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Contract Management and Performance of Road Construction Projects at Local Government Entity in Uganda

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Abstract:

Contract management for public works remains a notable challenge for central and local governments in Uganda. The purpose of this study was to investigate the management of road construction contracts by Busia Local Government, with the aim of improving such practices. Based on a mixed study that involved a review of existing data and empirical investigation using questionnaires, observations, and interviews, this study reveals that contract management has a significant effect on the performance of road construction projects in Busia Municipality. Contract evaluation, risk management, and monitoring were highlighted as key processes to focus on if contract management is to support the successful performance of road construction projects. The outcome of the study is important since most governments spend large amounts of their budget on public infrastructure projects including roads, but do not get value for money. The findings add to the current body knowledge as they demonstrate which areas should come under critical focus when designing contract management practices to benefit road construction projects.

Keywords: contract management, contract evaluation, monitoring, public works, road projects.

乌干达地方政府实体道路建设项目的合同管理与履约

摘要:

公共工程的合同管理仍然是乌干达中央和地方政府面临的显著挑战。本研究的目的是调查布西亚地方政府对道路建设合同的管理，目的是改进这种做法。本研究基于对现有数据进行审查并使用问卷调查、观察和访谈进行

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实证调查的混合研究，表明合同管理对布西亚市道路建设项目的绩效有显著影响。合同评估、风险管理和监控被强调为关键流程，如果合同管理要支持道路建设项目的成功实施，则需要重点关注。该研究的结果很重要，因为大多数政府将大量预算用于包括道路在内的公共基础设施项目，但并没有得到物有所值。这些发现增加了当前的身体知识，因为它们表明在设计合同管理实践以使道路建设项目受益时，哪些领域应该成为关键重点。

关键词：合同管理、合同评估、监测、公共工程、道路项目。

1. Introduction

Contract management and road construction were initially introduced in Uganda by consultants in the early 1980s (Awanyo, 2019). Contract management has subsequently gained much attention in government departments, multinational companies, and local companies and is expected to assume even greater significance in the years to come (Bemelmans et al., 2013).

Traditionally, contract management was less recognized in road construction. For instance, according to Awanyo (2019), in the 17th century, few organizations in the world followed planning, control, monitoring, and evaluation of procurement. However, by the 19th century, most firms and public sector organizations in Europe and United States added procurement committees as part of their governance structures, focusing on planning, controlling, and monitoring the process (Muhammad et al., 2019). Subsequently, in the late 19th century, administrators and managers began to rethink their competitive priorities and value chain (Muhammad et al., 2019).

In Africa, a significant number of organizations started to recognize that effective contract management can transform and improve the Public Sector road construction (Awanyo, 2019). The importance attached to effective procurement started to increase not only because organizations realized that a one-dollar reduction in purchasing spent equals a one-dollar increase in profit (Awanyo, 2019). It is opined that African countries have been awakened to the importance of an effective contract management process at central and local government levels and its subsequent contribution to improved road construction (Bemelmans et al., 2013).

1.1. *Origins and Evolution of Contract Management in Uganda*

Traditionally, contract management was viewed as a clerical and reactive task, but recently it has been positioned among core organizational responsibilities (Local Government Association, 2013), and has become increasingly critical (Coleman et al., 2020) to the effective functioning of any organization, especially local

governments (National Audit Office, 2013). For example, in the United Kingdom, it is argued that local authorities spent £56.6 billion on buying goods and services, of which over half (£29.2 billion) was paid to third parties responsible for the improvement of contract management controls in the financial year 2011–12 (National Audit Office, 2013).

Awanyo (2019) reports that since the 1960s, a number of measures have been introduced to improve contract management including constitutional and legislative instruments, administrative instructions, and financial circulars. Furthermore, the Government enacted the Public Finance Act 1964, which gave powers to the Ministry of Works and Public Service to administer procurements of general stores and office supplies for all government ministries, districts and departments (Agwot, 2018). In 1973, inefficiencies and unfairness in the delivery of public services became apparent, and the number of districts increased to more than 12. Consequently, the Central Tender Board (CTB) was established in 1977 to approve procurements above US \$1,000 in order to improve road construction; additionally, the Government established different institutions under the Central Tender Board (CTB) to procure and stock supplies to avoid delays and shortages, as well as to control the usage of foreign exchange at that time. Among the new institutions were the State Trading Corporation (STC), now commonly known as State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and the Army Shop, established in 1964 and 1965 respectively. They were mandated to procure and stock commodities at subsidized prices (Agwot, 2018). Uganda General Machinery was also established in 1965 to buy and distribute small-scale machinery for minor enterprises concerned with tools, and agricultural inputs and processing (Ojok & Basheka, 2016).

Between 1981 to 1986, the Ministry of Supplies was set up to buy and stock essential commodities, consumables, and common user items at subsidized prices and avoid shortages, especially for the privileged class. By 1990, the Customer Technical Bulletin (CTB) was suffering from huge numbers of contracts submissions for approval from ministries and districts. As a way forward

and to ease the situation, further decentralization was institutionalized by the establishment of additional contract regulators but also without adequate enabling guiding principles and standards: Military Tender Board 1992, National Medical Stores (NMS), 1993, Police Tender Board 1994 and District Tender Boards 1994 (Ojok & Basheka, 2016).

Earlier on, the World Bank (1997) had raised concerns on the prevailing problems in contract management: over-centralization, heavy, clogged, and bureaucratic system, delays in public road construction, inefficiency, obsolete stores—waste, lack of transparency and accountability among others (Ojok & Basheka, 2016). With assistance from the International Trade Centre (ITC), a national consultative conference was held in December 1997, among recommendations passed was to set up a committee to review (as reported in "Services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency" chaired by Aripfosal: - contract management system, the role and effect of the different Contract bodies in providing contract management leadership, contract practices and standards, the role of CTB as the oversight body and others. The committee was reinforced by gains from the Abidjan conference (November 30th–4th December 1998 by the ADB) on contract management reforms in Africa (Government of Uganda, 2003). Other reforms have been manifested by Contract Management Regulations (Government of Uganda, 2014). The regulation requires that procuring and disposing entities (PDEs) develop contract implementation plans and contract management in general, appoint contract supervisors, procedures for awarding contracts, specific types of contracts for respective procurement categories, pricing, and payment (Government of Uganda, 2014).

1.2. Theoretical Lens

The theoretical basis for contract management and road construction was founded on the Institutional Theory developed by Scott (2004) in 1987. This theory resonates well with the study variable, which investigated the effect of contract management on road construction in Busia District Local Government. The theory proposes that if the organization wants to deliver effective road construction service to stakeholders, it needs to invest in good contract management processes such as better evaluation processes, risk management, and increasing monitoring intensity. The institutional theory assumes that the institutional environment can strongly influence the development of formal structures in an organization, often more profoundly than service delivery. Scott (2004) supported the theory by examining the growth of three administrative services in California public schools (school of health, psychology, and curriculum) from the standpoint of institutional theory. Its basic premise is that when there is a high level of consensus and cooperation within the institutional environment, the diffusion of

innovative structures is steady and long-lasting hence better service delivery to the stakeholders.

1.3. Problem and Research Gap

Local governments (LGs) are mandated to deliver services in conformity to minimum national standards of road construction. Thus, LGs are responsible for delivering decentralized services directly to the stakeholders and their citizens (Awanyo, 2019). Despite the above legal mandate, Busia District Local Government loses much taxpayer money because of improper procurement and poor contract management practices (Office Auditor General, 2019). Contract management is further characterized by corruption, litigations, contract cancellations, unnecessary contract variations, and substandard service or product delivery. Public Procurement and Disposal Authority (2018) revealed the existence of shadow works and noted that in ten (10) contracts worth UGX 980 million (Nine hundred Eighty million), providers executed contracts beyond the contract periods as evidenced in the signed contracts as providers failed to complete contracts within the contractual timelines. Despite the efforts of the district in inserting terms and conditions of the contract, such as having the start and completion dates filled by the contractor, provision of performance bonds/guarantees, appointing of project managers or project teams by the District officials to curb this phenomenon, results have been unsatisfactory (Public Procurement and Disposal Authority, 2018). This study, therefore, sought to investigate the implementation of contract management that affects road construction in Busia District Local Government. Existing literature has further focused effort on contract management challenges, but no study has been done on contract management and specific areas of focus at Busia Local Government.

2. Literature Review

The contract evaluation process consists of the preliminary examination and evaluation of the offers received and considered to be valid, to assess their responsiveness to specifications and requirements as defined in the solicitation document, analyze their cost and benefit, and determine their price and value. Contract evaluation, together with the requirement definition and the evaluation criteria and method specified in the solicitation document, is the basis for the subsequent selection of the offer that provides the best value for money for the organization (Ghossein et al., 2018; World Bank, 2018). Contract evaluation is one of the major constructs of contract management that involves an insight into risks and the likelihood of meeting the program and contractual requirements. According to Selviaridis and Wynstra (2015), contract evaluation is an activity to assess the contractor's technical and programmatic progress, approaches, and deliverables.

The concepts under which the contract evaluation is premised are qualified personnel use and the assessment of goals and objectives, which are further operationalized by managing construction service delivery by establishing key road construction indicators, such as timely deliveries, stakeholder fulfillment, efficiency, and effectiveness.

In road construction, the description of quality is deemed to be very important, and the success of contract management is dependent on the exploitation of qualified employee knowledge and experience that generally culminates into better service delivery (Fukeya et al., 2018). The Busia District Local Government contracts committee has criticized poor performance and conduct in their contract management process. Some engage in corruption, and others are not qualified to discharge their duties to the required levels (Office of the Auditor General, 2019). Armstrong and Landers (2018) contend that having qualified personnel will help an organization run and grow contract evaluation processes effectively and efficiently. In this study context, qualified personnel is employees meeting the Busia District Local Government Contracts Committee's or other comparable requirements applying to the areas in which the individuals conduct evaluations or provide services (Armstrong & Landers, 2018) geared toward improving road construction services. According to Fukeya et al. (2018), qualified personnel use is an act of intervention to improve the organization's goods and services quality in stiff competition by improving employees' technical skills to deliver service effectively. A study by Vian (2016) reveals that the significant value of the contract evaluation process and the concern about reducing spending and improving the quality of road construction in Uganda is notoriously vulnerable to corruption and unqualified personnel. The author found out that using unqualified personnel led to billions of public funds wasted because of poor contract management, which hinders the achievement of value for money. The report further shows that ineffective management of contracts caused contract value leakage of 17 to 40 percent. The losses from all this disorganization could be substantial. Vian (2016) stated a positive relationship between qualified personnel and construction service delivery. Aziz and Abdel-Hakam (2016) observe that using qualified personnel supports making accurate and timely decisions during the contract evaluation process, which culminates in better service delivery to the organization in terms of resource saving. The use of qualified personnel enables the District Contracts Committee (CC) to assign the right personnel to work on the tasks necessary to

complete the contract evaluation process. The most important aspect of using qualified personnel is that the contracting committee will have a competent team to help make competent and productive decisions to save the district from incurring future legal, financial challenges if they arise (Aziz & Abdel-Hakam, 2016).

3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed design employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The review of documents aimed to understand the context of the study, identify stakeholders for data collection, and guide the set of questions designed to collect data in the study. To ensure quality, a content validity index of 70% (Rwothumio et al., 2021; Orichom & Omeke, 2021) was adopted in testing data collection instruments that were pre administered to peers and supervisors for initial review, redesigned, and retested to ensure CVI conformity of 70%. In addition, reliability checks were undertaken using a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. Cronbach's ' α ' is the coefficient of reliability. From a population of 122, a sample of 112 respondents participated in the study according to the guidance by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Respondents were drawn from officials from Busia Local Government who were senior managers or officers or support directly involved in contract management and road works and consistent with justifications by McCombes (2019). Contractors were involved as well since they have roles and responsibilities to play in line with PPDA (2003) (Government of Uganda, 2003) as amended and Contract Regulations (Government of Uganda, 2014).

Quantitative data were organized by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. Descriptive statistics were then generated and formed the basis of the analysis of quantitative data. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the constructs of contract management and the performance of construction projects. For enhancing the analysis of qualitative data, simple linear regression analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to test the research hypotheses. Similar studies by Adjabeng and Amoah (2021) and Albalate et al. (2021) have used regression analysis to test the intensity causal effects among variables associated with contract management. By testing the hypothesis, the study was able to identify key areas of focus to improve contract management. Qualitative data was analyzed to enhance the outcome of quantitative data analysis. We transcribed data from the interview and developed themes from which related

content was analyzed to generate findings and conclusions. This approach has been recommended by Nduhura (2019), arguing that if themes are derived, content in the form of narrated feelings and experiences about the phenomena under study should be analyzed under respective themes that match with the narrated experiences in the social interaction under the investigation. Ethical dimensions in the study were largely guided by the works of Pallant (2020), McCombes (2019). They were managed by seeking informed consent from participants and letting them know that they have a right to exit the data collection dialogue at any one time. Confidentiality was managed through coding that protected the identity of respondents. Citation of previous scholarly works by authors was undertaken. Due to COVID-19, the investigators ensure that they followed Ministry of Health (MoH) standard operating procedures,

specifically ensuring that focus group discussions are not held, wearing masks, and using sanitizers.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Contract Evaluation Process

Research objective one sought to examine the effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction in Busia district local government. The study examined six quantitative questions on which the respondents rated themselves to establish the effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction. The investigation captured the sentiments presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' opinion about the contract evaluation process (Field data, 2021)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. dev
T11 There is always appropriate documentation by the contractors	0%	11 (12%)	7 (8%)	35 (39%)	37 (41%)	4.18	.571
T12 The road contract management committee gives voice to participant's experience	28 (31%)	34 (38%)	3 (3%)	18 (20%)	7 (8%)	3.84	.816
T13 Information is always provided to enhance the quality of the contract management committee	1 (2%)	13 (14%)	10 (11%)	30 (33%)	36 (40%)	4.34	.544
T14 Contract managers always carry out assessments concerning goals and objectives stipulated in the initial agreement	0%	5 (6%)	15 (17%)	30 (33%)	40 (44%)	4.28	.514
T15 Objectives are always adjusted where there are gaps	0%	9 (10%)	12 (14%)	44 (48%)	25 (28%)	4.31	.562
T16 Timely decisions about the future of the contracts are always taken	35 (39%)	30 (33%)	0%	20 (22%)	5 (6%)	3.25	.816
Composite Mean						4.03	.637

Table 1 illustrates the effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction. Based on the conceptual framework in Chapter One, the contract evaluation process was studied from the dimensions of the use of qualified personnel and assessment of goals and objectives perceived to affect road construction. The following are descriptive statistics regarding respondents' opinions about the contract evaluation process.

Item T11 sought to determine from the respondents whether there is always appropriate documentation by the contractors. The results show that the majority of the respondents, 37 (41%), strongly agreed, 35 (39%) agreed, 11 (12%) disagreed, while 7 (8%) indicated "not sure." The mean score = 4.18 while the standard deviation = .571. The appropriate documentation by the contractors implies consent and expectations between the contractors and the clients. It helps inform about decisions made and how contractors and the client respond to different situations.

Item T12 sought to determine from the respondents whether the road contract management committee gives voice to participants' experience. The results show that the majority of the respondents, 34 (38%), disagreed, 28 (31%) strongly disagreed, 18 (20%) agreed, 7 (8%) strongly agreed, while only 3 (3%) indicated "not sure"

with the statement implying that the committee gives a moderate voice to participants' experience.

Item T13 sought to determine from the respondents whether the information is always provided to enhance the quality of the contract management committee. The results show that the majority of the respondents, 36 (40%), strongly agreed, 30 (33%) agreed, 13 (14%) disagreed, 1 (2%) strongly disagreed, while 10 (11%) indicated "not sure" with the statement implying that information is always provided to enhance the quality of the contract management committee. Information sharing and communication are key factors that may affect construction processes and influence construction projects' costs, time, and quality performance. Therefore, information sharing in BDLG seems to reveal that the costs, time, and quality performance of construction projects are always handled well. This assertion was confirmed by the mean score = 4.34, which was far above the composite mean score of 4.03.

As to whether contract managers always carry out assessments concerning goals and objectives stipulated in the initial agreement, the results show that the majority of the respondents, 40 (44%), strongly agreed, 30 (33%) agreed, 15 (16%) are not sure, while 5 (6%) disagreed with the statement implying that the assessment team can understand road construction material used. Assessment

is a key component of learning materials used in road construction. It helps the assessment team learn what kind of materials were used in a particular road construction area and why. In an interview with a key informant BD-10 had this to say:

“Assessment of the roads constructed is part of our goal here at the district. My team is able to rate what kind of materials were used at a particular road construction area and justify why. This means that we expect quality.”

The above statement seems to reveal that some respondents are convinced that assessment in relation to goals and objectives as stipulated in the initial agreement is key to quality road construction at Busia district local government.

Item T15 sought to determine from the respondents whether objectives are always adjusted where there are gaps. Results revealed that the majority of the respondents, 34 (38%) disagreed, 28 (31%) strongly disagreed, 18 (20%) agreed, 7 (8%) strongly agreed while, 3 (3%) were non-committal. The mean score was 3.25 and the standard deviation equaled 0.716, meaning that there was low stakeholder satisfaction because services are moderately provided as planned or promised. Indeed, this is arguably one of the most important set of

processes within the road construction services delivery because it determines their levels of satisfaction.

As regards to item T16, which sought to find out whether timely decisions about the future of the contracts are always made, results show that the majority of the respondents 35 (39%) strongly disagreed, 30 (33%) disagreed, 20 (22%) agreed, while 5 (6%) strongly agreed with the statement. These results implied that timely decisions about the future of the contracts are not always taken. Timing of the decision is important since it allows decision makers to visualize various elements needed for the decision and helps make the decision making more coordinated with critical key points considered while making the decision.

4.2. Testing Hypothesis One

Simple linear regression analysis was carried out to establish the effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction. In testing hypothesis one, a composite index was computed from data collected from the respondents on the indicators of contract evaluation process, which was regressed with data collected from road construction. The purpose was to determine the percentage variation in the road construction explained by the contract evaluation process.

Table 2. Regression model summary (Field data, 2021)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.782 ^a	.612	.601	.28059

a. Predictors: (Constant), Contract evaluation process
N = 90

Table 2 reveals R Square of .612, indicating that only 61.2% of the total variation of road construction is explained by the contract evaluation process. The model was therefore taken fit to explain the relationship between the two variables. The inference is that a strengthened

contract evaluation process contributes to road construction. The results in Table 2 explained the validity of the regression model. The outputs of the ANOVA in Table 3 below describe the variance accounted for in Table 2.

Table 3. ANOVA table (Field data, 2021)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.546	1	6.546	106.391	.001 ^b
	Residual	20.236	89	.068		
	Total	26.782	90			

a. Dependent Variable: Road construction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Contract evaluation process
N = 90

The results in Table 3 represent a significant effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction; $F(1/90) = 106.391$; $p < 0.05$. This is an indication that a significance of contract evaluation process model occurs over road construction. The F value illustrates that the coefficient of the contract evaluation process is not equal

to zero and therefore a significant relationship between the two variables exists. That contract evaluation process had a coefficient of estimate, which was significant based on (p -value = 0.001), which is below 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis is therefore accepted and it is concluded that “There is significant

effect between the contract evaluation process and road construction in Busia district local government.” Therefore, this concludes that the contract evaluation process is a significant predictor of road construction.

4.3. Discussion of Findings

Findings indicate that most respondents were not satisfied with the services offered by the BDLG, especially the quality standards of the roads. Findings reveal that most of the respondents believed that mechanisms should be put in place to help identify alternative processes and potential solutions to BDLG road construction challenges. Accordingly, participants suggested that some stakeholders could be part of BDLG road construction committee to ensure that stakeholders’ resources are not misappropriated. Therefore, these findings show that road construction in the BDLG is poor.

This study establishes a strong positive significant correlation ($r = .495$) between contract management and roads construction service delivery in the BDLG. Thus, in the Busia district, a better contract evaluation process contributed to better roads construction service delivery, and poor monitoring intensity contributed to poor roads construction service delivery.

The contract evaluation process accounted for a 61.1% change in road construction. Findings reveal that the contract evaluation process, risk management, and monitoring intensity significantly affect road construction in the BDLG because the significant p-values (p-value = .001, p-value = .005, and p-value = .003) were less than the critical significance at 0.05. However, the contract evaluation process affected road construction in the Busia District more significantly than risk management and monitoring intensity because it had a higher Beta-value ($\beta = .611$) than risk management and monitoring intensity-Beta-values ($\beta = .493$ and $\beta = .466$, respectively).

Overall, the study results reveal that contract management has a positive and significant effect on road construction measured in four dimensions: timely deliveries, stakeholder fulfillment, efficiency, and effectiveness. Thus, the study concluded that good contract management would be accompanied by improved road construction.

4.4. Effect of Contract Evaluation Process on Road Construction

There is a strong positive and significant effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction ($r = .782^{**}$, Sig = .001). This effect means that any additional unit invested in the contract evaluation process would significantly improve road construction, which implies that a positive increase in the contract evaluation process will lead to better road construction regarding timely deliveries, stakeholder fulfillment, efficiency, and effectiveness. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis

was rejected, and a conclusion was drawn that an emphasis in the BDLG on the contract evaluation process concerning the use of qualified personnel and assessment of goals and objectives will increase and improve road construction regarding timely deliveries, stakeholder fulfillment, efficiency, and effectiveness.

4.5. Effect of Contract Evaluation Process on Road Construction

The study sought to examine the effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction in the BDLG. According to the conceptual framework in Chapter One of this report, the contract evaluation process was assessed according to (a) the use of qualified personnel and (b) the goals and objectives perceived to affect road construction. The Institutional Theory was chosen as a basis for this study because it clearly illustrates how contract evaluation process factors, such as using qualified personnel and assessing goals and objectives, affect service delivery. The study’s findings reveal a strong positive and significant effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction.

While the findings above showed a significant effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction, Nshemereirwe (2015) indicates a widespread problem with the contract evaluation process in terms of participation in contract management. In addition, Nshemereirwe (2015) adds that the inability to participate in contract management effectively through the contract evaluation process by the stakeholders can result in the fact that they (stakeholders) will consider the contract management being for the top district, therefore, leading to poor road service delivery.

The findings reveal that information is always provided to enhance the quality of the contract management committee. They also reveal that contract managers always carry out an assessment in relation to goals and objectives, as stipulated in the initial agreement. Information sharing and assessing the expected goals and objectives of the contract are essential aspects of contract management. Providing an abundance of information to contract managers is key to business success. These findings concur with those of Banaitiene and Banaitis (2012), who emphasize the importance of information sharing in contract management. They posit that information sharing is fundamental but insufficient by itself to bring about significant service delivery improvements. Rather than relying on the shared information received from partners or asking partners to share information, organizations need to focus on establishing good relationships with their partners and having trust in each other that good quality information will be shared in a timely manner.

Yang et al. (2010) also emphasize the above point, stating that “access to relevant information would enable organizations to reduce uncertainty and improve planning

which in turn improves their service delivery” and that the “quality of information would help organizations to improve information exchange among contractor partners.” Inadequate information exchange and poor quality information seem to have an impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery (Awasthy & Hazra, 2020; Danielle, 2020).

Despite all this, the issue that decisions about the future of contracts are not always made in a timely fashion by the Busia District Local Government (BDLG) still remains. This may affect road construction if not immediately attended to by the district authorities concerned.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study sought to examine the effect of the contract evaluation process on road construction in the area administered by the BDLG; to establish the effect of risk management on road construction in the area administered by the BDLG; and to assess the effect of monitoring intensity on road construction in the area administered by the BDLG. Overall, contract management had a positive effect on road construction performance. However, the strength of the effect varied among the three contract management aspects studied—the contract evaluation process, risk management, and monitoring intensity. The study concluded that the contract evaluation process and risk management affected road construction significantly, but the effect of monitoring intensity was weak. It is also noted the BDLG has attempted to adhere to the principles of contract evaluation processes, although decisions about the future of contracts are not always made in a timely fashion. More can be done in the spirit of “kaizen”, in essence continuous improvement in service delivery.

Recommendations are made based on the findings. The significant powers and authority accorded to BDLG need to be checked in the sense that a review of top management structures is required to encourage and enhance stakeholder participation, particularly in terms of quality service delivery.

Practices, policies, operating procedures, and processes should be revised in the interest of improving the timeliness of decision making so as to improve the quality of road construction. Because BDLG is a public entity, management should share these recommendations as part of the input in annual reviews of the public procurement process in Uganda.

Empowerment/sensitization of the staff affected by the above-mentioned restructuring specifics is important to deter the abuse of power and authority while supporting

increased stakeholder participation in contract management. Several approaches to engage stakeholders that are recommended in a study by Nduhura et al. (2020) should be considered. Specifically, it is argued that there is a need to engage stakeholders in identifying challenges and to provide stakeholders with real-time information about various aspects of contract management through a variety of channels.

Proactive decision making is necessary in some instances due to the sensitive nature of road construction service provision. This requires that an internal service-level agreement (SLA) be developed by stakeholders. The SLA should map processes, identify appropriate timescales for executing processes, and allocate responsibilities with trace and track systems to identify delays. It is also important to note that some delays may be caused by mistakes in public contract management processes. This could be due to lack of skills (Agaba & Shipman, 2007), indicating a need for capacity building in the areas of bid evaluation and contract management. Capacity building will result in timely decision making and thus reduced delays that affect contract management.

However, to the extent possible, a more participatory decision-making approach should be embraced in view of its benefits. The negative effects of proactive decision making should also be better managed. This can be achieved through periodic contract management process reviews, with meetings held to review processes, challenges, and remedies identified and agreed upon for execution with the aim of reducing contract management process delays.

There is need to strengthen audit practices, both internal and external, so that audits are done objectively. Recommendations should be implemented without discrimination or bias, as the study was guided by institutional theory, which is based on sanctions. Contract variations should be guided by the set laws, strictly adhered to, and done by professionals who should be independent of the entity’s staff so that any conflict of interest is eliminated, as such conflicts seem to be the cause of poor service delivery in the area administered by the BDLG. This is mentioned in the problem statement as one of the factors that prompted the researcher to investigate the phenomena, and it calls for an amendment in contract management regulations. The management of BDLG should be encouraged to improve monitoring intensity in terms of monitoring and evaluation (M & E) plans, the allocation and use of resources, and complaints management so as to facilitate road construction in terms of timely deliveries, stakeholder fulfillment, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Ethical Considerations

The article is a part of a Master's thesis undertaken by the principal investigator in support of secondary investigators.

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