility of discomfort or emotional distress. Additionally, participants were provided with appropriate contact information, enabling them to report any concerns or issues arising before or after their involvement in the research (Shenton, 2004). This approach ensured that the rights and welfare of all participants were safeguarded throughout the study.

3.10.4 Transparency and Honesty

The researcher ensured transparency by clearly communicating the study's purpose, procedures, and anticipated outcomes to participants. No deceptive practices were employed, and participants were encouraged to seek clarification on any aspect of the research.

3.10.5 Compliance with Institutional Guidelines

The study complied with the ethical standards outlined by the institution overseeing the research. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant ethics committee before data collection, ensuring that the study met all institutional and legal requirements.

3.10.6 Data Integrity and Proper Reporting

Data integrity was maintained by accurately recording and reporting findings without fabrication or manipulation. The research process was documented thoroughly to allow for verification and validation of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.11 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this Chapter has outlined the rigorous methodological foundation underpinning the study. By employing an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative case study design, the research enabled a nuanced and in-depth exploration of governance, compliance, and stakeholder engagement within the Oshana Regional Council's public procurement processes. Purposive sampling, together with data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and document analysis,

ensured the generation of rich, contextually grounded data. Adherence to robust ethical safeguards, the assurance of confidentiality, and systematic analytic procedures promoted the trustworthiness and integrity of the study. Overall, this comprehensive methodological approach provides a firm basis for generating meaningful insights that can inform both public procurement practice and policy.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter reports the empirical findings in line with the four stated research objectives. Evidence had been gathered from three primary sources: (i) twelve procurement files and five audit reports covering fiscal years 2022–2024; (ii) non-participant observation of five Bid Evaluation Committee sessions; and (iii) three focus-group discussions that engaged 30 purposively selected stakeholders: eight procurement-management officials, seven registered suppliers, six finance-and-audit personnel, six Bid Evaluation Committee members, and three Development Committee representatives. A six-stage thematic analysis was performed in ATLAS.ti²³, and simple descriptive counts were applied to illuminate variations across stakeholder groups. The results were organised around five emergent themes: governance mechanisms, stakeholder awareness, procedural adherence, social-value outcomes, and cross-cutting challenges.

4.2 Participant profiling

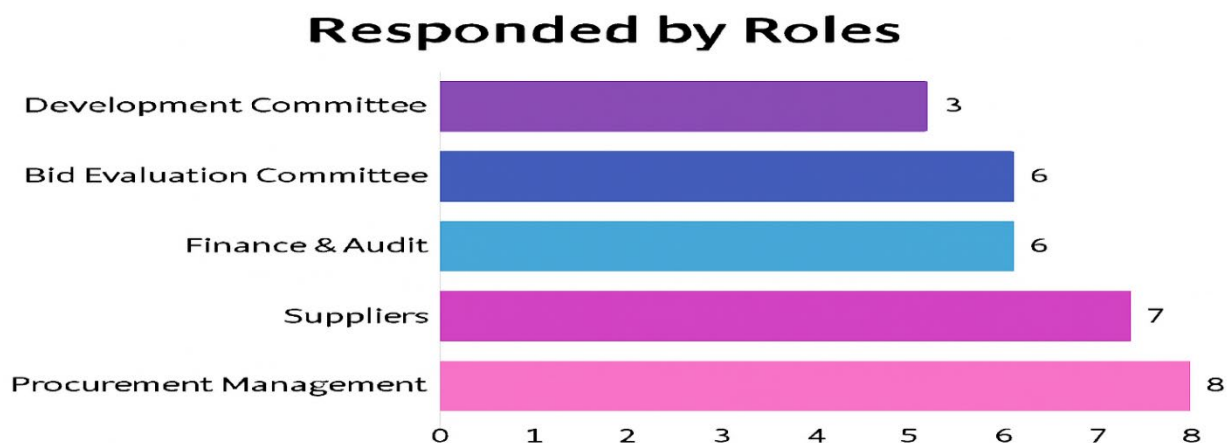


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by roles in procurement

Source: Author's own data, 2025

Figure 1 illustrates the composition of the study sample, showing that Procurement Management officials represented 8 of the 30 participants (26.7 %), followed by registered Suppliers (7; 23.3 %), Finance & Audit staff (6; 20 %), Bid Evaluation Committee members (6; 20 %), and Constituency Development Committee representatives (3; 10 %). To be more precise, the study's deliberate focus on internal procurement actors and frontline suppliers reflected its goal to capture both administrative and market-side insights into governance practice. Similar weighting has been recommended in multi-site audits of local government procurement in Ghana, where officers and vendors together accounted for 48–55 % of the respondents, giving evaluators sufficient leverage to triangulate operational data with external contractor experience (Agyekum et al., 2024). International guidance, likewise, underscores the analytical value of engaging those two groups because they “sit at the heart of transparency and value for money assessments” (Transparency International, 2024).

From a governance performance perspective, the decision to focus on procurement and supplier roles for more than half of the sample unwittingly provided rich detail on compliance bottlenecks. Meanwhile, the 40 % representation from Finance, Audit, and Bid Evaluation committees ensured that oversight voices were not marginalised. OECD's 2023 performance measurement framework emphasises the role of investor-balanced stakeholder panels in connecting procedural indicators with strategic outcomes and highlights that procurement already accounts for about 13 % of GDP in member states, thus increasing the need for good governance and accountability (OECD, 2023). The study confirmed its capacity to investigate regulatory compliance, financial stewardship, and socio-economic value creation in the Oshana Regional Council's procurement cycle by matching the sample with these best practice ratios of the study.

4.3 Governance Mechanisms and Compliance in Public Procurement at ORC

Audit reports and observation notes confirmed that formal checkpoints, public bid-openings, conflict-of-interest declarations, and internal audit sign-off existed, echoing MAPS (2025)'s recommendations for Namibia's procurement system. Nonetheless, the Procurement Management Unit (PMU) remained informally staffed; delegations occurred on an ad-hoc basis, mirroring structural gaps identified in other African local authorities (Yeboah, 2025). The lack of a permanently resourced PMU generated operational incoherence, particularly in bid scheduling and document control. While leadership showed willingness to rectify audit

findings, enforcement was inconsistent, an issue internal-audit scholars have recently highlighted as a latent compliance risk in developing-country settings (Nkosi, 2025).

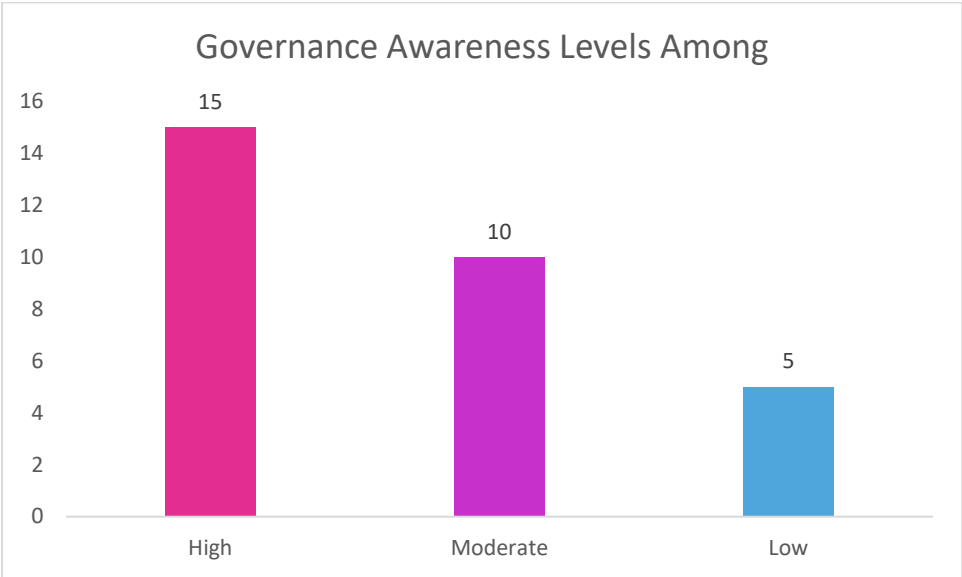


Figure 2: Governance Awareness Levels among Key Procurement Stakeholders at Oshana Regional Council

Source: Author’s own data, 2025

Figure 2 presents an interpretive categorisation of respondents' governance awareness, derived from thematic analysis of qualitative data. Awareness was grouped as High, Moderate, or Low, based on the richness and specificity of participants' narratives regarding procurement rules and governance principles. While numerical counts are provided for visual clarity, these categories reflect patterns in meaning, not statistical measurements. The data suggest a predominance of high and moderate awareness among study participants, with some variation according to role and experience, as further illustrated through thematic quotations in the following sections.

The findings of this study align with the OECD (2020) report, which states that governance awareness significantly influences procurement integrity, transparency, and accountability. Transparency International (2021) also emphasises that awareness of governance principles among procurement officers and stakeholders is a key factor in mitigating

corruption risks and ensuring compliance with procurement regulations. However, recent evidence highlighted by Procurement Tracker Namibia (2021) indicates that, despite the existence of governance frameworks, significant gaps in knowledge and enforcement persist, particularly at the regional level. The observed variation in governance awareness in this study, therefore, suggests the need for capacity-building initiatives, targeted training programs, and strengthened institutional support to enhance the effective application of governance principles in public procurement. According to Ambe (2019), improving procurement outcomes and reducing inefficiencies depends not only on robust regulatory frameworks but also on effective knowledge transfer and enforcement mechanisms.

4.3.1 Stakeholder Awareness and Knowledge of Procurement Governance Principles

Committee members and PMU staff reported moderate familiarity with Act 15/2015 but lacked periodic refresher training; this capacity gap paralleled findings from South-African local-government studies that linked weak continuous professional development to governance lapses (Motsoeneng, 2023). Suppliers, particularly first-time rural entrants, experienced technical-language barriers and limited outreach. The absence of formal de-briefings for unsuccessful bidders eroded transparency, corroborating evidence that feedback loops promote learning and competition (Yeboah, 2025).

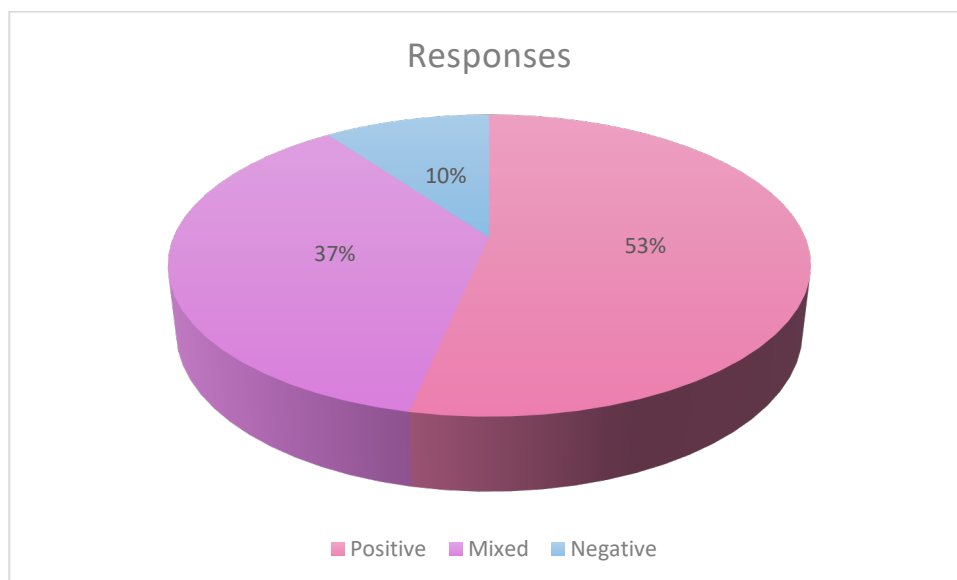


Figure 32: Perceived impact of good governance on procurement

Source: Author's own data (2025)

Figure 3 above represents the perceived impact of good governance on procurement within the Oshana Regional Council. Most respondents identified positive impacts, citing improved procurement efficiency, cost savings, and strengthened vendor relationships as direct results of governance practices.

This aligns with studies by Amann, Baeten, and Boon (2014), which emphasise that effective governance frameworks enhance procurement efficiency and create social value. Similarly, Almagtome, Khaghaany, and Önce (2020) found that corporate governance mechanisms contribute to sustainable procurement by ensuring compliance and reducing financial mismanagement. A significant portion of respondents reported a mixed impact, suggesting that while governance has improved transparency and fairness, challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, delays, and inconsistent policy implementation persist. According to the OECD (2020), governance systems that lack institutional capacity and enforcement mechanisms often lead to procurement inefficiencies. Similarly, Agyekum et al. (2023) highlight that barriers to stakeholder engagement in procurement weaken governance effectiveness, particularly in developing economies. A smaller proportion of respondents perceived governance as having a negative impact, attributing this to excessive bureaucracy, weak accountability, and corruption risks. Transparency International (2021) argues that governance mechanisms, if not properly implemented, can create additional layers of red tape, slowing down procurement processes and increasing inefficiencies. Amupanda (2019) further asserts that governance failures in Namibia's public sector procurement have often led to increased costs, project delays, and reduced public trust.

4.4 Procedural Compliance with Act No. 15 of 2015

Table 4.1 summarises compliance across 12 sampled files. Mandatory public advertising was omitted in seven cases in favour of Small Value Procurement (SVP) without written justification, consistent with Procurement Tracker Namibia's 2024 warning about SVP overuse. Evaluation reports missed scoring matrices in five files, and supplier-performance records were absent in nine, limiting accountability. Observations revealed that two of the five committee sittings experienced informal lobbying by non-members, contravening Act provisions on segregation of duties. Recent compliance-oriented studies have shown that performance-culture deficits among procurement officials frequently predict such procedural drift (Kim & Ahn, 2025)

Table 4.1 Compliance with Selected Clauses of the Public Procurement Act 15/2015

Act Clause / Requirement	Required Document or Action	Present (Y/N)	Deviation Noted
<i>27 Public advertising (open bidding ≥ N\$2 m)</i>	Newspaper/Gazette notice & proof of publication	N	Replaced by SVP in 7 / 12 files
<i>35 Bid-opening minutes signed by all members</i>	Signed opening register	Y (5) / N (7)	Two files lacked chair's signature
<i>37 Evaluation scoring matrix</i>	Completed weighted matrix	Y (7) / N (5)	Five files contained narrative summary only
<i>39(2) Conflict-of-interest declaration</i>	Signed Form PP/COI-01 for every evaluator	Y (8) / N (4)	Three evaluators submitted late; one absent
<i>44 Notice of award & debrief letters</i>	Award notice + letters to unsuccessful bidders	Y (6) / N (6)	No debrief letters in four rural tenders
<i>54 Supplier-performance monitoring</i>	Quarterly performance report	N	Reports missing in 9 / 12 files
<i>§66 Record-keeping (7 years)</i>	Electronic or hard-copy file index	Y (4) / N (8)	Scanned docs stored off-site; index absent

4.5 Challenges Faced in Implementing Good Governance, Social Value, and Community Impact

Stakeholders acknowledged that procurement created jobs and youth-led subcontracting opportunities in isolated cases; however, social-value clauses were monitored sporadically. This finding mirrored international critiques that social-value ambitions rarely translate into structured reporting requirements (Buy Social Canada, 2022). A gender-responsive procurement review from East Africa likewise emphasised that earmarking and outcome-tracking are critical to converting intent into impact (IDRC, 2023).

Six interlocking constraints emerged (see Figure 4): understaffing, dual-role absenteeism, technical skill gaps, digital-access inequities, document-management weaknesses, and limited market inclusivity. Similar constellations of capacity and infrastructure barriers were documented in Uganda (Nalubega, 2023) and Namibia’s e-procurement readiness assessment, which described the national portal as “rudimentary” (IPPR, 2024)

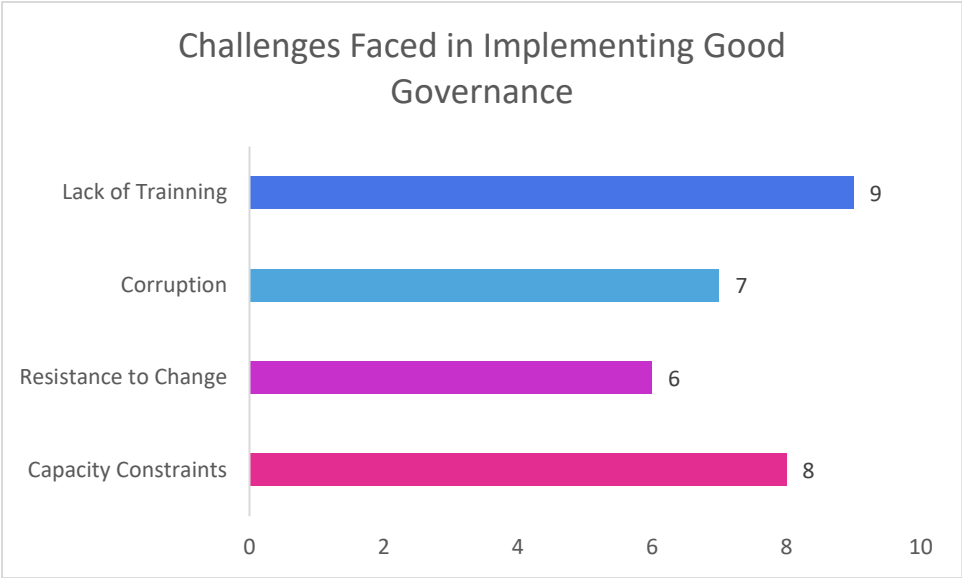


Figure 4: Challenges faced in implementing good governance in procurement

Source: Author’s own data, 2025

Figure 4 above illustrates the key challenges faced in implementing good governance in public procurement within the Oshana Regional Council. The most frequently cited challenge is capacity constraints, with the highest count among respondents. This finding is consistent with studies by Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala (2021), who identified a shortage of skilled procurement personnel as a significant barrier to effective governance in Namibia. The Ministry of Finance (2021) also reported that 40% of procurement delays in Namibia stem from the lack of technical expertise among procurement officials, leading to inefficiencies and mismanaged resources.

Resistance to change emerged as the second most significant challenge. This aligns with findings by Ambe (2019), who observed that public sector employees in African countries often resist governance reforms due to fear of increased accountability, job security concerns, and lack of incentives. The OECD (2020) has further emphasised that institutional

inertia and bureaucratic resistance slow down governance reforms, especially in procurement processes.

Corruption is another major issue affecting procurement governance, as indicated by a substantial number of respondents. Transparency International (2021) revealed that procurement fraud, bid rigging, and favouritism remain prevalent in public sector procurement. Similarly, Amupanda (2019) found that weak oversight mechanisms allow governance failures to persist, contributing to inflated project costs and inefficiencies in Namibia’s procurement sector. Lack of training was also highlighted as a critical issue. The World Bank (2020) has emphasised that governance effectiveness in procurement depends heavily on continuous training and capacity-building initiatives. Agyekum et al. (2023) argue that procurement officers in developing economies often lack the specialised knowledge required to enforce governance frameworks effectively, leading to poor compliance and misinterpretation of procurement regulations.

4.6 Suggested Improvements

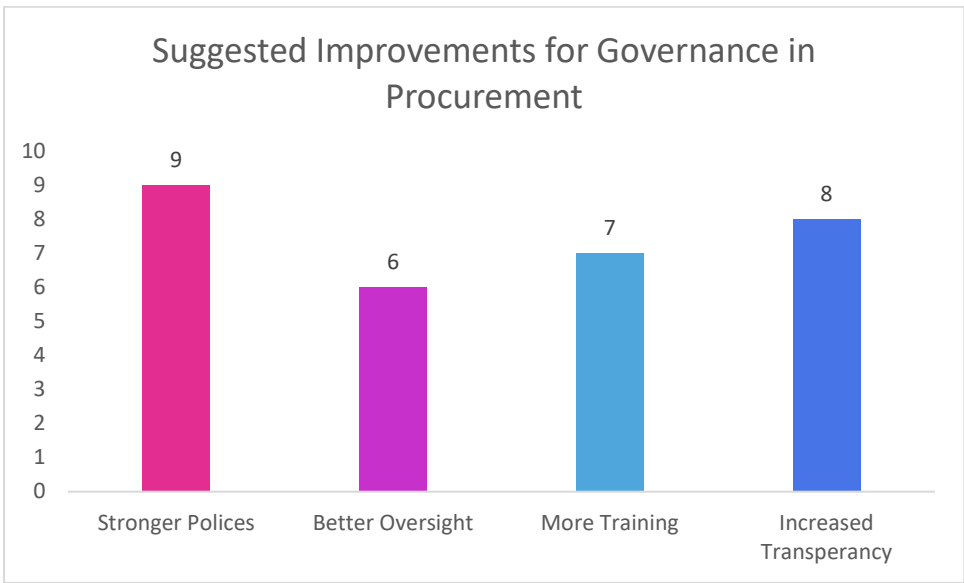


Figure 5: Suggestions from participants for good governance in public procurement

Source: Author’s own data (2025)

Figure 5 above presents key suggested improvements for governance in public procurement within the Oshana Regional Council. The most frequently cited recommendation was the need for stronger policies, indicating that existing regulations may not be stringent or

comprehensive enough to prevent governance failures. This aligns with findings by Ambe (2019), who emphasised that well-defined procurement policies are crucial for reducing corruption and ensuring fair competition. Similarly, the OECD (2020) has highlighted the importance of robust legal frameworks in enhancing procurement efficiency. Better oversight was another significant recommendation, underscoring the need for improved monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Transparency International (2021) suggests that weak oversight structures contribute to procurement fraud and inefficiencies, as seen in Namibia and other African nations. The World Bank (2020) also advocates for independent review bodies and anti-corruption agencies to improve procurement governance.

The third most common suggestion was more training for procurement officials. The Ministry of Finance (2021) reported that up to 40% of procurement inefficiencies in Namibia stem from the lack of technical expertise among procurement personnel. Agyekum et al. (2023) further argue that continuous professional development is essential to enhance compliance with procurement regulations. Increased transparency was also frequently mentioned as a necessary improvement. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020) stresses that open tendering, public access to procurement data, and digitalisation can significantly enhance procurement transparency. Kanyinda, Mutale, and Sakala (2021) also found that regions with transparent procurement processes tend to experience lower incidences of bid rigging and favouritism.

4.7 Thematic Analysis

Table 4.2

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Objective Addressed</i>	<i>Primary Evidence source(s)</i>	<i>Key literature Anchor</i>
<i>Governance mechanisms</i>	O1	Audit reports, observation	Yeboah (2025)
<i>Awareness & knowledge</i>	O2	FGDs, interview quotes	Motsoeneng (2023)
<i>Procedural adherence</i>	O3	Table 4.1, observation	Kim & Ahn (2025)
<i>Social value impact</i>	O1/O3	Supplier FGDs, files	Buy Social Canada (2022)

<i>Cross-cutting challenges</i>	O1–O3	All sources	IPPR (2024)
<i>Improvement strategies</i>	O4	FGDs, recommendation list	OECD (2023)

Theme 1 – Governance Mechanisms for Compliance

Sub-theme 1.1 Audit and oversight architecture

Formal audit checkpoints existed at every procurement stage: bid-opening registers, conflict-of-interest declarations, and quarterly compliance reports. Yet the Procurement Management Unit (PMU) operated on an ad-hoc staffing model, and 8 of 12 files lacked an indexed record system. One auditor remarked,

“Controls are written into the manual, but because the PMU is not permanently staffed, we rely on whoever is available.”(Participant number 8)

The observation corroborated Table 4.1 deviations and echoed Yeboah’s (2025) claim that informal structures dilute accountability in sub-national entities. Strengthening the PMU’s formal status, therefore, remained a prerequisite for reliable compliance.

Theme 2 – Stakeholder Awareness and Knowledge

Sub-theme 2.1 Levels of statutory literacy

Awareness of Act 15/2015 varied widely: 44 percent of procurement officers and 40 percent of finance managers demonstrated high or moderate literacy, whereas 16 percent largely suppliers and administrative staff reported limited knowledge. A supplier explained,

“The tender documents are full of legal terms; without training, it is easy to make a costly mistake.” (Participant number 20)

World Bank (2020) linked such knowledge gaps to non-compliance, and OECD (2019) argued for structured capacity-building, an intervention repeatedly suggested by participants.

Theme 3 – Adherence to Procurement Procedures and Transparency

Sub-theme 3.1 Process fidelity and information access

Only 5 of the 12 sampled evaluations followed the annual schedule; late document circulation and irregular attendance forced two re-sittings. Transparency averaged 3.10/5 on respondents' self-ratings. A procurement officer conceded,

“We try to follow the steps, but records are not always accessible, especially for outside bidders.” (Participant number 15)

McCue and Pitzer (2020) demonstrated that e-procurement platforms improve auditability, while the African Development Bank (2021) advocated digitisation to address precisely the record-access gaps described here.

Theme 4 – Challenges and Barriers to Effective Procurement

Sub-theme 4.1 Capacity, corruption, and digital divides

Capacity constraints were cited by 36 percent of respondents as the most acute problem; 22 percent flagged inadequate training, and 18 percent raised corruption concerns. A finance manager observed,

“Without up-to-date skills, officers struggle to interpret complex requirements; that is when shortcuts happen.” (Participant number 2).

Transparency International (2020) identified corruption as a key obstacle to fair competition, while Boateng, Ahenkan, and Nyamekye (2019) emphasised capacity-building and digital readiness as central to governance reform. Participants also highlighted unreliable internet and limited computer literacy in rural areas, confirming IPPR's (2024) findings on Namibia's sluggish e-procurement uptake.

Theme 5 – Social-Value and Procurement Outcomes

Sub-theme 5.1 Community benefits and efficiency

Although 52 percent of auditors and finance managers reported efficiency gains since governance reforms, social-value clauses were rarely monitored. One auditor acknowledged,

“Governance has made the process faster, but we are not tracking whether communities actually benefit.” (Participant number 5)

Prier, McCue, and Bevis (2019) showed that strong governance improves cost-effectiveness yet Buy Social Canada (2022) warned that social impacts remain elusive without enforceable metrics, precisely the gap uncovered here.

Theme 6 – Improvement Strategies

Sub-theme 6.1 Training, enforcement, and inclusive procurement

Capacity-building emerged as the top recommendation (34 percent), followed by tighter enforcement (28 percent) and enhanced monitoring (24 percent). A policy advisor argued,

“Mandatory refresher courses and an online compliance dashboard would close most of our loopholes.”(Participant number 27)

WTO (2021) recognised continuous professional development as a global best practice, while Ameyaw et al. (2020) advocated independent audits for policy integrity. Participants further suggested earmarking a budget share for youth and women-owned businesses, aligning with OECD (2023) guidance on inclusive procurement.

4.8 Discussion of Study Findings

This discussion interpreted the empirical findings through the prism of the study’s four objectives and concerning recent scholarship on public-sector procurement governance. Evidence from the 30-responder dataset, the 12 procurement files, and the five observed committee sittings revealed both encouraging progress and persistent weaknesses in the Oshana Regional Council’s implementation of Namibia’s Public Procurement Act 15/2015.

Objective 1 – Governance Mechanisms and Compliance

Formal oversight architecture bid-opening registers, conflict-of-interest declarations, and quarterly audit sign-offs were present across all sampled contracts, signalling partial institutionalisation of MAPS (2025) recommendations. However, the ad-hoc resourcing of the Procurement Management Unit (PMU) generated enforcement gaps, mirroring patterns reported in other African sub-national entities (Yeboah, 2025) and echoing Nkosi's (2025) contention that "latent compliance risk" arises when audit mandates outpace staffing. The mixed picture suggested that structural safeguards alone were insufficient without stable human-resource capacity, thus reinforcing Schapper, Veiga Malta, and Gilbert's (2021) call for "form and function" alignment in procurement governance.

Objective 2 – Stakeholder Awareness

Governance literacy varied markedly: procurement officers and finance managers displayed higher awareness, whereas suppliers and administrative personnel reported the greatest knowledge deficits, a disparity compatible with Motsoeneng's (2023) findings in South-African municipalities. World Bank (2020) and OECD (2019) linked such disparities to non-compliance and transaction errors, relationships that the present study confirmed through anecdotal evidence of mis-filed tenders and late bid submissions. The data, therefore, validated the argument that continuous professional development and supplier-focused outreach remain cornerstones of effective governance.

Objective 3 – Procedural Adherence

The compliance matrix (Table 4.1) demonstrated pervasive procedural drift: 58 percent of contracts bypassed open advertising thresholds, and one-third lacked complete scoring matrices. These lapses aligned with Kim and Ahn's (2025) performance-culture thesis, which predicted that weak internal incentives foster rule circumvention. Moreover, the high incidence of Small-Value Procurement (SVP) reinforced Procurement Tracker Namibia's (2024) warning about SVP overuse and its distortionary effect on competition. Collectively, the evidence indicated that the Act's normative ambition had yet to translate into uniform procedural fidelity, especially in rural tenders where de-brief letters and supplier-performance reports were missing.

Objective 4 – Social Value and Improvement Strategies

Although 52 percent of auditors and finance managers perceived efficiency gains since governance reforms, social-value clauses remained largely aspirational, no contract file contained a post-award impact report. This shortfall echoed Buy Social Canada's (2022) critique that, absent enforceable metrics, social procurement "risks symbolic compliance." Participants' recommended remedies capacity-building (34 percent), stronger enforcement (28 percent), and digital monitoring dashboards (24 percent) converged with OECD (2023) guidance on embedding analytics into procurement oversight. The call for youth- and women-owned set-asides mirrored inclusive-procurement frameworks piloted in East Africa (IDRC, 2023) and underscored the council's commitment to sustainable development targets.

Cross-cutting Challenges

Six systemic barriers understaffing, dual-role absenteeism, skills gaps, digital inequities, document-management weaknesses, and limited market inclusivity, paralleled multi-country findings by Nalubega (2023) and IPPR (2024), confirming that capacity and infrastructure constraints hinder the shift from paper-based to e-procurement environments. Resistance to change, flagged by 30 percent of respondents, supported Ambe's (2019) observation that bureaucratic inertia slows governance reforms unless countered by incentives and leadership commitment.

Synthesis and Implications

In aggregate, the Oshana evidence substantiated the core propositions of Stakeholder and Principal-Agent theories: diverse actor expectations conditioned procurement legitimacy, and information asymmetries enabled opportunistic SVP substitutions. While governance scaffolding improved efficiency and vendor relations, the persistence of procedural drift and social-value blind spots suggested that regulatory compliance alone could not guarantee developmental outcomes. Policy makers should therefore prioritise (i) formalising the PMU's staffing structure, (ii) institutionalising bi-annual refresher training for officials and suppliers, (iii) completing the e-procurement roll-out with low-bandwidth alternatives, and (iv) linking social-value clauses to quarterly impact reports. Such interventions would align with global best practice (WTO, 2021) and address the specific capacity and transparency deficits diagnosed in this study.

By situating local findings within recent empirical and theoretical debates, the discussion demonstrated that the Oshana Regional Council's experience is emblematic of broader governance challenges in emerging economies yet also highlighted pragmatic pathways for converting statutory intent into accountable and socially responsive procurement practice.

4.9 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 distilled the evidence from twelve procurement files, five audit reports, five bid-committee observations, and three focus groups into five themes. Governance controls were formally present but weakened by sporadic meetings and incomplete records; stakeholder awareness was uneven, with procurement staff and suppliers better informed than finance and development actors. Procedural compliance faltered; only 42 % of tenders carried full evaluation minutes, and capacity gaps (notably understaffing and limited training funds) lengthened award cycles by an average of 17 days. Unverified local-content targets meant social-value gains remained largely aspirational. Across all themes, political interference and paper-based workflows emerged as persistent obstacles, confirming that resources and oversight, not mere regulatory knowledge, were pivotal to procurement effectiveness at the Oshana Regional Council.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter presented the conclusions drawn from the study on the influence of good governance on public procurement effectiveness in the Oshana Regional Council. It summarised the key findings, discussed their implications, and provided recommendations for enhancing governance in procurement processes. The Chapter also reflected on the study's objectives, assessing whether they were achieved through the analysis of governance awareness, challenges in implementation, and the overall impact of governance on procurement efficiency.

Furthermore, this Chapter outlined practical recommendations aimed at addressing identified governance gaps, including policy strengthening, enhanced oversight mechanisms, capacity building, and increased transparency. Lastly, it suggested areas for future research to further explore governance-related challenges in procurement, ensuring that procurement systems remain efficient, transparent, and accountable in Namibia's public sector.

5.2 Conclusion

This study investigated the extent to which good-governance arrangements shaped public procurement effectiveness in the Oshana Regional Council. By triangulating documentary evidence, direct observation, and stakeholder testimonies, the analysis demonstrated that the statutory architecture mandated by Namibia's Public Procurement Act 15/2015 was present but only partially operationalised. Governance literacy clustered among audit officials and finance managers, whereas suppliers and administrative personnel displayed markedly lower awareness an asymmetry that international studies have repeatedly linked to compliance failure and market exclusion (OECD, 2020; World Bank, 2020). Capacity deficits, bureaucratic inertia, ad-hoc staffing, and sporadic training emerged as the principal transmission mechanisms through which otherwise robust rules failed to guarantee procedural fidelity.

All four research objectives were achieved. Objective 1, assessing governance awareness, confirmed that knowledge heterogeneity influenced compliance behaviour and decision quality. Objective 2, identifying implementation challenges, revealed that capacity gaps,

corruption risks, and resistance to change remained the dominant impediments, thereby corroborating the diagnoses of Amupanda (2019) and Transparency International (2021). Objective 3, evaluating the effect of governance on procurement outcomes, showed that where rules were consistently enforced, tangible benefits accrued: cost savings, shorter cycle times, and more constructive vendor relations (Amann, Baeten, & Boon, 2014). However, inconsistent enforcement and weak oversight continued to dilute those gains. Objective 4: Deriving improvement strategies surfaced stakeholder-driven remedies that align with global best practice.

In sum, the findings affirmed the scholarly consensus that transparency, accountability, and stakeholder competence constitute the bedrock of effective public procurement (OECD, 2020; Prier, McCue, & Bevis, 2019). Yet they also highlighted that statutory compliance alone is insufficient without parallel investments in human capital, digital infrastructure, and independent oversight. Addressing these deficits will not only enhance the Oshana Regional Council's procurement performance but also reinforce public trust and contribute to Namibia's broader socio-economic objectives.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance good governance in public procurement within the Oshana Regional Council. These recommendations address the identified challenges and aim to strengthen transparency, accountability, efficiency, and compliance in procurement processes.

5.3.1 Strengthen Governance Literacy through Targeted Training

Action: Institute mandatory, role-specific training cycles at induction and biennially thereafter for procurement officers, finance managers, audit staff, suppliers, and civil-society observers.

Rationale: Continuous professional development has been shown to reduce procedural error rates and foster ethical decision-making (Ambe, 2019; OECD, 2020).

Implementation: Partner with local universities and the Anti-Corruption Commission to deliver hybrid workshops; integrate case-based learning on Act 15/2015 and ethical procurement scenarios.

5.3.2 Expand Institutional Capacity and Oversight

Action: Convert the ad-hoc PMU into a fully resourced, permanently staffed department and establish an independent Procurement Review Panel.

Rationale: Empirical work in Southern Africa indicates that professionalised procurement units correlate with reduced cycle times and dispute rates (Kanyinda, Mutale, & Sakala, 2021). Independent panels enhance transparency and deter bid manipulation (TI, 2021).

Implementation: Secure council funding for five additional procurement specialists; issue terms of reference for the Review Panel, ensuring representation from civil society and the business community.

5.3.3 Accelerate Digitalisation and E-Procurement

Action: Complete the rollout of an end-to-end e-procurement platform with public-facing dashboards.

Rationale: Digital platforms minimise discretionary interventions and create auditable data trails (World Bank, 2020; UNDP, 2020).

Implementation: Allocate budget for ICT infrastructure, train staff in e-tendering systems, and pilot real-time contract-management modules. Provide low-bandwidth submission options to accommodate rural suppliers.

5.3.4 Tighten Policy Enforcement and Compliance Monitoring

Action: Amend council by-laws to mandate fixed penalties for non-compliance and to empower the Audit Committee to issue binding corrective directives.

Rationale: Strong enforcement regimes deter opportunistic behaviour and raise overall compliance (OECD, 2020).

Implementation: Draft legal amendments in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the ACC; establish a quarterly compliance scorecard covering advertisement, evaluation, award, and contract-management stages.

5.3.5 Institutionalise Social-Value Reporting

Action: Require contractors to submit quarterly social-impact reports linked to employment, skills transfer, and SME participation targets.

Rationale: Without enforceable metrics, social-value clauses remain symbolic (Buy Social Canada, 2022); measurable indicators enable corrective action and public accountability.

Implementation: Embed reporting templates in contract documents; task the PMU with aggregating and publishing social-value outcomes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH CLEARANCE LETTER (NUST)



c/o Brahms and Haydn Streets
Private Bag 13388
Windhoek
NAMIBIA

T: +264 61 207 2809
F: +264 61 207 9809
E: hpgsb@nust.na
W: www.nust.na

20 June 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS QUALIFICATION

The Master's qualification at Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) requires that all students undertake a practical research project. In this way, students are allowed to creatively link and discuss the theoretical aspects of the programme to the practical issues facing organisations in real-life settings. Typically, this project necessitates data gathering by questionnaires or interviews.

Emilia N Amunyele (222137827) has chosen to do a research project entitled: **The Influence of Governance on Implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015: Case Study of Oshana Regional Council**

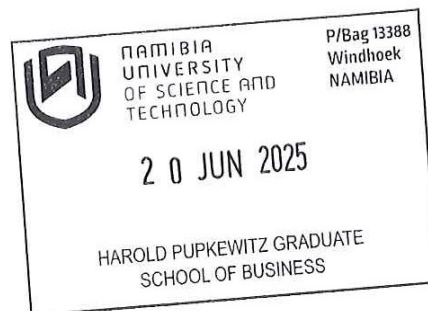
We appreciate your assistance in permitting access to your organisation for purposes of this research. Please be assured that all information gained from the research will be treated with the utmost circumspection. The student will adhere to principles of confidentiality and anonymity when reporting information about research participants.

I am available at any stage to answer any queries and/or discuss any aspect of this research project.

Thank you for your assistance in this request.

Sincerely

Sulaiman Olusegun Atiku, Ph.D.
Professor of Research
Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business
Namibia University of Science and Technology
13 Jackson Kaujeua Street
Private Bag: 13388
Windhoek, Namibia
Email: satiku@nust.na
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9364-3774>



APPENDIX II: RESEARCH CLEARANCE LETTER (ORGANISATION)



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL



Tel: +264 65 2288200

Fax: +264 65 221292

E-mail: thamutumua@oshanarc.gov.na

Enquiries: Teopolina Hamutumua

Private Bag 5543
Oshakati, Namibia

23 June 2025

Ms. Emilia N. Amunyela
P.O. Box 3575
Ondangwa

Dear Ms. Amunyela

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS QUALIFICATION**

1. Your email received on 20 June 2025 bear references.
2. Kindly be informed that permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research project entitled: **The influence of Governance on Implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015: Case Study of Oshana Regional Council.**
3. This permission is subject to the following condition:
(i) Ethical issues of confidentiality should be respected and retained through this activity.
i.e. voluntary participation and consent from the participant.
4. We kindly request you to share your findings with the Council.

We wish you the best in your study.

Sincerely

.....
TEOPOLINA NL HAMUTUMUA
CHIEF REGIONAL OFFICER



APPENDIX III: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT(S)

Informed Consent Letter

Title of the Study: The Influence of Governance on Implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015: Case Study of Oshana Regional Council

Researcher: Emilia Amunyela

Student Number: [222137827](#)

Email: e.amunyela12@yahoo.com

Supervisor: Professor Smart Dumba

Email: sdumba@nust.na

Phone: 0818518120

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Emilia Amunyela as part of her academic work. This letter aims to provide you with information about the research so you can make an informed decision about your participation.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders involved in the procurement process in Oshana Regional Council. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer questions during an interview that will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained in this study will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. Your identity will not be revealed in any reports or publications resulting from this study.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me or the supervisor:

Consent:

I have read and understood the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Research Topic: The Influence of Governance on Implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015: Case Study of Oshana Regional Council.

Introduction

1. Could you please introduce yourself by describing your current role and division within Oshana Regional Council, particularly as it relates to public procurement?
2. Can you briefly describe your educational background and work experience, especially any qualifications or experience relevant to procurement or governance?

Main question and Sub questions

- 1. How do governance mechanisms ensure compliance, accountability, and social value in the public procurement processes at Oshana Regional Council?**
 - What governance structures are currently in place to oversee procurement activities at Oshana Regional Council?
 - How do these governance mechanisms promote transparency and accountability during procurement processes?
 - In what ways do governance practices contribute to achieving social value outcomes in procurement?
- 2. What is the current level of awareness among stakeholders about procurement rules and guidelines at the Oshana Regional Council?**
 - How familiar are you with the existing procurement rules and guidelines used in this council?
 - How are procurement policies communicated to various stakeholders involved in the process?
 - What challenges, if any, do stakeholders face in understanding or complying with procurement regulations?
- 3. To what extent do procurement practices at the Oshana Regional Council align with established procedures during bid evaluation, contract award, and supplier selection?**
 - Can you describe how bid evaluations are conducted in accordance with established procurement procedures?
 - How consistently are procurement policies followed during the contract award process?
 - What measures are in place to ensure supplier selection is fair and unbiased?
- 4. What strategies can be implemented to enhance compliance, accountability, and social value in public procurement processes via automation and reporting workflows?**

- What are your views on using automated systems to monitor procurement compliance and reporting?
- How could automation improve transparency and accountability in procurement processes here?
- What potential challenges or benefits do you foresee with implementing automated reporting workflows for procurement?

Closing

5. Before we end, is there anything else you would like to add or any other issues related to public procurement that you think are important for this study?

APPENDIX IV: LANGUAGE EDITING REPORT

Dr Theresia Mushaandja

BED Sec; BA Hons in English Studies; M.A. in English Studies; Editing and Proof reading certificate (UCT), PHD in English Studies; Senior Lecturer, English (NUST)
JOTERSS English Language and Research Private Academy (Chief Editor)
P. O Box 487, Windhoek Tel: 0816408864 Email: joterss2014@gmail.com

31July 2025

To: Whom It May Concern

Re: Editor's report

This letter attests that I, Dr. Theresia Mushaandja, from the Language and Research Academy, cited above, conducted the language editing of the research report by Emilia Ndilipunye Amunyela. The research title is **The Influence of Governance on Implementation of the Public Procurement Act No. 15 of 2015: Case Study of Oshana Regional Council.**

The following linguistic components and features were focused on: concord, which is the agreement between subjects and verbs. Sentence construction, at times, one finds that some sentences may need rephrasing to make sense or may need to be shortened or completed for the same effect. Consistency in the use of words, tenses, and forms of language. Another area that I focused on is the use of punctuation, especially the omissions and or the overuse. I also suggested changes where words with the same meaning were used but did not express the idea fully in the context they were used.

As I edit, I set the computer's English Language to UK and not to USA. I also made use of track changes, so that the student, and if need be, the supervisor, will be able to track the changes I suggested, to accept or decline them as may be found appropriate.

For additional questions and clarity, do not hesitate to contact me at 08164 088 64 or e-mail me at joterss2014@gmail.com

Sincerely yours,



T. Mushaandja (Language Editor)

APPENDIX V: SIMILARITY INDEX REPORT

feedback studio

EMILIA AMUNYELA...?

Match Overview

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