

THE EFFECTS OF E-TENDERING PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES IN TANZANIA: A CASE OF IRINGA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effects of e-tendering practices on the performance of Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania, using Iringa Municipal Council as a case study. Specifically, the study examined the effects of e-advertisement, e-evaluation and e-award practices on LGA performance. A convergent research design with a mixed methods approach was adopted. Stratified random sampling was used to select 60 respondents from a population of 172. Data were collected through questionnaires and unstructured interviews, then analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis with SPSS version 22. The findings revealed that e-advertisement enhances organizational performance by reducing fraud, increasing supplier participation and building confidence in the procurement process. E-evaluation practices were found to minimize exclusion errors, promote merit based decisions and improve transparency and accountability. Similarly, e-award practices reduced administrative delays, ensured timely procurement activities and improved efficiency and reliability. The study concludes that the adoption of e-tendering practices particularly e-advertisement, e-evaluation and e-award has significantly improved the performance of Iringa Municipal Council. It recommends continued strengthening of e-tendering implementation through investment in ICT infrastructure, user-friendly systems and regular upgrades. Further research should explore the long term impacts of e-tendering on cost efficiency, project quality and supplier diversity, as well as comparative studies across regions.

Key Term: E-tendering Practices, E-advertisement, E - award, E - Evaluation, Performance of Local Government Authorities

INTRODUCTION

The performance of Local Government Authorities (LGAs) is a vital indicator of how effectively these institutions achieve their objectives in areas such as financial efficiency, operational effectiveness, service delivery and citizen satisfaction (Neely, 2019). In the public sector, performance is often evaluated through the lenses of transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness (Kaplan & Norton, 2020). Public procurement plays a central role in promoting efficient service delivery and fostering socio-economic development (Mugambi & Karanja, 2021). To enhance procurement efficiency, the adoption of e-tendering the digitalization of procurement processes has emerged as a strategic innovation aimed at increasing transparency, reducing costs, minimizing human errors, and curbing corruption (Mlinga, 2020).

E-tendering encompasses several key components, including e-advertisement, e-evaluation and e-award. E-advertisement involves the online publication of tender opportunities, which widens access to potential bidders and promotes fair competition. Globally, this practice has been shown to increase transparency and participation. For instance, Heikkinen (2019) found that e-advertisements in Finland boosted supplier participation and reduced procurement irregularities, while Øverland (2020) reported that Norway's digital tendering improved processing speed and evaluation accuracy. In African contexts, Wambui and Njeru (2021) observed that Kenya's e-advertising

enhanced information dissemination and vendor participation. Similarly, Mwita and Mushi (2020) revealed that e-advertisement in Tanzania improved accessibility, reduced favoritism and strengthened competition in public procurement.

E-evaluation refers to the use of digital tools to assess and review tender submissions, which enhances objectivity, minimizes bias and ensures compliance with procurement regulations. Empirical studies demonstrate its effectiveness: in Sri Lanka, Perera and Jayasinghe (2020) found that e-evaluation accelerated and improved bid assessments, while Ntuli and Sibiyi (2021) reported that e-evaluation in South Africa promoted transparency and fairness. Within Tanzania, Mlinga (2020) confirmed that e-evaluation enhances the accuracy and timeliness of decision-making, thereby improving procurement efficiency.

E-award, on the other hand, involves the electronic allocation of contracts to successful bidders (Mtasiwa, 2021). This digital process minimizes administrative delays and enhances fairness. Evidence from Kenya shows that e-award systems significantly reduced biased contract allocations (Mwangi & Waweru, 2020), while in Tanzania, the National Bureau of Statistics (2023) reported that e-award practices improved compliance and accelerated contract issuance, strengthening overall LGA performance.

To facilitate digital procurement, Tanzania's government through the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) introduced the Tanzania National e-Procurement System (TANePS) to enhance transparency and streamline procurement operations (PPRA, 2023). Initially developed by external experts, TANePS marked the country's first major step toward e-tendering. Subsequently, the Public Procurement Act and the National ICT Policy were revised to support the establishment of an internal system, the National e-Procurement System for Tanzania (NeST) (Altamini, 2023).

In Iringa Municipal Council, NeST has been integrated to improve procurement efficiency and reduce corruption risks. However, implementation challenges persist. According to PPRA (2023), Iringa faces inadequate digital infrastructure, limited technical expertise and resistance to technological change. Nonetheless, awareness of the potential benefits of e-tendering is growing and ongoing capacity-building initiatives aim to enhance adoption and system reliability. Despite these efforts, the adoption of e-tendering across Tanzania's local government authorities remains uneven. Mchopa (2012) and Njunwa (2023) highlight persistent barriers such as weak technological infrastructure, limited financial resources and low digital literacy. These challenges hinder full scale digital transformation and the realization of expected benefits.

The motivation for this study arises from the existing knowledge gap regarding the effects of e-tendering practices on the performance of local government authorities. While prior research has explored adoption levels and policy frameworks, limited empirical evidence exists on how specific e-tendering components namely e-advertisement, e-evaluation, and e-award influence organizational performance at the local level. Understanding these relationships is essential for policymakers and practitioners seeking to enhance procurement efficiency, accountability, and service delivery. Therefore, this study aims to assess the effects of e-tendering practices on the performance of local government authorities, using Iringa Municipal Council as a case study.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review: Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIT)

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIT), developed by Rogers and later expanded by various scholars, explains how new ideas, technologies or practices spread within social systems over time (Xulu & Msimanga, 2023). The theory identifies five key attributes that influence the adoption of innovations: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Yohana & Mwangi, 2023). It also classifies adopters into categories innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards based on their rate of adoption (Adebayo & Mwakalobo, 2023).

In this study, DIT provides a useful framework for understanding how e-tendering practices including e-advertisement, e-evaluation and e-award are adopted within local government authorities and how these practices influence organizational performance. The theory highlights that innovations with clear advantages, low complexity and visible outcomes are more likely to be adopted quickly. In the case of e-tendering, relative advantage refers to perceived efficiency and cost-effectiveness, compatibility assesses alignment with existing procurement systems, and complexity measures the ease of system use. Trialability allows users to experiment before full-scale implementation, while observability determines how visible the benefits are to others. When applied to Iringa Municipality, DIT helps explain the varying adoption levels among procurement officers. Innovators and early adopters quickly embrace e-tendering due to perceived benefits, while late adopters and laggards often resist due to lack of digital literacy or infrastructure. Understanding these adoption dynamics assists in identifying strategies to enhance user engagement and organizational performance. Furthermore, DIT helps in assessing the challenges affecting e-tendering adoption in Tanzania, including weak technological infrastructure, limited skills and resistance to change (Mchopa, 2012; Njunwa, 2023). Despite government initiatives such as the Public Procurement Act, the National ICT Policy and systems like TANePS and NeST, the diffusion process remains slow in many local governments. DIT thus serves as a lens to evaluate both the enablers and barriers to e-tendering, providing insight into how innovation diffusion influences efficiency, transparency and accountability in local government operations.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Effects of E-Evaluation Practices on LGA Performance

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that e-evaluation enhances transparency, efficiency, and decision-making in public procurement. Nguyen and Tran (2021) in Vietnam found that digital evaluation systems improved decision-making and accountability despite challenges of limited skills and infrastructure. Similarly, Olsen and Hansen (2020) in Norway reported positive impacts on efficiency and transparency supported by strong digital infrastructure. Studies in South Africa (Nkosi & Mthethwa, 2021), Rwanda (Habimana & Mugisha, 2022) and Tanzania (Mwakalinga & Komba, 2022) echoed similar findings e-evaluation reduced bias and improved accuracy but faced barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, low digital literacy and resistance to change. These studies highlight that successful e-evaluation requires strong policy support, capacity building, and adequate technological resources.

Effects of E-Advertisement Practices on LGA Performance

E-advertisement is widely acknowledged as a driver of transparency and inclusivity in procurement. Smith and Brown (2020) in Canada found that e-advertisement improved citizen engagement and reduced communication costs. In Switzerland, Müller and Schneider (2021) revealed that online tender postings increased vendor participation and fairness, though inconsistent systems limited effectiveness. Studies in Malaysia (Ahmad & Zulkifli, 2022), Ghana (Owusu & Mensah, 2022) and Tanzania (Mwakalebela & Nzunda, 2023) confirmed that e-advertisement enhanced transparency and cost-efficiency but continued to face challenges like poor internet access, limited digital literacy, and insufficient funding. These findings emphasize the importance of investing in digital infrastructure and staff training to maximize the benefits of e-advertisement.

Effects of E-Award Practices on LGA Performance

E-award systems streamline contract allocation processes, improving fairness and accountability. Studies from Finland (Pei Lim, 2020), Canada (Tan & Lee, 2020), Sri Lanka (Utouh & Kitole, 2024), Kenya (Watuleke, 2017) and Tanzania (Ulimwengu & Mwakalobo, 2023) consistently show that e-award enhances transparency and efficiency in contract management. However, common obstacles include high system costs, data security risks and limited digital skills. These studies highlight the need for stakeholder engagement, strong policy frameworks and sustainable investment in technology. E-award practices have proven effective in improving governance but require continuous capacity building and infrastructural development to ensure long-term success.

2.3 Knowledge Gap

Although numerous global and local studies have explored e-tendering, several contextual, methodological, theoretical, and empirical gaps remain. Contextually, most research focuses on national or large urban settings, neglecting smaller municipalities like Iringa, which face unique infrastructural and resource constraints. Methodologically, many studies rely on single data collection methods and exclude key stakeholders such as suppliers and contractors. A mixed-methods approach involving diverse participants is needed to capture a more comprehensive view of e-tendering's impact on performance.

Theoretically, prior studies often used frameworks such as the Resource-Based View or Technology Acceptance Model, overlooking governance-focused theories like DIT, which explain the behavioral and organizational dynamics of innovation adoption. Empirically, few studies have examined the direct impact of e-tendering practices specifically e-advertisement, e-evaluation, and e-award on the performance of local government authorities at the municipal level in Tanzania.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill these gaps by analyzing the effects of e-tendering practices on organizational performance in Iringa Municipal Council, focusing on how these digital systems enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability. By integrating theoretical and practical perspectives, the study aims to provide empirical evidence to inform policy decisions and strengthen e-procurement implementation across local governments in Tanzania.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Iringa Municipal Council, selected for its notable progress in implementing e-tendering systems to improve transparency, efficiency and accountability in public procurement. The research targeted a population of 172 individuals (Iringa Municipal, 2023), including procurement officers, the Head of Procurement Management Unit (HPMU), accounting officers, heads of departments, and suppliers actively engaged in e-tendering activities. This diverse group was chosen to capture multiple perspectives on the operational and performance-related impacts of e-tendering within the council. The study adopted a mixed research approach (Creswell, 2014; Kothari, 2014), integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively assess how e-tendering practices affect organizational performance. Quantitative data highlighted trends and measurable outcomes such as efficiency and compliance, while qualitative data explored perceptions, experiences, and contextual challenges through interviews.

A convergent research design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018) was used, where quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and integrated during interpretation to provide complementary insights. A total of 63 respondents were selected using Kothari's (2004) formula for determining sample size, ensuring representativeness through stratified random sampling for suppliers and procurement officers and purposive sampling for the HPMU and accounting officer (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data collection instruments included structured questionnaires for quantitative data and semi structured interviews for qualitative data (Nyoni, 2021). Primary data were collected directly from participants, while secondary data were obtained from published materials and municipal records (Anderson *et al.*, 2019), enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

Data were analyzed using both SPSS (version 22) for quantitative analysis employing descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and thematic analysis for qualitative data to identify emerging patterns. The study ensured validity through expert reviews, pilot testing and translation of questionnaires into Kiswahili for clarity. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded an acceptable coefficient of 0.78, indicating good internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003). Ethical standards were rigorously upheld by obtaining research clearance from the University of Iringa, securing permissions from relevant authorities and ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study (Bless & Smith, 2000; Bryman, 2004; Israel & Hay, 2006). These procedures ensured that the research was methodologically sound, ethically responsible and capable of producing credible and applicable findings.

4. RESULT

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

A total of 63 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, of which 60 were successfully filled and returned representing a response rate of 95.2%, which is considered excellent according to Mugenda (2003), who states that a 70% or above response rate is ideal for generalization. The demographic characteristics of respondents revealed that 60% were male and 40% were female, indicating a fairly balanced gender representation among participants. In terms of age distribution, most respondents were within the 30 - 34 years (25%) and 25 - 29 years (21.7%) age groups,

showing that the workforce involved in e-tendering practices was relatively young and active. Regarding education, 50% of respondents held bachelor's degrees, 33.3% held diplomas, 10% had master's degrees and 6.7% had other professionals, reflecting a highly educated group capable of understanding procurement systems. With respect to job experience, 35% had 11-15 years of experience, followed by 30% with 6-10 years, and 16.7% with 0-5 years, suggesting that the majority had sufficient professional exposure to provide informed views on e-tendering practices. The high response rate and diverse demographic representation enhanced the reliability and credibility of the study's findings.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Information (N=60)

Respondents' gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	36	60.0
Female	24	40.0
Respondents Age		
20-24	3	5.0
25-29	13	21.7
30-34	15	25.0
35-39	12	20.0
40-44	7	11.7
45-49	10	16.7
Level of Education		
Diploma	20	33.3
Bachelor degree	30	50.0
Master degree	6	10.0
PhD	4	6.7
Job Experience		
0-5 years	10	16.7
6-10 years	18	30.0
11-15 years	21	35.0
16-20 years	5	8.3
21-25 years	3	5.0
26-30 years	3	5.0
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field data (2025)

2.2 Descriptive and Qualitative Thematic Result

The Effect of e-Advertisement Practices on the Performance LGA

The results in Table 2 reveal that most suppliers agreed that e-advertisement practices have a significant positive effect on procurement performance in Iringa Municipal Council. A total of 79.8% of respondents expressed agreement with the effectiveness of e-advertisement practices, while only 20.2% disagreed. Specifically, 78.6% of respondents confirmed that e-advertisements are accurate, and 71.5% believed that the advertisement process is objective. Additionally, 74.7% indicated that e-tendering is well integrated with other systems, while 87.5% agreed that tender advertisements are communicated through clear and accessible channels. Similarly, 85.7% acknowledged that tenders are published in a timely manner, ensuring equal opportunities for all

suppliers, with 82.1% agreeing that the e-tendering system ensures security in advertisement and submission processes. These findings demonstrate that e-advertisement enhances transparency, fairness, accessibility and security in the procurement process, thereby improving the performance of the Iringa Municipal Council.

Qualitative findings further supported these results, showing that e-advertisements published by the Council are accurate, consistent, and uniform across multiple platforms such as the Council's website, the national procurement portal, and official social media channels. Interviews with accounting officers and HPMU officials revealed that accuracy is maintained through the use of standardized templates, centralized uploading and internal verification before publication. These governance mechanisms help ensure that tender details such as title, scope, eligibility and deadlines remain identical across platforms, minimizing errors and promoting transparency. Respondents also noted that standardized adverts reduce supplier confusion and the number of clarification requests, thereby improving efficiency and trust between the Council and suppliers. However, despite these achievements, a few challenges were reported, including occasional technical issues such as poor-quality scanned attachments or corrupted files, which can hinder supplier understanding. Thus, while e-advertisement practices significantly enhance procurement performance, ensuring technical quality control of uploaded documents remains essential for maximizing their effectiveness.

Table 2: Suppliers responses on the effects of e-advertisement (N=60)

Item	Strong disagree		Disagree		Cummul Disagree		Agree		Strong agree		Cummul Agree	
	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per
E-advertisements is accurate	4	5.35	12	16.05	16	21.4	34	60.7	10	17.9	44	78.6
Advertisement process is objective	6	8.6	14	19.9	20	28.5	36	64.4	4	7.1	40	71.5
E-tendering integrated with other systems	5	7.0	13	18.3	18	25.3	32	56.9	10	17.8	42	74.7
clear and accessible channels	2	2.3	9	10.2	11	12.5	40	71.4	9	16.1	49	87.5
Advertised tenders are communicated in a timely	4	4.8	8	9.5	12	14.3	39	69.6	9	16.1	48	85.7

The advertisement provides equal opportunities	6	8.0	10	13.4	16	21.4	40	71.5	4	7.1	44	78.6
E-tendering system ensures the security	4	5.2	10	12.7	14	17.9	39	69.6	7	12.5	46	82.1
Agree = 45(79.8%)												
Disagree 15(20.2%)												

Source: Researcher, (2025)

4. The Effect of e-Evaluation Practices on the Performance of LGA

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that the majority of suppliers agreed that e-evaluation practices positively influence procurement performance in Iringa Municipal Council. Overall, 78.5% of respondents agreed with the statements related to the effectiveness of e-evaluation, while only 21.5% disagreed. Specifically, 71.5% of respondents agreed that suppliers are adequately considered or engaged in the evaluation process, and 74.7% believed that the e-evaluation process is inclusive and free from discrimination. Furthermore, 83.9% agreed that the tendering system is regularly updated to reflect the current status of evaluations, and 80.4% confirmed that evaluations are conducted transparently and fairly. Additionally, 82.1% indicated that it is easy to access relevant evaluation information through the e-system. These findings suggest that e-evaluation enhances inclusivity, fairness, transparency and accessibility in procurement, contributing to improved organizational performance and supplier confidence in Iringa Municipal Council.

Qualitative findings from interviews further support these quantitative results, showing that suppliers are adequately considered and engaged where appropriate during the evaluation process. Although evaluations are carried out solely by authorized procurement staff, suppliers are formally allowed to clarify aspects of their submissions when ambiguities arise. Interviews with HPMU and procurement officers revealed that all clarifications are made through the Government Procurement Portal (GPP), ensuring transparency and documentation of communication. This structured engagement not only prevents unfair rejection of bids due to minor issues but also enhances accuracy and fairness in decision-making. Respondents emphasized that such practices build supplier trust and encourage broader participation in tenders, ultimately improving competition and value for money. However, participants also stressed that these engagements must be managed carefully to maintain impartiality and consistency. As one HPMU official noted, all suppliers must be treated equally to prevent any perception of favoritism. The findings demonstrate that e-evaluation practices in Iringa Municipal Council foster transparency, fairness and inclusivity, thereby strengthening procurement integrity and institutional performance.

Table 3: Suppliers' Responses on the Effect of e-Evaluation Practices (N=60)

Item	Strong disagree		Disagree		Cummul Disagree		Agree		Strong agree		Cummul Agree	
	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per

Suppliers are adequately considered or engaged in the evaluation process	5	7.1	15	21.4	20	28.5	31	55.4	9	16.1	40	71.5
The e-evaluation process is inclusive and free from discrimination	6	8.4	12	16.9	18	25.3	32	56.9	10	17.8	42	74.7
The tendering system is regularly updated to reflect the current status of evaluations	3	3.7	10	12.4	13	16.1	40	71.4	7	12.5	47	83.9
The evaluation process is conducted transparently and fairly	4	6.1	9	13.6	13	19.7	35	59.8	12	20.5	47	80.4
It is easy to access relevant information about tender evaluations through the e-system	4	5.2	10	12.7	14	17.9	39	69.6	7	12.5	46	82.1
Agree = 44(78.5%) Disagree = 16(21.5%)												

Source: Field Data, (2025).

2 The effect of e-award on the performance of local government authorities

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that the majority of suppliers agreed that e-award practices significantly improve procurement performance in Iringa Municipal Council. Overall, 81.5% of respondents agreed with the statements related to the effectiveness of e-award practices, while only 18.5% disagreed. Specifically, 78.6% of respondents agreed that contract awards are made within a reasonable and predictable timeframe and 71.5% believed that award decisions are communicated effectively and without unnecessary delays. Moreover, 82.1% agreed that the e-award process is compliant with procurement regulations and ensures accountability, while 89.3% indicated that the process is automated and integrated with other tendering functions. Similarly, 83.9% of respondents affirmed that the e-award process helps reduce costs associated with tendering and contract management and that award information is handled securely and confidentially. These results suggest that e-award practices enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in procurement operations, leading to improved performance and credibility of Iringa Municipal Council.

Qualitative evidence from interviews reinforced these findings, showing that the e-award system promotes timeliness, predictability, and transparency in the contract award process. Participants emphasized that automation within the system enables prompt issuance of awards once evaluations are completed, reducing delays and improving communication with suppliers. Interviewees noted that predictable award timelines allow suppliers to plan resource mobilization and project execution efficiently, while also enabling the Council to align procurement implementation with

its financial and operational schedules. Automated notifications and system alerts were reported to minimize administrative bottlenecks and uncertainty among bidders, fostering trust and smooth project initiation. One accounting officer remarked that, “Once the evaluation is complete, the award is issued promptly and everyone is informed without waiting weeks for paperwork,” while an HPMU official added that timely awards ensure government projects “start and finish as planned.” The study therefore concludes that efficient e-award practices strengthen supplier confidence, enhance value for money and contribute to more effective public service delivery.

Table 4: Suppliers’ Response on the Effects of e-Award (N=60)

Item	Strong disagree		Disagree		Cummul Disagree		Agree		Strong agree		Cummul Agree	
	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per
Contract awards are made within a reasonable and predictable timeframe	4	7.2	8	14.2	12	21.4	39	71.5	4	7.1	44	78.6
Award decisions are communicated effectively and without unnecessary delay	6	10.7	10	17.8	16	28.5	33	59.0	7	12.5	40	71.5
The e-award process is compliant with procurement regulations and ensures accountability	2	3.6	8	14.3	10	17.9	40	71.4	6	10.7	46	82.1
The award process is automated and integrated with other tendering functions	0	0.0	6	10.7	6	10.7	39	72.6	9	16.7	48	89.3
The e-award process helps reduce the costs related to tendering and contract management	0	0.0	9	16.1	9	16.1	40	71.5	7	12.4	47	83.9
Award information is handled securely and confidentially	0	0.0	9	16.1	9	16.1	38	69.5	8	14.2	47	83.9
Agree = 10(81.5%)												
Disagree = 10(18.5%)												

Source: Field Data, (2025).

5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study revealed that e-advertisements by Iringa Municipal Council are consistent and accurate across multiple platforms, including the Council website, the national procurement portal, and official social media. Standardized templates, centralized

procedures, and internal verification processes ensure uniform and reliable tender information, supporting transparency and fairness. These results align with Kikwasi (2016), who emphasized that centralized communications reduce information asymmetry, and Ameyaw, Mensah, and Osei-Tutu (2022), who noted that clear tender advertisements foster supplier trust.

Despite these benefits, technical challenges, such as corrupted or low-quality document uploads, were noted. This reflects concerns highlighted by Achieng (2019) regarding insufficient quality control in digital procurement platforms. Furthermore, a reduction in clarification requests suggests streamlined processes, consistent with Mwakipesile (2018), who reported that uniform advertisements reduce administrative burdens.

Accounting officers and Heads of Procurement Management Unit (HPMU) confirmed that the tender advertisement process is objective, adheres to regulations, and provides equal opportunity to all suppliers. Automated platforms like the Government Procurement Portal (GPP) reinforce transparency and minimize bias (Schapper, Veiga Malta, & Gilbert, 2016). Integration with supplier registration, tax verification, and payment systems enhances efficiency, accuracy, and accountability, echoing findings from Wanyama and Mbeche (2016) and Aje and Okafor (2020). However, system effectiveness depends on stable ICT infrastructure, highlighting the need for reliable connectivity and maintenance (Mangare & Mwakyusa, 2020; Molla & Heeks, 2017).

The council's feedback mechanisms, including designated contacts and portal-based Q&A, promote fairness and transparency, consistent with Thai (2021) and Ameyaw, Mensah, & Osei-Tutu (2022). Public posting of responses ensures equal access to information, though limited digital access for rural suppliers remains a challenge. Finally, timely and detailed communication of tender results fosters supplier trust and competitive participation (Ogollah, Waiganjo, & Ayuto, 2015; Njau & Kamau, 2015). Secure systems protect confidential bid information, aligning with best practices in e-procurement security (Schapper, Veiga Malta, & Gilbert, 2016; Molla & Heeks, 2017), although ongoing user training is essential for maintaining security.

Suppliers are engaged during the evaluation process through formal clarification channels, allowing minor ambiguities to be addressed without outright bid rejection. This approach enhances fairness, inclusivity and merit based decisions (Thai, 2021; Ameyaw, Mensah, & Osei-Tutu, 2022). Maintaining consistency in granting clarifications prevents favoritism and supports regulatory compliance (Kakwezi & Nyeko, 2020).

The GPP system provides real-time updates on tender evaluation status, reducing uncertainty and enabling independent tracking by suppliers. This transparency aligns with Sako and Zylberberg (2021) and Turban et al. (2018), improving stakeholder confidence and administrative efficiency. Transparent evaluation, with pre-established criteria, formal bid openings, and confidentiality measures, ensures fairness and minimizes bias (Thai, 2021; Arrowsmith, 2020).

Easy access to evaluation information enhances operational efficiency, strengthens accountability, and encourages supplier participation, thereby improving procurement outcomes and organizational performance (Cousins et al., 2017; Uyerra & Flanagan, 2020; Thai & Prier, 2021). Contract awards are executed within predictable timeframes through automated e-award systems, reducing administrative delays and enabling suppliers to plan resource mobilization efficiently (Adebanjo & Kehoe, 2016; Nyeko &

Mutebi, 2018). Timely and transparent communication of award decisions fosters trust, minimizes disputes and ensures compliance with procurement regulations (Lam & Postlethwaite, 2018; Thai, 2021).

Integration of e-award with other tendering modules ensures real-time information flow and reduces human errors, enhancing accuracy and operational efficiency (Taye & Worku, 2020; Thai, 2021). Security measures, including encryption, restricted access and user authentication, protect sensitive information, promoting supplier confidence while maintaining transparency and fairness (AlHogail, 2015; Ellram et al., 2018). The study indicates that the Iringa Municipal Council's adoption of e-tendering practices covering advertisement, evaluation, and award enhances transparency, efficiency, accountability and supplier trust, ultimately contributing to improved local government performance.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The study demonstrates that the adoption of e-tendering practices by Iringa Municipal Council encompassing e-advertisement, e-evaluation and e-award significantly enhances transparency, efficiency, accountability and supplier confidence, thereby improving overall local government performance. The findings indicate that standardized, consistent and timely tender advertisements, coupled with fair and inclusive evaluation processes, foster merit-based competition and reduce administrative burdens. Automated e-award systems ensure predictable contract execution, efficient communication and secure handling of sensitive information, further strengthening trust and compliance with procurement regulations. However, challenges such as technical issues with document quality, ICT infrastructure reliability and limited digital access for rural suppliers were noted, suggesting areas for improvement.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Council strengthen technical quality control and ICT maintenance to ensure uninterrupted and reliable system performance. The council have to enhance digital accessibility and provide alternative channels to include suppliers from rural areas and also provide continuous training for procurement staff and suppliers to maintain system security, procedural compliance and effective use of e-tendering platforms, thereby sustaining the benefits of transparency, fairness, and efficiency in public procurement.

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