



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE INFLUENCE OF E-ORDERING SYSTEM ON LGAS' PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF KASULU DISTRICT COUNCIL, KIGOMA TANZANIA

Dr. Haji MussaMnasi (Ph. D)¹, Begarving Arthur² and Nicodemus Kasilati Mwaseba³

1. The Government of Tanzania (GoT) Siha DC District Executive Director; P. O. Box, 129, 5BR-Sanya Juu-Elerai.
2. Managing Director; Research & Business Development Consultant; 255 Investmetrics Group; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
3. Logistic and Procurement Manager at Medical Team International; P. O. Box, 32388 Dar es Salaam.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 28 August 2023

Final Accepted: 30 September 2023

Published: October 2023

Keywords: -

Public Procurement, E-Procurement,
Public Procurement Performance

Abstract

The study was conducted to determine the influence of e-Ordering system on the performance of public procurement of Kasulu District. The study employed a positivism philosophy and implemented a cross-sectional research design to answer research objectives. Data were collected from employees of Kasulu district council and suppliers that located in Kasulu district, Data were collected from 395 responded to questionnaires. Simple random sampling technique used to select sample. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 27; where Bivariate Regression analysis using Chi-Square test, descriptive analysis were conducted to answer the research objectives. The study found that the e-Ordering System has a statistically significant and positive impact on public procurement performance in local government authorities (LGAs). Specifically, implementing e-Ordering System leads to improvements in timely allocation of goods and resources, increased value for money, better quality of services, reduced user complaints, and improved communication results. The study recommends that the government should create a conducive technological environment to encourage innovative investments in e-Procurement technology by LGAs, as effective technology plays a crucial role in enhancing public procurement performance in these areas.

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Introduction:-

Governments across the globe have a fundamental responsibility to advance the wellbeing of their populations by ensuring the delivery of top tier services and essential infrastructure. In pursuit of this obligation, governments allocate significant financial resources to acquire and fund pivotal infrastructure projects. These projects involve a broad spectrum, including but not limited to road construction, transportation networks, housing developments, educational facilities, healthcare infrastructure, and various other critical public services and infrastructure (Knight, et al., 2012).

Corresponding Author:- Begarving Arthur

Address:- Managing Director; Research & Business Development Consultant; 255 Investmetrics Group; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The expenditure that incurred by the government are through the structure mechanism, thus, all spending that government initiated for the interest of the majority is considered as the public procurement (Owusu, et al., 2021). Due to the enormous movement of finance resources from government to mobilize necessary resources for handling public needs, it makes public procurement as one of the most exposed functions of government in global (Kingsford-Owusu & Chan, 2022). According to a 2016 report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the global annual losses due to corruption were estimated to reach \$3 trillion USD, moreover another survey conducted by CoST indicated that 15% to 35% of investments in publicly funded construction projects were lost due to mismanagement and corruption which is further estimated that by 2030 would reach an approximately \$6 trillion USD (CoST, 2018; IMF, 2016). This concerning trend can be attributed to several factors, including governments relying more heavily on private contractors, increased tolerance for conflicts of interest during procurement processes, insufficient emphasis on and monitoring of contractor performance, and a lack of commitment to robust procurement controls.

Over the years, world has witnessed revolution in technologies that has become one of the significant elements for the growth organizations on delivery of goods or service to the intended consumers (Hsin & apazafeiropoulou, 2008). Most government introduced strategies that create supportive environment for growth of technology that allow effective harnessing of technology and promote efficiency in delivery of public services to the citizen (OECD, 2021).

In 21st century it has been accompanied with rapid evolution of digital technology that alter business operation experiences as well as consumers experiences, technology enhance business operation to increase its value and efficiency through adaptation of reliable digitalized system that enable efficiency delivery of the products or services (Kearney's Editor , 2019). One of the areas that benefited with the digital transformation is Procurement, different countries globally has been collaborating technology into procurement procedure in different activities performed in the public sectors (Knight, et al., 2012).

Electronic procurement system (E-Procurement), considered a significant reform in public procurement, involves using electronic methods via the internet for various procurement functions like identifying needs, conducting the tender process, managing payments, and overseeing contracts(Munyao & Moronge, 2018). The primary aim is to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability in public procurement. This approach has gained popularity, especially with technological advancements. In the early 2000s, many public organizations began establishing an online presence to support some aspects of their procurement, including participation in online bidding(Oteki, Namusonge, Sakwa, & Ngeno, 2018).

The adoption of e-procurement in Africa, particularly in the public sector, is gradually gaining traction as a response to the challenges concerning accountability and transparency in procurement activities(Amani, 2015). E-procurement platforms have shown considerable promise in enhancing the efficiency of procurement services. Tanzania, for example, has extensively utilized e-procurement systems, enabling e-sharing, e-advertisement, e-submission, e-evaluation, e-contacting, e-payment, e-communication, and e-monitoring(Danga, Kapwani, & Justus, 2021). These online processes ensure the entirety of public procurement activities is conducted electronically(Munyao & Moronge, 2018).

The Tanzanian government implemented the TANePS e-Procurement system in 2018 to enhance transparency and efficiency in various procurement sectors. It covers a wide range of entities and services in Tanzania (Danga, Kapwani, & Justus, 2021). While it aimed to improve procurement in Local Government Authorities (LGAs), studies suggest that poor adherence to standards in traditional procurement methods hindered its impact(Chan & Owusu, 2017; Mchopa, 2020). This research examines the influence of e-Ordering system on the performance of public procurement of Kasulu District.

Problem Statement

As one of the duties of LGAs is to develop social and public wellbeing within its jurisdiction area, public procurement become significant element to facilitate the delivery of public services to the targeted areas (Matto, 2017; Gombeye, 2020). Thus, Tanzania government introduced Public Procurement Act No. of 2011 that allow LGAs and other government agency to perform their procuring function without central government intervening (Matto, 2017).

Procurement processes within Local Government authorities are afflicted by several issues including a lack of clear direction, inefficient coordination, a cumbersome bureaucratic structure, limited competition, and a deficit in transparency. These factors contribute to inefficiencies, delayed operations, substandard quality, and instances of corruption. According to an audit conducted by the Public Procurement Authority in 2010, products and services tendered within these authorities were estimated to be overpriced by nearly 60% (PPRA, 2018).

The involvement of officials in irregular practices was evident in various cases, such as the suspension of individuals from the Mpanda Water Supply and Sanitation Authority in the Katavi region and a Town Planning officer from Tanganyika District, accused of violating public procurement procedures (Mhagama, 2022). Moreover, there are records from the Public Procurement Regulatory Reports (PPRA) pointing to dubious payments, with the Dar es Salaam City Council allegedly making payments of TZS 140.7 million for substandard or non-existent work (Matto, 2017; PPRA, 2018). Furthermore, reports from the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) underscore the deficient performance of LGAs in their procurement activities. Notably, the rejection of the lowest bidder by the Morogoro District, leading to substantial loss of public funds, was highlighted (CAG, 2016-2019). These reports also indicate that a significant 40% of LGAs failed to comply with the existing procurement laws and regulations (CAG, 2018; CAG, 2019).

Government in responded to the ineffectiveness of LGAs to conduct procurement process by following accountability, fairness, and transparency by implementing various strategies that include procurement reform that led to enactment of public procurement regulations of 2013 (PPRA 2013) and public procurement Act of 2011 (PPA 11), also, the introduction of E-procurement system was major mechanism that government implemented to control the performance of public procurement in LGAs (Matto, 2017; Gombeye, 2020). The e-Procurement was enrolled to foster following principles standards and essential of public procurement such as integrity, competitiveness, accountability, transparency, and efficiency of Procuring Entities (PEs) that include LGAs (Danga, et al., 2021).

Despite of the effort that made to promote usage of the e-Procurement system for LGAs, there is low compliances to the application of e-Procurement, this indicates on the CAG report of 2020. Also, it was observed that only 5.8% of procuring award are issued by the LGAs mostly are award outside the system; this indicated that LGAs are only using the e-Procurement partially while most of the procurement process are finalized through paper-based process (PPRA, 2022). Due to low utilization of e-Procurement it led to several allegation on the authorizing procurement through bribery and corruption which distresses the performance of procurement that conducted by LGAs in Tanzania. Among LGAs experienced malpractice in public procurement, Kasulu district was remarked as lacking institutional capacity in terms of human and technological resources and tools was viewed as a threat to its accountability (Mwaseba, 2023). Lacking these technological tools gives loopholes among unfaithful local and political leaders. Despite of the few previous studies that showed linkages of e-procurement with performance of public procuring entities (Danga, et al., 2021; Amani, 2015; Kingsford-Owusu & Chan, 2022), but none of the empirical studies has focused on assessing the influence of e-Procurement in public procurement performance of Kasulu District. Thus, this study aimed to fill the gap by conducted the study that focus on determining the influence of e-Ordering system on the performance of public procurement of Kasulu District.

Literature Review:-

Definition of Keyword

Public Procurement

Public procurement is the procedure by which governments and other public sector groups buy products, services, and works from private-sector suppliers is referred to as public procurement (Crooms & Brandon-Jones, 2017; Candra & Gunawan, 2017). This procedure typically entails issuing a request for bids or proposals, evaluating replies from prospective vendors, and selecting a successful buyer or vendors (Mayunga, 2019).

e-Procurement

E-procurement is the process of managing procurement operations through the use of digital technology, this encompasses governmental and private groups purchasing goods, services, and works (Boafo, et al., 2020). By automating and standardizing procurement activities, e-procurement tools allow businesses to streamline their procurement processes, decrease expenses, and increase efficiency. Requisitioning, finding, purchasing, and billing are all examples of e-procurement tasks. Online catalogs, request for proposal (RFP) procedures, electronic bids, and supplier management tools are common components of e-procurement platforms (Crooms & Brandon-Jones, 2017).

Online supplier registration, electronic contract administration, and automatic invoice handling are all possible aspects of these systems (Ofori & Fuseini, 2020).

Public Procurement Performance

The main aim of the government is to deliver efficiency and value for money (VFM) in use of public fund. VFM is a crucial factor in public procurement to make sure that public funds are used effectively and quickly (Agaba and Emenika, 2018). The value for money idea involves striking a balance between cost, quality, and the desired result rather than just focusing on getting the best deal or the lowest price. Given the power of technology, LGAs and other institutions paying much attention to improve procurement performance which desired by best public service of the right quality, price, quantity which has to be delivered on the right time (Paga, 2018); thereafter insuring efficiency and value for money in use of public fund.

Theoretical Review

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Uses of Technology (UTAUT)

Unified Theory of Acceptance Use of Technology was formulated by Venkatesh et al., (2003). The UTAUT suggests that behavior intention determines actual use of technology, where; perceived likelihood of adopting technology depends on four key issues including, performance expectancy, efforts expectancy, social influence and facilitating condition. The UTAUT explained up to 70 percent of the variance has a desire to use technology, surpassing the previous model. These include demographic factors that have been ignored in other models like age and gender, this is basically used in pharmaceutical supply chain by considering what technology to use so that to introduce medical needs to the people based on age and gender. The UTAUT helps managers to assess the probability of success for new technologies based on pharmaceutical supply chain management as well as understanding the forces which makes to accept those technology. UTAUT has four predictors of behavior intention or usage like performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence as well as facilitating conditions.

In this study, the adoption of UTAUT model should now played as a yardstick for the technology adoptability studies based on local government authority (LGAs) because it holds user perceptions (the institute) in a more comprehensive and pragmatic way than previous ones. The implication of the theory is that whenever the government unit plans to formulate a system that need to be accepted by the users, it requires to concentrate on the viewed functions of the system by the users before rolling out the same. In addition, the government must focus on the job-fit and the relative advantage of the system to users as well as the expected outcome. This theory outlines the demands to concentrate on these factors before formulating any system to the counties or in the county. According to (Sarisar, 2015), this implies further that there is a need to have a partnership among the national government, county government and all the stakeholders and the views of the users need to be considered and inputted in the final product.

Despite of criticism from study of Dwivedi, et al (2017) that indicated that UTAUT only indicate the efficiency usage of UTAUT only explored based on the individual rather the institution. However, the criticism was invalidated by the study Shatta(2020) that indicated the succussive of e-procurement adaptation to the public entities using performance expectancy variable which is one of the key determinants of UTAUT. Therefore, the study adopted the theory to explain the performance of procurement efficiency in Kasulu district by focus on determine direct influence and driving factors and usages of the TANePS to promote public procurement efficiency in local government authority.

Empirical Literature Review

Mayunga(2019), conducted an assessment on the impact of electronic procurement toward supply chain performance in Tanzania. Cross-sectional research design was used by the study to select sample of 130 respondents through purposive and simple random sampling, data were collected using interview, questionnaire, document review, and observation. The mixed research strategies were used, where qualitative and quantitative data analysis was used for data analysis. The results revealed that e-tendering, e-payment, and e-information have significant positive relationship with supply chain performances.

Adebayo and Evance(2015) conducted a study on Adoption of the e-Procurement Systems in Developing countries. A Nigerian Public Sector Perspective. Data were obtained through web-based survey, whereby, this involved 174 employees that were involved in the e-procurement departments of Nigerian Public sector organizations. 74 respondents' answers were received which determined that most of the employees were not well trained. Also, the

study showed that the implementation of the e-procurement system improved transparency and integrity in the procurement process (Adebayo & Evans, 2015).

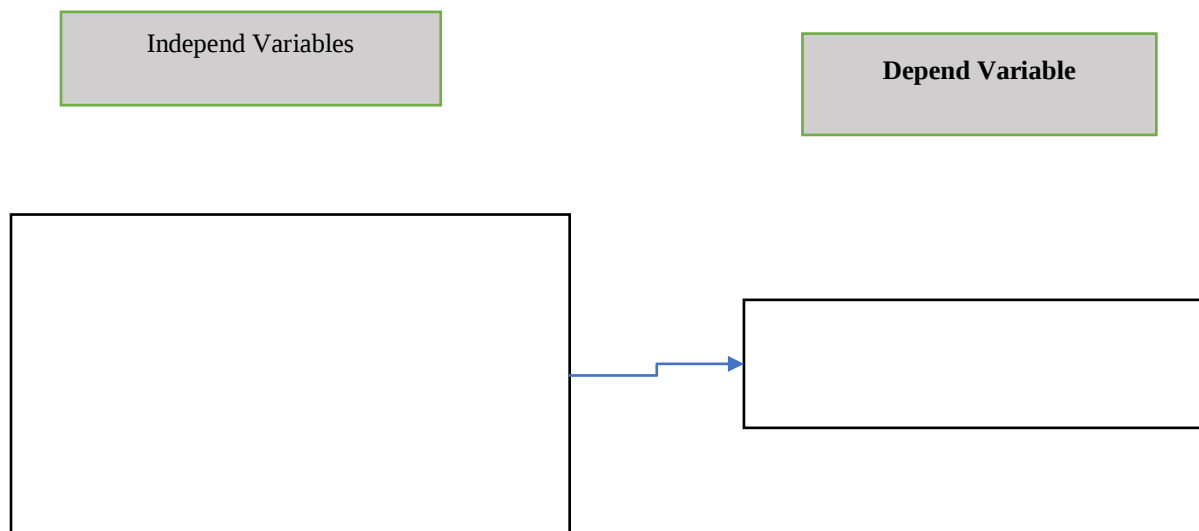
Kartika (2022) studied on the impact of E-Procurement Implementation on Public Procurement's corruption cases with the evidence from Indonesia and India. The study used both qualitative and quantitative studies where by it attempted to assess the extent to which the extent of the e-procurement to corruption cases. From his study, it was revealed that governments adopt E-Procurement systems to increase transparency, accountability and reduce corruption.

Kweka, (2021) conducted the study to examine the effect of e-Procurement on timely procurement of goods in selected government hospital in Tanzania. A cross-sectional research design was adopted by the study that facilitate to select 104 respondents as sample size of the study for data collection. The data was collected through interview, documentary review, questionnaire, the correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis and descriptive statistic was used for analysis of data. The results found show that the adaptation of online procurement methods has positive effect on the timely procurement of goods in hospital, the study concluded by the e-procurement are important for the government hospital that government should focus on implementing.

Kilo (2021), assessed the factors that hinder the execution of e-Procurement system (TANePS) in the public sectors in Tanzania. Cross-sectional research design for collection of data from sample of 100 respondents that selected through simple random sampling and purposive sampling. The data was collected through interview, questionnaire, and document review, data was analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis through SPSS program version 20. Results revealed that the adaptation of TANePS are affected by the ICT infrastructure and supplier's capacity on using the system, the study recommended for further commitment of top management on promoting usage of TANePS system while government innovate the ICT facilities.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework of the study present summarized relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable, the conceptual framework provides the summary of the variable within the study and direct the research on finding solution to the research problem. This research conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.



Source: Proposed by the Researcher, (2023).

The dependent variable influenced by e-Ordering System with its measurement includes catalogue accessibility, order management, and availability of stock information.

Research Methodology:-

This study followed the positivist research paradigm, which employs quantitative research methods to draw conclusions based on data collection and interpretation, rather than relying solely on observation. The adopted philosophy is highly relevant to this study, as it helps address the research problem and objectives through a

systematic data collection process focused on assessing the influence of e-procurement systems on the promotion of public procurement efficiency within local government authorities. The study employed a cross-sectional research design, which allows for the collection of data at a single point in time from selected study areas and a representative subset of respondents. The cross-sectional design offers several advantages, including the ability to collect data on different variables relevant to the research problem and to determine their correlations. Furthermore, this design is cost-effective and time-efficient, as data is gathered from a single time point, and it enables the collection of information from a large pool of respondents, enhancing the reliability of the gathered data.

The study conducted Kasulu District Council (KDC) as among local government authorities in Tanzania. Kasulu District Council selected because despite of undertaking various procurement activities of significant amount over the years to facilitate delivery of public services to the population of the district, the district was remarked as lacking technological tools that gives loopholes among unfaithful local and political leaders (Mwaseba, 2023). The targeted population of the study was drawn from all employees of Kasulu district council and suppliers that located in Kasulu district, the population include procurement officers, ICT personnel, tender board, planning officer, Accountants, and suppliers. The study used the sample size of 395 that selected from the targeted population, that distributed from each target population that included LGAs Staff and Suppliers. The sample size was selected through simple randomly sampling techniques from probability sampling. The primary data was collected using questionnaire and interview, while secondary data was collected using documentary review to compliment the primary data.

Data cleaned, coded, edited, summarized, and organized in relation to corresponding variables to research questions using Microsoft excel and prepared to be processed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 27. The study used descriptive statistics and the study used Bivariate Regression Analysis (BRA) to determine the relationship between e-Ordering System and public procurement performance in Kasulu District Council. To establish the relationship between variable in the study, the Chi-Square test (X^2) test implemented to measure the causes and effect relations between dependent variable which is public procurement efficiency and independent variable which is

Findings And Results Analysis:-

The current study projected to collect data from 395 respondents; 43 and 344 for LGAs staff and suppliers respectively. However, 98% of the proposed sample was achieved; amongst them 88% of the targeted staff were successful surveyed, whereas 99% of the proposed supplier sample was also achieved. Thus, the sample response ratio was good to proceed with further stages of analysis. See table 1

Table 1:- Response rate of the respondents.

	Proposed sample size	Actual sample size	Responded %	Non response %
Staff	43	49	88	12
Supplier	344	346	99	1
Entirely	395	387	98	2

Frequency Distribution of the respondents

This study found it vital to discuss the respondents' demographic features including age, gender, and education level. This basics of understanding the nature of the respondents with respect to their attribution in LGAs public procurement. The findings characteristics helps to judge the proportional and representation of each unique characteristic of respondents which could affect the outcome of the research. By considering such needs, respondent's gender, age and education level are presented.

Age of the Respondents

The frequency distribution in Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by age group. The dominated age group among respondents was 36-40 who amounted 41.6% of total respondents followed by 41-50 who amounted to 25.6%; 25-30 group of age were 23.3%; 50 and above were 8.5% while few amounting to 1% were aged below 24. This indicates that a significant portion of study sample consists of individuals above 25 age range which are working ages for most individuals in Tanzania.

Table 2:- Age group of the respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	below 24	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	25-30	90	23.3	23.3	24.3
	36-40	161	41.6	41.6	65.9
	41-50	99	25.6	25.6	91.5
	50 and above	33	8.5	8.5	100.0
	Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Sex of the Respondents

The frequency distribution in Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents by genders, 172 respondents (44.4%) are male and 215 respondents (55.6%) are female. The gender distribution in the study's sample is relatively balanced, with a slightly higher percentage of female respondents. This balance helps to ensure that the findings are not skewed by gender-related factors.

Table 3:- Sex of the Respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	172	44.4	44.4	44.4
	Female	215	55.6	55.6	100.0
	Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Education Level of the respondents

The breakdown of education levels in Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents had secondary/TVET education level who amounted to 48.1%, followed by primary education level whose were 23.3%; then undergraduate level respondents were 12.7%; 12.1% possessed informal education while very few amounting to 3.9% possessed postgraduate level of education.

Table 4:- Education Level of the respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Informal education	47	12.1	12.1	12.1
	Primary education	90	23.3	23.3	35.4
	Secondary/TVET education	186	48.1	48.1	83.5
	Undergraduate	49	12.7	12.7	96.1
	Postgraduate	15	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Bivariate Regression Analysis

To establish the relationship between variable in the study, the BRA was implemented to measure the causes and effect relations between dependent variable which is public procurement performance and independent variable which e-ordering system. The BRA results presented in Table 5

Table 5:-Chi-Square Tests.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1170.858 ^a	323	.000
Likelihood Ratio	502.448	323	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	175.009	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	387		

Table 5 shows that e-Ordering System has Chi-Square test (X^2)coefficient of 1170.858 and its P-value of 0.000. this shows that, e-Ordering System is statistically significant relating to public procurement performance positively at 95% degree of freedom because its P-Value was smaller than the significance level of 0.05. This indicating that, executing e-Ordering System in local government authorities (catalogue accessibility; order management; availability of stock information; submission of purchase requests and reviewing and evaluation of top supplier) will

increase in public procurement performance in terms of timely allocation of goods and resources; increasing value of money; quality of delivered services; decrease level of user complaints; and improve communicative results.

Descriptive Statistics

In order to triangulate the results from bivariate regression analysis, the study employed descriptive statistics to measure the influence of each independent variable's proxy measure. The higher the mean the higher the specific influence to public procurement performance.

Table 6:- Descriptive Statistics.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Catalogue accessibility	387	1.00	5.00	3.8501	1.06195
Order management	387	1.00	5.00	3.8605	1.00577
Availability of stock information	387	1.00	5.00	3.8424	1.02985
Submission of purchase requests	387	1.00	5.00	3.7829	1.10318
Reviewing and evaluation of top supplier	387	1.00	5.00	3.8269	1.02482
Valid N (listwise)	387				

Table 6 indicates that, Ordering management (Mean=3.861) in e-Ordering relatively higher influence to public procurement performance in LGAs. Followed by, catalogue accessibility, availability of stock information, reviewing and evaluation of top supplier and the least is submission of purchase request. However, all their mean value is below 4.00 and above 3.00 indicating that, at Kasulu District Council moderately implements e-Ordering System in its public procurement.

This result is supported by the study of Mayunga(2019) which revealed that e-tendering, e-ordering, e-payment, and e-information have significant positive relationship with supply chain performances. Also, Adebayo and Evance(2015) showed that the implementation of the e-procurement system improved transparency and integrity in the procurement process. While Kartika (2022) adaptation of e-procurement in Indonesia reduced the level of corruption to Indonesia provinces, however, in India, the adoption of E-procurement did not reduce corruption in the state government. Kweka, (2021) found show that the adaptation of online procurement methods has positive effect on the timely ordering of goods in hospital. However, Kilo (2021) revealed that the adaptation of TANePS is affected by the ICT infrastructure and supplier's capacity on using the system.

Conclusion:-

It was found that e-Ordering System is statistically significant relating to public procurement performance positively at 95% degree of freedom because its P-Value was smaller than the significance level of 0.05. it is further indicating that, increase in executing e-Ordering System in local government authorities (catalogue accessibility; order management; availability of stock information; submission of purchase requests and reviewing and evaluation of top supplier) lead toin public procurement performance in terms of timely allocation of goods and resources; increasing value of money; quality of delivered services; decrease level of user complaints; and improve communicative results.

The study results imply different LGAs and PEs by providing awareness on the influence of integrating technology in procurement process in improving performance compared to traditional paper-based procurement process, which enhance their effectiveness on using TANePS in all procurement stages. The study serves as a guide for policymakers, helping them to design and implement effective policies and programs to implement e-Procurement. Further, the study offers awareness of the real case situation and provide thoughtful insight to district council actors on how to undertake procurement activities of significant amount and facilitates delivery of public services.

Recommendation:-

Considering the findings in the study and its subsequent conclusions, the study makes several recommendations. The study found that, effective technology has strong influence on ensuring public procurement is well performed in LGAs, in terms of timely allocation of goods and resources; increasing value of money; quality of delivered

services; decrease level of user complaints; and improve communicative results; therefore, it has to be recommended the government should facilitate technological atmosphere so as to enhance e-Procurement technology investment by LGAs in innovative ways.

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