

Government Procurement: Processes, Challenges, and Perspectives of Implementers

Ace Angelo G. Crisostomo¹, Alger P. Dura, DPA¹

¹Graduate School, Master in Public Administration Program, University of Mindanao–Tagum College, Tagum City, Davao del Norte, Philippines

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Email of Corresponding Author: ace.acrisostomo@gmail.com

Abstract

Government procurement is essential to effective public service delivery but remains challenged by complex procedures, extensive documentary requirements, and operational inefficiencies. This study explored the lived experiences of procurement implementers in the City Government of Tagum to examine government procurement processes, implementation challenges, strategies, and insights for improving procurement performance. The study was anchored on the Stages Model of Public Policy and New Public Management Theory. A qualitative phenomenological research design was employed, involving 20 purposively selected procurement implementers. Data were collected using a validated researcher-developed interview guide through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis following Colaizzi's phenomenological approach. The findings revealed that procurement implementation is characterized by procurement planning, documentary verification, procurement mode selection, digitalization, and accountability mechanisms. Major challenges included documentary inefficiencies, budget and resource constraints, workflow bottlenecks, and workforce limitations. Procurement implementers addressed these challenges through stakeholder capacity-building, monitoring and tracking mechanisms, inter-office coordination, proactive planning, legal compliance, and quality assurance. The study concludes that strengthening digital procurement systems, continuous capacity-building, stakeholder collaboration, and procurement process improvement can enhance procurement efficiency, transparency, accountability, and public service delivery. It recommends continued procurement modernization, expanded training programs, strengthened supplier engagement, enhanced inter-office collaboration, and further studies on the implementation of Republic Act No. 12009. The study mainly aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12: Responsible Consumption and Production by supporting sustainable public procurement practices. Its findings contribute to institutional, governance, and socio-economic sustainability by providing evidence that may strengthen procurement implementation, improve public resource management, and support responsive local governance.

Keywords: Philippine Government Procurement, Local Government Units, Phenomenology, Procurement Implementers, Procurement Planning, Public Procurement, Qualitative Research, RA 9184, RA 12009

1. Introduction

Government procurement is a fundamental mechanism for delivering public services through the efficient acquisition of goods, infrastructure, and services. However, procurement processes in government institutions remain challenged by lengthy procedures, extensive documentary requirements, bureaucratic processes, and the participation of multiple stakeholders, which often result in procedural delays and compliance issues (Querijero et al., 2022; Polinar et al., 2023; COA, 2022). These challenges directly influence organizational performance, service delivery, and the effective utilization of public resources. The City Government of Tagum, despite implementing a substantial portion of its development projects, continues to encounter procurement-related concerns requiring improvements in procurement planning and document processing. Guided by the experiences of procurement implementers, this study examines the procurement processes, challenges, strategies, and insights within the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Tagum. The findings aim to contribute to improved procurement implementation, transparency, efficiency, and policy enhancement while strengthening local governance and public service delivery.

1.1 Background of the Government Procurement Process in the City Government of Tagum

Government procurement involves multiple administrative procedures requiring coordination among procurement implementers, suppliers, signatories, and other stakeholders. Because of its complex and document-intensive nature, procurement activities frequently experience procedural delays, compliance issues, and administrative challenges (Querijero et al., 2022). Procurement implementers likewise encounter demands arising from bureaucratic processes and operational responsibilities, affecting the timely completion of procurement activities (Polinar et al., 2023). These issues are reflected in reports of the Commission on Audit, which identified recurring procurement deficiencies and procedural

delays across government agencies (COA, 2022). Procurement performance reflects the effectiveness and operational efficiency of an organization's procurement system. Continuous assessment enables organizations to identify weaknesses and implement corrective measures that improve procurement outcomes (Kakwezi and Nyeko, 2019). Sufficient staffing and balanced workloads further contribute to procurement efficiency by reducing employee burnout, improving productivity, enhancing procurement performance, and strengthening service delivery (Carillo and Diano, 2025). Within the City Government of Tagum, the Commission on Audit reported that while most government projects were implemented, a portion remained unimplemented, prompting recommendations to improve procurement document processing and accelerate procurement activities. These observations underscore the importance of strengthening procurement mechanisms to ensure efficient resource utilization and project implementation. This study focuses on the experiences of procurement implementers in the City Government of Tagum, particularly employees responsible for preparing purchase requests and other procurement documents. Although previous studies have examined government procurement policies, limited attention has been given to the practical implementation challenges encountered by procurement personnel at the local government level. By examining these lived experiences, the study seeks to identify implementation issues and provide insights for improving procurement mechanisms and public service delivery.

1.2 Themes and Insights on Government Procurement Implementation among Procurement Implementers

Existing literature consistently emphasizes that effective procurement performance depends on sound procurement planning, competent procurement personnel, transparency, compliance with procurement regulations, stakeholder participation, and organizational capacity. Studies have demonstrated that procurement planning significantly influences procurement performance by improving user participation, identifying organizational needs, and strengthening institutional efficiency (Udoba and Mwalukasa, 2024). Green public procurement further supports sustainable procurement practices by emphasizing employee education, management support, and work quality as essential factors in achieving procurement objectives (Ayarkwa et al., 2025). Similarly, procurement professionals who receive continuous training demonstrate improved efficiency, stronger technical competence, and greater capacity to address procurement challenges (Dadzie et al., 2024; Mebrate and Shumet, 2024; Tsegaye, 2017). Transparency and policy implementation likewise remain central themes in procurement literature. Weak implementation of procurement policies contributes to corruption risks, procedural errors, and reduced public trust, highlighting the need for transparent procurement mechanisms and strengthened compliance systems (Vah, 2023). Non-compliance among procurement professionals further affects internal controls, ethical standards, procurement efficiency, and service delivery (Sama and Mwalukasa, 2024). Fair procurement planning also encourages supplier participation, promotes value-for-money, and improves organizational responsiveness (Chepkesis and Keitany, 2018). Several international studies have identified inadequate procurement planning, weak contract management, insufficient personnel skills, and ineffective coordination as major contributors to procurement delays and poor procurement performance (World Bank, 2024; Abera, 2022). Information sharing, management commitment, and stakeholder collaboration have likewise been shown to improve procurement performance and organizational responsiveness (Kissi et al., 2025). Procurement planning further enhances project implementation by supporting risk management, community participation, and evidence-based decision-making (Joshua & Chege, 2025). Research also emphasizes the importance of quality assurance, organizational performance practices, and ethical procurement. Procurement managers who consistently apply quality management practices strengthen procurement performance through technical evaluation, collaboration, communication, and continuous monitoring (Awoke, 2021; Salam and Yaqub, 2023). Likewise, responsible public financial management and adherence to procurement regulations help prevent corruption, promote fair competition, and ensure accountability in the use of public funds (U4, 2005). Within the Philippine context, procurement laws establish transparency, workforce development, and strategic procurement planning as essential principles for effective government procurement (Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems, 2021; Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), 2023). Nevertheless, studies continue to report challenges related to procurement delays, bidder participation, document processing, inadequate procurement personnel, and the need for procurement modernization, digitalization, capacity-building, and dedicated procurement management offices (Polinar et al., 2023; Nisnisan and Salapa, 2024; Bacalso et al., 2024; Sobremisana & C, 2024). Observance of procurement laws likewise reinforces accountability among procurement personnel entrusted with managing public resources (Athumani and Minja, 2020).

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Government Procurement Implementation in Local Government Units

Government procurement is recognized globally as a mechanism for ensuring transparency, fairness, and efficient public service delivery. Public procurement promotes equal opportunities through competitive and non-discriminatory processes that stimulate employment, innovation, investment, and inclusive economic growth (Interact-Eu, 2021). The European Union likewise emphasizes equal treatment of all tenders, recognizing procurement as a significant contributor to economic development and public value (excerpt from the reports of Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2017). International studies consistently identify procurement planning, personnel competence, stakeholder participation, transparency, and information sharing as determinants of procurement performance. Procurement efficiency improves when user departments possess adequate procurement knowledge, organizations invest in continuous training, and

procurement planning is strengthened (Udoba and Mwalukasa, 2024; Dadzie et al., 2024; Tsegaye, 2017; Mebrate and Shumet, 2024). Likewise, transparent implementation of procurement policies reduces corruption risks and enhances institutional accountability (Vah, 2023), while supplier participation, quality management practices, and management commitment contribute to responsive procurement systems (Chepkesis and Keitany, 2018; Awoke, 2021; Salam and Yaqub, 2023; Kissi et al., 2025). Global evidence further shows that procurement delays commonly result from weak procurement planning, inadequate contract management, insufficient personnel capacity, and ineffective coordination among implementing entities (World Bank, 2024; Abera, 2022). Consequently, organizations are encouraged to strengthen institutional capacity, modernize procurement systems, improve stakeholder collaboration, and institutionalize transparency throughout procurement implementation (World Bank, 2024). In the Philippine context, the government procurement system is governed by a comprehensive legal framework that promotes transparency, competitiveness, and workforce development (Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems, 2021). Strategic procurement planning is emphasized to address procurement delays, bidding failures, risk management, and efficient resource utilization under the New Government Procurement Act, Republic Act No. 12009 (Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), 2023). Despite these reforms, studies continue to identify implementation challenges, including procurement delays, limited bidder participation, insufficient procurement personnel, compliance issues, and the need for digitalization, capacity-building, and dedicated procurement management systems (Polinar et al., 2023; Nisnisan and Salapa, 2024; Bacalso et al., 2024; Sobremisana & C, 2024). Procurement personnel are therefore expected to perform their responsibilities with accountability while ensuring the responsible use of public funds (Athumani and Minja, 2020). At the local level, the City Government of Tagum provides an appropriate context for examining procurement implementation. Although procurement policies are legally established, the lived experiences of procurement implementers remain underexplored, making it necessary to understand the operational challenges affecting procurement efficiency and service delivery within the local government setting.

1.4 Theoretical and Philosophical Basis of Government Procurement Implementation among Procurement Implementers

This study is anchored on the Stages Model of Public Policy, the New Public Management Theory, and the Interpretivist Theory and Paradigm, which collectively explain the implementation of government procurement processes and the lived experiences of procurement implementers. The primary theoretical foundation is the Stages Model of Public Policy, proposed by Harold Laswell (1956), which describes policy development as a sequence of problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, policy legitimation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation (Stages Model of Policy Making, 2011). This model provides a systematic framework for examining procurement implementation, identifying implementation issues, evaluating policy effectiveness, and determining opportunities for improving procurement practices. It also enables public workers to analyze procurement challenges, recognize stakeholder participation, and identify intervention points throughout the policy process (Adam Anyebe, 2018). The study is further supported by the New Public Management Theory, advanced by Christopher Hood in 1991. This theory advocates the adoption of private-sector management principles within public organizations to improve efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, decentralization, performance measurement, competition, and customer orientation (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). Inspired by free-market principles, New Public Management emphasizes competition, organizational efficiency, performance improvement, and governance reforms as mechanisms for enhancing public service delivery (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Within this study, the theory serves as a framework for evaluating the participation and performance of procurement implementers in the procurement process. Complementing these frameworks is the Interpretivist Theory and Paradigm, which serves as the study's philosophical foundation. The interpretivist perspective emphasizes understanding individuals' subjective experiences and meanings, allowing the study to explore the lived experiences of procurement implementers and the challenges they encounter in implementing government procurement processes (Patel, S., 2005). This paradigm supports the qualitative nature of the research by providing a deeper understanding of procurement realities from the perspectives of those directly involved. Collectively, these theoretical perspectives provide complementary lenses for examining procurement implementation, organizational performance, policy execution, and the experiences of procurement implementers within the City Government of Tagum.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale on Government Procurement Implementation in the City Government of Tagum

Although previous studies have extensively examined government procurement policies, procurement planning, transparency, personnel competency, procurement performance, and digitalization, limited research has focused on the actual implementation of procurement processes at the local government level, particularly from the perspectives of procurement implementers. Existing Philippine studies have identified procurement delays, bidder participation, staffing limitations, document processing, and procurement modernization as significant concerns (Polinar et al., 2023; Nisnisan and Salapa, 2024; Bacalso et al., 2024; Sobremisana & C, 2024). However, the lived experiences of procurement implementers within local government units remain insufficiently explored. Despite the implementation of Republic Act No. 9184 (Republic of the Philippines, 2003) and the recent enactment of Republic Act No. 12009, procurement implementation in local government units continues to present issues relating to compliance, efficiency, and operational execution. This study addresses these gaps by examining the procurement processes, implementation challenges, strategies,

and experiences of procurement implementers in the City Government of Tagum. Through an in-depth qualitative inquiry, the study seeks to generate evidence that may contribute to improving procurement implementation, strengthening policy execution, enhancing transparency, and supporting governance reforms.

1.6 Alignment of Government Procurement Implementation with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, particularly Target 12.7, which promotes sustainable public procurement practices in accordance with national policies and priorities (SDG 12.7 Target and Indicator on Sustainable Public Procurement Implementation, 2022). Public procurement supports equitable access to government programs and services while encouraging transparency, accountability, and responsible utilization of public resources (Ayarkwa et al., 2025; United Nations Development Programme, 2021). The study likewise supports the promotion of efficient and transparent procurement systems by identifying implementation challenges and opportunities for improvement within the City Government of Tagum. By examining procurement practices from the perspectives of procurement implementers, the research contributes to strengthening procurement processes consistent with national procurement policies and the objectives of sustainable public procurement.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Governance and Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes primarily to policy and governance sustainability, institutional sustainability, and socio-economic sustainability by generating evidence that can strengthen procurement implementation, improve transparency, enhance accountability, and promote efficient public service delivery within local government. Its findings are expected to assist policymakers in refining procurement policies, support local government units in improving procurement compliance and operational efficiency, and contribute to public administration literature by providing practical recommendations for procurement implementers. The study also promotes institutional capacity-building through improved procurement planning, implementation, and governance mechanisms. Given the strategic role of the City Government of Tagum as the capital of Davao del Norte, strengthening its procurement system supports local development and effective public resource management. Furthermore, the study reinforces the objectives of procurement law and contributes to the broader national development agenda, including AmBisyon Natin 2040 (NEDA, 2016), by promoting transparency, accountability, and responsive governance. While recognizing limitations related to the study population, available resources, and the transition to Republic Act No. 12009, the study contributes to the scientific literature on government procurement by providing an in-depth understanding of procurement implementation within the local government context.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of procurement implementers in government procurement. Qualitative research emphasizes participants' empirical experiences through open-ended inquiries, detailed data collection, thematic categorization, and interpretation of emerging insights (Creswell & Clark, 2004). Specifically, the study adopted a phenomenological research approach to examine the participants' lived experiences in implementing procurement processes (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology focuses on describing and interpreting individuals' experiences of a particular phenomenon through in-depth interviews and analysis of their meanings (Creswell & Clark, 2004). Guided by Husserl's phenomenology, the study considered participants' subjective experiences and inductive reasoning in understanding procurement implementation. It likewise followed Colaizzi's phenomenological procedure, which involves transcribing interviews, extracting significant statements, formulating meanings, validating interpretations, organizing themes, integrating descriptions, and developing conclusions (Hallett, 1995). The study employed the interpretative or hermeneutic phenomenological approach, which seeks not only to describe participants' experiences but also to understand the meanings behind those experiences (Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000; McConnell-Henry et al, 2009; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011; van Manen, 2011, as cited in Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, audio-recorded with participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes (Moustakas, 1994; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative data were obtained primarily from participants' verbal responses, supported by records, artifacts, and observations throughout the research process (Polkinghorne, 2005).

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the City Government of Tagum, Region XI, because of its procurement reform initiatives and procurement-related challenges in complying with RA 9184, as reported by the Commission on Audit (COA, 2022). The city's continuing infrastructure development and procurement activities provide an appropriate setting for examining the effectiveness of government procurement implementation. As the first-class component city and capital of the Province of Davao del Norte, the City Government of Tagum undertakes numerous infrastructure projects, resulting in extensive procurement activities compared with neighboring local government units. This context offers a suitable environment for exploring the experiences and challenges encountered by procurement implementers in carrying out government procurement processes.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were procurement implementers from the Local Government Unit of Tagum, Region XI, who possessed firsthand experience in government procurement. They were primarily responsible for preparing procurement-related documents, including Project Procurement Management Plans (PPMPs), Purchase Requests (PRs), Activity Designs (ADs), and similar documents. The participants had at least two years of experience handling procurement transactions and were knowledgeable about government procurement processes and the requirements of RA 9184. Their direct involvement enabled them to provide relevant information regarding the experiences and challenges encountered in implementing government procurement.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

A total of 18–20 formally employed procurement implementers were selected through purposive and homogeneous sampling. The sample size was considered adequate for achieving data saturation in qualitative research, consistent with Creswell (2013), who suggested that 5–25 participants are sufficient for qualitative studies. Likewise, the Nielsen Norman Group recommended that 15 users can identify the majority of usability issues, with additional participants yielding diminishing returns. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that only individuals with substantial knowledge and experience in government procurement participated in the study, making them capable of providing rich and relevant information (Patton, 2015). Participants were selected based on established inclusion criteria. They had to be formally employed in the Local Government Unit of Tagum for at least six months before the interview, occupy either permanent or contract-of-service positions, be between 18 and 65 years of age, be directly assigned to processing procurement-related documents, and possess knowledge of the Philippine Government Procurement Law. Employees were excluded if they had less than six months of employment, were below 18 or above 65 years of age, or performed duties unrelated to procurement. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw from the study at any stage. Withdrawal was permitted if participants decided to discontinue their participation or resigned from their employment after initially meeting the inclusion criteria and consenting to participate.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a validated researcher-developed interview guide to facilitate the in-depth interviews. Before data collection, participants were informed about the study, provided informed consent, and completed demographic profiling. The interview guide consisted of validated questions with probing items designed to elicit detailed responses regarding the participants' procurement experiences and challenges. To establish content validity, the research instrument was initially reviewed by the research adviser, Dr. Alger Dura, and subsequently evaluated by five public administration experts, including the adviser, four experts from the University of Mindanao–Professional Schools, and one external expert. Three of the validators rated the instrument as Very Good, with ten affirmative ratings, resulting in a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.98. This validation confirmed that the interview guide was appropriate for capturing significant procurement-related issues experienced by procurement implementers.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed established qualitative research procedures to ensure the systematic and credible gathering of participants' experiences. The researcher first developed and validated the interview guide with expert guidance before securing approval from the University, represented by the Graduate School Faculty and the thesis adviser, as well as from the Local Government Unit of Tagum. After obtaining the necessary approvals, informed consent was secured from all participants, who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. During the interviews, the researcher established rapport with the participants, explained the purpose and nature of the study, addressed their questions, and conducted in-depth interviews regarding their procurement experiences. Interviews were supported by observations, audio recordings, and photo documentation to enhance the accuracy and completeness of the collected data. Following data collection, interview transcripts were prepared and organized before being submitted to the data analyst for thematic analysis. The analyzed results were discussed with the researcher through consultation and subsequently reviewed by the research adviser and panel members to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Thematic analysis followed the five-step process of Castleberry and Nolen (2018), with software utilized to facilitate coding and thematic organization (Fink, 2008).

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed thematic analysis to analyze the qualitative data collected from the in-depth interviews. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and systematically examined to identify significant statements, recurring patterns, and emerging themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Guided by the phenomenological approach, the analysis followed Colaizzi's method of extracting meaningful statements, formulating meanings, organizing them into themes, integrating thematic descriptions, and developing conclusions that reflected the lived experiences of the participants (Hallett, 1995). The findings were further validated through consultation with the data analyst, research adviser, and panel members to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and credibility of the interpretations.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (Certification No. UMERC-2025-538). Ethical principles were observed in accordance with Arifin (2018), including informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy, confidentiality, and protection of participants' rights. Participants were informed of the study's purpose in a language they understood, signed informed consent forms, and were free to decline or withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing participants' identities and securely storing all research data in compliance with the Data Privacy Law. Participant recruitment followed the approved inclusion criteria with authorization from both the Local Government Unit of Tagum and the University. Throughout the study, potential risks were carefully considered to ensure that participation posed no legal or political harm. The research maintained academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, conflicts of interest, deceit, and misinformation. Necessary permissions were secured from the appropriate offices, and authorship and contributions were properly acknowledged. Participants were likewise informed of the confidentiality measures implemented to protect their information before the commencement of data collection.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Government Procurement Processes in the Local Government Units

3.1.1 Initiation Stages of Procurement Planning

The findings showed that procurement begins with comprehensive planning initiated by the end-users. Participants emphasized that Project Procurement Management Plans (PPMPs), Purchase Requests (PRs), Annual Procurement Plans (APPs), and Annual Investment Plans (AIPs) serve as the foundation of procurement activities. Procurement cannot proceed without approved procurement plans, and timely submission of these documents by end-users enables the BAC Secretariat to consolidate procurement requirements and facilitate implementation. Budget planning likewise precedes procurement to ensure that projects are properly funded before implementation. These findings indicate that procurement planning is fundamental to an efficient procurement process because it establishes the legal, financial, and operational basis for procurement activities. The active participation of end-users ensures that procurement requirements accurately reflect organizational needs and project priorities. This supports the findings of Udoba and Mwalukasa (2024), who emphasized that knowledgeable user departments and effective procurement planning significantly improve procurement performance by strengthening stakeholder participation and institutional responsiveness.

3.1.2 Documentary Requisites and Verification Procedures

The findings revealed that procurement implementation relies heavily on documentary compliance and multiple verification procedures. Procurement implementers carefully reviewed technical specifications, supporting documents, electronic and printed records, and budget certifications before procurement activities could proceed. Documents with deficiencies were returned for correction, while procurement requests underwent cross-checking by different offices to ensure completeness, consistency, and availability of appropriations before processing. These findings demonstrate that documentary verification serves as an accountability and quality-control mechanism that minimizes procurement errors and strengthens transparency. Careful preparation and verification of procurement documents help prevent delays and improve procurement responsiveness. This finding is consistent with M. Navarro and O. Tanghal (2017), who explained that inadequate procurement planning and incomplete documentary preparation contribute significantly to procurement delays and highlighted the importance of equipping procurement personnel with adequate procurement knowledge.

3.1.3 Procurement Mode Selection

The findings showed that selecting the appropriate procurement mode is an essential step in government procurement. Procurement implementers verified whether projects should undergo public bidding, Small Value Procurement (SVP), negotiated procurement, or other legally prescribed procurement modes. Supplier accreditation, pre-qualification, pre-procurement conferences, pre-bid conferences, bidding activities, and post-qualification procedures were likewise identified as necessary mechanisms that facilitate procurement and ensure supplier eligibility before contract award. These findings suggest that proper procurement mode selection promotes efficiency, fairness, and compliance throughout procurement implementation. Strategic procurement planning enables procurement entities to determine appropriate procurement methods, reduce delays, and support effective service delivery. These results support the guidance of the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) (2023), which identifies procurement planning and appropriate procurement methods as critical components of efficient and responsive government procurement.

3.1.4 Digitalization for Smooth Processing

The findings indicated that digital technologies significantly improved procurement efficiency within the City Government of Tagum. Procurement implementers utilized digital systems to facilitate document processing, electronically review procurement documents before printing, and post procurement opportunities through the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS). These digital practices accelerated procurement workflows while promoting transparency and broader supplier participation. These findings demonstrate that digitalization enhances procurement efficiency by reducing processing time, improving transparency, and strengthening accountability. Electronic procurement systems also support audit trails, increase competition, and modernize procurement administration. These observations are consistent with the Government's Tool for Procurement Reforms and Transparency (2026) and Bacarisas et al. (2026), which emphasized that digitalization strengthens procurement transparency, efficiency, reliability, and good governance.

3.1.5 Accountability Mechanisms

The findings revealed that procurement implementers employed several accountability mechanisms to ensure compliance with procurement regulations. These included verifying the quantity and quality of delivered items, cross-checking procurement documents against purchase orders, validating procurement records, and reviewing complete procurement documentation before forwarding transactions to the appropriate offices. Such mechanisms enabled procurement personnel to ensure that procurement activities complied with established standards and legal requirements. These findings indicate that accountability mechanisms reinforce transparency, accuracy, and responsible utilization of public resources throughout the procurement process. Continuous verification and documentation strengthen procurement integrity while ensuring compliance with procurement laws. This supports Diggs and Roman (2012), who emphasized that accountability in procurement requires auditability, consistency, fairness, responsiveness, and adherence to procurement regulations. Overall, the findings further suggest that although government procurement remains lengthy and document-intensive, continuous improvement of internal procurement processes and effective coordination among stakeholders contribute to more responsive procurement implementation, consistent with Querijero et al. (2022) and Kakwezi and Nyeko (2019).

3.2 Challenges of Procurement Officers in Local Government Units

3.2.1 Documentary Inefficiencies in Procurement Processes

The findings showed that incomplete documentary requirements, inaccurate technical specifications, delayed submission of supporting documents, and mismatches between procurement documents and delivered items were common challenges encountered by procurement implementers. Participants reported that deficiencies in documentary compliance by end-users and suppliers delayed procurement activities and affected the timely implementation of projects. These findings indicate that documentary compliance is critical to procurement efficiency because procurement activities cannot proceed without complete and accurate documentation. Delays caused by incomplete requirements and documentary inconsistencies ultimately affect service delivery and project implementation. This finding supports Tsegaye (2017), who emphasized that inadequate document preparation, insufficient procurement knowledge, and poor procurement planning contribute significantly to procurement delays and weaken procurement performance.

3.2.2 Constraints Relating to Budgeting and Resource Allocation

The findings revealed that procurement implementers experienced challenges related to limited budget allocations, unplanned procurement activities, emergency procurements without available appropriations, and restricted procurement timelines. Participants emphasized that inadequate funding and unexpected procurement needs complicated procurement planning and often constrained the timely implementation of projects. They also noted that limited time for procurement activities further affected procurement schedules. These findings suggest that effective procurement planning requires adequate resource allocation and proactive financial management. Anticipating procurement needs and allocating sufficient resources enable organizations to respond efficiently to both planned and emergency procurement requirements. These results are consistent with Mebrate and Shumet (2024), who concluded that proactive procurement planning and proper utilization of public funds strengthen procurement performance and improve service delivery.

3.2.3 Bottlenecks Across Procurement Workflows

The findings indicated that procurement delays frequently resulted from unavailable signatories, delayed supplier compliance, slow payment processing, and failed bidding due to a lack of interested bidders. Participants explained that these bottlenecks interrupted procurement workflows, delayed procurement completion, and affected the timely delivery of goods and services. Failed bidding further prolonged procurement because the process had to restart from the initial stages. These findings demonstrate that procurement workflows depend on timely coordination among procurement implementers, approving authorities, and suppliers. Delays at any stage of procurement create cascading effects that disrupt project implementation and public service delivery. This finding supports Polinar et al. (2023), who attributed procurement delays to the unavailability of signatories due to multiple administrative responsibilities, and the World Bank (2024), which identified weak supplier qualifications, poor contract management, and inadequate procurement preparation as major contributors to procurement delays.

3.2.4 Workforce Limitations

The findings showed that procurement implementation was affected by insufficient manpower, employee absences, personnel turnover, and continuity issues. Participants reported that interconnected procurement responsibilities made employee absences disruptive to procurement operations, while frequent personnel changes reduced continuity and institutional knowledge. They also highlighted the shortage of qualified personnel to perform procurement-related functions effectively. These findings indicate that adequate staffing and workforce continuity are essential for maintaining procurement efficiency and organizational responsiveness. Sufficient human resources and appropriately qualified personnel enable procurement offices to manage workloads effectively and sustain procurement operations. These results support Querijero et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of responsive service delivery, and Carillo and Diano (2025), who found that sufficient staffing significantly improves procurement performance by reducing workload pressures and administrative inefficiencies. Overall, the findings further affirm that procurement challenges arise from both internal and external factors, including organizational capacity, stakeholder participation, and procurement modernization, consistent with Abera (2022) and Nisnisan & Salapa (2024).

3.3 Strategies of Procurement Officers in Local Government Units

3.3.1 Strengthen Stakeholder Capacity Through Information Dissemination

The findings revealed that procurement implementers regularly conducted meetings, conferences, information drives, reminders, and annual training programs to improve stakeholders' understanding of procurement procedures. These activities primarily targeted end-users and liaison officers to address recurring documentary deficiencies and strengthen participation in procurement processes. These findings suggest that continuous information dissemination and capacity-building improve procurement performance by equipping stakeholders with updated knowledge and encouraging active participation throughout the procurement process. This finding is consistent with Kissi et al. (2025), who emphasized that continuous information sharing strengthens procurement performance by improving communication and coordination among stakeholders.

3.3.2 Enhance Process Efficiency Through Monitoring and Tracking Mechanisms

The findings showed that procurement implementers improved procurement efficiency by establishing tracking systems, continuously monitoring procurement activities, and regularly updating procurement information systems such as item catalogues and price lists. Monitoring enabled procurement personnel and end-users to verify document completeness, monitor procurement progress, and maintain updated procurement records. These findings indicate that monitoring and tracking mechanisms enable procurement implementers to identify delays promptly, improve document management, and strengthen procurement performance. This supports Bacalso et al. (2024), who concluded that procurement monitoring systems improve procurement efficiency by allowing stakeholders to monitor procurement progress and identify process bottlenecks.

3.3.3 Promote Inter-Office Coordination

The findings revealed that procurement implementers promoted open communication, timely follow-ups, consultations, and continuous feedback among offices involved in procurement. Participants emphasized that maintaining accessible communication channels and collaborative problem-solving facilitated the resolution of procurement concerns and strengthened coordination among stakeholders. These findings demonstrate that effective inter-office coordination enhances procurement efficiency by facilitating timely information exchange and collaborative decision-making. Consistent communication minimizes misunderstandings and supports smoother procurement implementation. These findings support Kissi et al. (2025), who found that active information sharing significantly improves procurement performance and organizational efficiency.

3.3.4 Proactive Planning and Anticipatory Management Practices

The findings showed that procurement implementers adopted advance procurement planning, early preparation of procurement documents, anticipatory budgeting, and preventive planning to minimize procurement delays. Participants also emphasized the importance of learning from previous procurement experiences and allocating resources for unforeseen procurement needs to improve future procurement implementation. These findings indicate that proactive procurement planning enables procurement entities to anticipate operational challenges, utilize public funds efficiently, and improve project implementation. This finding aligns with Joshua and Chege (2025), who concluded that procurement planning positively influences project performance by promoting effective resource utilization and using previous procurement experiences to improve future planning strategies.

3.3.5 Ensure Legal Compliance and Procedural Integrity

The findings revealed that procurement implementers consistently relied on procurement laws when making procurement decisions. They regularly consulted legal experts, benchmarked practices with other organizations, and ensured that procurement issues were resolved in accordance with existing procurement regulations. Participants emphasized that procurement activities should never deviate from the governing procurement law. These findings demonstrate that strict

legal compliance promotes accountability, transparency, and public trust throughout procurement implementation. Adherence to procurement laws also guides procurement personnel in making legally sound decisions while maintaining procedural integrity. These findings support Sobremisana and C (2024), who recommended continuous orientation and capacity-building on procurement laws, and I. Athumani and J. Minja (2020), who emphasized that compliance with procurement regulations strengthens procurement performance and accountability.

3.3.6 Conduct Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The findings showed that procurement implementers strengthened quality assurance through accountability measures, justification requirements for procurement delays, multi-department inspections, and continuous evaluation of procurement procedures. Participants highlighted the importance of revisiting procurement processes and integrating different offices during inspections to improve procurement quality and ensure compliance with procurement standards. These findings suggest that quality assurance mechanisms strengthen procurement performance by promoting accountability, improving inter-office collaboration, and continuously evaluating procurement practices. Regular process evaluation and coordinated inspections contribute to more efficient and reliable procurement implementation. These findings are consistent with Awoke (2021), who found that quality assurance practices improve procurement performance, and Salam and Yaqub (2023), who reported that quality management practices positively influence purchasing performance and organizational effectiveness.

3.4 Insights of Procurement Officers in Local Government Units

3.4.1 Public Awareness of Procurement Processes

The findings revealed that procurement implementers emphasized the need for continuous public information campaigns, regular orientations, and wider stakeholder involvement to improve understanding of procurement procedures and governing laws. Participants recommended sustained information dissemination for the public, office personnel, liaison officers, and office heads, particularly when new procurement regulations are introduced or personnel changes occur. These findings indicate that increasing public awareness promotes transparency and strengthens stakeholder participation in government procurement. Continuous orientation and education help improve compliance with procurement requirements and reinforce accountability among procurement implementers. This supports Ayarkwa et al. (2025), who emphasized that investing in education and training enhances procurement knowledge and contributes to improved procurement performance.

3.4.2 Capacity Building for Continuous Learning

The findings showed that participants recommended expanding training opportunities for BAC members, BAC Secretariat personnel, and other procurement implementers. They highlighted the importance of keeping procurement personnel updated on evolving procurement laws and ensuring that staff possess sufficient technical knowledge to perform their responsibilities effectively. These findings suggest that continuous professional development strengthens procurement competence and organizational responsiveness. Expanding training opportunities equips procurement personnel with updated knowledge and minimizes recurring procurement errors. These findings are consistent with Dadzie et al. (2024), who concluded that training interventions significantly improve procurement efficiency and organizational performance.

3.4.3 Procurement Efficiency through Policy and Process Enhancement

The findings indicated that procurement implementers recommended improving procurement systems by adapting to new legal requirements, strengthening procurement policies, reducing redundant procedures, accelerating document processing, and supporting digitalization with appropriate technological resources. Participants emphasized that process improvement should focus on simplifying procurement procedures while ensuring compliance with the updated procurement law. These findings demonstrate that policy enhancement and process optimization contribute to more efficient and responsive procurement implementation. Strengthening procurement policies and integrating technological improvements help reduce procedural delays while maintaining transparency and accountability. This finding supports Vah (2023), who emphasized that effective policy formulation and implementation address organizational weaknesses, improve procurement systems, and reduce opportunities for non-compliance and corruption.

3.4.4 Rigorous Legal Compliance to Implementation

The findings revealed that procurement implementers consistently recommended strict adherence to procurement laws, continuous consultation with legal experts, and the selection of technically competent and ethically qualified procurement personnel. Participants stressed that procurement decisions should always conform to legal standards and that no procurement procedure should bypass the requirements of the governing law. These findings indicate that rigorous legal compliance strengthens accountability, transparency, and integrity throughout the procurement process. Continuous observance of procurement regulations and legal consultation helps procurement implementers make sound decisions while minimizing procedural errors. These findings support Sama and Mwalukasa (2024) and I. Athumani and J. Minja (2020), which emphasized that compliance with procurement laws promotes accountability, ethical practice, and improved procurement performance.

3.4.5 Collaborative Stakeholder Participation

The findings showed that procurement implementers advocated greater participation from suppliers, particularly local business owners, to increase competition and obtain more responsive and cost-effective bids. Participants also emphasized maintaining regular engagement with suppliers to better understand their challenges and strengthen cooperation throughout the procurement process. These findings suggest that collaborative stakeholder participation enhances procurement competitiveness, improves communication between procuring entities and suppliers, and supports more effective procurement outcomes. Increased supplier engagement broadens competition while enabling procurement implementers to better understand supplier concerns and improve procurement practices through stronger stakeholder collaboration.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that government procurement in the City Government of Tagum is characterized by structured yet document-intensive processes that require strong coordination among procurement implementers and stakeholders. Procurement implementers experienced challenges related to documentary requirements, processing time, workforce limitations, and operational bottlenecks that affected procurement efficiency. To address these concerns, they adopted strategies such as information dissemination, inter-office coordination, legal compliance, quality assurance, and proactive procurement planning. The findings further highlight the need for operational reforms through digitalization, strengthened capacity-building, improved stakeholder participation, and continuous process evaluation to enhance procurement efficiency, transparency, accountability, and public service delivery.

The study recommends strengthening government procurement through the adoption of digital procurement systems, including electronic processing and monitoring mechanisms, to reduce documentary burdens and improve operational efficiency. It also recommends expanding capacity-building programs for procurement implementers, strengthening supplier engagement and public awareness, enhancing inter-office collaboration, and continuously improving procurement policies and procedures in line with the transition from Republic Act No. 9184 to Republic Act No. 12009. Future studies are likewise encouraged to examine the implementation of the new procurement law, compare procurement practices across local government units, and explore supplier perspectives to further improve government procurement processes.

The study was limited to the lived experiences of procurement implementers in the City Government of Tagum and was conducted within the context of Republic Act No. 9184 during the transition to Republic Act No. 12009. Consequently, the findings reflect only the procurement practices and challenges within the study locale and period and may not represent procurement implementation in other local government units or under the full implementation of the new procurement law.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards throughout the research process. Ethical principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy, confidentiality, protection of participants' rights, and academic integrity were observed. Appropriate institutional authorization and ethical clearance were secured prior to data collection, participant confidentiality was maintained through data anonymization and secure handling of research information, and all participants were informed of the study's purpose and their rights before providing informed consent.

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