

# **The Influence of Tendering Principles on Procurement Performance in the County Government of Kiambu, Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

Enhancement of procurement performance in public entities requires effective implementation of tendering principles of transparency. This study investigated the influence on procurement performance in the County Government of Kiambu. The study adopted a descriptive research design targeting 216 county employees, with a sample size of 140 respondents selected through stratified and random sampling techniques. Data was collected using structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistic. The findings revealed that competitive procurement had a positive and significant effect on procurement performance, transparency had the strongest effect while accountability also significantly influenced performance. The study concluded that transparency was the most influential tendering principle, followed by accountability and competitive procurement last. The study recommended that Improving procurement performance in county governments therefore requires disclosure mechanisms, ensuring accountability frameworks are adopted and followed, and competitive bidding processes are upheld. Additionally, effective use of the existing digital procurement platforms, simplified bidding procedures, and enhanced contract monitoring be strengthened. At policy level institutionalizing mandatory tender disclosure, implementing inclusive supplier registration frameworks, and providing legal protections for whistleblowers would assist in attaining higher procurement performance in public entities.

**Keywords:** *Tendering Principles, Accountability, Competition, Transparency, Procurement Performance*

## 1.1 Introduction

Public procurement plays a vital role in the efficient allocation of public resources and the delivery of essential services (ADEKOYA, 2024). In Kenya, county governments spend a significant proportion of their budgets through procurement, making it a central area of public financial management. Despite the enactment of the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act (2015) and the constitutional requirement under Article 227 for fair, equitable, transparent, competitive, and cost-effective procurement, numerous challenges persist at the county level. In Kiambu County, audit reports have revealed recurring inefficiencies such as cost overruns, delayed projects, and irregular tender awards (Office of the Auditor-General, 2023).

These problems were directly linked to weaknesses in the tendering process, raising concerns about the effectiveness of procurement systems in achieving value for money. The need for this study arose from the increasing public concern about corruption, lack of openness, and weak accountability in county procurement. Recent developments, including high-profile procurement scandals, have highlighted how inadequate, limited transparency, and poor accountability compromise procurement performance, ultimately undermining citizen trust and service delivery. Globally, institutions such as the OECD and World Bank emphasize that procurement reforms should focus on these three principles as the foundation of efficient public procurement systems (Paraskeva & Tsoulfas, 2025).

Although several factors, including human resource capacity, institutional culture, technology adoption, and legal compliance influence procurement outcomes, this study narrows its scope to, transparency, and accountability in the procurement processes. These principles were selected because they are explicitly embedded in Kenya's procurement legal framework, are universally recognized as fundamental to tendering processes, and have been repeatedly identified in empirical studies as the most recurrent sources of inefficiency when not adequately implemented (Mabillard & Zumofen, 2021; Chilunjika et al., 2022). Therefore, this study was necessitated by the need to empirically assess whether strengthening these tendering principles can improve procurement performance in Kiambu County. Through examining their influence, the research sought to generate practical insights that complement broader reforms addressing legal requirements, institutional strengthening, and capacity development.

Procurement-related issues which affect the public sector require essential tendering principles to eliminate inefficiencies in operations (Farrington & Lysons, 2020). The tendering procedure involves formal proposals requests directed to suppliers for product and service submissions. Public resource management systems should motivate fairness along with competition and transparency rather than permitting public resource abuse (Masudio, 2021). This study investigated tendering principles of transparency, accountability and competition to understand their effects on procurement accomplishment rather than examining core procedural and process elements of tendering.

## 2.1 Literature Review

This study was anchored on Institutional Theory providing the foundation for examining how tendering principles of transparency influence procurement performance in Kiambu County. Institutional Theory, initially developed by Meyer and Rowan (1977), posits that organizations operate within institutional environments shaped by rules, norms, and cultural expectations. To gain legitimacy and resources, organizations adopt structures and practices that conform to these institutional pressures (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Furusten, 2023). Coercive pressures (from laws

and regulations), normative pressures (from professional standards), and mimetic pressures (from peer organizations) all influence organizational behavior. In procurement, Institutional Theory highlights how compliance with procurement laws, regulations, and oversight frameworks is critical in ensuring efficiency, accountability, and legitimacy (Forster et al., 2024).

Transparency in the tendering process heightens procurement effectiveness. Transparent procurement practices facilitate understanding for all stakeholders engaged in the process, thereby cut down malpractice. According to Adam (2024), transparency in the tendering appendage take into account for public and internal oversight, translating malpractice into socially unacceptable. Mabillard and Zumofen (2021) analyzed the procurement and found that transparency helps decrease corruption factors and increase people's confidence in the process, which affects the efficiency of procurement activities. Ali et al. (2021) examined the factors affecting efficiency of public procurement for Punjab procurement rules and found that strict regulatory compliance, supplier capacity, transparency in tendering processes, and the use of e-procurement systems significantly enhanced procurement efficiency. Larbi, Baiden, & Agyekum (2019) assessed the degree of adherence of the public sector organizations to the set transparency standards and its effects on procurement. Williams & Andrew (2021) found that transparency reduced corrupt practices hence enhancing efficiency in procurement. Ndururu, Gesimba & Muasya (2023) contributed valuable insights into the role of leadership transparency in judicial procurement settings, it did not extend its scope to broader county government procurement frameworks.

Transparency goes hand in hand with has been identified as a cornerstone of effective public procurement, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and processes remain transparent and credible. Empirical studies emphasize that accountability mechanisms such as oversight committees, audit reviews, and sanctions against malpractice directly influence procurement outcomes. Masudio (2021) emphasized that the existence of both internal and external review systems curtailed unethical behavior in procurement, thereby improving efficiency and safeguarding public resources. Bilali Ademun (2021) examined accountability challenges in public procurement and highlighted that while accountability mechanisms minimize fraud and waste, their effectiveness is often undermined by political interference and inadequate monitoring systems. Sian and Smyth (2022) underscored the universal importance of maintaining accountability features even under exceptional circumstances. Hassan et al. (2021) found that accountability is among the principles that underpin public procurement along with transparency. Abiro (2021) noted that lack of accountability procedures affects procurement performance and hinders service provision. Maraka and Osoro (2024) established that when accountability is such in the tendering process, the overall service delivery improves.

### **3.1 Research Methodology**

The target population was all the employees in the County Government of Kiambu who take part in the tendering/procurement, finance, auditors, legal departments as well as other supportive staff. These individuals occupy strategic roles on the chain of procurement hence being able to determine the relationship between principles of tendering and evaluation of procurement performance. In that way, the overall number of employees to be served with this research was 216.

**Table 1: Target Population**

Department	Number of Employees
Procurement Officers	48
Tender Committee Members	39
Finance Department Staff	46
Audit Department Staff	28
Legal Department Staff	17
Total	216

Source: (Directorate of Human Resource Management of County Government of Kiambu, 2025)

The sampling technique that was used for the current study was the stratified random sampling technique. This technique involves division of the population into smaller groups each of which has some attributes similar to the other, for instance departments here. The respondents are then selected in proportionate random fashion from each stratum to ensure that all the selected departments of the County Government of Kiambu are captured in the final sample. This technique minimizes cases of sampling bias and is relevant in ensuring that one gets a good sample.

Sample Size was determined adopted use of Yamane’s formula, which is commonly employed when a population size is known. The calculated sample size was 140.

**Table 2: Sample Size**

Department	Number of Employees	Sample Size	Proportion (%)
Procurement Officers	48	31	22%
Tender Committee Members	39	25	18%
Finance Department Staff	46	30	21%
Audit Department Staff	28	18	13%
Legal Department Staff	17	12	8%
Total	216	140	100%

Source: (Author, 2025)

Data collection was mainly done through structured questionnaires. This tool is meant to standardize the response that participants give hence appropriate for use in obtaining quantitative information. A structured questionnaire is one that is made up of a sequence of set questions which are arranged in a way that there is little or no confusion as to the expected response. The study covered a number of aspects relating to tendering principles and procurement performance including competition, transparency and accountability. The structured questionnaires provide a number of merits, allowing easy data collection, as well as analysis. Moreover, they assist in minimizing interviewer bias by offering a uniform structure for answers (Fife-Schaw, 2020).

In this study, reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, with an index of 0.7 and above considered acceptable for internal consistency. The structured questionnaire was subjected to this test, and results confirmed that all constructs achieved acceptable reliability thresholds. In addition, a test–retest method was applied by re-administering the questionnaire to the same pilot group after two weeks. The results were compared, and necessary refinements were made to improve the stability and reliability of the instrument (Kennedy, 2022). Content and construct validity were established by seeking the expert opinion of professionals in procurement and research methodology. Their feedback confirmed that the items were appropriate for assessing the

intended constructs. Furthermore, pilot data were subjected to exploratory factor analysis, which helped identify and eliminate items that did not align well with the target constructs. This ensured that only valid items were retained, thereby enhancing the accuracy of the research instrument (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020).

In this study, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of the data collected were carried out in order to get a holistic knowledge of the variables under study. The essential characteristics of the data were recapped by descriptive measures, such as standard deviations and means, to describe the behaviour and demographic as well as perceptual reactions of the participants involved. Tables, graphs and charts were used to illustrate the findings visually so that stakeholders may have an easy time interpreting the results.

The study also relied on inferential statistics, which are correlational and multiple linear regression analysis in addition to descriptive analysis to test the relationship and predictability of variables. Correlational analysis was employed to determine the direction of the linear relationship between the independent variables which comprise of competition in tendering, transparency in tendering and accountability in tendering and the dependent variable which is the procurement performance the direction of the relationship between the variables and the strength of the relationship between the variables.

#### 4.1 Findings and Discussion

The study targeted 140 respondents and out of the 140 distributed questionnaires, 126 were filled and returned, translating to a response rate of 90%. This was considered to be adequate for the study in business studies where response rates above 70% are generally regarded as sufficient in achieving (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). The high response rate enhances the credibility of the findings and supports the generalizability of the study within the context of the Counties. This section presents the descriptive analysis of responses related to the level and nature of transparency in the tendering process at the County Government of Kiambu, as perceived by the respondents.

**Table 3: Transparency in the Tendering Process at the County Government of Kiambu**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Information on tendering opportunities is easily accessible to all stakeholders.	3.83	1.11
Tendering processes are clear and understandable for all participants.	3.80	1.08
Results of tendering processes are publicly disclosed in a timely manner.	3.66	1.17
Information on the contracts awarded is transparent and accessible to the public.	3.64	1.21
Procedures are in place to ensure unbiased access to tender-related information.	3.72	1.19
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>1.15</b>

Source: Research Data, 2025

The study findings on transparency in the tendering process the County Government of Kiambu, as presented in the Table 3, highlighted stakeholders' perceptions through mean scores and standard deviations, revealing a generally positive view with an average mean of 3.73 and an

average standard deviation of 1.15 across five statements. For the first statement, which asserted that information on tendering opportunities was easily accessible, a mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 1.11 indicated agreement, with the relatively moderate variability suggesting that while most stakeholders found access straightforward, some faced challenges, possibly due to uneven dissemination channels. The second statement, regarding the clarity and understandability of tendering processes, yielded a mean of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 1.08, reflecting solid agreement that processes were clear, with the lowest variability implying a relatively consistent perception, though a minority might have encountered complex documentation. The third statement, on the timely public disclosure of tendering results, recorded the lowest mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.17, suggesting moderate agreement but greater variability, indicating that delays or inconsistent disclosure practices led to mixed experiences among respondents.

The fourth statement, assessing the transparency and accessibility of information on awarded contracts, had a mean of 3.64 and the highest standard deviation of 1.21, reflecting the weakest agreement and significant divergence, likely due to limited public access to contract details for some stakeholders. The fifth statement, which evaluated procedures ensuring unbiased access to tender-related information, showed a mean of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 1.19, indicating moderate to strong agreement with notable variability, suggesting that while procedures existed, their effectiveness varied across stakeholder groups. The average mean of 3.73 underscored a broadly favorable perception of transparency in the tendering process, yet the average standard deviation of 1.15 highlighted moderate variability, pointing to inconsistencies in how transparency was experienced, particularly in contract disclosure and timely result publication. These findings suggested that while the county’s tendering system was relatively transparent, improvements in public disclosure and equitable information access were needed to enhance stakeholder trust and participation. The following section presents the descriptive analysis of procurement performance at the County Government of Kiambu, based on respondents’ feedback.

**Table 4: Procurement Performance at the County Government of Kiambu**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Deliveries of goods and services are made on time according to procurement schedules.	3.87	1.08
Procurement processes prioritize cost-effectiveness to minimize expenses.	3.79	1.07
Goods and services procured meet the required quality standards.	3.88	1.04
The procurement process effectively manages timelines to avoid delays.	3.85	1.05
Vendor selection is optimized to achieve both quality and cost-efficiency.	3.81	1.10
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>1.07</b>

Source: Research Data, 2025

The study findings on procurement performance at the County Government of Kiambu, as presented in Table 4, elucidates stakeholder perceptions through mean scores and standard deviations, revealing a strong positive evaluation with an average mean of 3.84 and an average standard deviation of 1.07 across five statements. The first statement, asserting that deliveries of goods and services adhered to procurement schedules, achieved a mean of 3.87 and a standard

deviation of 1.08, indicating robust agreement on timely deliveries, though moderate variability suggested occasional delays affected some stakeholders' experiences. The second statement, which claimed that procurement processes prioritized cost-effectiveness, recorded a mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.07, reflecting solid agreement on expense minimization, with similar variability implying that cost savings were not uniformly perceived across all contracts. The third statement, evaluating whether goods and services met required quality standards, tied for the highest mean of 3.88 with the lowest standard deviation of 1.04, signaling strong consensus on quality compliance and relatively consistent perceptions, likely due to effective quality controls.

The fourth statement, on the effective management of timelines to avoid delays, posted a mean of 3.85 and a standard deviation of 1.05, suggesting strong agreement that timelines were generally well-managed, with slight variability indicating minor disruptions for some respondents. The fifth statement, concerning the optimization of vendor selection for quality and cost-efficiency, had a mean of 3.81 and the highest standard deviation of 1.10, reflecting strong but slightly less uniform agreement, possibly due to varying stakeholder views on vendor selection fairness. The average mean of 3.84 underscored a highly favorable perception of procurement performance, highlighting strengths in quality and timeliness, while the average standard deviation of 1.07 indicated moderate variability, suggesting that while the procurement system performed well overall, inconsistencies in cost-effectiveness and vendor selection occasionally shaped divergent experiences. These findings pointed to a robust procurement framework at Kiambu, with room to enhance consistency in cost management and vendor processes to further elevate performance. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of transparency on procurement performance. The following output tables summarize the findings.

**Table 5: Model Summary**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.801	.642	.634	0.646

- a. Predictors: (Constant) Transparency in Tendering
- b. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

The model summary in Table 5 indicates that the predictor explains 64.2% of the variance in procurement performance ( $R^2 = 0.642$ ). The adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.634 confirms the model's robustness even after accounting for the predictor. The multiple correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.801$ ) reflects a strong overall linear relationship between the predictor variable and procurement performance.

**Table 6: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	52.830	3	17.610	42.282	.000
Residual	29.470	122	0.241		
Total	82.300	125			

- a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Transparency in Tendering

As shown in Table 6, the overall regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 42.282$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that transparency has a meaningful impact on procurement performance. This

supports the conclusion that the tendering principles under investigation are reliable predictors of performance outcomes in the procurement function.

**Table 7: Regression Coefficients**

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.481	0.253	—	1.901	.060
Transparency	0.328	0.083	.341	3.952	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

The results displayed in Table 7 present the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients for the independent variable of transparency in predicting procurement performance. The independent variable was found to have a positive and statistically significant influence on procurement performance.

Transparency was identified as the most critical tendering principle influencing procurement performance in Kiambu County. The clear dissemination of information regarding procurement opportunities and the fairness of the bid evaluation process were noted as major contributors to improved procurement outcomes. The findings strongly support the idea that transparency leads to greater accountability, increased public trust, reduced corruption, and improved efficiency. Despite its relatively strong implementation, transparency gaps especially in post-award contract disclosures were noted. Therefore, while the county has made commendable strides in promoting transparency, there remains a need to institutionalize full information access throughout all stages of the procurement process, including contract implementation.

The study concluded that accountability is a key factor in procurement performance, although its effect is moderate compared to transparency. Mechanisms such as independent audits and oversight by procurement committees were acknowledged as instrumental in enhancing procurement effectiveness. However, inconsistent enforcement, weak protection for whistleblowers, and political interference were seen as limitations that hinder the full realization of accountability’s benefits. The study highlights the need for stronger institutional frameworks that ensure consistent monitoring, enforcement of rules, and protection for those who expose procurement irregularities. When accountability systems are effectively applied, they significantly enhance the ethical standards and operational efficiency of public procurement.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that practical efforts be undertaken by the County Government of Kiambu to strengthen the implementation of tendering principles in order to boost procurement performance. To improve competition, the procurement department should simplify prequalification requirements, minimize bureaucracy, and conduct regular supplier sensitization to attract a broader pool of qualified vendors. These steps would address current constraints and expand competitive participation. In enhancing transparency, it is recommended that the county adopt a digital e-procurement platform to publicly display procurement plans, bid evaluations, contract awards, and implementation statuses. This would not only increase openness but also build stakeholder confidence in the system. To strengthen accountability, regular training on ethical procurement practices should be provided to procurement officers and tender committees. Additionally, the establishment of an anonymous, secure whistleblower system is necessary to

enable the reporting of irregularities without fear of retaliation, thereby reinforcing internal controls and ethical conduct.

The study recommends that county-level policies be revised to strengthen the legal and procedural frameworks that govern tendering practices. For competition, the county should adopt policy guidelines that encourage inclusivity by reducing restrictive eligibility criteria and setting participation quotas for youth, women, and marginalized groups. In terms of transparency, policies should mandate full disclosure of procurement processes and outcomes at every stage and require digital record-keeping and publication of all tenders and awards. For accountability, the enactment of policy measures that institutionalize periodic independent audits, ensure enforcement of procurement laws, and provide legal protection for whistleblowers is crucial. These policy changes would not only improve procurement practices within Kiambu but could also serve as a model for other counties in Kenya striving to enhance the performance and integrity of their procurement systems.

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