

INFLUENCES OF ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES ON TENDERING PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

Naira Jepkosgei Korir 

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology,
School of Entrepreneurship, Procurement and Management, Kenya
nairakorir7@gmail.com

Victoria Wanambiro

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology,
School of Entrepreneurship, Procurement and Management, Kenya
wanambirrhoda@gmail.com

Abstract

Tendering participation determines the success of disadvantaged groups particularly women. This study assessed the influence of Access to Government Procurement Opportunities on tendering participation by women in Nakuru County. Procurement procedures, sensitization and financing were considered. Agency, transaction cost and institutional theories were utilized. Descriptive survey design was adopted with a target population of 297 women. 75 participants were randomly sampled and administered with semi-structured questionnaires. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Consequently, procurement procedures were responsive to women needs (mean=3.750), there were inadequate controls on tendering processes (mean=3.111), there were capacity building programs on tendering (mean=4.222), women entrepreneurs have limited access to tendering information (mean=3.561), access to financing determines women participation in tendering (mean=4.472), funding from Women enterprise fund enhances tendering participation by women (mean=3.556). There were significant relationships between procurement procedures ($r=0.726$), government sensitization ($r=0.695$), financing ($r=0.713$) and tendering participation by women. In conclusion, tendering processes for women were accountable, there was inadequate access to tendering information,

financial incapacity and gender imbalance limits women participation in tenders, women needs should be prioritized in procurement; more controls should be incorporated into tendering processes to foster efficiency, women should be regularly trained on procurement procedures, terms and conditions.

Keywords: Tendering; Participation; Procurement; Women; Procedures; Sensitization; Financing; Government; Access

INTRODUCTION

Women are among the disadvantaged or special interest groups in many developing economies. According to Blome and Schoenherr (2011), the participation of Special Interest Groups in Public procurement is an important function of governments across the world. Nonetheless, the World Bank (2010) indicates that many countries are yet to develop procedural frameworks that ensure: public procurement procedures are transparent and promote fair and equal treatment; public resources are linked to public procurement and in accordance with intended purposes; procurement officials are ethical and accountable and promote public scrutiny. Neha et al., (2012) posited that the role of progressive legislation in empowering women in accessing public procurement opportunity has proven successful around the world. However poor implementation of policies has ensured that the vulnerable populations are more likely to be overlooked by government procurement, less likely to receive skills and training.

As a result, disadvantaged groups particularly women are at greater risk of being unemployed and having no source of livelihood (Attaran, 2002). This implies that exclusion of women from development ultimately causes economies to stagnate. According to the International Trade Centre (2014), the same challenges face public procurement policy in stimulating entrepreneurial activity by women-owned enterprises. Nevertheless, the application of gender equality objectives through public procurement remains underdeveloped and under-researched (Callerstig, 2014). Further, OECD (2010) posited that increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of procurement systems is an on-going concern of governments and the international development community. Moreover, special interest in procurement expenditure has a great impact on the economy and needs to be well managed (Baker et al., 2011).

In addition, Routledge and Lomdon (2006) posited that the estimates of the financial activities of government procurement across the world by the youth or disadvantaged groups

are believed to be in the order of 10% – 30 % of the Gross National Product (GNP). This explains why empowerment programmes organized at the national and international levels are increasingly targeting youth and women (Mentzer, et al. 2011). According to Ketchen (2009), women empowerment in public procurement is a matter of advancing women's rights especially through lack of employable and entrepreneurial skills for them to be included in public procurement activities. As a result, disadvantaged groups or people are generally excluded from public procurement thereby hampering their overall economic independence (R.O.K, 2013). Therefore, the World Bank (2012) posited that many governments now practice gender mainstreaming when designing national budgets to make sure national economic planning pays adequate attention to the unique challenges of women's economic empowerment.

Ramsay (2008) pointed out that the rapidly growing social entrepreneurs which tap practical and creative business approaches in solving pressing social and development problems have been equally instrumental around the world in creating opportunity for women, youth and the disadvantaged. Gender equality, according to the United Nations (2005) is the opportunity sought to narrow gender gaps to support greater equality between women and men. According to Mota and Filho (2011), women are the backbone of rural economies in Africa. Preferential treatment to the disadvantaged groups, among them the youth, women and persons with disabilities, is slowly taking shape in Africa through enactment of various procurement laws. In South Africa, preferential treatment is given to the blacks in an attempt to accommodate group differences, encompass the right to reparation for past inequalities and to uplift vulnerable groups in society. Similarly in Malawi, a reservation scheme is currently being applied to the ICT sector for procurement below BWP 300,000 (US\$ 46,000), where the opportunity to bid is reserved for 100% citizen-owned companies (Kennekae, 2012).

However, unequal procurement opportunities between women and men continue to hamper women's abilities to lift themselves out of poverty and gain more options to improve their lives (Fanuel, 2001). Furthermore, regardless of inequalities that persist in the way paid and unpaid work is divided between women and men, women remain the sole caregivers despite limited access to resources (Ongori, 2009). Polo (2008) posited that the best thing about getting government contract is that you will get paid but it takes a while. In Kenya, the government still face an uphill task in ensuring youth, people living with disabilities and women groups to participate in public procurement as they may not have the financial wherewithal (Orodho, 2013). Fortunately, there are a host of financial instruments being offered by various institutions, including local purchase order (LPO) financing and invoice discounting. There is also the Uwezo Fund and the youth and women enterprise fund, yet processing an invoice takes months.

The level of compliance to procurement regulations can therefore determine whether a government meets its goals and objectives or not as well as affect many internal and external stakeholders (Eyaa, 2011). According to Amemba et al., (2013), public procurement in Kenya plays a major role in the utilization of government resources and achievement of the economic development agenda. In 2013, the Government of Kenya enforced procurement regulations which began the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) programme, under the National Treasury Public Procurement Directorate. Women and other marginalized groups were allowed to procure 30% of public goods and services in line with Article 2 of the PPDR of 2013 and Article 27 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, on equality and freedom from discrimination. The sole purpose of the AGPO was to ensure that women and discriminated groups actively participate in public procurement. The benefits of registering for the AGPO includes among others: the ability to participate in 30% of government tenders, to qualify for Local Purchase/Service Orders financing from the Youth/Women Enterprise Development Fund, exclusion from bid bonds, and invoice discounting with financial institutions.

According to the implementation of the PPDA 2015, for the three years the procurement law has been in operation, several weaknesses and complaints have been raised with regard to its efficiency and effectiveness. Long delays in procurement process, a lot of supply details that have to be evaluated before awarding tenders (KURA, 2012). There have also been many petitions surrounding procurement procedures. However, the Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA) dismisses claims that government procurement procedures are too bureaucratic because the process only becomes long when the due process is not followed. Gatere and Shale (2014) studied challenges affecting the implementation of access to the government procurement opportunities for youth, women and persons with disabilities in Kenya. A case of Nairobi County, the study found out that the legal framework has a duty to facilitate in the implementation of access to government procurement opportunities for youth, women & persons with disabilities in Kenya. The study also concluded that good training for practitioners in procurement will raise the skills of the procurement staff and to familiarize suppliers with the requirement of the reformed system.

They also established that the Kenyan government is very critical in funding Youth, women and persons with disabilities. According to Wee (2002) ethics are the moral principles or values that guide officials in all aspects of their work. Ethical behavior encompasses the concepts of honesty, integrity, probity, diligence, fairness, trust, respect and consistency. Ethical behavior includes avoiding conflicts of interest, and not making improper use of an individual's position. Raymond (2008) acknowledges that lack of high degree of professionalism in public procurement leads to corruption which ultimately impedes compliance. Procurement staff of

county governments must be trained and made aware of all the regulations in relation to procurement and related procedures (Hui et al., 2011). The ethical code is not only the deterrent of incorrect behavior but also an enabler for all members of the organization to safeguard the ethical legacy of the firms (Rossi, 2010).

According to public procurement regulations 2011, procuring entities are allowed to unbundle goods, works and services in practicable quantities pursuant to Section 31(7) of the PPDA, 2005 for the purpose of ensuring maximum participation of disadvantaged groups, small and microenterprises in public procurement (GoK, 2005). Transparency international (2013) posited that in Kenya special groups constitute over 85% of the entire population and yet contribute to less than 10% of public procurement. In a strategic plan of Ministry of Finance (2009-2013) government spends approximately 70% of budget on procurement. Also procurement has a major role to play in the execution of budget at all levels of government. The main aim of public procurement is to achieve maximum value for money while ensuring fair competition and meeting the needs of the public.

Statement of the Problem

Access to procurement opportunities (AGPO) is an affirmative action aimed at empowering women by giving them more opportunities to do business with Government. In the past, well established businessmen dominated the public procurement. This is because men are aggressive in seeking business opportunities and are conversant with the requirements of establishing and running businesses. Traditionally, men have always been supported to seek business opportunities. The special groups came to the government attentions recently and in particular in the last three years when the government enacted legislations that established the preference and reservation scheme. Consequently, women face challenges in registering, running businesses and participating in government tenders. The requirements for registering and running business are cumbersome; the government procurement tendering process is lengthy, complex, involve voluminous documents; and in most cases the government does not pay its suppliers and contractors on time. Consequently, access and uptake of the public procurement opportunities by women is low though they have been allocated 14% out of the 30% for special interest groups in public procurement. Still, women require to be empowered on available tender opportunities, information on bids and access to information. Moreover, not all tenders and contracts are uploaded online on government websites or sent out through mobile phone message alerts to women. On the other hand, not all women are able to access financing from Uwezo Fund and women enterprise funds. Thus, this study aims to fill these gaps by assessing how AGPO influence tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.

General Objective of the Study

The study assessed the influence of AGPO on tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.

Specific Objectives of the Study

- i. To determine how procurement procedures influences tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.
- ii. To establish how government sensitization influences tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.
- iii. To ascertain how financing influences tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.

Significance of the Study

The study will be beneficial to the Government through the Public Procurement Oversight Authority which will understand the challenges it still needs to address so that the opportunities it has presented under the AGPO scheme can be exploited. The youth will also benefit from the study by understanding fully and taking up the opportunities presented to them by the government and also come up with ways of dealing with the challenges facing them. Scholars and academicians who may wish to use the findings of this study as the basis for further research on this subject will also benefit from this study.

Scope of the Study

The study assessed the influence of AGPO on tendering participation by women in Nakuru County. In this study, tendering participation by women was studied based on procurement procedures, sensitization and financing as the objectives. The study further targeted participants from women groups in Nakuru County. In addition, the study was limited to a budget of Kshs. 130,000 and was conducted between August and October 2017.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to women who access government procurement opportunities (AGPO) in Nakuru County. This therefore limited its ability to generalize the findings as representative of the women in the country as different women experience different situations in accessing AGPO. The researcher also experienced some difficulties during the data collection process as some of the women approached could not freely give some information required as they treated it as confidential. The researcher also faced time constraints during the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The study adopted Agency theory, Transaction cost theory and institutional theory. The theoretical review helped make a logical sense of the relationships that exist between the study variables.

Agency Theory

Agency theory is a concept that explains why behavior or decisions vary when exhibited by members of a group. The concept originated from the work of Adolf Augustus Berle and Gardiner Means in 1932 when they were discussing the issues of the agent and principle. Berle and Means explored the concepts of agency and their applications toward the development of large corporations. They saw how the interests of the directors and managers of a given firm differ from those of the owner of the firm, and used the concepts of agency and principal to explain the origins of those conflicts (Murtishaw & Sathaye, 2006). Specifically, the theory describes the relationship between one party called the principal, that delegates work to another, called the agent. It explains their differences in behavior or decisions by noting that the two parties often have different goals and independent of their respective goals, may have different attitudes towards risk. Agency Theory explains how to best organize relationships in which one party determines the work while another party does the work. In this relationship, the principal hires an agent to do the work, or to perform a task the principal is unable or unwilling to do (Ramsay, 2008).

For example, in corporations, the principals are the shareholders of a company, delegating to the agent i.e. the management of the company, to perform tasks on their behalf. Agency theory assumes both the principal and the agent are motivated by self-interest. This assumption of self-interest dooms agency theory to inevitable inherent conflicts. Thus, if both parties are motivated by self-interest, agents are likely to pursue self-interested objectives that deviate and even conflict with the goals of the principal. Yet, agents are supposed to act in the sole interest of their principals. Jensen and Meckling shaped the work of Berle and Means in the context of the risk-sharing research popular in the 1960s and '70s to develop agency theory as a formal concept.

Jensen and Meckling formed a school of thought arguing that corporations are structured to minimize the costs of getting agents to follow the direction and interests of the principals. The theory essentially acknowledges that different parties involved in a given situation with the same given goal will have different motivations, and that these different motivations can manifest in divergent ways. It states that there will always be partial goal conflict

among parties, efficiency is inseparable from effectiveness, and information will always be somewhat asymmetric between principal and agent. The theory has been successfully applied to myriad disciplines including accounting, economics, politics, finance, marketing, and sociology (Nikkinen & Sahlstrom, 2004). In this study, agency theory is very relevant especially in explaining how agents influence procurement procedures on behalf of the government (principal) through the manner in which they offer their services. Further, the theory clarifies the information asymmetry in public procurement especially when women are not sensitized or empowered with knowledge on tendering processes.

Transaction Cost Theory

According to John (2007), transaction cost theory tries to explain why companies exist, and why companies expand or source out activities to the external environment. The transaction cost theory supposes that companies try to minimize the costs of exchanging resources with the environment, and that companies try to minimize the bureaucratic costs of exchanges within the company. Companies are therefore weighing the costs of exchanging resources with the environment, against the bureaucratic costs of performing activities in-house. The theory sees institutions and market as different possible forms of organizing and coordinating economic transactions. When external transaction costs are higher than the company's internal bureaucratic costs, the company will grow, because the company is able to perform its activities more cheaply, than if the activities were performed in the market. However, if the bureaucratic costs for coordinating the activity are higher than the external transaction costs, the company will be downsized. According to Williamson (2009), a transaction cost occurs "when a good or a service is transferred across a technologically separable interface". Therefore, transaction costs arise every time a product or service is being transferred from one stage to another, where new sets of technological capabilities are needed to make the product or service. This theory is relevant in explaining how access to financing influences government tenders for disadvantaged groups especially women. At each stage of tendering, women incur cost in accessing public tendering opportunities.

Institutional Theory

The basic concepts and premises of the institutional theory approach provide useful guidelines for analyzing organization-environment relationships with an emphasis on the social rules, expectations, norms, and values as the sources of pressure on organizations. This theory is built on the concept of legitimacy rather than efficiency or effectiveness as the primary organizational goal (Doug & Scott, 2004). The environment is conceptualized as the

organizational field, represented by institutions that may include regulatory structures, governmental agencies, courts, professionals, professional norms, interest groups, public opinion, laws, rules, and social values. Institutional theory assumes that an organization conforms to its environment. There are, however, some fundamental aspects of organizational environments and activities not fully addressed by institutional theory that make the approach problematic for fully understanding procurement procedures of AGPO and their environment.

The organization being dependent on external resources and the organization's ability to adapt to or even change its environment (Doug & Scott, 2004).

Researchers such as Meyer and Rowan (1991), DiMaggio and Powell (1983) are some of the institutional theorists who assert that the institutional environment can strongly influence the development of formal structures in an organization, often more profoundly than market pressures. Innovative structures that improve technical efficiency in early-adopting organizations are legitimized in the environment. Ultimately these innovations reach a level of legitimization where failure to adopt them is seen as "irrational and negligent" (or they become legal mandates). At this point new and existing organizations will adopt the structural form even if the form doesn't improve efficiency.

In this study, institutional theory is relevant in understanding the way procurement procedures operate in a tendering process. The environments of the tendering entities are influential on the level of sensitization, access to capital and participation of women in public tenders. The theory also explains the impact of efficiency and effectiveness of tendering processes in encouraging women participation through the creation of favorable structures due to legitimacy and social pressure on government institutions.

Empirical Review

Procurement Procedures and Tendering Participation

Purchasing Insight (2013) posited that Procurement is the overarching function that describes the activities and processes to acquire goods and services. Effective public procurement systems are systems that are defined as offering a high level of transparency, accountability and value for money in the application of a procurement budget. They are critical to poverty reduction and aid effectiveness. OECD (2010) notes that increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of procurement systems is an on-going concern of governments and of the international development community. According to OECD (2007), public procurement is progressively recognized as an instrument of government policy and a lever for wider economic, social and environmental change. A number of factors have been identified to contribute to women and youth participation in public procurement. One of the factors is the legal/regulatory

framework. The legal and regulatory framework establishes the rules within which all the financial institutions, instruments, and markets conduct procurement procedures in a given country.

Further, in 2007 the PPDA came into force and established the Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA) as regulatory body for development and oversight of the Kenyan Public Procurement System (Nyathore, 2013). The public procurement process should uphold integrity by mitigating all malpractices; inform decision-making, which requires public bodies to base decisions on accurate information and ensure that requirements are being met (Trkman, & McCormack, 2010). More still, the Procurement practice should be responsive to aspirations, expectations and needs of the target society. The World Bank (2003) emphasizes that there is need for transparency to enhance openness and clarity on procurement policy and its delivery. Besides the PPDA, Public procurement in Kenya is governed by many other legislations like Public Procurement and Disposal Regulations (2006), Supplies Practitioners Management Act (2007), Public Procurement and Disposal (Public Private Partnerships) Regulations (2009), Constitution of Kenya (2010), Public Procurement and Disposal (Preference and Reservations) Regulations 2011, Public Private Partnerships Act (2012), and most recently Public Procurement and Disposal (County Government) Regulations 2013 (Nyathore, 2013).

Most of these legislations are in support of the disadvantaged groups, under which category the women fall, for instance, one of the objectives of the PPDA is to facilitate the promotion of local industry and economic development. Sec. 39 of the Act stipulated provisions for Preference and Reservations for the groups. Section 227 of the Kenyan constitution also gave guidelines on the preference and reservation scheme. The Public Procurement and Disposal (Preference and Reservations) Regulations 2011 defines a target group as designated tenderer identified by the government to benefit from the preference and reservations schemes. Public Procurement and Disposal Preference and Reservations Amendment Regulations, 2013 reserved 30% of government tenders for the youth, women and persons with disabilities. Under the same regulations, the target groups have also been exempted from paying tender securities for government tenders (G.o.K, 2013).

These legislations have contributed greatly to the youth and women uptake of government tenders as most of the youth and women entrepreneurs now find the government a better entity to trade with. Puddephatt (2012) asserts that in Egypt, where public procurement makes up a significant portion of the economy and has the potential to play a major role in incentivizing SME growth, collusive tendering (bid rigging) corruption and in-transparency remain serious obstacles for SMEs. In developing countries where corruption is still a pervasive issue, transparency initiatives are critical to unlock many challenges facing SMEs in benefitting

from the public procurement market especially those owned by women. Thus, there is need for active disclosure of documentation and creation of a level playing field for women in public procurement to maximize the growth of their enterprises.

Ngugi and Mugo (2007) examined the impact of procurement activities on the operation and effectiveness of public sectors in Kenya and concluded that it is essential that these activities be performed by qualified staff with high professional and ethical standards using sound procedures anchored in appropriate policies and regulations. They adopted a descriptive research design to analyze the purchasing process in the Health-Care industry. The findings revealed that accountability, ICT adoption and ethics affected procurement process of health care supplies in the public sector to a great extent. The study therefore recommends that adequate controls should be put in place to reduce opportunities for corruption. Mahmood (2010) conducted a study on Public procurement and corruption in Bangladesh confronting the challenges and opportunities. He found out that in Bangladesh contract awards provide opportunities for procurement. However, there are reports of wide-ranging corruption, political control and pressure from trade unions in the procurement process. Public trust in the process is generally absent.

Byokusheka (2008) noted that, the procurement objective is to provide quality goods and services through open and fair competition in the exact quantity and proper quality as specified and has to be delivered at the time and place where needed. Kotoka (2012) assesses the level of compliance with public procurement in public entities in Ghana. The study revealed that the Public Procurement Act, somewhat, succeeded in harmonizing the process of procurement in the public entities to secure fiscal transparency, efficiency, and increase competition among the local industry. However the challenge of creating procurement structures and recruiting appropriate personnel to manage procurement process limits the scope for efficiency and value for money. OECD considers public procurement as the government activity most vulnerable to corruption. In this sense, lack of transparency and accountability are considered as the major threats to integrity in public procurement (OECD, 2007). The World Bank (2010) indicates that many countries are yet to develop procedural frameworks that ensure: public procurement procedures are transparent and promote fair and equal treatment; public resources linked to public procurement are used in accordance with intended purposes; procurement officials' behavior and professionalism are in line with the public purposes of their organization and systems are in place to challenge public procurement decisions, ensure accountability and promote public scrutiny.

Sensitization and Tendering Participation

According to Ketchen (2006), women are the backbone of rural economies in Kenya and Africa as a whole. To fight poverty in Kenya, women need to be accepted and supported through funds like Uwezo and provision of capacity building and training in functional business areas with the ultimate goal of promoting the social and economic status of women. This is because women constitute a vulnerable social category that is critical in sustainable development endeavors. Unequal procurement opportunities between women and men continue to hamper women's ability to fight poverty and gain more options to improve their lives. Empowerment programmes organized at the national and international level are increasingly targeting youth and women to participate in public procurement (Mentzer et al., 2011). Creation of awareness and access to information also contributes greatly to youth and women participation in government tenders.

Awareness is defined by Baron and Shane (2007) as the competitive force, the most important force that an enterprise can have. Njiraini and Moyi (2006) argue that most MSEs particularly those owned by women rarely participate in government purchasing in Peru due to lack of information about government tenders. In most developing countries, market signals on business opportunities, customer trends, methods of organization are not communicated effectively, to women owned SMEs (Okello-Obura et al., 2008). To achieve quality within the information rich environment, some notable challenges need to be handled head on particularly women empowerment on tendering opportunities. The Commonwealth Secretariat (2010) established that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Uganda face difficulties identified by the insufficient knowledge of the formal tendering process and no feedback was made available about previous unsuccessful tenders (Obanda, 2011). According to InterTrade Ireland (2009), women and youth owned SMEs are often not well-acquainted with public procurement language and procedures, and may face more difficulties than larger organizations when looking for relevant opportunities and drawing up tenders.

In cognizant of these challenges, the government of Kenya has put in place avenues through which special groups can access information on government tendering. There is continuous capacity building on how to write formal tenders by the government through the PPOA. Through suppliers' forums, the bidders are also enlightened on the public procurement system and the continuous improvements the government is undertaking to make it easy for the SME's. This has somehow helped in changing the public perception that the public procurement system is complex, costly and time consuming. The government has also required all public procuring entities to give feedback to unsuccessful bidders, indicating why they did not win a certain tender. This not only motivates them to participate more, but also helps them improve on

the areas that made them not win the tender. High value contracts are published on daily papers and departmental websites (GoK, 2013). Most public procurement systems address in one way or another issue of how to provide information support for the domestic supplier base (Lavassani, et al., 2008).

Improved information techniques mostly through the internet for buying goods and services using modern quality standards and business practices in the government can help improve the efficiency of special group's suppliers as they compete for government contracts with big players. Such improvements in information access can enhance trade prospects by making these suppliers more acceptable vendors to global business partners (Murray, 2007). Public procurement policy makers recognize the importance of the role of SMEs in the economy, including the importance of their participation in the public procurement market (McCrudden, 2005). Nevertheless, lack of sufficient education and training for women is an impediment to women participation in entrepreneurial activities. Culturally, and especially in the rural setting, the girl child was not given equal opportunity to study like the boys; hence they had limited education and training (if any) which tended to affect effective performance in later life.

Financing and Tendering Participation

According to Orodho (2013), the Kenyan government has had an uphill task for youth and women groups to play in the big-ticket leagues of public procurement as they may not have the financial wherewithal. Fortunately, there are a host of financial instruments being offered by various institutions, including local purchase order (LPO) financing and invoice discounting. Another factor affecting women participation in public procurement is Financial Access. According to Ganbold (2008), the ability of SMEs to grow depends highly on their potential to invest in innovation and qualification. All of these investments need capital and therefore access to finance is critical in public procurement.

Moreover, prevailing social and cultural gender based inequalities and biases weigh heavily against women (Barwa, 2003). Knowledge and resources are culturally embedded and influences availability of resources for exploitation of potentials of women entrepreneurs. Kenyan government recognizes that women entrepreneurs have not been on an equal footing when it comes to access to opportunities and assets but it has yet to effectively address the barriers facing women in business (Athanne, 2011).

According to Musgrave et.al, (2007), public procurement can be an important source of business for women owned SMEs. However, access to public sector contracts by smaller entities is often seen as a problem at national and global level for many in the sector. While sustaining development impacts is fundamental, it is the majority at grassroots that accelerate

and sustain poverty reduction efforts. Hence, there is need to target the rural poor to achieve overall economic growth by funding them to be able to access public procurement (Ramsay, et.al, 2008). Snider (2006) argues that the high proportion of women in the poverty group in the third world makes efforts at development fruitless. This is because the investment threshold for the 3rd world has been pushed far above the current levels of funding to a point where local level development is the only feasible alternative solution (Gomez, 2009). The evidence suggests that women owned SMEs often feel excluded from public procurement contracts because they do not have the capacity to tender for the entire contract (European Commission, 2008).

This has been necessitated by high required levels of professional indemnity and company turnover; a perceived over-emphasis on price; long payment terms or late payments; and onerous administrative requirements (Inter-Trade Ireland, 2009). Nelson et al., (2007) noted that un-informed inefficient government suppliers provide poor value to their national government and are unlikely to engage in any meaningful private sector trading partnerships in the era of global competition (Zwicker & Ringheim, 2004). In this case, the primary source of information for these groups on what is to be awarded is the tender notices placed in the newspapers. But given the financial constraints faced by some of the procuring entities, these notices are generally posted only once (Ogada et al., 2008).

Tendering Participation

Women confront a variety of challenges in their participation in public procurement, entrepreneurship and running a business (McKay, 2001). Many authors argue that significant barriers still remain for women establishing and growing businesses. Some of these challenges are simply the legacy of a gender imbalance that exists prior to political and economic reforms. Baily et al., (2007) defines a tender as an unconditional order made by one to another to enter into the contract or transaction of goods or services at certain specified cost. Various established organizations issues notices for their needs of specified goods or services from other businesses that they would require in a certain period, which is known as Invitation to Tender. Tendering system refers to that process that defines the guidelines through which this the tendering activities are conducted and managed.

Tendering is one of the core components of purchasing and supplies management which is used in sourcing and acquisition of the necessary goods and services. In an effort to enhance efficiency of the procurement function, organizations make use of the tendering system to reduce procurement cycle time and provision or quality management of information. Tendering also enables organizations to be able to identify reliable suppliers who are able to meet the products or services required according to the specifications (Lysons & Farrington,

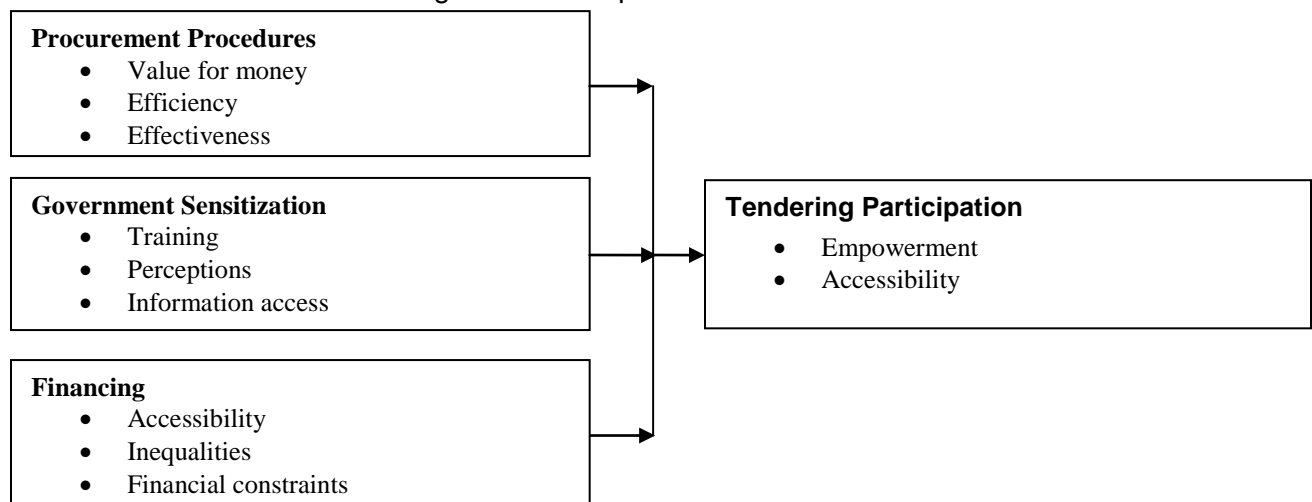
2006). The World Bank (2006) posited that many governments now practice gender mainstreaming when designing national budgets (gender responsive budgeting) to make sure national economic planning pays adequate attention to the unique challenges of women's economic empowerment. The role of progressive legislation in empowering women in accessing public procurement opportunity has proven successful around the world (Neha et al., 2012). Furthermore, governments in the 21st century are under increasing pressure to use more effective and efficient social procurement practices to deliver services and achieve their goals.

Many governments have established funds targeting women entrepreneurs and the youth because they are often left out of the economic mainstream and most disadvantaged when it comes to accessing startup capital or loans from the existing financial infrastructure (World Bank, 2012). Research shows that, regardless of inequalities that persist in the way paid and unpaid work is divided between women and men, women remain the sole caregivers despite limited access to resources (Ongori, 2009). This hinders their participation in public tendering as result of inadequate resources. In fact women's empowerment in public procurement is a matter of advancing women's human rights (Otunga et al., 2001). Though there exist various programs initiated by government and corporate organizations for improving the skills levels of the general work force, little attention has been given to the benefit of empowerment particularly through public procurement (R.o.K, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

Robson (2002) defines the conceptual framework as the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs research as a key part of the research design. The variables of this study comprised of one dependent variable (Tendering participation) and three independent variables (procurement procedures, government sensitization and financing).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Critique of the Literature Reviewed

Although public procurement is very important for government to get goods and services, the process faces challenges from lack of transparency, accountability and value for money. Integrity levels in public procurement have not been able to mitigate all malpractices for informed decision making. The reserved 30% of government tenders for the youth, women and persons with disabilities has not been fully achieved. Legislations should set controls to avoid collusive tendering or corruption and in-transparency. Public trust in the process is generally absent and thus creating procurement structures and recruiting appropriate personnel to manage procurement process should enhance the scope for efficiency and value for money. For women to fight poverty and succeed in their enterprises, provision of capacity building and training in functional business areas should be prioritized.

However, creation of awareness and access to information about government tenders has not been consistent and expansive to reach as many disadvantaged groups as possible. Majority of women rarely participate in government purchasing due to lack of information about government tenders. There is a challenge of effective communication especially for illiterate women who may intend to participate in government tendering. Nevertheless, lack of sufficient education and training for women is an impediment to women participation in entrepreneurial activities.

Further, most women are unable to participate in government tenders because they lack access to finance or funding. Also, though there are a host of financial instruments being offered by various institutions, a few women can get access to local purchase order (LPO) financing and invoice discounting. Women in Kenya also continue to put up with lack of confidence, lack of strong individual involvement and unwillingness to take risks. Hence, women should be funded to be able to access public procurement opportunities because most women often feel that they are excluded from public procurement contracts.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

Public procurement is progressively recognized as an instrument of government policy and a lever for wider economic, social and environmental change OECD (2007). Moreover, public procurement process should uphold integrity by mitigating all malpractices; informed decision-making, which requires public bodies to base decisions on accurate information and ensure that requirements are being met (Trkman, & McCormack, 2010). In developing countries where corruption is still a pervasive issue, transparency initiatives are critical to unlock many challenges facing women entrepreneurs. However, public trust in the tendering process is generally absent because of lack of transparency and accountability and integrity in public

procurement (OECD, 2007). Empowerment programmes organized at the national and international level are increasingly targeting youth and women to participate in public procurement (Mentzer, et al., 2011). To achieve quality within the information rich environment, some notable challenges need to be handled head on particularly women empowerment on tendering opportunities.

There is continuous capacity building on how to write formal tenders by the government through the PPOA. Most public procurement systems address in one way or another issue of how to provide information support for the domestic supplier base (Lavassani, et al., 2008). Women face challenges of financial access which equally affect participation in public procurement. Moreover, prevailing social and cultural gender based inequalities and biases weigh heavily against women (Barwa, 2003). According to Musgrave et.al, (2007), public procurement can be an important source of business for women owned SMEs. Snider (2006) argues that the high proportion of women in the poverty group in the third world makes efforts at development fruitless.

Research Gaps

Public procurement is an on-going process has not been increasing in effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of procurement systems. However, public procurement is an instrument of government policy and a lever for wider economic, social and environmental change. The legal and regulatory frameworks which establish the rules has not progressively addressed challenges facing women. Public procurement also face integrity issues in decision making and operations. Procurement practices should be responsive to aspirations, expectations and needs of the target society and especially women. Lack of adequate controls has led to wide-ranging corruption, political control and pressure. Thus, lack of transparency and accountability are considered as the major threats to integrity in public procurement. Women need to be accepted and supported through provision of capacity building and training. Nevertheless, unequal procurement opportunities between women and men continue to hamper women's ability to fight poverty. Creation of awareness and access to information also contributes greatly to youth and women participation in government tenders.

Some notable challenges need to be handled head on particularly women empowerment on tendering opportunities. Difficulties of insufficient knowledge of the formal tendering process have not been adequately handled by the AGPO and the PPOA. Through suppliers' forums, the bidders are also enlightened on the public procurement system. Further, lack of sufficient education and training for women is an impediment to women participation in entrepreneurial activities. Women experience a myriad of challenges in participating in government tenders.

Another factor affecting women participation in public procurement is Financial Access. Knowledge and resources are culturally embedded and influences availability of resources for exploitation of potentials of women to achieve overall economic growth by funding them to be able to access public procurement. This is because a high proportion of women in the poverty which make them experience financial constraints when they intend to participate in government tenders.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to Kombo et al. (2002), research design is the scheme; outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) defined survey research as an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of the population with respect to one or more variables. This design was preferred because it facilitates the collection of a considerable amount of data quickly, efficiently and accurately (Oso & Onen, 2005). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed.

Target Population

According to Castillo (2009) target population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. This study targeted 297 women (27 women from each of the 11 sub-counties in Nakuru County).

Sampling Frame

According to Silverman (2005), the sampling frame should be large enough to allow the researcher to make deduction of the whole population. The sample frame for this study was 297 participants from Nakuru County.

Determination of Sample Size

A sample size of 75 was selected using simple random sampling technique from the target population of 297 participants via the mathematical approach developed by Nassiuma (2000).

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N-1)e^2}$$

n = sample size; N = population size; C = coefficient of variation which is 50% e = error margin which is 0.05.

$$n = \frac{297 (0.5)^2}{0.5^2 + (297-1)0.05^2}$$

$$n = 75$$

Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 75 participants from the target population.

Data Collection Instrument

The study used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data from the sampled respondents. Questionnaires are research instruments used to collect information geared towards addressing specific objectives (Kombo et al., 2002). The close-ended questions used a Likert rating to scale the items on (5, 4, 3, 2 and 1) where 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-undecided/neutral 2-disagrees and 1-strongly disagree. The questionnaires were self-administered on a drop and pick later basis to allow the participants enough time to answer the questions.

Pilot Testing

Prior to conducting the main research, a pilot study was conducted in Baringo County among women with similar characteristics to test the reliability and validity of the research instrument by pre-testing the questionnaire. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommend that 10% of the sample size is adequate for conducting a pilot study. Therefore, a sample size of 8 participated in the pilot study. The results of the pilot study were not included in the final data analysis.

Instrument Reliability

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), reliability is the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after a number of trials. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), reliability is the extent to which results are consistent overtime. Reliability of the research instrument was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. George and Mallery (2003) recommends that a Cronbach alpha coefficient greater or equal to 0.7 is acceptable and adequate.

Instrument Validity

Kothari (2004) opines that validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what is supposed to measure. The validity of the research instrument was established by seeking experts' opinion and input. Furthermore, the questionnaire was subjected to pre-test to detect

any deficiencies in it. Comments and suggestions made by the pre-test participants were integrated in the final questionnaire for data collection.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection as defined by Kombo and Tromp (2006) is the process of gathering specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts. Data was collected through a self-administered semi-structured questionnaire on a drop and pick later basis. The importance of data collection is to promote decision making and response allocation that will be based on solid evidence rather than on isolated occurrences, assumption and emotions.

Data Analysis and Presentation

According to Kombo et al., (2002), data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences. The data collected was edited, collated to eliminate errors and coded for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) tool. The coded data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation and percentages) was generated. Further, inferential analysis (correlation, ANOVA and regression) was conducted to test the statistical significance of the results. The study assumed a linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable by adopting the Ordinary Least Square Method of estimation (OLS) in examining the following multiple linear regression model. ϵ is an error term normally distributed about a mean of 0.

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Where, Y_1 = Tendering participation

X_1 = Procurement procedures

X_2 = Sensitization

X_3 = Financing

ϵ = representing the error term, β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 are the net changes in Y

Pilot Study Results

A pilot study was conducted in Eldama Ravine sub-county in Baringo. 10% of the study sample (8 participants) as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) was randomly selected and administered with questionnaires. The response rate was 100%. The questionnaires were coded and Cronbach's Alpha analysis was then conducted. All the 4 variables gave Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values greater than 0.7 as shown in Table 1. From the study results, the

variables had 6, 7, 6 and 6 items with Cronbach Alpha values of 0.818, 0.729, 0.783 and 0.739 respectively. Therefore, procurement procedures, government sensitization, financing and tendering participation all had Cronbach values which were greater than 0.7. A correlation coefficient greater or equal to 0.7 is acceptable (George & Mallery, 2003). Field et al., (2012) observes that a Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.7$ implies that the research instrument provides a relatively good measure. The results of the pilot study were not be included in the final data analysis.

Table 1: Reliability Test Results

V a r i a b l e	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
Procurement procedures	6	.818
Government sensitization	7	.729
Financing	6	.783
Tendering participation	6	.739

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The study targeted a sample size of 75 participants out of which 72 questionnaires were filled and returned. Out of the returned questionnaires, 70 questionnaires were completely and adequately well filled and therefore they were used for data analysis giving a response rate of 93.3%. Cooper and Schindler (2003) argued that a response rate exceeding 30% of the total sample size provides enough data that can be used to generalize the characteristics of a study problem as expressed by the opinions of few respondents in the target population. The high response rate was occasioned by appropriate study design, proper timing and consistent follow up of the participants. The use of the drop and pick later method also improved the response rate because it gave adequate time to the participants to fill the questionnaire.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study sort to ascertain the demographic characteristics of the participants because they play a great role in determining the nature of information provided. The analysis relied on the information of the participants to classify the different results according to their knowledge and responses. The demographic data analyzed comprised of gender, age categories, level of education and length of time women in Nakuru County have participated in government tenders.

Gender Distribution of the Participants

All the 70 participants in this study were women. Therefore the female gender was 100%.

Age Categories of the Participants

The study sought to determine the age categories of the participants as shown in Table 2. From the findings, 34.3% of the participants were aged between 20 to 25 years, 41.4% were aged between 26 and 30 years, 12.9% were aged between 31 to 35 years while 11.4% were aged 35 years and above. Therefore, majority of the respondents were aged between 26 and 30 years implying that relatively young women had access to information regarding access to government procurement opportunities as compared to those aged between 20 and 25 years and 31 to 35 years and above respectively.

Table 2: Age of the Participants

A g e	F r e q u e n c y	P e r c e n t (%)
2 0 - 2 5 y e a r s	2 4	34.3
2 6 - 3 0 y e a r s	2 9	41.4
3 1 - 3 5 y e a r s	9	12.9
A b o v e 3 5 y e a r s	8	11.4
T o t a l	7 0	100.0

Academic Qualifications of the Participants

The study also sought to find out the academic qualifications of the participants. From the study findings in Table 3, majority of the participants' (32.9%) had attained secondary education (KCSE certificate). This was followed by those who had attained diploma education (30.0%), Certificate (25.7%) and university degrees (11.4%). The findings imply that majority of the participants were adequately educated to comprehend and answer the study questions appropriately.

Table 3: Academic Qualifications of the Participants

L e v e l	F r e q u e n c y	P e r c e n t (%)
KCSE Certificate	23	32.9
Certificate	18	25.7
Diploma	21	30.0
University Graduate	8	11.4
T o t a l	7 0	100.0

Experience with Government Tenders

The study asked the participants to indicate the length of time they had participated in government tenders and the results are as shown in Table 4. The study findings established

that majority (45.7%) had been involved with government tenders for 3 to 4 years followed by those who had been involved for less than one year (21.4%). Those who had been involved with government tenders for 5 years and above formed 12.9%. The findings imply that majority of the participants had sufficient length experience with government tenders and were therefore able to effectively and sufficiently provide the information sought by the study.

Table 4: Participants' Experience with Government Tenders

Experience in years	Frequency	Percent (%)
Less than 1 year	15	21.4
1 - 2 years	14	20.0
3 - 4 years	32	45.7
5 years and Above	9	12.9
T o t a l	70	100.0

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis focuses on describing the basic features of data in a given study (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). In this section, descriptive analysis was used to summarize findings regarding procurement procedures, government sensitization, financing and tendering participation.

Influence of Procurement Procedures on Tendering Participation by Women

The study sought to establish the influence of procurement procedures on tendering participation by women. Several statements were fronted to which the participants responded to on a five-point Likert scale as shown in Table 5. The findings on the question as to whether tendering processes for women ensures there was value for money at each stage; majority agreed with the statement with a mean score of 4.333 and standard deviation of 0.894. On whether procurement procedures are responsive to aspirations, expectations and needs of women, the majority were in agreement with a mean of 3.750 and a standard deviation of 0.967. The study further sought to establish whether most women have taken up government tenders because they are exempted from paying tender securities. The mean score of the responses was 3.500 while the standard deviation was 0.910. The result imply that majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statement. Further on whether adequate controls are in place to ensure tendering processes are effective for women, majority of the participants were impartial with the mean score of 3.111 and a standard deviation of 1.090. As well, the study sought to assess whether there is level playing field for women in government tenders. The majority were neutral with a mean of 3.056 and standard deviation of 0.955. On whether

tendering processes were anchored on sound regulatory frameworks to enhance women participation, majority of the participants were impartial with a mean of 3.060 and a standard deviation of 1.170. The finding is congruent to that of OECD (2007) who posited that lack of transparency and accountability are considered as the major threats to integrity in public procurement. Overall, the average scores on procurement procedures show a mean score of 3.468 and standard deviation of 0.998 implying majority were in agreement with all the statements.

Table 5: Influence of Procurement Procedures on Tendering Participation

Procurement Procedures	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Tendering processes for women ensures there is value for money each str	70	2	5	4.333	.894
2. Procurement procedures are responsive to aspirations, expectations and needs of wor	70	1	5	3.750	.967
3. Most women have taken up government tenders because they are exempted from paying tender securit	70	1	5	3.500	.910
4. Adequate controls are in place to ensure tendering processes are effective for wom	70	1	5	3.111	1.090
5. There is level playing field for women in government tende	70	1	5	3.056	.955
6. Tendering processes are anchored on sound regulatory frameworks to enhance women participat	70	1	5	3.060	1.170
Average Scores				3.468	0.998

Influence of Government Sensitization on Tendering Participation

In addition, the study sought to establish the influence of government sensitization on tendering participation as shown in Table 6. The first statement asked whether there were capacity building programs on tendering to empower women and majority of the participants were in agreement with a mean of 4.222 and standard deviation of 0.898. The second question sought to find out whether creation of awareness and access to information enhances women to participate in government tenders. The result indicates that majority of the participants were in agreement with a mean of 3.861 and a standard deviation of 0.723. This finding is congruent to those of Baron and Shane (2007) who posited that awareness is the competitive force, the most important force that an enterprise can have. In the third statement, the study asked the participants whether most women entrepreneurs rarely participate in government tenders due to lack of information, majority with a mean of 3.561 and a standard deviation of 1.028 were in agreement. The fourth statement asked whether most women were well acquainted with procurement language and procedures.

Majority of the participants were impartial with a mean of 3.417 and a standard deviation of 0.806. The fifth statement sought to establish whether Government has provided accessible information on tenders for special groups and majority of the participants with a mean of 3.472

and standard deviation of 1.159 were in agreement. The sixth statement sought to ascertain whether women bidders are enlightened on procurement systems regularly through training. The findings indicated that majority of the participants were neutral with a mean of 3.250 and a standard deviation of 0.906. The study also asked the participants whether public procurement system is complex, costly and time consuming making it difficult for women to participate. The majority were in disagreement with a mean of 2.917 and standard deviation of 1.052. The average mean score of 3.529 and standard deviation of 0.939 imply that majority of the participants were in agreement with all statements on government sensitization.

Table 6: Influence of Government Sensitization on Tendering Participation

Government Sensitization	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
7. There are capacity building programs on tendering to empower women	70	1	5	4.222	.898
8. Creation of awareness and access to information enhances women to participate in government tenders	70	2	5	3.861	.723
9. Most women entrepreneurs rarely participate in government tenders due to lack of information	70	1	5	3.561	1.028
10. Most women are not well acquainted with procurement language and procedures	70	2	5	3.417	.806
11. Government has provided accessible information on tenders for special groups	70	1	5	3.472	1.159
12. Women bidders are enlightened on procurement systems regularly through training	70	1	5	3.250	.906
13. Public procurement system is complex, costly and time consuming making it difficult for women to participate	70	1	5	2.917	1.052
Average Scores				3.529	0.939

Influence of Financing on Tendering Participation

The study sought to assess the influence of financing on tendering participation. The first statement asked the participants whether access to financing affects women participation in government tenders. The responses mean score was 4.472 and standard deviation of 0.810 as shown in Table 7. The result suggest that majority of the participants were strongly in agreement. This finding supports that of the European Commission (2008), who suggested that women owned SMEs often feel that they are excluded from public procurement contracts because they do not have the capacity to tender for the entire contract. The participants were further asked whether gender imbalance and inequality in access to finance hampers women participation in tenders and majority were in agreement with a mean score of 3.944 and standard deviation of 0.744. As well, the study sought to determine whether some women feel excluded from public procurement contracts because they do not have financial capacity. The mean score of 3.278 and standard deviation of 0.914 imply that the majority of the participants were impartial on their responses to the statement. The fourth statement sought to establish whether funding from Women enterprise fund and Uwezo enable women to participate in

government tenders. The mean score of 3.556 with a standard deviation of 0.998 indicate that the participants were in agreement in their views and responses to the statement. The fifth statement asked participants whether women are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing startup capital or loans for tendering. The mean response score of 3.139 and standard deviation of 0.833 indicated that majority of the participants were impartial in their responses to the statement. This finding is congruent to that of Barwa (2003) who said that the prevailing social and cultural gender based inequalities and biases weigh heavily against women. The sixth statement sought to establish if women who participate in government tenders are promptly paid. A mean score of 3.167 indicates that the participants were neutral in their responses to the statement while a standard deviation of 1.082 implied that the participants were indifferent in their responses to the statement. The average mean score of 3.593 and standard deviation of 0.897 imply that majority of the participants were in agreement with all the statements regarding the influence of financing on tendering participation by women.

Table 7: Influence of Financing on Tendering Participation

Statements on Financing	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Access to financing affects women participation in government tenders	65	2	5	4.472	.810
2. Gender imbalance and inequality in access to finance hampers women participation in tenders	65	2	5	3.944	.744
3. Some women feel excluded from public procurement contracts because they do not have financial capacity	65	1	5	3.278	.914
4. Funding from Women enterprise fund and Uwezo enable women to participate in government tenders	65	1	5	3.556	.998
5. Women are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing startup capital or loans for tendering	65	2	5	3.139	.833
6. Women who participate in government tenders are promptly paid	65	1	5	3.167	1.082
Average Scores				3.593	0.897

Tendering Participation

The study further analyzed tendering participation by women in government tenders. In the first statement, the participants were asked whether women confront many challenges in their participation in public procurement as illustrated in Table 8. Majority of the respondents were in agreement with a mean of 4.250 and a standard deviation of 0.967. This finding is consistent with that of McKay (2001) who posited that women confront a variety of challenges in their participation in public procurement, entrepreneurship and running a business. The second statement sought to ascertain whether Government practices women empowerment to promote women participation in government tenders. From the findings, majority of the participants were in agreement with a mean of 3.972 and standard deviation of 0.654 implying that their responses were cohesive to the statement.

The third statement sought to establish whether progressive legislation in empowering women to access public procurement has been successful. The mean score of 3.889 with a standard deviation of 0.887 imply that the majority were in agreement with the statement. The fourth statement asked the participants whether inequalities resource access hinder women from participating in public tendering processes. The mean score of 3.444 and a standard deviation of 1.027 indicate that the participants were impartial in their responses with the statement. The study further asked the participants whether women's empowerment in public procurement is a matter of advancing women's rights and a mean score of 3.583 and standard deviation of 1.052 imply that majority were in agreement with the statement. Moreover, the study asked the participants whether transparency and accountability in public procurement are critical to promote participation in tenders by women. Majority with a mean of 3.194 and standard deviation of 1.082 were neutral in their responses. The total average mean score of 3.722 and standard deviation of 0.945 imply majority were in agreement with all statements on tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.

Table 8: Tendering Participation

Tendering Participation	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Women confront many challenges in their participation in public procure	70	2	5	4.250	.967
2. Government practices women empowerment to promote women participation in government te	70	2	5	3.972	.654
3. Progressive legislation in empowering women to access public procurement has been succe	70	2	5	3.889	.887
4. Inequalities resource access hinder women from participating in public tendering proc	70	1	5	3.444	1.027
5. Women's empowerment in public procurement is a matter of advancing women's ri	70	2	5	3.583	1.052
6. Transparency and accountability in public procurement are key to promote participation in tenders by wc	70	1	5	3.194	1.082
Average Scores				3.722	0.945

Inferential Analysis

Correlation Analysis

In this section, the study sought to investigate the correlation between the independent variables (procurement procedures, government sensitization and financing) and the dependent variable, tendering participation.

Correlation between Procurement Procedures and Tendering Participation

The researcher conducted a correlation analysis to investigate the nature of the relationship between procurement procedures and tendering participation in Table 9. From the correlation analysis results, a strong and significant positive correlation ($r = 0.726$, $P=0.000$) exist between

procurement procedure and tendering participation. The findings are consistent with those of Byokusheka (2008) who posited that the procurement objective is to provide quality goods and services through open and fair competition in the exact quantity and proper quality as specified and has to be delivered at the time and place where needed.

Table 9: Correlation between Procurement Procedures and Tendering Participation

		Procurement Procedures
Tendering participation	Pearson Correlation	.726**
	Sig. (2 - t a i l e d)	.000
	N	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The p-value is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$) implying that the relationship between procurement procedures and tendering participation is statistically significant. Therefore based on the significance rule, the study rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a statically significant relationship between procurement procedures and tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.

Correlation between Government Sensitization and Tendering Participation

The researcher in addition sought to determine the relationship between government sensitization and tendering participation. From the correlation analysis results in Table 10, a strong significant positive relationship ($r=0.695$, $P=0.040$) exist between government sensitization and tendering participation.

Table 10: Correlation between Government Sensitization and Tendering Participation

		Government Sensitization
Tendering participation	Pearson Correlation	.695*
	Sig. (2 - t a i l e d)	.040
	N	70

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The p-value of 0.040 is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$) and this means that the relationship between government sensitization and tendering participation is statistically significant. Therefore based on the significance rule, the study rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a

statically significant relationship between government sensitization and tendering participation by women in Nakuru County. The findings are congruent to those of Lavassani et al., (2008) that public procurement systems address in one way or another issue of how to provide information support for the domestic supplier base. Murray (2007) also pointed out that such improvements in information access can enhance trade prospects by making these suppliers more acceptable vendors to global business partners.

Correlation between Financing and Tendering Participation

The study further wanted to establish the relationship between financing and tendering participation. The results in Table 11 established the existence of a strong significant and positive relationship ($r = 0.713$, $P=0.031$) between financing and tendering participation. The p-value of 0.031 is less than the conventional value of 0.05. This implies that the relationship between financing and tendering participation is statistically significant. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that the relationship between financing and tendering participation is statistically significant. According to Musgrave et.al, (2007), public procurement can be an important source of business for women owned SMEs.

Table 11: Correlation between Financing and Tendering Participation

		Financing
Tendering Participation	Pearson Correlation	.713*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031
	N	70

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis

The researcher conducted a multiple regression analysis to assess how access to government procurement opportunities (AGPO) influences tendering participation by women in Nakuru County. The Regression model summary in Table 12 shows that the three predictor variables (Procurement procedures, Government sensitization and Financing) accounted for 68.1% of the total variation in tendering participation because the 'R square' value is 0.681. Therefore, this study did not assess factors constituting 33.9% which influence tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.

Table 12: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.825 ^a	.681	.667	.96028

a. Predictors: (Constant), Procurement procedures, Government sensitization and Financing

b. Dependent Variable: Tendering Participation

Analysis of Variance for Regression Model

The analysis of variance of the regression model was conducted to test the significance of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The results in Table 13 show that the P-value is 0.008. The results showed that the significance probability value of $P=0.008$ of the regression model was less than the level of significance at 0.05 indicating that the regression model was significant. Further, the F statistic (2, 67) at 95% level of significance = 3.13 was less than the F calculated = 5.304 and therefore the model was significant.

Table 13: Analysis of Variance for Regression Model

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.326	2	3.163	5.304	.008 ^a
	Residual	39.951	67	.5963		
	Total	46.277	69			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Procurement procedures, Government sensitization and Financing

b. Dependent Variable: Tendering Participation

Regressions Coefficients

The researcher further conducted a multiple regression analysis in order to determine the relationship between factors influencing access to government procurement opportunities and tendering participation by women in Nakuru County as illustrated in Table 14.

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3$ whereby X_1 represents procurement procedures, X_2 represents government sensitization and X_3 represents financing.

$$Y = 2.978 + 0.658X_1 + 0.624X_2 + 0.641X_3$$

From the multiple regression analysis results, beta values were obtained and used to explain the regression equation in Table 14. Taking all the factors into account and at zero, the constant is 2.978. The p-value is 0.001 implying that procurement procedures, government sensitization

and financing have a significant influence on tendering participation by women in Nakuru County.

Table 14: Regression Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.978	.821		3.627	.001
	Procurement procedures	.658	.233	.538	1.105	.077
	Government Sensitization	.624	.312	.505	2.013	.019
	Financing	.641	.215	.539	1.192	.049

a. Dependent Variable: Tendering Participation

Taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in procurement procedures leads to a 0.658 units increase in tendering participation. This finding is consistent to that of Neha et al., (2012) who posited that the role of progressive legislation in empowering women in accessing public procurement opportunity has proven successful around the world. Further, a unit increase in government sensitization leads to 0.624 units increase in tendering participation; a unit increase in financing leads to 0.641 units increase in tendering participation. The findings are congruent to those of Otunga et al., (2001) who posited that women's empowerment in public procurement is a matter of advancing women's human rights.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to assess how AGPO influences tendering participation by women in Nakuru County. The study was guided by four objectives. The first objective sought to determine how procurement procedures influence tendering participation by women in Nakuru County, the second objective sought to establish how government sensitization influences tendering participation by women in Nakuru County and the third objective sought to ascertain how financing influences tendering participation by women in Nakuru County. Findings on the influence of procurement procedures on tendering participation by women revealed that tendering processes for women ensured there was value for money at each stage. The findings further revealed that procurement procedures were responsive to aspirations, expectations and needs of women. Most women have also taken up government tenders because they are exempted from paying tender securities. However, the study established that there were no

adequate controls are in place to ensure tendering processes are effective for women. The study found that there no level playing field for women in government tenders. Similarly, majority felt that tendering processes were anchored on sound regulatory frameworks to enhance women participation.

In addition, findings on the influence of government sensitization on tendering participation disclosed that there were capacity building programs on tendering to empower women. Secondly, the study established that awareness and access to information was provided to enhance women participation in government tenders. Further, the findings revealed that most women entrepreneurs fail to participate in government tenders because they lack information. Moreover, the study established that most women were not well acquainted with procurement language and procedures. It was also established that the Government has not provided adequate access to information on tenders for special groups. Government institutions have not sufficiently enlightened women bidders on procurement systems on a regular basis through training. Nevertheless, the study established that public procurement system was not complex, costly and time consuming to deter women from participating.

On the influence of financing on tendering participation, the findings revealed that access to financing affects women participation in government tenders. It was also established that gender imbalance and inequality in access to finance hampers women participation in government tenders. Further, the findings established that some women feel excluded from public procurement contracts because they do not have financial capacity. The findings further showed that funding from Women enterprise fund and Uwezo have enabled women to participate in government tenders. It was also found that women are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing startup capital or loans for tendering. Additionally, women who participate in government tenders are not promptly paid.

CONCLUSIONS

On the influence of procurement procedures, the study concludes that tendering processes for women have ensured there is accountability. The study also concludes that procurement procedures are responsive to aspirations, expectations and needs of women. Exemption from paying tender securities has seen many women take up government tenders. The study additionally concludes that the government has not put in place adequate controls to ensure tendering processes are helpful to women. Moreover, the study concludes that the playing field for women in government tenders is not level. On the contrary, the study concludes that tendering processes are anchored on sound regulatory frameworks to enhance women participation.

In addition, the study concludes that the government has capacity building programs on tendering to empower women. Similarly, the study concludes that there is awareness and access to information to enhance women participation in government tenders. However failure to access information has hindered most women entrepreneurs from participating in tenders. Moreover, the study concludes that most women are not well acquainted with procurement lingo and procedures. The study further concludes that the Government has not provided adequate access to information on tenders for special groups. Also, women bidders are not well acquainted with procurement systems due to lack of regular trainings. Further, the public procurement system has been simplified and is affordable by women.

On the influence of financing, the study concludes that access to financing has a great impact on tendering participation by women. Further, gender imbalance and inequality in access to finance make it difficult for women to participate in government tenders. The study concludes that lack of financial capacity has made many women feel excluded from public procurement contracts. Furthermore, government funding through women enterprise and Uwezo funds have empowered women to participate in government tenders. As well, women are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing startup capital or loans for tendering. Additionally, government tenders takes time before paying women bidders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that transparency and accountability measures in tendering processes should be enhanced to encourage more participation by women. Women needs, expectations should be prioritized in procurement procedures to encourage them to participate more. The government through its institutions should develop more elaborate plans to ensure as many women as possible utilize the exemption from paying tender securities to access tenders. More controls should be incorporated into tendering processes to ensure they are efficient for women. Procurement procedures should ensure women have a level playing field with men in government tenders by building their capacity and capabilities. In addition, the study recommends that the government should widen capacity building programs on tendering processes to empower more women. Women entrepreneurs should be more sensitized to access information on government tenders to enhance their participation levels. More regular training should be provided to women particularly on procurement procedures, terms and conditions. Special groups should be more empowered to access information on tenders and apply for them. Further, the public procurement system should be more simplified to attract more women to participate and access tenders.

Furthermore, the study recommends that women should be given more affordable options by government institutions and private to access financing to enable them participate in tenders. Government should put measures in place to address gender imbalance and inequality especially in financial access to ensure women are not excluded from public tenders. Government funding through women enterprise and Uwezo funds should be expanded in terms of limits and enhanced to adequately build the financial capacity of women to participate in government tenders.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The study suggests that further research should be conducted on the influence of access to information on tendering participation by people living with disabilities in Nakuru County. Similarly, a longitudinal study should be conducted to determine the effect of capacity building programs on tendering participation by women in Kenya.

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