

FACTORS INFLUENCING TENDERING PROCESS IN PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE OF MEDICAL STORE DEPARTMENT (MSD), DAR ES SALAAM ZONE

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of study was to investigate factors influencing tendering process in public sector in Tanzania. The study intended to find out the influence of training, ethical practices and ICT usage on tendering process at Medical Store Department. The study employed case study design whereby purposive and convenience sampling techniques were applied to select sample of 40 respondents from MSD. Both primary data and secondary data were employed whereby data were analyzed through qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study revealed that in regards to tendering process only procurement staffs attend training. The study further showed that, staff attends training less frequently. It was found that, there are unethical practices found in procurement function. The study further observed that, the rate of favouritism in tendering process at MSD as well as tribalism in tendering process at MSD is very low. It was reported that, MSD has well developed ICT infrastructure that supports tendering process and at large extent. The study concludes that training, ethical issues and ICT usage have significant impact in influencing tendering process at MSD. However, attending of training at less frequently could affect tendering process because training is very important as it ensures that the staffs are not left with changes that happen in the system. The study recommends that, despite the fact that unethical issues are not highly exercised at MSD, much efforts should be taken into consideration to prevent unethical practices at large because there is high influence of unethical practice in tendering process in most of public institutions in Tanzania.*

KEYWORDS: Factors, Tendering Process, Public Sector

INTRODUCTION

Procurement means buying, purchasing, renting, leasing or otherwise acquiring any goods or works by procuring entity spending public funds on behalf of a ministry, department or regional administration of the governments or public body and including all functions that pertain to obtaining of any goods or works together with description of requirements selection and invitation of tenders and preparation and ward of contracts (PP Act No. 21 of 2011). Public expenditure is a complex phenomenon of growing global importance (Eyaa and Oluka 2011). The absolute scale of public procurement on OECD countries lies between 8% and 25% of their GDP and 16% of GDP for EU Countries being attributable to government purchases of goods or services (OECD, 2007). Within the overall pattern of public expenditure in Tanzania 50% of the budget spent on procurement comes from taxpayer, in due regard the control and proper use of this public resource should be wisely used (Rutashobya 2001). The importance of public expenditures within the world economy has stimulated an established interest in how public money is spent, with an emphasis on transparency and openness within public expenditure processes (Gelderman *et al.* 2006)

Competition among suppliers is encouraged in order to select one of them who will be competitive and perfect for the tender (Bugenyi 2005). Tendering process is a continuation set of actions or events that opted in order for supplier/bidders to give an offer, proposal, and a quotation by a request of a procuring entity. The set of activities or actions which are to be performed in the tendering process are preparation of bidding documents by Procuring entity, advertise, collection of bidding document by bidders, fill the bidding document by the bidders, submission of bids and open by the procuring entity, evaluation of the bids by procuring entity and award of tender of contractor and signing of contract (URT 2013) in Nyaki (2016). In most cases in Tanzania, tender evaluation durations exceed tender validity periods (Mlinga 2006). For example, about 40%-50% of the budget owed to the construction projects was used due to the delays in tender evaluation procedure (Rutashobya 2001).

Thus, government loses a lot of money through inferior and substandard goods as well receive complaints from suppliers about the variation in criteria and practice of awarding the tenders (SIKIKI 2016). conversely, tendering process are considered being ineffective, as the government is still receiving inferior and substandard goods and services, while delayed of goods and service is becoming rampant in public sector. Yateri (2004) argues that, PPA requires the procuring entity to inform all the bidders the result of a particular tender and the reasons behind the results. Public procurement policies are based on the need to make the best possible use of public funds, whilst conducting all procurement with honest and fairness. This is possible if the tendering process is effective. Previous researchers found that, tendering processes in public sector is not effective, leading to lower value for money for the goods procured or services offered. Therefore, this study was set to find out the factors influencing tendering process in Public Sector.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to investigate factors influencing tendering process in public sector in Tanzania

Specific Objectives

- (i) To find out the influence of training in tendering process at Medical Store Department.
- (ii) To explore the influence of ethical practices in tendering process at Medical Store Department
- (iii) To determine the influence of ICT usage in tendering process at Medical Store Department

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This study was guided by three theories; Ethics based theory which emphasizes on the creation of instrument of code of conducts, integrity pacts, and self regulating rules (Ackermann, 2002). Ethical issues are very important in tendering process. If the employee does not practice tendering issues in an ethical manner, it will render to affect the service delivery. Also social learning theory was applied as employee can acquire skills by observing other member of staff whom he believes and have confidence to on them that they are more knowledgeable on the subject matter (Bratton, 2007; Otieno and Nyakundi 2016). Furthermore, reinforcement theory was used to enlighten the importance of training to employees that culminate to promoting employees for outstanding performance, innovation, creativity as a result of training attended (Ahmad2013). This implies that without training, tendering process may not be delivered at the optimum level. Therefore, training is very crucial for effective tendering process at Medical Store Department (MSD).

Review of variables

Ethical practices

Baden horst (1994) argues that the public purchasing environment can create an atmosphere conducive to unethical behavior. An environment characterized by an absence of clear ethical policies can contribute towards unethical behavior. Reilly and Kyi (1992) state that the ethical level of behavior of procurement staff is mainly determined by the climate (environment) of the organization, top management, limited productive resources and lack of intellectual support in the organization. Thai (2001) outlines the environmental factors affecting the ethical standards in public procurement as: internal environment, legal environment, political environment and socio-economic environments. Otieno and Nyakundi (2016) explain that, ethical behavior is important in public procurement as it involves the expenditure of public money, and is subject to public scrutiny. Mlinga (2006) observed that, public procurement underpinned by five pillars which are very vital in the attainment of value for money, which is to be attained by having sound tendering process, that are equity, ethics and fair dealing, competition, accountability, transparency and value money. Public officials should always behave ethically and fairly in their business undertakings. Ethical behavior supports openness and accountability in a procurement process and gives suppliers confidence to participate in the Government marketplace

Training

Training is important for the development of procurement professional who are just recognized within the government and profession as a whole. It helps profession to be covered fully with range of procurement activities and strategies and then to utilize the knowledge obtained to public sector (McKue et al, 2007). This helps an increase in professionalism and greater education. Training also helps the professional to get exposed on the best practices procurement strategies to be applied to the public sector for attainment of value for money. Ayoti (2012) reiterated that, majority of officers engaged in tendering process have never been trained in tendering process and proposed the need for staff to attend both local and international workshops, seminars and conferences on tendering process for efficiency and effective service delivery. Raymond (2008) explained professionalism contrary to the level of education and

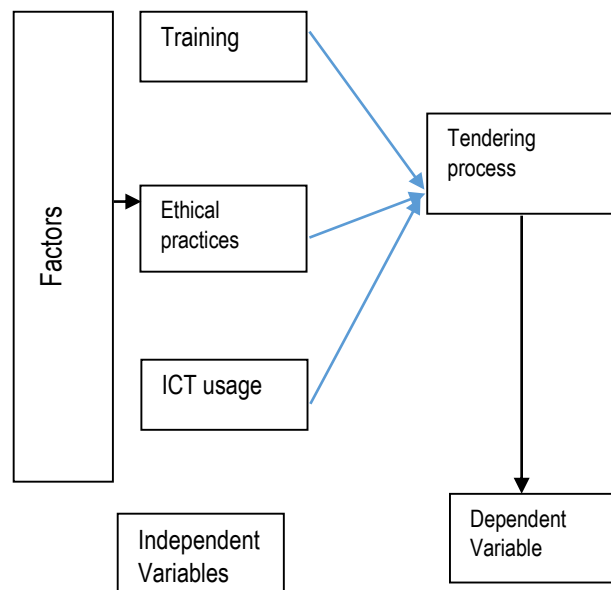
qualification but rather to professional approach in the business conduct as for the procurement professional to be equipped competencies and skills on procurement techniques and method for better outcome of procurement goals.

ICT usage

In today's challenge where the public is demanding for better service, the use of ICT is crucial in order to improve service and lower operating costs which in turn will improve performance. Due to that the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority established the Procurement Management Information System (PMIS) to improve efficiency in public procurement system. Waigwa (2016) revealed the need for employees to be equipped with ICT skills and knowledge in order to make tendering process effective that, ICT training and motivation correlated significantly with the success of tendering process. ICT use in procurement is perceived as an advantages tool, as it lowers contract prices, compact administrative costs and increased transparency, (Shalev and Asbjornsen, 2010), to the public sector.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Author's Construction, 2018

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed case study design whereby purposive and convenience sampling techniques were applied to select sample of 40 respondents from the total population of 360 employees at MSD. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview and documentary review. In ensuring the validity of data, the researcher compared different responses that were provided by respondents using questionnaires, and the responses that appeared to be the same, it meant that the tested questionnaires produced the valid results. Also to ensure validity of this study, the data being collected were reviewed and cross checked. Both primary data and secondary data were analyzed through qualitative and quantitative approaches. Descriptive

analysis was initially used to transmute data into a more coherent and easily understood form. Microsoft Office Excel software was used to convert the collected data into frequency tables, cross tabulations, averages, and percentages for different variables. Meanwhile, qualitative data (mostly from questionnaires and discussions) were analyzed using cases and quotations.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Characteristics of Respondents

Gender of Respondents

The study participants were enquired to specify their gender on the questionnaires. The gender distribution was considered in order to establish the gender composition of the respondents. The results of the study are presented in Table 4.1 below: -

Table 4. 1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage
Male	24	60
Female	16	40
Total	40	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

As far as Table 4.1 is concerned, about 60% of the respondents were male and 40% were female. It is cleared shown from the findings that more than a half of the respondents were male. The findings imply that men were highly involved in the study than women. But also these findings give an implication of the fact that there is high possibility of MSD to have employed high number of men than women.

Age of Respondents

This area of the study, it was an intention of the researcher to find out the age category of respondents. This was expected to guide researcher on getting awareness of the most active group in tendering process at MSD. The results of the study are presented in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4. 2: Age of respondents

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
Less than 30 years	5	12.5
31 – 39 years	20	50
40 -49 years	11	27.5
Above 50 years	4	10
Total	40	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

The findings in Table 4.2 disclose that, about 12.5% of the respondents were less than 30 years, 50% of the respondents ranged between 31-39 years, 27.5 of the respondents ranged between 40-49 years and 10% of the respondents ranged over 50 years. Therefore, majority of respondents who participated in the study ranged between 31-39 years. The study concludes

that, most of the staff at MSD are young aged group of people. This age is regarded to be productive one and hence capable to ensure effective tendering process at MSD.

Education Level of Respondents

The researcher thought it was important to establish the level of education of study participants so as to find out if they are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills about tendering process at MSD. The results of the study are presented in Table 4.3 below: -

Table 4. 3: Education level of respondents

Education level	Number of respondents	Percentage
Diploma	5	12.5
Degree	28	70
Master's degree	5	12.5
PhD	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

The data from Table 4.3 revealed that, most staff who were involved as respondents in this study conducted at MSD were educated where as 12.5% had diploma education, 70 had bachelor degree education, 12.5 had master's degree and 5% had PhD education. Therefore, the data analysis shows that, majority of respondents had bachelor degree education. The study concludes that a good number of staff at MSD are educated thus; capable of ensuring effective and efficient tendering process. But also this average of education qualifies the respondents to know nature of the study problem.

Job Experience of Respondents

The researcher determined job experience of the respondents in order to find out the extent to which their responses could be relied upon to make conclusion on the study problem using their job experiences. The results of the study are presented in Table 4.4 below: -

Table 4. 4: Job experience of respondents

Job experience	Number of respondents	Percentage
1-5 years	16	40
6-10 years	20	50
Above 10 years	4	10
Total	40	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

As the data disclose in Table 4.4, about 40% of the respondents said to have job experience between 01-5 year, 50% said to have job experience for 6 -10 years and 10% of the respondents said to have job experience of above 10 years. Therefore, the findings show that, majority of respondents said to have a job experience of between 6-10 years. The study concludes that, a sufficient number of respondents at MSD has enough job experience. Thus gives the implication of the fact that their information on the factors influencing tendering process at MSD is reliable. These findings were in constant with Braxton (2008) who argued that the study participants who have high job experience are good at giving reliable data on the study problem since they have technical experience on the problem being investigated by the study.

The Influence of Training in Tendering Process

Training Attendance

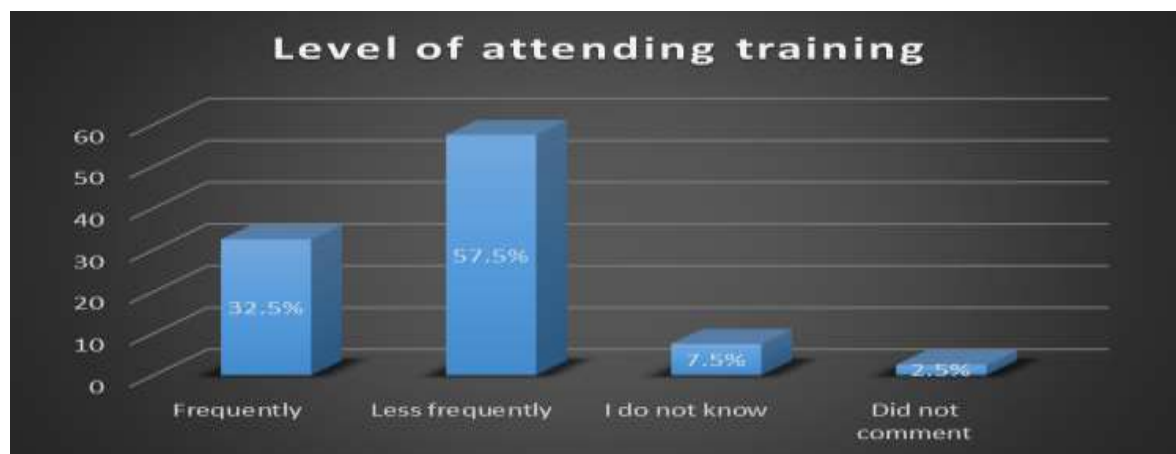
The researcher set this question from questionnaire to ascertain as whether the staff at MSD attends training to improve their skills in tendering process. The findings from the field revealed that, all respondents said that the staff at MSD attends training to their skills in tendering process. This implies that, organization is aware of the importance of training for better tendering process. Training encourages employees to perform better and hence enables effective tendering process. However, it was noted that, despite the question was answered by all respondents who were taken from different departments, but it is only procurement staff who attend procurement training. But all respondents are aware of the fact that procurement staff attends training and that is why the researcher decided to ask all respondents.

The study conducted by Ayoti (2012) showed that, majority of officers engaged in tendering process have never been trained. For efficiency and effective service delivery all staff involved in tendering process from various functions should be trained. They should be allowed to attend both local and international workshops, seminars and conferences on tendering process.

Level of Attending Training

The researcher extracted question from questionnaire wanted to ascertain at what level the respondents attend training at MSD. The results of the study showed that, 32.5% of the respondents said, the staff attend training frequently, 57.5% of the respondents said staff attend training less frequently, 7.5% said they do not know level of staff attendance in training and 2.5% did not comment. Therefore, most of the respondents were in the position that staff attends training less frequently. This implies that, attending training is not a priority issue at MSD. This can lead to ineffective tendering process. However, the researcher had a view that, the less frequent of attending training could be caused by inadequate budget because attending training needs fund. The study findings are complied with Nyaki (2017) who found that, majority of staff at Ilala Municipal Council do not attend professional training, workshops and seminars and those who attend, they attend at less frequently. Attending professional training, workshops and seminars is not considered as an important matter at MSD. Figure 4.1 gives summary of the findings.

Figure 4.1 Level of attending training

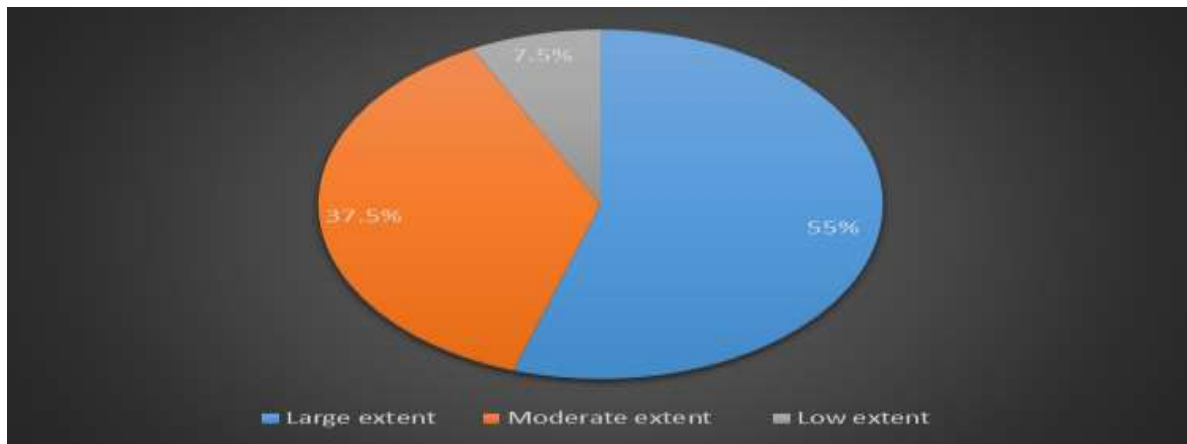


Source: Field survey (2018)

The Extent Training Influences Tendering Process at MSD

The study through questionnaire method sought to establish the extent training influences tendering process at MSD. The findings are summarized in Figure 4.2: -

Figure 4.2 The extent training influences tendering process at MSD



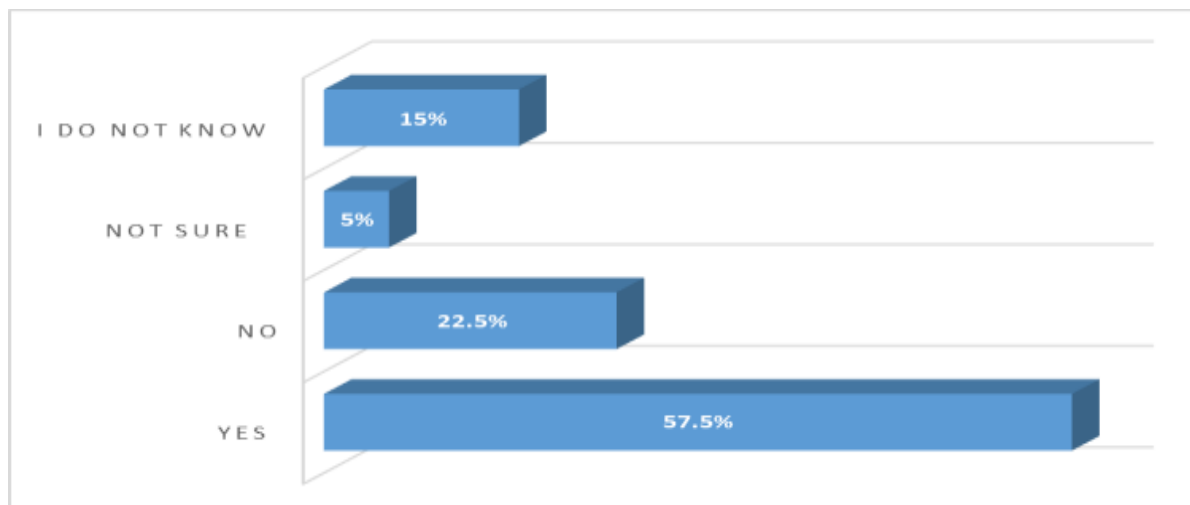
Source: Field survey (2018)

Analyzing data in Figure 4.2, about 55% of the respondents said at large extent training influences tendering process at MSD, 37.5% said at a moderate extent training influences tendering process at MSD and 7.5% of the respondents said at a low extent training influences tendering process at MSD. Therefore, majority of respondents said at large extent training influences tendering process at MSD. This gives an implication of the fact that, training is useful in ensuring effective tendering process. Training has significant impact in tendering process. The findings concur with William (2009) that training is very important at every angle. In a work context, individuals must possess a range of personal competencies along with task specific competencies to perform effectively and efficiently. However, this can be achieved when staff attends training to sharp their skills.

The Influence of Ethical Practice in Tendering Process

Whether Unethical Issues Found in Tendering Process at MSD

Based on the question extracted from questionnaire, it was the interest of the study to ascertain as whether unethical issues found in tendering process at MSD. The study observed that, about 57.5% of the respondents said unethical issues are found in tendering process at MSD, 22.5% said unethical issues are not found in tendering process at MSD, 5% said they are not sure whether unethical issues are found in tendering process at MSD and 15% said they do not know whether unethical issues found in tendering process at MSD.

Figure 4.3 Unethical issues at MSD

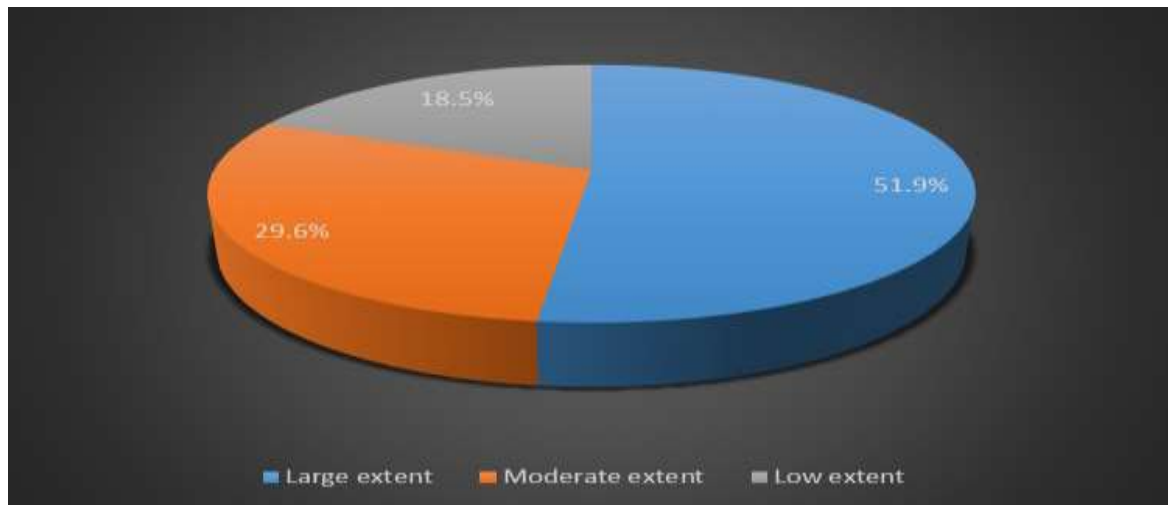
Source: Field survey (2018)

Majority of the respondents agreed that, there are unethical practices found in procurement function. This implies that unethical issues are among of the factors affecting tendering process at MSD. Some of the public officers are not acting on due diligence, as the result it renders to affect tendering process.

The study findings are consistent with Kipichilat (2006) who asserted that, ethical behavior includes avoiding conflicts of interest, and not making improper use of an individual's position. Ethical behavior is important in public procurement as it involves the expenditure of public money, and is subject to public scrutiny. Public officials should always behave ethically and fairly in their business undertakings. Ethical behavior supports openness and accountability in a procurement process and gives suppliers confidence to participate in the government marketplace. Ethical behavior can also reduce the cost of managing risks associated with fraud, theft, corruption, and other improper behavior; and enhance confidence in public administration.

The Extent Ethical Issues Influence Tendering Process at MSD

The study through questionnaire method sought to establish the extent ethical issues influence tendering process at MSD. This question was answered by 27 respondents out of 40 equal to 67.5% who agreed that ethical issues such as honesty, integrity, fairness and trust are adhered in the process of tendering. Figure 4.4 presents summary of the findings: -

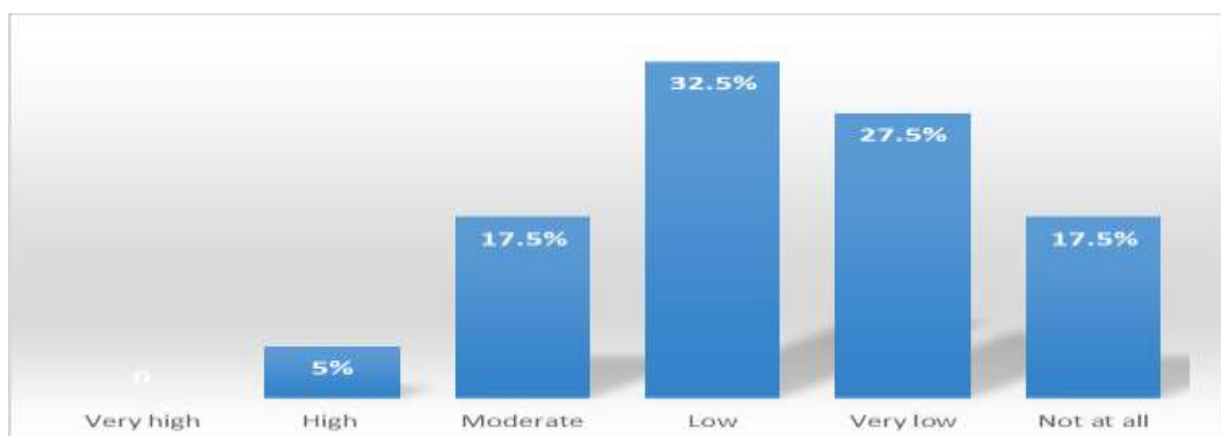
Figure 4.4 Extent ethical issues influence tendering process at MSD

Source: Field survey (2018)

As summarized in Figure 4.5, about 51.9% of the respondents said at large extent ethical issues influence tendering process at MSD, 29.6% said at a moderate extent ethical issues influence tendering process at MSD and 18.5% of the respondents said at a low extent ethical issues influence tendering process at MSD. Therefore, majority of respondents said at large extent ethical issues influence tendering process at MSD. This gives an implication of the fact that, ethical issues such as honesty, integrity, fairness and trust are useful in ensuring effective tendering process at MSD.

Rate of Favoritisms in Tendering Process at MSD

The researcher through questionnaire sought to establish the way respondents gauge favoritism in tendering process at MSD. Figure 4.5 presents summary of the findings: -

Figure 4.5 Rate of favoritism in tendering process at MSD

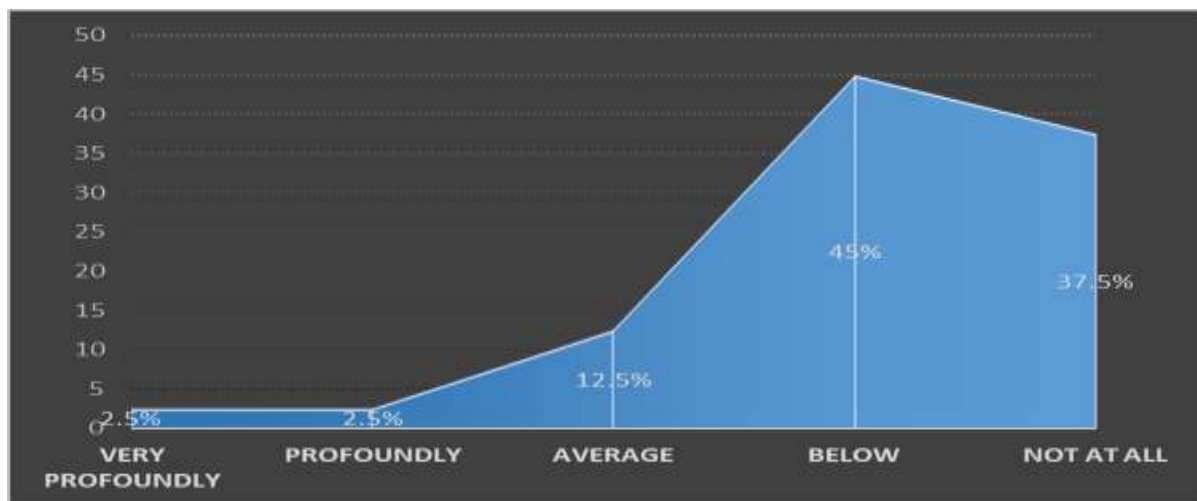
Source: Field survey (2018)

As shown above in Figure 4.6, about 5% of the respondents said the rate of favoritism in tendering process at MSD is high, 17.5% said the rate of favoritism in tendering process at MSD is moderate, 32.5% said the rate of favoritism in tendering process at MSD is low, 27.5% said the rate of favoritism in tendering process at MSD is very low and the rest of respondents 17.5% said the rate of favoritism in tendering process at MSD is not at all. Therefore, majority of respondents said the rate of favoritism in tendering process at MSD is low. This gives an implication of the fact that, MSD has not been highly affected by favoritism in tendering process. That is to say, there is a practice of ethical issues in tendering process at MSD despite some challenges.

The Extent Politics Affect the Tendering Process at MSD

As extracted from questionnaire, it was the interest of the researcher to find out the extent politics affects the tendering process at MSD. Figure 4.6 presents summary of the findings: -

Figure 4.6 The extent politics affect the tendering process at MSD



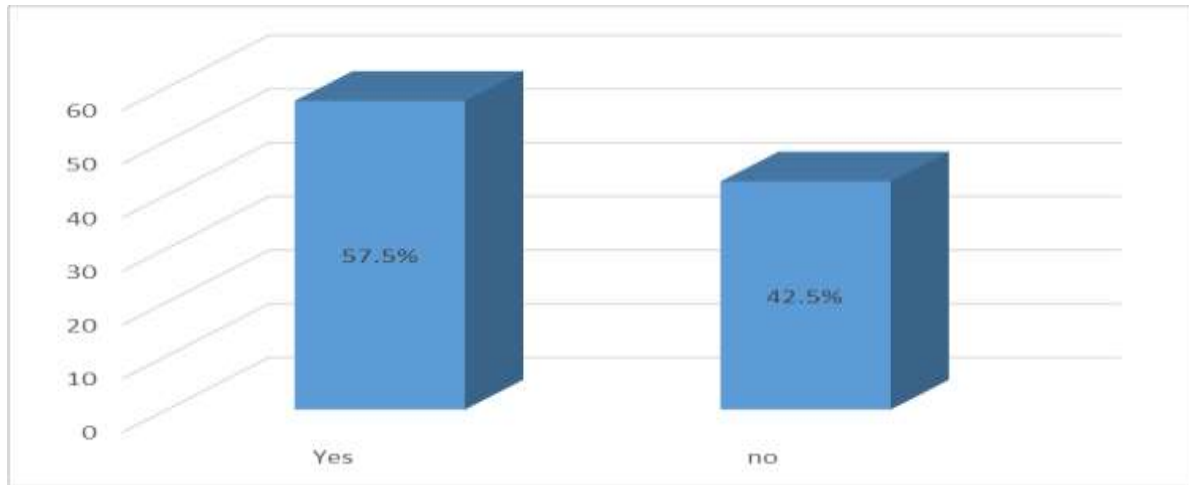
Source: Field survey (2018)

It was revealed that, 2.5% of the respondents said politics affect tendering process at MSD very profoundly, 2.5% of the respondents said politics affect tendering process at MSD profoundly, 12.5% said politics affect tendering process at MSD at average, 45% said politics affect tendering process at MSD below the average and 37.5% said not all politics affect tendering process at MSD. Therefore, majority of respondents said politics affect tendering process at MSD below the average. This gives an implication of the fact that, MSD has not been highly affected by politics in tendering process. That is to say, there is a practice of ethical issues in tendering process at MSD despite some challenges.

The Influence of ICT Usage on Tendering Process at MSD

Developed ICT Infrastructure at MSD

The question extracted from questionnaires required the respondents to provide their views as whether MSD has well developed ICT infrastructure that supports tendering process. Figure 4.7 gives summary of findings.

Figure 4.7 ICT infrastructure at MSD

Source: Field survey (2018)

It was revealed that, 57. % said MSD has well developed ICT infrastructure that supports tendering process while 42.5% of the respondents said MSD has no well-developed ICT infrastructure that supports tendering process. Therefore, majority of respondents were in the position that, MSD has well developed ICT infrastructure that supports tendering process. The implication of these findings is that, the system is well organized by using ICT which enhances effective tendering process at MSD.

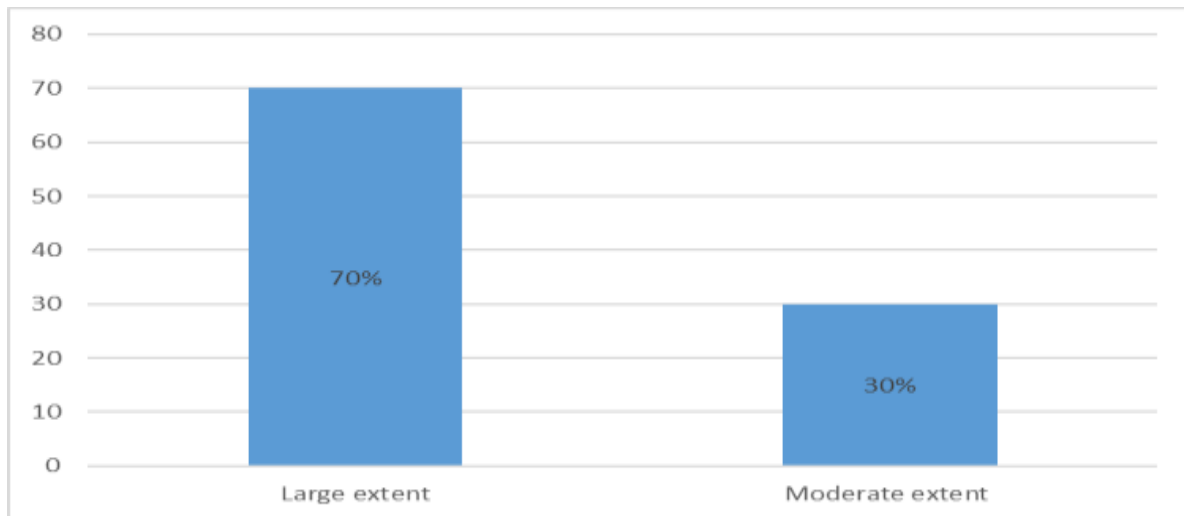
In an interview conducted to procurement unit, the following information was grasped: -

“MSD has well developed ICT infrastructure since it serves the whole country, hence it must have well equipped ICT system. However, this is not to all MSD stations. The budget still does not allow us to have ICT infrastructure system to all MSD zones.”

Furthermore, the researcher sought to get the responses of the study participants as whether MSD advertises tendering processes through website. The findings revealed that, about 67.5% of the respondents said MSD advertises tendering processes through website, 20% said MSD does not advertise tendering processes through website and 12.5% of the respondents did not comment. Therefore, according to these findings, majority of respondents said MSD advertises tendering processes through website. Thus implies that, MSD is aware of the importance of advertising tendering process through website since it creates public awareness to know what is going on and also it increases transparency.

The Extent ICT Usage Influences Tendering Process at MSD

The study through questionnaire method sought to establish the extent ICT usage influences tendering process at MSD. The findings showed that, 70% said at large extent ICT usage influences tendering process at MSD and 30% of the respondents said at moderate extent ICT usage influences tendering process at MSD. Figure 4.8 gives summary of the findings as obtained from the field.

Figure 4.10 The extent ICT usage influences tendering process at MSD

Source: Field survey (2018)

As provided above, majority of respondents said at large extent ICT usage influences tendering process at MSD. This gives an implication of the fact that, ICT usage plays a significant role in ensuring effective tendering process at MSD.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Public sector has the mandate to deliver good service in order to improve social economic development. Since almost 70% of Government budget is used through public procurement there is a need to have effective tendering process in public sector. MSD as a public procuring entity has taken initiative to deliver good services to the public through procurement. This initiative includes the staff training in tendering process, improvement on ethical issues and use of ICT in procurement. However, only procurement staff attends procurement training particularly in tendering process and said training is not frequently done. But it was revealed that, to a large extent training influences tendering process at MSD and most of the employees have satisfactory level of education in dealing with tendering process. Furthermore, it was found that, there are unethical practices found in procurement function. However, ethical issues such as honesty, integrity, fairness and trust are adhered in the process of tendering at MSD and the rate of favoritism in tendering process at MSD is low this includes cases like tribalism in tendering process. Politics indicator was seen below the average to affect tendering process. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that ethical practice helps tendering to be free and fair at MSD, majority of the study participants agreed that, ethical practice prevents corruption practices in tendering process at MSD and ethical practice ensures transparency in tendering process at MSD. With regard ICT usage the study revealed that, MSD has well developed ICT infrastructure that supports tendering process. Most of the respondents agreed that ICT tools help to manage work flow management functions controlling the tendering process by enabling effective communication at MSD.

Recommendations

- i) The organization should ensure that, it creates a tradition of sending its employees for trainings and refreshers courses frequently to enhance their level of education and understanding to excel in tendering process because lack of attending training and refreshers courses could affect the process and getting stuck to the old ways of doing things.
- ii) Despite the fact that unethical issues are not highly exercised at MSD, but many efforts should be taken into consideration to prevent unethical practices at large because there is high influence of unethical practice in tendering process in most of public institutions in Tanzania.
- iii) There is a practice of ICT system at MSD particularly in tendering process and at large extent ICT usage influences effective tendering process. However, the study recommends that, much efforts should be put because the ICT usage is not widely covered as it is required so as to enhance better effective tendering process at MSD

Future research

Effective and efficient tendering process is essential to every Procuring entity in Public organization in order to realize value for money. The use of ICT is important in many aspects in public procurement ((Shalev and Asbjornsen, 2010). Therefore, I recommend the future research to engage on the challenges on using of E-procurement in public sector as it yet to be practiced in the Country. Based on the reviewed literatures, there is no related study which was conducted in Tanzania.

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