



## UNLOCKING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT FROM CORRUPTION: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF ETHICAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN SELECTED LGAs, TANZANIA

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### **Abstract:**

The efforts towards anti-corruption in public funded projects have been more emphasized, however; the challenge still persists. About 20%-30% of procurement project value lost through corruption. Scholars and policy makers regard ethical training and education as one of the solid steps towards anti-corruption in public funded projects. This study examined and validated the role of ethical training and education [contents, sources, nature, and scope] towards anti-corruption in public procurement, with focus in selected Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania. The study adopted descriptive research design and purposive sampling to collect data from 114 respondents. Data were collected using survey and interview methods, and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that, once effectively streamlined, ethical training and education play a significant role in upholding a sense of anti-corruption in public procurement ( $p < \alpha$ ). However, the contents, nature and scope of ethical training and education were found less effective in curbing corrupt practices in public funded projects. The study recommends to the training bodies and procuring entities to review and restructure the contents, scope and nature of ethical training and education, make it mandatory to all procurement practitioners, designed with focus to impart knowledge on the consequences of corruption to the public and to the government at large.

**Keywords:** ethical training, education, procurement, corruption, LGAs, Tanzania

### **1. Introduction**

In the recent decades, anti-corruption has emerged one of the top agenda of many governments and international organs particularly in public procurement projects. The subsequent costs of corruption include loss of scarce public resources, poor quality of procured goods, services and works (Msanya, 2015; Israel *et al.*, 2019). Public

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procurement is more prone to corruption since it attracts almost 35% of developed and 70% of developing countries budget (World Bank, 2016; OECD, 2019). Empirical evidences show that on average, 20%-30% of procurement value lost through corruption every year (EC, 2014; OECD, 2019). Corruption in public procurement takes a form collusive, obstructive, and fraudulent practices (Kornevs *et al.*, 2016; World Bank, 2015; Lysons and Farringtons, 2006). The World Bank (2004) and URT (2011) refer corruption in procurement to include offering, giving, receiving or soliciting, directly or indirectly anything of value to influence the actions of a public official in the procurement process. The need to establish legal frameworks and explicit measures to govern how public money is spent and unlock public procurement from corruption and malpractices is of great importance. Enactment of legal procurement frameworks: policies, laws, regulations; anti-corruption training and education have been regarded by scholars and policy makers as important tools towards addressing the challenge of corruption in procurement (Araújo *et al.*, 2017; Kornevs *et al.*, 2016).

Among others, the OECD Principles (2004) and two sets of directives, 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC govern public procurement process to enhance anti-corruption among the European member states (OECD, 2019; EC, 2014). Australia is an observer of the WTO agreement on government procurement under the Austrian Federal Procurement Agency and Anti – Corruption Strategy. As part of its express measures towards anti-corruption in public funded projects, the French Central Service of Corruption Prevention and the American Inter-States Convention play a significant role in fighting against corruption among the member groups through regular training to stakeholders (Araújo *et al.*, 2017; Balsevich and Podkolzina, 2014; EC, 2014). In Africa, anti-corrupt practices, particularly in public funded procurement projects are governed by the World Bank and African Development Bank procurement guidelines (World Bank, 2014; AFDB, 2012). Moreover, Internal legal frameworks, specifically Public Procurement Acts (PPA) and oversight authorities have been established with more emphasis to enhance anti-corruption in public procurement. The Uganda's Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), the Kenya's Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA) and Anti-Corruption Commission are mandated to train and educate procurement practitioners to ensure compliance with anti-corruption (EACC, 2015).

In Tanzania, the frameworks and reforms to fight against corruption dates back in 1930's were the first penal code against corruption was enacted. To date, several reforms have been implemented to strengthen anti-corruption particularly in public procurement. The PCCB, PSPTB and PPRA through the power entrusted by PPA and PCCA are mandated to train, educate and fight against corruption, uphold fairness, confidentiality, integrity, due diligence, professionalism, and avoiding conflict of interest and corruption in public projects undertaking (URT, 2011; PCCB, 2013). On regular basis, the PSPTB and PPRA calls for training among procurement stakeholders, to present and discuss contemporary and alarming issues in public procurement, including issues pertaining to corruption. Reforms and infrastructures to fight against corruption in public procurement through education and training is a necessary tool in enhancing anti-

corruption. Setting up special training bodies, mandated to promote and train government officials on ethical practices, help in solving various ethical dilemmas, enable public servants become ethical, accountable and enhance stakeholders' awareness on the established policies, procedures, regulations and code of conduct, and therefore act in full accordance (Kauppi and Erik, 2015; Israel *et al.*, 2019). (Araújo *et al.*, 2017; Mainga, 2012) identified one of the major causes of unethical practices, particularly corrupt practice in public procurement due to lack of effective training and education among government officials and key stakeholders.

Despite regular training and education to address corrupt practices, irregularities and loss; corruption in public procurement have been frequently reported. In 2018/2019 financial year, the government incurred a loss amounting to TZS 1.9 trillion through corruption, compared to TZS 1.6 trillion in 2017/18, being an increase of TZS 2.8 billion (URT, 2019). Previous studies connect corruption in public procurement as the result of lack of political and administrative will, especially among elected political leaders who use their power to influence award of public tenders to service provider in their favour (Kornevs *et al.*, 2016; Mazigo, 2014). Poverty, ineffective incentive system, low level of salary among government officials, weak anti-corrupt oversight institutions and framework have been also identified as a corruption contributing factors. Little studies have been empirically undertaken to validate whether ethical training and education play a significant role toward anti-corruption (Nyambariga, 2016; Msanya, 2015; Balsevich and Podkolzina, 2014), with non-procurement corrupt practices related local studies. This has created a significant knowledge gap and form the basis for this study. The study therefore examined and validated the role and effectiveness of ethical training and education toward anti-corruption in public procurement, with insight from selected Local Government Authorities in Tanzania.

## 2. Theoretical Perspective

Principal-Agency theory guided this study. The theory describes the agency relationship in which one party (The principal) delegates work to another party (The agent) to perform some tasks and make decisions in the principal's interest (Eisenhardt, 1989). The theory is useful and work well when the agent has necessary skills, knowledge and expertise needed to perform delegated duties, and substantial goals and interest between the principal and the agent do not differ. However, it is difficult to motivate individuals and avoiding conflict of interest. When executing their tasks under principal-agent relationship, the agents need to choose actions with positive impact for both parties, to the principal and agent. Corrupt practices occur when the agents decide to maximize private benefit over principal's benefits (Kauppi and Erik, 2015). The government (The principal) delegates procurement obligations to its agencies and authorities (The agents) under the power entrusted to them through employment contracts. The government expect these agencies to act in accordance with the established legal framework while avoiding conflict of interest and corruption, maximise organisation's utility and

performance. Political accountability, better aligned incentives, training and education for agents uncovers challenges of corruption (Msanya, 2015; Araújo *et al.*, 2017). This study therefore adopted Principal-Agency theory and its assumptions to examine the extent at which substantial ethical training and education can unlock public procurement from corruption and its related malpractices.

### 3. Material and Methods

This study adopted descriptive research design to examine the role of ethical training and education in unlocking public procurement from corrupt practices, with focus in selected LGAs in Tanzania. The design was appropriate since what, who, where and how was the focus of the study questions with respect to research variables and phenomenon as it exists at present (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The study was conducted at Moshi District Council (MDC) and Kahama Town Council (KTC). In 2019, the annual procurement performance report identified the two councils, *among others*, with high likelihood indicators of corrupt practices in public procurement funded projects, hence preferred for the study. The study applied survey and interview methods of data collection. Survey was used to collect primary data from a total of 114 respondents: 12 procurement staff, 2 accounting officer, 39 ward councilors, 5 internal auditors, and 56 from user departments in MDC and KTC using structured questionnaires, containing closed questions.

On the other hand, a face to face structured interview was used to collect qualitative data from 7 key informants who were suppliers, consultants, and contractors who have involved in public procurement bidding, and have knowledge on procurement corrupt practices. The study adopted purposive sampling technique as the unit of analysis under this study were selected basing on their knowledge, experience and their participation in public procurement proceedings, procurement decisions making, ethical training and education. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. Quantitative data was coded into common theme and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics: mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages, and Ordinal Logistic Regression (ORR). The ORR appropriately fitted with this study as the study involved the use of four independent categorical variables and one ordinal dependent variable (equation 1).

$$\text{Logit}[p(Y_i)] = \log \left[ \frac{p(y)}{1 - p(y)} \right] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \beta_4 x_4 + e.. \text{Equation (1)}$$

**Table 1:** Descriptions and Measurement of Variables

Variables	Descriptions	Measurement	Expected Sign	Achieved Sign
<b>Outcome Variable</b>	Rate of Corruption in public procurement, coded 3 = high, 2 = Moderate and 1 = No at all.	Ordinal	+	+
<b>Explanatory Variables</b>	Contents of Ethical training and education (1 = raising awareness, 2 = compliance with anti-corrupt, 3 = ethical decision making)	Nominal	-	+
	Sources of Ethical training and Education (1 = university or college, 2 = informal/self-taught, 3 = seminars or workshops, 4 = internal training)	Nominal	+	+
	Nature of Ethical training and education (1 = Compulsory, 0 = Not compulsory)	Binary	-	-
	Scope of ethical training and education (1 = all public officials, 2 = specific public officials).	Nominal	-	-

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Sources of Ethical Procurement Training and Education

The study sought to examine the role of ethical training and education towards procurement anti-corruption. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they have received ethical training and education related to procurement anti-corruption. It was reported by the majority of respondents (87.8%) that they have received ethical training and education on procurement anti-corruption practice, however; 12.2% of respondents argued otherwise. This finding is an indication that majority of the respondents have knowledge on ethical procurement practices, thus were aware and able to identify corruption related practices in public procurement. Furthermore, respondents were asked to indicate the sources of ethical procurement training and education. Table 2 presents multiple responses results: frequencies and percent on the sources of ethical training and education towards anti-corruption in public procurement, where each respective respondent where trained and educated.

**Table 2:** Multiple Responses Results on the Sources of Ethical Procurement Training and Education (Cases = 316)

Sources of training and Education	Count	Percent
University or college degree	114	100%
Informal or self-taught	55	48.2%
Seminars or workshops (Central bodies)	79	69.3%
Internal training	68	59.6%

It was revealed that all 114 (100%) respondents received ethical procurement training and education through their university or colleges. This is due to the fact most of the universities and colleges integrates their curriculums with the established procurement legal frameworks, ethical code of conducts, laws and regulations with emphasis on imparting anti-corruption knowledge to the trainees. Informal or self-taught accounted for 48.2% of all sources of ethical training and education among respondents. Moreover, it was argued by 69.3% of respondents having received ethical procurement training and education from internal training program and seminars organized by their particular organization. Seminars and workshops, which have been regularly organized by the central bodies (PSPTB and PPRA) accounted for almost 59.9% of ethical procurement training and education among respondents. On a regular basis, PSPTB and PPRA conduct seminars and workshops on ethical procurement practices in public procurement, whereby procurement practitioners are urged to participate. In line with these findings, the report of Controller and Audit General (CAG) reported a significant numbers of participants in Annual Procurement Governance Workshop (APGW) in 2017 (338), 2018 (629) and 2019 (458) (URT, 2018; URT, 2019). These findings are indication that majority of respondents received training and education related to procurement ethical practices from different sources, thus were able to identify and curb public procurement from corrupt practices in the course of its proceedings.

#### 4.2 Organization of Ethical Procurement Training and Education

The study further investigated whether the types of ethical procurement training and education being organized to uphold a sense of anti-corrupt behaviour and unlock public procurement from corruption in LGAs are compulsory or voluntary in nature. It was reported by 79.8% of responses that the nature of ethical training organized in LGAs are not compulsory in nature. Only 20.2% regarded the nature ethical training among procurement practitioners to be compulsory in nature (Table 3). Regarding the scope of ethical procurement training and education towards procurement anti-corruption, it was revealed and acknowledged by 65.7% of respondents that the types of ethical procurement training and education towards unlocking public procurement from corruption were organized for specific and selected public officials and departments, 34.3% agreed the scope of training to be for all public officials. In line with this finding, Mazigo (2014) and Nyambariga (2016) in their studies of the causes of corruption in public procurement found and posited that corruption in public procurement is pioneered and is critical as some public officials who indirectly involve in public procurement proceedings has no ethical procurement knowledge, thus are unable to identify the key indicators of procurement corruption.

**Table 3: Organisation of Ant-corruption Training and Education (n = 114)**

Nature of Ethical Training and Education			Scope of Ethical Training and Education	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Compulsory	23	20.2	All Public officials	39 34.3
Not Compulsory	91	79.8	Specific Public officials	75 65.7

### 4.3 Contents of Ethical Procurement Training and Education

Respondents were further asked to indicate the contents of ethical procurement training and education they have received towards unlocking public procurement from corruption. The data was collected and analysed using a set of multiple responses (Table 4). It was revealed that raising of awareness on corruption related indicators and practices was one of the types of ethical training offered to procurement practitioners (77.3%) however, the type of content does not significantly unlock public procurement from corruption ( $m = 2.093$ ; Std. Dev = 0.978,  $p = 0.061 > 0.05$ ). This finding, in line with Mainga (2012) and Msanya (2015) findings, imply that, the contents of ethical procurement training and education in most cases focus on raising procurement practitioners' awareness on how to identify and deal with procurement corrupt practices. It was also found that compliance with anti-corruption and code of conduct accounted for 75%, followed by ethical decision making which accounted for 70.5%. Once effectively streamlined, ethical decision making and compliance with anti-corruption, ethical training and education play significant role in unlocking public procurement from corruption ( $p < \alpha$ ). Procurement practitioners reported being received ethical procurement training and education on different aspects with focus on unlocking public procurement from corruption and achieve sustainable performance. Ethical procurement training and education have been organized with express objectives towards enhancing procurement stakeholders and practitioners' ability in identifying and dealing with procurement irregularities and corruption related practices.

**Table 4:** Multiple Responses Results on the Contents of Ethical Procurement Training and Education (Cases = 257)

Contents of Education and Training	Count	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev	<i>p</i> -Value
Raising awareness on corrupt practices	87	76.	2.093	0.978	0.061**
Compliance with anti-corruption	74	64.9	2.115	0.865	0.003**
Ethical decision making	96	84.2	2.230	0.908	0.000**

**Note:** \*\*, \*, Represents Chi-Square tests at 95%, Confidence levels.

### 4.4 Effectiveness of Ethical Training and Education on Procurement Corruption

Moreover, the study examined the extent to which ethical training and education is effective in unlocking public procurement from corruption. Four aspects related to ethical procurement training and education: contents, sources, nature, and, and scope of ethical training and education were examined. The three aspects examined out of four were found being less effective in unlocking public procurement from corruption ( $p > \alpha$ ) except for the sources of ethical procurement training and education (mean = 1.9820; Std. Dev = 0.7205;  $p = 0.027 < 0.005$ ). 51.8% of respondents argued that the contents of ethical training and education which basically focus on raising awareness on corrupt practices and ethical decision making, among others, were less effective in upholding a sense of anti-corruption in public procurement (mean = 1.8429; Std. dev = 0.8815;  $p = 0.103 > 0.1$ ). Nevertheless, 49% and 45% of respondents argued that the nature and scope of ethical and education (respectively) were less effective in upholding a sense of anti-corruption

in public procurement. This is due to the fact that the nature of ethical training and education towards procurement anti-corruption is not mandatory to all procurement stakeholders, and its scope do not involve all procurement stakeholders. Generally, these findings indicate that the current status of corruption in public procurement, among others, is attributed by the nature, scope and contents of ethical procurement training and education, which were found less effective in unlocking public procurement from corruption. Despite the fact that anti-corruption is driven by internal and external factors such as moral behaviours of individual person, and socio-economic factors, the role of ethical procurement training and education should never be underemphasized (Kornevs *et al.*, 2016; Mainga, 2012).

**Table 5:** Effectiveness of Ethical Training and Education on Procurement Anti-corruption (n = 114)

Aspects of Ethical Training	Effectiveness	Count	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev	t-stat.	p- value
Contents of Ethical Training & Education	More Effective	23	20.2	1.8429	0.8815	23.074 <sup>a</sup>	0.103 <sup>*</sup>
	Less Effective	59	51.8				
	Not Effective	32	28.0				
Sources of Ethical Training & Education	More Effective	53	46.5	1.9820	0.7205	21.344 <sup>a</sup>	0.027 <sup>**</sup>
	Less Effective	28	24.6				
	Not Effective	33	28.9				
Nature of Ethical Training & Education	More Effective	34	29.8	2.0007	0.7356	22.336 <sup>a</sup>	0.193 <sup>*</sup>
	Less Effective	56	49.1				
	Not Effective	24	21.1				
Scope of Ethical Training & Education	More Effective	32	28.2	1.9925	0.8027	20.683 <sup>a</sup>	0.182 <sup>**</sup>
	Less Effective	45	39.5				
	Not Effective	37	32.3				

**Note:** \*\*, \*, Represents Chi-Square tests at 95%, and 90% Confidence levels, respectively.

#### 4.5 Ethical Training, Education and Procurement Anti-corruption

Furthermore, Ordinal Logistic Regression was used to validate the role and effectiveness of ethical procurement training and education in unlocking public procurement from corruption, keeping into account the four aspects of ethical procurement training and education as presented in table 6. To check whether the model adopted in this study improves prediction ability, and that it fitted well with data collected and the study variables, Chi-square statistics test was conducted. The results of the Chi-square statistics test revealed  $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ ; Hosmer and Lemeshow Test  $p = 0.101 > 0.05$ ; which are indication that predictor variables were consistent with the model used. Looking at the results in table 6, it was found that the contents of ethical training and education play a significant and positive role in unlocking public procurement from corruption by a factors of 1.525 ( $\beta = 1.733$ ,  $p = 0.017$ ;  $p = 0.017 < 0.05$ , Odds Ratio = 1.525). Likewise, the sources of ethical procurement training and education was more likely to unlock public procurement from corruption by a factors of 4.527 ( $\beta = 2.402$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.000$ , Odds Ratio = 4.527). On the other hand, the nature and scope of ethical procurement training and



education were less likely to unlock public procurement from corruption ( $p > \alpha$ ) by a factors of 0.825 and 0.306 respectively. The Nagelkerke  $R^2$  was 0.507, meaning that the predictor variables adopted in this study were able to predict the role of ethical procurement training and education in unlock public procurement from corruption and its related malpractices by 50.7%, leaving 49.3% for unaccounted variables.

**Table 6:** Impact of Ethical Training and Education on Procurement Ant-corruption

Variables	Estimates	Std. error	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp( $\beta$ )
Anti-corruption_00	1.203	0.623	6.001	1	0.005	2.107
Anti-corruption_01	4.041	1.809	22.313	1	0.000	2.912
Contents of Ethical Training & Education	1.733	0.895	5.118	1	0.017	1.525
Sources of Ethical Training and Education	2.402	1.163	11.783	1	0.000	4.527
Nature of Ethical Training and Education	1.844	0.879	5.744	1	0.113	0.825
Scope of Ethical Training and Education	3.057	1.206	13.043	1	0.071	0.306
Chi-Square statistics, $p = 0.003$ ; Hosmer and Lemeshow Test, $p = 0.101$ ; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.507$						

In line with Mainga (2012) and Msanya (2015) findings, the findings under this study revealed that ethical procurement training and education plays a significant role in unlocking public procurement from corruption. However; the modality on how the training and education are organised among procurement stakeholders is less effective towards upholding a sense of anti-corruption in public procurement. This finding was supported by the argument from one of the key informants, service provider, who argued that: *"...as long procurement practitioners are not trained and educated, especially on socio-economic impact of corruption in public funded projects, make them responsible and accountable for their unethical behaviours; corrupt practices in public procurement will persist, despite regular training and education..."*. Nevertheless, one of the contractors during a face to face interview responded that: *"...offering regular training and education to procurement practitioners can serve a tool towards tackling corrupt practices in public funded projects, however; an emphasis also should be on strengthening anti-corruption frameworks, rewards and punishment..."*. On the other hand, the findings hold the assumptions of the Agency theory true and useful, that the agents [procurement practitioners] and the organisation tend to perform well, and minimises conflict interest [corruption] when have necessary skills, knowledge and expertise needed to perform delegated duties (Eisenhardt, 1989).

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the role of ethical training and education in unlocking public procurement from corruption. Majority of the respondents were found having the required ethical procurement knowledge and education, specifically on how to identify corrupt practices, comply with anti-corruption, code of conduct, and ethical decision making. The study concludes that ethical training and education play substantial role towards enhanced anti-corruption practices in public funded projects. However, the nature, contents and scope on how ethical procurement training and education organised

are less effective in upholding a sense of anti-corruption. The researcher therefore recommends to the central training bodies and PEs on the need to organise, design and conduct ethical training and education be mandatory to all procurement practitioners. Nevertheless, it was revealed that the content of ethical training and education is based on imparting knowledge towards identifying corrupt practices, raise awareness, and make ethical decisions. The study further recommends to training bodies to review and restructure the contents of ethical training and education to include the impact and consequences of corruption in public funded projects, not only to the specific organisation, but also to the public and the government at large. This will strengthen a sense of accountability among procurement practitioners, and therefore enhances anti-corrupt practices.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author has no potential conflicts of interest to declare with respect to publication of this article.

### **About the Author**

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