



Impediments to Implementation of the Procurement Audit Recommendations in the Public Sector in Tanzania: Challenges and Solutions

Masoud Yussuf¹; Nashon E. Masunya¹; Eliakim C. Maswi²; Magoti Harun¹; Vera Sikana¹; Zuwena Nkwanya¹; Joseph Salula³; Happiness Mgyabuso⁴; Suma Atupele Mwanjwango⁵; Magai Maregesi⁶

¹ Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Capacity Building and Advisory Services Directorate, Research and Documentation Section, Box 2865 Dodoma, Tanzania

² Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Director General office, Box 2865 Dodoma, Tanzania

³ Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Directorate of Corporate Social Services, Human Resource and Administration Section, Box 2865 Dodoma, Tanzania

⁴ Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Directorate of Corporate Social Services, Planning section, Box 2865 Dodoma, Tanzania

⁵ Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Monitoring and Compliance Directorate, Box 2865 Dodoma, Tanzania

⁶ Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Director General office, Zonal offices Box 2865 Dodoma, Tanzania

E-mail: masunya.nashon@ppra.go.tz; masoud.yusuf@cbe.ac.tz; magoti.harun@ppra.go.tz;
joseph.salula@ppra.go.tz; magai.maregesi@ppra.go.tz; zuwena.nkwanya@ppra.go.tz
happiness.mgyabuso@ppra.go.tz; vera.sikana@ppra.go.tz; suma.mwanjwango@ppra.go.tz

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Abstract

The study investigates impediments that hinder the implementation of audit recommendations in the public sector and suggests suitable recommendations. The study employs a semi-structured interview method to gather data from stakeholders involved in public procurement. These stakeholders are from 51 procuring entities, which include Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Parastatals (PAs), and Local Government Authorities (LGAs). This study sampled and interviewed a total of 51 employees. The individuals included in this group are procurement officers, accounting officers, tender board members, internal auditors, engineers, information and communication technology experts, transport officers, legal officers, and finance managers from the selected procuring firms. The data has been analyzed through the technique of content analysis. The study found that the insufficient implementation of audit recommendations in Tanzanian procuring entities is due to ineffective monitoring mechanisms for

implementing the recommendations, insufficient resources needed to carry out the recommendations, and a lack of commitment among stakeholders in the organizations to implement the recommendations. The study suggests that the oversight bodies should establish an effective monitoring mechanism to ensure the implementation of the audit recommendations, the government should ensure that the procuring entities possess the resources to carry out audit recommendations. Additionally, procuring entities must demonstrate a strong commitment to executing the audit recommendations.

Keywords: *Audit Findings; Audit Recommendations*

1. Introduction

The auditing function is one of the vital functions within the organization. It has a significant impact on monitoring the organization's activities by identifying its operational deficiencies and suggesting appropriate recommendations to address them, thereby enhancing the organization's performance (Matlala & Uwizeyimana, 2020). By doing a comprehensive and real-time audit, it not only reduces financial losses within the organization but also improves the safety and security of society (Rendon & Rendon, 2016). Fakie (1999) insisted that auditing is a fundamental aspect of effective governance in the public sector, as auditors play a crucial role in ensuring accountability and integrity within government organizations by conducting impartial and objective assessments of the responsible and effective management of public resources to achieve desired outcomes. This helps to improve operations and instill confidence among citizens and stakeholders (Korje, 2016).

Gendron, Cooper, and Townley (2007) emphasized the essential nature of the auditor's expertise in issuing recommendations and constructing performance guidance measurements to improve the organization's performance. Wilkins (1995) argued that audit results and recommendations can achieve improvements in public sector accountability. This implies that public sector audits can be effective if the auditees put audit recommendations into action for better government performance and resource management, which will improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the local sphere of government (Gendron et al. 2007). Therefore, the implementation of the auditor's recommendation is critical, as it is a measure of the auditing activity's effectiveness. (Yussuf et al., 2021).

On the other hand, a lack of effective implementation of the audit recommendations has a lot of consequences for the organization and the country at large. As argued by Sinar (2013), the recurring audit issues result in a bad image for the government, and the public wants a solution to be made immediately. Implementation of the audit recommendations by the public sector's auditees will result in enhanced accountability, improved operations, cost savings, and asset safeguarding (Aikins 2012). This is because audit recommendations provide valuable methods for bridging the gap between the standards and actual practices within the organizations as well as providing learning information (Steagall, 2004; Van Acker et al., 2015).

Regarding the importance of the auditing function within the public sector, the need to conduct a proficient auditing role in the public sector, particularly in relation to procurement, is underscored by numerous experts (Yussuf et al., 2021; Yusof et al., 2019). Given the substantial financial resources allocated to the procurement function, it is particularly vulnerable to corruption and mismanagement (Budiman and Amyar, 2021; Matto, 2017). Inefficiencies in the procurement process annually cause a significant loss of public funds, as indicated by substantial evidence (NAOT, 2022; PPRA, 2022). This has influenced governments throughout the world to institute various institutions for conducting this notable function from time to time (Matlala and Uwizeyimana, 2020; Yusof, 2019). For example, the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) has established the National Audit Office of Tanzania (NAOT) and

the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) so as to conduct compliance and value-for-money audits for all procuring entities each year and as deemed appropriate (Yussuf et al., 2021).

Despite the government's efforts and the potential benefits for the organization and the country from effective implementation of the audit recommendations the records indicate a lackluster level of implementation of prior audit recommendations (Budiman, 2021, Matlala and Uwizeyimana, 2020; PPRA, 2022;). This situation is not healthy for society as well as the country at large due to its implications. Failure to implement audit recommendations related to financial loss implies the continued loss of public funds (Budiman, 2021). For instance, in South Africa, as revealed by the Auditor General of South Africa's (AGSA), most of the public entities were not taking corrective action on the issues of irregularities raised in prior-year audits; hence, some of the weaknesses remained unresolved or were recurring yearly (AGSA 2014). The same has been revealed by the Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) of PPRA for FY 2021–2022, which shows that 565 audit recommendations were given to the 19 audited entities, out of which only 125 recommendations (22.12 percent) were partially implemented, while 41 recommendations (7.26 percent) remained completely unimplemented. Based on the audit findings as per APER of PPRA for FY 2020–2021, 47 percent (497 out of 1,051) of the audit recommendations were fully implemented, 26 percent (275 recommendations) were partially implemented, and 27 percent (279 recommendations) were not implemented at all (PPRA, 2023).

From these few observations, it is evident that to minimize financial losses that would be annually realized and health-related challenges that would continually affect the general public, governments need to make a lot of efforts to ensure that the audit recommendations are implemented as effectively as required (Budiman, 2021; Randon & Randon, 2016). Tajudeen (2016) argued that organizations should pursue audit recommendations that require non-compliance with regulations, even if the implementation requires exorbitant resources against those owned by the organization. Chiang and Northcott (2010) argued that failing to pursue audit recommendations related to personnel health and safety, working environment, emissions, and waste disposal due to financial limitations is considered an offense punishable by law.

Some scholars have investigated the reasons for the poor implementation of previous audit recommendations. For instance, Ibrahim et al. (2014) depicted a lack of resources for implementing the recommendations as the root cause of the failure. Also, Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020) also noted that management support and a lack of vibrant audit committees within the organization have a significant impact on the implementation of the audit findings. Furthermore, Ibrahim (2016) revealed that a lack of regular progress checks, follow-up, and monitoring hinders the implementation of the auditor's recommendations. Also, according to Aikins (2012), the lack of consequences for not implementing the audit recommendations influences their general implementation. The author further argued that when there is no or insignificant consequence for not implementing the audit recommendations, the auditees will not take the effort to implement the audit recommendations as a result of the findings remaining as they are. However, many organizations and employees are aware of the consequences of not effectively implementing the audit recommendation, yet the observed implementation is not as impressive as expected (Budiman, 2021).

Based on the reality that the government loses significant sums of money annually as a result of poor implementation of audit recommendations and the presence of inconsistencies in findings in the previous studies, most of which relied on secondary data and were conducted outside of the United Republic of Tanzania, these altogether bring up empirical and contextual gaps that need to be bridged. This study aimed to investigate the factors hindering the effective implementation of the audit recommendations and suggest suitable solutions for the identified challenges, grounded in the audit findings and not supported by quotes.

After the introduction, the study goes on to the literature review part, which is a collection of different works on the subject. The section on research methodology presents the procedures for data collection and sample selection, along with an examination of the study's findings. Subsequently, the study aligns its findings with its objectives and presents the results, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations.

2. Literature Review

The need for prompt implementation of the audit recommendations is empathized with by many scholars (Matlala & Uwizeyimana, 2020; Budiman, 2021), due to the significant importance of minimizing fraud and malpractices on public funds. However, in many cases, the evidence shows the level of implementation of the audit recommendation is not impressive (Matlala & Uwizeyimana, 2020; Dain & Rahmat, 2017). This has influenced some scholars to investigate the reasons behind the poor implementation of audit recommendations. For instance, Ibrahim et al. (2014) argued that a lack of resources, including funds and competent personnel, is a major contributor. According to Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020), management support and a lack of active audit committees affect the implementation of audit recommendations. As stated by Ibrahim et al. (2014), the audit committees must continuously follow up on the implementation of audit recommendations (Nest, 2006). Scholars also found that the organization's lack of progress checks, follow-up, and monitoring to assess the audit recommendations hinders their implementation. On the other hand, Dain and Rahmat (2017) reveal that although other scholars found minimum follow-up audit recommendations to be one of the impediments, periodic follow-up by the audit committee has no impact if there is no management will and allocated funds. Surprisingly, many organizations have audit committees; however, their performance in implementing the previous audit findings is not satisfactory (Matlala and Uwizeyimana, 2020).

Moreover, Aikins (2012) further reveals that a lack of serious punishments and repercussions for not implementing the audit recommendations makes procuring entities deliberately ignore the need to implement the audit recommendations. However, in some cases, punishments were imposed on those individuals or organizations that failed to implement the audit recommendations, for instance, demotion or transfer of responsible officers, and alike (Aikins 2012). Also, on the other side, in some cases, the employees are aware of the consequences of not effectively implementing the audit recommendation, yet the observed implementation is not as impressive as expected (Budiman, 2021).

Aikins (2012) also claimed that the audit recommendations' quality greatly affected their implementation. The author further contended that poor-quality and imprecise recommendations are unfeasible because they ignore legal and practical limits and hinder audit implementation. Poorly labeled, hidden, or obscured audit recommendations are not easily identifiable or stand out in the report, according to the Australian National Audit Office (2015). These recommendations utilize ambiguous and soft language like "consideration should be given to," which does not indicate urgency or conviction. (Aikins, 2012). Also, studies show that some organizations lack competent staff who can understand the audit recommendations and how to implement them as required, and as a result, they fail to implement them accordingly.

However, other scholars argued that some of the audit recommendations are associated with other organizations; therefore, their implementations need collaboration with other organizations (Aikins, 2012). For instance, having an inadequate number of staff or a lack of funds to execute some projects, normally these types of audit findings their implementations are not easily implemented without the collaboration of other institutions like the Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for releasing funds, and recruitment institutions for the employment of the required number of staff. Therefore, the auditor

penalizing the audited organizations seems inappropriate, as they do not have a mandate to implement those recommendations.

3. Methodology

The study employed a qualitative technique. This technique was used in order to capture various details in terms of opinions, feelings and narratives of respondents regarding the phenomenon which would not be achieved if quantitative approaches used by other previous scholars were used. In addition, this study utilized a multiple case study technique that was devised by seasoned researchers for the purpose of gathering data. The designed specifically required the researcher to collect indepth data about the implementation of audit recommendations from multiple organizations recruited in this study. Multiple cases involved 51 procuring entities sampled in this study.

In this study, data were gathered using semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders engaged in public procurement within sampled procuring entities. The key stakeholders participating in public procurement were purposefully sampled from 51 procuring entities representing different government bodies, including MDAs, PAs, and LGAs. These procuring entities were chosen purposefully based on certain criteria, including procuring entities from MDAs, LGAs, and PAs; procuring entities that have consistently done poorly in the previous five audits by the PPRA; and lastly, procuring entities that have consistently been declared by CAG to do well in the previous five audits by the PPRA.

In order to confirm the quality of the interview guide used in the case study approach, the researchers conducted a pilot study to evaluate its clarity. This was done by interviewing six respondents from six distinct procuring entities that were not part of the actual study. Subsequently, the researchers analyzed the interview guide based on the replies gathered during the pilot study. Prior to commencing the data collection process, all revealed weaknesses in the interview guide were corrected. There were a total of 51 interviews performed, and each interview was carefully documented and transcribed in compliance with Tanzania's personal data protection legislation. Each interviewer was chosen from a single procuring entity. The researchers performed the interviews at the participants' offices according to the predetermined schedule. Each session lasted around 45 minutes. A qualitative content analysis was performed to derive significant themes. During the entire process, the researchers consistently analyzed the data and referred to the existing literature to assess how the facts could potentially contradict established concepts. Each author individually coded the first three transcripts and then compared them to identify similarities and differences in the codes. Subsequently, modifications and consensus were collaboratively achieved regarding the codes, and subsequently, the remaining transcripts were coded accordingly. The repeated method allowed for the aggregation of themes that elucidated the underlying mechanism.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section present the findings and discussion of the results which the study obtained through interveiwed with the participants.

4.1 Demoghaptic Profiles of the Respondents

Table 4.1 presents the demographic profile of the participants in this study. The demographic profile reveals that 88.2% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree or higher, suggesting that they possessed sufficient educational background to comprehend the questions stipulated in the questionnaire. Similarly, individuals within the working age range (i.e., 25–49 years old) accounted for 68.6% of the participants. Furthermore, 37.2% of the respondents, who were predominantly procurement officers, actively participated in the daily execution of procurement decisions by completing the questionnaire.

Similarly, 11.8% of the participants, as internal auditors, were responsible for ensuring adherence to public procurement law and its regulations at the organizational level.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age distribution	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Percent
65 and above years	4	7.9	7.9
Between 18 and 24 years	5	9.8	17.7
Between 25 and 35 years	10	19.6	37.3
Between 36 and 49 years	25	49.0	86.3
Between 50 and 64 years	7	13.7	100.0
Total	51	100.0	
Education distribution	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Percent
Degree	27	52.9	52.9
Master's Degree or above	18	35.3	88.2
Post-secondary Certificate/Diploma	6	11.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	
Position distribution	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Percent
Accounting Officers	5	9.8	9.8
Tender Board	6	11.8	21.6
Engineer	2	3.9	25.5
Finance officer	5	9.8	35.3
IT	3	5.9	41.2
Legal Officers	5	9.8	51
IAU	6	11.8	62.8
Procurement Officer	19	37.2	100.0
Total	51	100.0	
Working experience distribution	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Percent
11-14 years	7	13.7	13.7
3-6 years	7	13.7	27.4
7-10 years	12	23.5	50.9
Above 4 years	16	31.4	82.3
Less than 3 years	9	17.7	100.0
Total	51	100.0	

4.2 Factors Affecting the Implementation of Previous Audit Recommendations

This section outlines the findings gathered from the respondents, bolstered by a series of supporting quotes. The findings indicate three main reasons hindering the ineffective implementation of the previous audit recommendations: which are; inadequate monitoring mechanisms, insufficient resources, and a lack of commitment among stakeholders within the organizations to implement the audit recommendations. The findings were elaborated hereunder:

a) Insufficient Monitoring Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Previous Audit

The study revealed that one of the major obstacles to the implementation of the previous audit recommendation is a lack of effective monitoring of its implementation. Normally, after the completion of

the audit process, the auditee receives information about the identified weaknesses and strategies to address them. However, the study has revealed the following, which were supported by the quotes from the interviewees:

i) There is Insufficient Oversight of the Execution of Corrective Action Plans that Procuring Entities (PEs) have Submitted

As mentioned earlier, the auditor, after completing the audit exercise within a given period of time, is required to submit its plan on how it is going to tackle the given recommendations. When the PPRA conducts audits, the procuring entities must submit remedial action plans to the PPRA within fourteen days of receiving the audit report, outlining their plans to address the identified shortcomings. Regrettably, the findings show no evidence of the PPRA following up to ensure the submitted plan for implementation of audit recommendation has undertaken as required. This finding is consistent with Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020), who revealed that one of the challenges that contribute to poor implementation of previous audit recommendations in South African Municipalities is a lack of regular progress checks, follow-up, and monitoring to track progress towards audit recommendation implementation. Key participants were reportedly saying:

“.....The main issue is how follow-up is done. Looking at the reports themselves, they are important and critical for the government and specific organizations. Therefore, to maximize the importance of these procurement audit reports, we need to treat them as equally important as other financial audit reports. We need to implement all recommendations at this time. Accounting Officer.....” (MDA-2)

“PPRA should verify all reports and all that is written in the reports before we submit them. Failure to verify these reports opens a room for dishonesty among some employees, who sometimes report what they have not implemented because they know no verification will be done at all. Or else, they report the findings of another project rather than the questioned one. So, allocating time for verification of what has been reported in the fourteen-day period helps to verify that what has been written in the report is really what was done.....” Procurement Officer-LGA-1

ii) Failure of the Audit Committees to Execute their Responsibilities Properly

One of the important organs within the procuring entities for follow-up on implementation of the audit recommendation is the audit committee, which, among other responsibilities, is monitoring the implementation of the audit recommendations to make sure that they are implemented as required. Contrary to this, the findings show that some respondents were unsure of the presence of the audit committee in their organizations, as well as their functions. While some of them revealed that the audit reports prepared by the PPRA were not submitted to them. This implied that the audit committees did not follow up on the implementation of audit recommendations. Consequently, the audit committees failed to implement most of the audit recommendations as required. This finding was consistent with Matlala and Uwizeyimana's (2020) findings, which revealed that a lack of active audit committees affects the implementation of audit recommendations.

While interviews were held, a participant was quoted as saying,

“We do not receive any feedback from the audit committee. And I don't know if we have such a committee here. Procurement Officer-MDA-14

iii) Inappropriate Follow-up of the Policy Recommendations

The finding revealed that some of the audit recommendations have policy implications, and in most cases, the audited procuring entity has no power or mandate to implement the recommendations, and all they do is to inform the responsible ministries or departments on the audit findings and their recommendations. For example, a staff shortage, unfinished projects due to a lack of funds, delays in receiving items procured from the Government Procurement Services Agency's (GPSA), and the alike. Thus, failing to follow the implementation of the audit recommendations to appropriate authorities (e.g., Paymaster General, Recruiting Authority, GPSA) prevents knowing their status if they were implemented or not. Therefore, instead of making follow up with the procuring entities, the PPRA needs to follow up with the appropriate authorities in relation to those audit recommendation implementations.

This type of finding, according to the Australian National Audit Office (2015), is called a complex issue in which the matters require extensive consultations and negotiations, as well as approvals from a wide range of stakeholders. For instance, the World Health Organization (2012) cites a staff health insurance fund as an example, asserting that despite initiating measures shortly after the audit report, the design of a new government structure took two years. Again, the finding is consistent with the finding of Aikins (2012), who argues that some audit implementations necessitate the establishment of new policies to ensure compatibility. The key participants provided the following quotes:

"The issue of staff shortages will not be resolved in one day. The government will pretend that it has enough staff, but that is not possible...." **Finance Officer-LGA-3**

"There are some issues that you are blamed for, but in reality, they should be addressed by the Permanent Secretary PO-RALG (President's Office, Regional and Local Government). But the council comes and fills the book with them. Now to respond to them is like you are beating around the bush," **Finance Officer-LGA-2**

"...or example: recently we paid for two motorcycles to GPSA, but they were delayed, and when the auditor came and asked where the motorcycles were, they had not been delivered yet. Moreover, when we asked GPSA for payment evidence, it was a problem. As a result, we faced blame and charges for actions that were outside our control. Moreover, even if the auditor recommended anything, that was not easy for us to implement." **Tender Board Member: LGA-4**

But there are audit issues that result from the interdependence of two or three institutions." **Tender Board Member: LGA-5**

iv) The PPRA's Failure to Perform Regular Audits for Some Procuring Entities Over an Extended Period of Time

The study discovered that several procuring entities had not undergone audits in several years. Notably, some LGAs have never had any audits performed at all. Furthermore, this study discovered a substantial difference in the number of years between consecutive audits for the audited procuring entities. For instance, the study observed that some procuring entities undergo audits every three to five years. The irregularity of the audit process has led to inadequate implementation of previous audit recommendations. The respondents reported hereunder:

"... Since I moved here three years ago, the PPRA report has not been issued, and they have not been audited for a long time. So, I have never witnessed that here." **Internal Auditor (LGA-2)**

"I think it would be better to do auditing every two years because you would have time to examine the implementation of audit recommendations. For example, you audited us this year. Next year, you

will check how we have implemented these things. The year after that, you will tell us which ones we complied with and which ones we did not. We are doing this for the sake of improvement only.” Accounting Officer-PA-1

b) Insufficient Resources Required to Implement the Audit Recommendations

The finding revealed that some procuring entities failed to implement the previous audit recommendations due to a lack of the resources required to implement them. The following types of resources have been identified as impediments to effective audit recommendation implementation:

i) PEs Lack of Adequate Competent Staff

The findings revealed that some staff within the organization lacked some skills and competence in understanding the audit findings and the accompanying suggestions made by the auditors. They rely on the auditor's guidance to resolve audit queries, while internal auditors within organizations play a crucial role in understanding and implementing audit findings as required within the organization. Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020) found that the auditees' inability to understand some audit recommendations led to their non-implementation. However, this finding contradicts the finding of Wadesango et al. (2017), who observed that some audit recommendations are not clear and vague, which makes it very difficult for the auditee to understand them clearly.

The key participants were quoted as saying:

“The ability to understand the issue is the problem... You may find that the auditor has questioned... Whether the institution has made purchases or hired a technician without following the procedures, to prove to the auditor that the procedures have been followed, a summary of meetings is needed. But when responses are made without management consultation, they normally make this common expression....” Accounting Officer (LGA-4)

“The auditor’s comments have been taken into account, and the council will ensure that this does not happen again, rather than providing documents to verify if there was compliance.” Accounting Officer (LGA-6)

“The challenges are about understanding how to respond to the issue, how to interpret it, how to read it, how to translate it, and how to answer it.” Transport Officer.....”LGA-4

“It depends on the auditors’ languages. One must read and understand all recommendations because they are written in auditing language. While others explain losses caused by non-compliance first and later provide what needs to be done to rectify the situation,” Procurement Officer-LGA-6

ii) The Procuring Entity Lacks Sufficient Staff

The study shows that procurement management units in various procuring entities, particularly LGAs, are understaffed in accordance with Section 37 of PPA, CAP 410 (R.E. 2022). The data shows that most LGAs' procuring management units consist of only two or three people. As a result, these people have an enormous workload, making it difficult for them to comply with the law. Furthermore, even when PMUs have a sufficient number of employees, they lack the necessary resources and professional personnel to successfully carry out their obligations. Furthermore, the findings indicate that there is insufficient funding to implement numerous audit recommendations. The procuring entities lack of funds prevented numerous public entities from complying with the audit recommendations.

The audit findings would stand if the funds for construction projects, which were not completed on time due to a shortage of funds, were not available next year. Furthermore, in some procuring entities, particularly LGAs, professional expertise and capacities are barriers to the successful implementation of audit findings and recommendations. According to the findings, numerous experts were unable to fully comprehend the audit findings and recommendations, and in the majority of cases, they relied on internal auditing assistance. This finding was consistent with Matlala and Uwizeyimana's (2020) findings, which revealed that the availability of resources and the quality of the workforce inside inspected organizations are two factors impacting audit recommendation implementation in South African municipalities.

During interviews, participants reported various issues, as reported hereunder:

"First, we have a staff shortage; the government has not hired for a long time, and those who are available are old and do not match with the government's required efficiency. So somewhere we are not doing well." Finance Officer-LGA-10

"There are councils that do not have the capacity to facilitate their employees attending the required trainings. In some instances, even the district directors travel by bus due to financial predicaments. This is not only because of financial challenges but also the level of willingness and prioritizing of the head of the institution." Tender Board Member: LGA-24

"We do not have enough funds to secure all that we need. For instance, the server room needs carpet, AC, a fire extinguisher, and a metallic door. But based on the financial status and priorities of the organization, we are not able to have all we need in time." Information and Communication Technology expert (LGA-5).

"On average, we still need assistance; many computers are worn out." TO-LGA-6

"Money is a resource; resources have never been enough... They are always insufficient as needs are many, and when you see issues, sometimes it is not because of corruption but because of a scarcity of resources and many needs. " Tender Board member: LGA-8

iii) Lack of Enough Funds

The findings show that the majority of the procuring entities failed to implement the audit findings due to a lack of sufficient funds to implement them. Not only that, but also, in some cases, especially in LGAs, there is a tendency to get funds from the government, normally near the end of the financial year. Furthermore, clear orders accompany these funds, mandating the assignment and full expenditure of the lump sum within a specific time frame, usually months or weeks before the financial year ends. If the lump sum is in excess, it prompts most PEs to initiate several needs not previously included in the annual budget plan, which they must procure within a short timeframe. Conversely, if the lump sum is insufficient, it leaves the projects planned for the financial year incomplete. Due to the limited time frame, PEs often disregard procurement law and regulations when acquiring their needs, instead following the orders that come with the money. Furthermore, some or most of the freshly launched demands end up with an unfinished status, prompting the audit queries. Rashel (2016) supported this finding, stating that the competent ministry did not provide the budgeted funds to the procuring entities on time, leading to delays in project completion.

During an interview, participants were quoted as saying;

"For example, the issue of not completing projects or not using all the money cannot be resolved by the government in a whole year. You gave me one billion on June 25th, but I cannot procure

materials worth one billion in seven days. Therefore, it is likely that we will carry over 600 or 700 million to the following year. When the auditor comes, he will automatically report that we failed to implement the project, not considering that we received funds late. But in reality, how can I complete it in the first three months? I will struggle to finish it, and the buildings will be done. After that, we will resolve the matter. But when he comes back next year, he will find the same problem.” **Finance Officer-LGA-9**

“...We only receive funds late, but the systems that we use in procurement are problematic and slow. With so many procurement activities in the organization, procurement becomes chaotic as everyone needs to use the disbursed funds effectively as they should not be taken back to the Treasury. As a result, because of late disbursement of funds, projects are not finished, and the money therefore causes a problem...” **Legal Officer-LGA-3**

“... money comes to implement projects on June 29, 2023, one day before closing the system. But it also comes with instructions that projects should be completed on time.” **Procurement Officer-LGA-8**

c) Lack of Commitment Among the Stakeholders to the Implementation of Audit Recommendation

The study revealed that there was a lack of commitment from the stakeholders in the procurement process within the organization.

i) Lack of Seriousness in the Implementation of the Audit Recommendations Among the Procuring Entities

Furthermore, the results indicate that there was a lack of seriousness in the implementation of the previous audit recommendations. In certain circumstances, officers are aware of the existence of auditing recommendations and have sufficient resources, like funds, staff, and time, to implement them. However, their negligence prevents them from implementing previous auditing recommendations as required, knowing that they will face no consequences. The absence of consequences for failing to carry out audit recommendations had an impact on implementation, consistent with Aikins' (2012) findings. The author stated that auditees are unlikely to implement audit recommendations in the absence of significant consequences, leading to the persistence of the current findings.

The participants were quoted as saying

“Failing to implement previous audit recommendations on time is often just negligence.” **Accounting Officer-LGA-8**

“...We have many experts, but we are not committed. This leads to answering queries incorrectly.” **Legal Officer-LGA-4**

i) Insufficient Enforcement of Penalties for Individuals who Failed to Properly Execute the Audit Recommendations

The findings indicate that some respondents attributed the ineffective implementation of the previous audit recommendation to a lack of appropriate authority, such as the PPRA, to take stern action against the procuring entities or the Chief Executive Officer who did not implement the audit recommendation as required. Some participants argued that the PPRA failed even to give warning letters to non-implementer procuring entities.

According to quotes from the participants,

“No action was undertaken for those organizations that failed to implement the audit recommendation.” Legal Officer-LGA-7

“If the punishments were imposed for non-implementors, the implementation of the previous audit findings could be improved as many officers were not ready to be demoted.” Finance Officer-LGA-08

4.2 The Way Forward for Enhancing the Implementation of Audit Recommendations

The section tried to come up with various recommendations based on the study findings on the challenges faced by the procuring entities in the implementation of previous audits.

a) Insufficient Monitoring Mechanism for Implementation of the Previous Audit Recommendations

From this finding, the following recommendations should be carried out:

- i) Oversight bodies should make sure that there is a proper program for conducting the auditing exercise. They should ensure that it audits procuring entities within the given timeframe. Also, they should ensure that the time duration between the auditing exercises does not exceed one year. In order to carry out these tasks effectively and efficiently, the organization must expand its workforce to audit a larger number of procuring entities annually. Also, oversight bodies must closely monitor the timely implementation of corrective action plans submitted by PEs. They must assign a team to conduct a quarterly follow-up on the implementation of corrective action plans submitted by PEs.
- ii) The audit committees within the organizations should review the audit reports submitted to their respective organizations and follow up on the implementation of the audit recommendations to make sure that they are implemented properly.
- iii) Lastly, but not least, the oversight bodies should follow up on the audit recommendations on policy issues with the appropriate authorities from which the auditing findings are coming and ensure that they are implemented accordingly. Additionally, the policy implementation organs should appropriately implement the audit recommendations they received from the procuring entities.

b) Lack of Enough Resources Required to Implement the Audit Recommendations

The following recommendations have been proposed in relation to the findings:

- i) The government should ensure that procuring entities have enough funds to implement the audit recommendations. Additionally, the government should release the funds at a reasonable time before the end of the financial year, allowing procuring entities to allocate them according to their plans without rushing to meet the deadline. Also, an adequate number of staff should be allocated to those procuring entities that are in need of them.
- ii) Also, the government should ensure there are an adequate number of procurement officers within the procuring entities. By ensuring that the number of procurement officers within the organization matches the extent of the procurement transactions performed within the procuring entities.

c) Lack of Commitment among the Stakeholders on Implementing of the Audit Recommendations

From this observation, the following recommendations have been proposed:

- i) The procuring entities' management is responsible for ensuring the proper and timely implementation of the audit recommendations. Not only that, but we should also ensure that the same detected finding does not occur again.
- ii) The oversight bodies should ensure that disciplinary measures are imposed on procuring entities as well as accounting officers that did not implement the audit recommendations without strong justification.

Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate the reasons for the ineffective implementation of audit recommendations and propose possible solutions for them. The study found that poor audit implementation is caused by insufficient monitoring of the implementation of the audit recommendation, a lack of resources among the procuring entities, and a lack of commitment among the stakeholders to the implementation of the audit recommendations. The study recommends that PPRA establish a proper auditing program to ensure every procuring entity is audited every year. The government should ensure that the organization has enough resources to implement audit recommendations, and lastly, there must be commitment among the procuring entities to implementing the audit recommendations. Finally, the study's limitations must be acknowledged, which can be used as a future research direction. This study used a qualitative approach and used only 51 procuring entities in Tanzania. Therefore, the study suggested that other researchers use either quantitative techniques or both methods in order to validate the findings, which might increase the sample size.

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