

Value for Money in Provision of Services in the Public Sector of Uganda

Article by Benson Benedict Okech
PhD in Management, Texila American University, Uganda
E-Mail: okechb@gmail.com

Abstract

Value for money has increasingly become a contentious and very prominent subject in the development agenda both within developed and developing Economies. Donor groups and community consider value for money when allocating budgets and other resources to developing countries. The study examined value for money in the provision of services in the public sector of Uganda. The general objective of the study was to evaluate value for money in the provision of services. The study was guided by three specific objectives which were; to examine effectiveness in the provision of services in the public sector of Uganda; to assess efficiency in the provision of services in the public sector of Uganda and to evaluate economy in the provision of services in the public sector of Uganda. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect primary data from the respondents while secondary data were collected through literature reviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The study findings show that economy as one of the pillars of value for money was the least consideration and therefore, not practiced in the public sector of Uganda. Meanwhile, efficiency was the most practiced element of value for money and followed very closely with effectiveness.

The conclusion is that there is no value for money from the provision of service in the public sector of Uganda. The study recommends that MDAs and Local governments should operationalize the concept of value for money and make it well understood across the three spheres of government; review alternatives including considering making inter-ministerial and departmental use of skilled resources which are in short supply to delivery on required projects; and above all, ensure that the anticipated benefits from the services outweighs the costs of acquiring the services.

Keywords: *Value for Money, Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Procurement of services, Public Sector, Uganda.*

Introduction

Background to the study

Since the 1990s and more precisely the early 2000s, there has been a significant increase in the use of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) by most of the OECD member countries in delivering complex services to citizens where government lack the capacity. For instance; France, Korea, Germany, Australia, the United Kingdom and others have taken seriously the use of PPPs to deliver professional advisory services that were hitherto delivered through ordinary procurement. The drive to use professionals with required skills is premised on the pursuit of best value for money (OECD, 2008).

Governments should prefer procurement of services which add and /create value for money. However, in practice there is always no value addition in the outputs of the professional services. In addition, the value for money principle objective is always blurred and the procurement of services may at some point be skewed by factors other than the value for money considerations.

According to (Burger and Hawkesworth, 2011) in their article published in OECD Journal on Budgeting, procurement of professional services for instance of Lawyers, Accountants, Engineers, Doctors, among others, to offer needed advice such as carrying out technical and or feasibility studies, strategic advisory, engineering design, legal and Information Technology services, and supervision of complex projects as a

result of the Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies including State Enterprises and Corporations is necessary and strategic in order for government to perform its core functions of provision of services to the citizens well. The public sector hires the above services from the private sector because government may not have the human resources with such skills or are insufficient, and in short supply. Fair and competitive procurement of professional and advisory services which achieve value for money is the desire and interest of any government, donors and citizens. It is expected that the procured services are of high necessity and government will make use of the deliverables of the services rendered. This is the essence of value for money.

Value for money is defined variedly. One of the most common is that it is a utility which is derived or obtained from any procurement of any funds or money which has been spent. It is based on three core connotations namely; Effectiveness, Efficiency and Economy. In its 2011 communication, the EU emphasizes a remarkable shift from the traditional considerations of quality to best value for money including equity (European Parliament, 2011).

According to the report from the office of the (Auditor General, 2014) of British Columbia, the Government of British Columbia spends more than US\$560 million (Five Hundred and Sixty Million dollars) on procurement of professional plus advisory services yearly in contracts with private sector businesses where skills needed by the government is in the offering.

Value for Money is discussed by many people but very few understand the concept well. Technically, it is not solely about buying cheaply from service providers but rather, it is the balance in the life cycle costs in the procurement process plus the quality of the service provided in what is famously referred to us the three Es that is Effectiveness, Efficiency and Economy (Tang, 2008). Transparency, competition and fairness are key ingredients in demonstrating value for money.

Effectiveness which means spending wisely is mainly concerned with the extent to which objectives have been met and the intended results achieved. (Kalubanga et al, 2013) indicate that effectiveness involves both qualitative and quantitative increase and decrease in outcomes while achieving the intended objectives. (Kalubanga et al, 2013) further stress that effectiveness relates to an entity doing the right thing. The value for money audit report of the Office of the Auditor General of Uganda, 2015 further reinforce this assertion that effectiveness is the extent to which the set objectives have been met and the intended results achieved.

Efficiency which is spending well can be said to be the measure of productivity. It is how much one gets out in relation to what one has put in. Therefore, it is the maximum output for any given set of inputs or the minimum inputs for any given quantity and quality of goods or services provided. According to the annual report of the (Auditor General, 2015) for the audit year ending December 2015 of the Republic of Uganda, efficiency is said to be getting the most from the available public resources. It is mainly concerned with the existing relationship between the resources employed by the government and all the outputs delivered out of the resources put in, as far as quality, quantity including timing are concerned.

Economy which is spending less is concerned with minimizing the cost of inputs used for an activity having regard to appropriate quality. This concerns the acquisition of resources in appropriate quality and quantity at a minimum cost. It is a measure of what goes into providing a service. Thus, costs of inputs-unit costs are used as an economy measure. (Adjo, Amakudzi 2008) further confirms this statement.

The public sector of Uganda is composed of Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Corporations which are run directly by the government. The public sector of Uganda spends about UGX 120,000,000,000 (One Hundred and twenty billion) representing 17.3% on procurement of services annually (PPDA, 2010). According to the (World Bank, 2012), Uganda spends over 55% of its budget on public procurement. Records from the PPDA 3rd integrity survey report (PPDA, 2016), indicate that Uganda government spent 50.2% of its 2014/2015 national budget on public procurement.

Statement of the problem

In Uganda's public sector, there is substantial concern from not only the citizens and the donor community, but the employees of the MDAs as well as local government units as to whether there is any value for money derived out of the procurement of professional and advisory services offered to the government, (Audit report on value for money, Office of the Auditor General, 2015). The report further states that discussions of the value for money reports is still a major challenge for the Accountability Committee. More times than not, once the outputs are completed by the professionals who were hired, the outputs are then put on the shelves and not made use of. When necessary, the output may be used as input for a Minister to pass a law or statutory instrument to solve a crisis. However, the implementation of such statutory instrument or policy remains a big challenge in the public sector of Uganda. This therefore, leads one to ask the question as to what value addition procurement of professional advisory services is to the government if the output of hiring services are not made use of.

Significance of the study

This study will be of high, significant value as a reference for students, scholars and researchers on Financial Management. The recommendations of this study will be of great significance to policy makers, managers and top decision makers on the value addition of the procurement of professional and advisory services.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was three fold:

- To examine the effectiveness in the provision of services in the public sector of Uganda;
- To assess the efficiency in the provision of services in the public sector of Uganda;
- To evaluate economy in the provision of services in the public sector of Uganda.

Conceptual framework

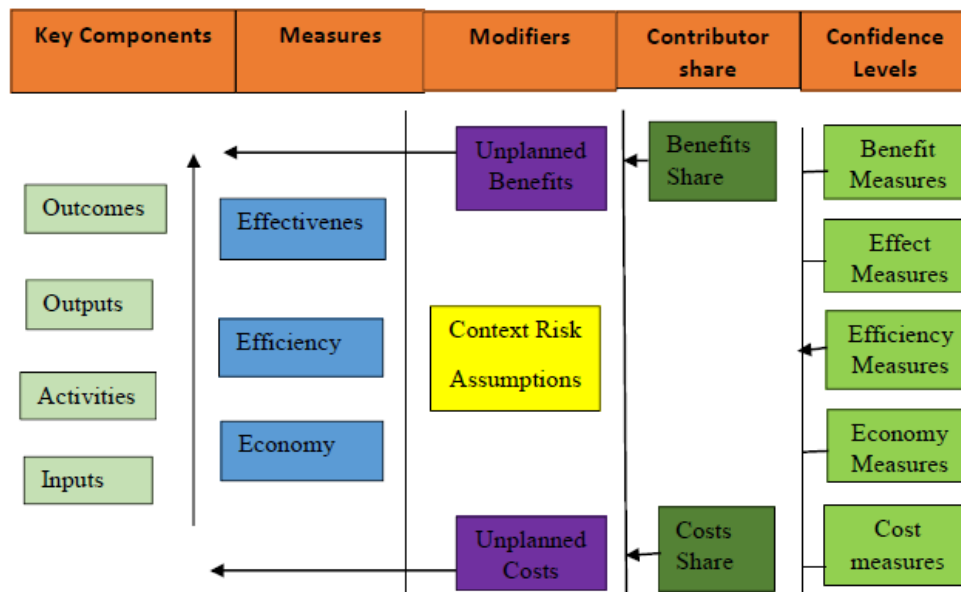


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by researcher, 2017.

In this conceptual framework model, the dimensions and also the definitions of the various components of the concept of value for money are applied in the following ways:

Economy. This concept is a measure of all that goes in while providing a service. This component may include costs of the inputs which will be used. The unit costs of the inputs are always used as a measure of the component of economy within the value for money framework. The life cycle costs of all inputs, such as direct and indirect costs of acquisition, running and disposal of the assets and other non-current assets are always considered.

Efficiency. This concept is a measure of productivity of services. In other words, it is the measure of how much government gets from the hire of a professional service. This further examines if there is any relationship between the inputs and the outputs; for instance, it measures the planned against actual delivery of all the milestones by professional hire to offer service to government.

Effectiveness. This concept is the quantitative and qualitative measures of any increase or any decrease in the outcomes which demonstrate that a government programme is indeed effective in the delivery of the intended objectives. This component of value for money therefore, examines possible relationships between the outputs and the outcomes. It also examines the entire process and if the alternative chosen was the best or not.

Literature review

Empirical studies on value for money

This section explains the various studies by other researchers on value for money. While this study is unique in terms of the methodology, conceptual framework and theoretical underpinning, there are some strands of literature related to the study which includes the following.

A report by the (Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, 2014) on how they considered the government to have received value for money from the procurement of not only the professional but also advisory services. The Auditor General reported to the Speaker of the Assembly that services done for and on behalf of the government, were procured in a competitive manner, fairly justifiable and also very cost-effective. They further report that in the majority of contracts reviewed and examined, the Ministries received the services which they procured on time but also at the agreed negotiated rate and no variations were seen. However, the report says the Ministries which were audited put themselves at high risks of not getting any value for money.

(Kalubanga, Kakwezi 2013) studied value for money from the perspective of auditing. They report that contemporary practices in the current world require that audits are done in a very comprehensive manner so that all factors and variables of an entity are known. Such styles of audit should include among other techniques, an assessment through forensic means of the ability of the government MDAs to execute their roles costs control by ensuring all kinds of resources are well managed in terms of costs, and ensuring that the entity's activities are efficiently organized to service the purpose.

(Client Earth, 2012) in a report "Procuring best value for money, why eliminating the 'lowest price' approach to awarding public contracts would serve both sustainability objectives and efficient public spending", the report did put emphasis on the new European Commission's proposal for a policy directive on sustainable public procurement, all contracting entities be tasked to ensure that the awarding of all forthcoming contracts will be on the basis of either the most economically advantageous offer or on the basis of lowest cost and nothing else. However, several criticisms have already arisen, as they say the issue of lowest cost will not be assessed on only price and therefore, the new proposal is not responsive to European Parliament and several others who have called for a move away from allowing awarding entities to just select the lowest offer and neglect other factors.

According to (Nicola Dimitri, 2012) in his report on best Value for Money in Procurement, in his Working Paper No. 2012/02 of Maastricht School of Management, he points to the fact that there are both monetary and non-monetary elements of the concept of value for money. The paper goes ahead to cite a recent European Communication Directive on incorporating life cycle perspective in monetary evaluation of procurement in determining value for money.

(Burger and Hawkesworth, 2011) in their study recommended that governments can make a choice to use the modality of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) instead of using the traditional procurement in contracting. They argue that the findings of their study pointed to the differences in the range and complexity of the ex-ante and ex-post value for money tests which they said some of the governments apply to PPPs projects and at the same time to traditionally procured infrastructure projects.

(George L. Harris, 1998) in a conference proceeding mentioned that there are five key issues to be taken care of in effective procurement of service and he pointed out the following. Customer Service, Supplier Performance, People Capabilities, Cost Performance and Future Direction Setting among others. His presentation is in agreement with that of the Auditor of British Columbia and others, including Client Earth and the communication from the European Parliament.

Methodology

Research design

This study adopted a descriptive research design. (Mugenda et al, 2003), this design describes a situation exactly the way it was. The descriptive design approach was good in the sense that it allows collection of data from the standard population and from those who can use questionnaire (Micheni, 2011).

Study population and sample size

The population of the study consisted of 109 public sector Institutions that included; Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Local Government Units and UN agencies within Uganda. From the 109 public sector institutions, a sample size of 35 MDAs, Local Government Units, UN agencies with total study population of 1,550 staff chosen for the study. Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, including UN, are said to be rife with no considerations of value for money while hiring services of professional and advisory individuals or firms to undertake specialized jobs for government. Therefore, based on the formulae of (Yamane, 1973), a sample size of 400 respondents were selected for the study. However, only 382 respondents representing, about 96% of the response rate, with only 4% or 18 questionnaire none response rate. Simple random method of sampling was used in selecting the respondents to take part in questionnaire answering.

Data collection instruments

Data were collected mainly from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected using self-administered questionnaire which were answered by the sampled respondents from the various MDAs and UN. The questionnaire was used because it can make data collection easy and analysis including permitting greater response rate from the respondents, whereas the secondary sources of data were collected through review of articles, reports and other published resources from Parliament and Ministry of Finance.

Validity and reliability

In order to ensure quality assurance and control, (Cronbach, 1951) alpha was used to carry out the test of the reliability of instruments. As a general rule, any coefficient which is equal to or greater than 0.5 is acceptable and an indication of a good construct reliability as reported by (Nunnally, 1978).

From the results of the test, the data collection instruments were revealed reliable at 0.763 overall. However, for each of the components of value for money, the reliability was as follows: Economy with 0.725, Efficiency with 0.684 and effectiveness with 0.860. To conduct an assessment of the scales, content validity was used so that the questionnaire was valid in terms of the content. The researcher reached out to six different experts from academia and practitioners to do an examination of the content as was the case by (Devellis, 1991). Therefore, the researcher made changes as suggested by the experts on the content and were later approved for use.

Additionally, the Content Validity Index (CVI) were obtained for the different sections of the questionnaire and because the results were all above 0.7 as (Sakaran, 2000) recommended, the validity was equally ensured.

Data analysis and presentation

The data presented in this paper were analyzed using descriptive statistics techniques. Descriptive statistics, from which the percentages, means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values achieved were computed and analyzed for each item that measured value for money in service provision. The Means together with standard deviations were used to summarize the results for interpretation and easy understandability. The study used the means because it shows summarization of data whereas standard deviation was used because it clearly shows how the different means represent the dataset as reported by (Field, 2009). The independent variables which included; Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness whereas the dependent variable which was Service quality is measured by reliability as illustrated by (Ali Ramezani, et al, 2015).

Empirical results

The empirical results are presented using descriptive statistics with the different components of value for money as independent variables; economy, efficiency and effectiveness as seen below.

Economy in procurement of services

9 items were used to show how to achieve economy in the procurement of services in the public sector of Uganda. Descriptive statistics showing the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values each variable has achieved.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables of economy in procurement of services

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Service of high quality	382	1	5	3.68	1.281
Benefits from service is more than the costs	382	1	5	3.16	1.184
Transparency in financial evaluations	382	1	5	3.94	.988
Assessing whether procurement of a service is necessary	382	1	5	3.81	1.027
Reviewing availability of alternatives	382	1	5	3.84	1.089
Carrying out a business case analysis	382	1	5	3.76	1.050
Competition in every procurement of a service	382	2	5	3.99	.919
Avoiding preferential treatment	382	1	5	3.75	.884
When donors predetermine contract value	382	1	5	3.20	1.144
Valid N (listwise)	382				

Source: Researcher's Computation of Primary data, 2017.

From the findings in the above table, it can be deduced that the top three major key factors in public service of Uganda which are considered as driving economy as elements of element in value for money are; Competition in every procurement of a service with a mean of 3.99 and standard deviation of 0.919, transparency in financial evaluations with a mean of 3.94 and standard deviation of 0.988 and reviewing availability of alternatives with a mean of 3.84 and standard deviation of 1.089. The three least factors considered in economy are; Benefits from service is more than the costs with a mean of 3.16 and standard

deviation of 1.184, when donors predetermine contract value with mean of 3.20 and standard deviation of 1.144 and Service of high quality with mean of 3.68 and standard deviation of 1.281. The table further show other statistics for the elements which are; Assessing whether procurement of a service is necessary with a mean score of 3.81 and standard deviation of 1.027, carrying out a business case analysis with a mean of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.050 and last but not least avoiding preferential treatment with a mean score of 3.75 and standard deviation of 0.884.

Efficiency in procurement of services

9 items were used to show how to achieve efficiency in the procurement of services in the public sector of Uganda. Descriptive statistics showing the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values each variable has achieved.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables of efficiency in procurement of services

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
When Government get reports for services provided	382	1	5	3.66	.890
Getting reports which are of high quality	382	1	5	3.79	1.202
When reports submitted are used by Government	382	1	5	4.01	1.120
When reports help to solve an issue/problem in society	382	2	5	4.12	.820
When reports are submitted timely	382	2	5	4.32	.762
When all outputs as per the TOR are delivered	382	2	5	4.14	.699
When more outputs are delivered than paid for	382	1	5	3.54	1.156
When OAG carry out value for money audits	382	1	5	3.29	1.314
When PPDA carry out compliance with value for money	381	1	5	3.48	1.187
Valid N (listwise)	381				

Source: Researcher's Computation of Primary data, 2017.

From the results in the table above, the statistics of the variables of efficiency in the public sector of Uganda are as follows for the top three. When reports are submitted timely with a mean of 4.32 and standard deviation of 0.762, When all outputs as per the TOR are delivered with a mean of 4.14 with standard deviation of 0.699 and When reports help to solve an issue/problem in society with a mean score of 4.12 and standard deviation of 0.820. The table further shows that when reports submitted are used by Government with a mean score of 4.01 and standard deviation of 1.120, getting reports which are of high quality with a mean score of 3.79 and standard deviation of 1.202, when Government get reports for services provided with a mean score of 3.66 and standard deviation of 0.890, when more outputs are delivered than paid for with a mean of 3.54 and standard deviation of 1.156, when PPDA carry out compliance with value for money with a mean of 3.48 and standard deviation of 1.187, and lastly when OAG carry out value for money audits with a mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 1.314.

Effectiveness in procurement of services

7 items were used to show how to achieve effectiveness in the procurement of services in the public sector of Uganda. Descriptive statistics showing the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values each variable has achieved.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of variables of effectiveness in procurement of services

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
When performance against objective is checked	382	1	5	4.26	.838
Achievement of intended purpose for each contract	382	1	5	4.20	.815
When there is identification of outcomes sought	382	2	5	4.00	.799
Evaluation of whether outcomes are achieved	382	1	5	4.00	1.031
Documenting evaluation of performance provided	382	2	5	4.11	.686
Fairness and Transparency in considering past performance	382	1	5	3.87	.956
Lessons learnt is shared with MDAs	382	1	5	3.98	.991
Valid N (listwise)	382				

Source: Researcher's Computation of Primary data, 2017.

From the findings in the table above, effectiveness has the following three key elements which the public sector needs to take note of very seriously as they contract consultants to provide key advisory and professional service. They are; when performance against objective is checked with a mean of 4.26 and standard deviation of 0.838, achievement of intended purpose for each contract with a mean score of 4.20 with standard deviation of 0.815 and documenting evaluation of performance provided with a mean score of 4.11 and standard deviation of 0.686. However, the table also shows that the elements of effectiveness are; When there is identification of outcomes sought with a mean score of 4.00 and standard deviation of 0.799, Evaluation of whether outcomes are achieved with a mean score of 4.00 and standard deviation of 1.031, lessons learnt is shared with MDAs with a mean score of 3.98 and standard deviation of 0.991 and lastly fairness and transparency in considering past performance with a mean of 3.87 and standard deviation of 0.956.

Discussion of results

Economy in procurement of services

Economy which means minimization of the cost of all resources which are required in the provision of service, and which sometimes is also referred to us inputs. This means the characteristics of spending less resources by the government for the inputs. It has been reported by Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Republic of Uganda in both the 9th and 10th Parliament, Office of the Auditor General (OAG), Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) that Government Ministries, Department and Agencies do not consider the element of economy while procuring either professional or advisory services for the government of Uganda. As a result, there has been several billions of tax payers' money lost paying for consultants at exorbitant prices. At some points, payments are even done when no service has been provided. According to the (OAG, 2016), about UGX 338 million could not be explained or accounted for by the Ministry of Education and Sport, let alone making payment for unexecuted work. Further, the report points out that National Medical Stores procured Anti-retroviral medicines (ARVs) from a local manufacturer at very high prices than the approved amount meaning there was no economy which means spending less.

According to a report from the Public Accounts Committee of the (9th Parliament of Uganda, 2015), a committee charged with the oversight of all public accounts, government MDAs did not take economy into account. The Local Government Accounts Committee (LGAC) of Parliament also confirms that economy was not a key factor most local government authorities took into account while spending resources at the 112 different District Offices in Uganda. The Committee on Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (COSASE) also present the same status as pointed out by Parliament, PAC and LGPAC.

According to the report from (African Parliamentary Index, 2012), the summary country report on the parliament of Uganda, the accountability committees of the parliament of Uganda put very clearly that the committees are very good at conducting independent investigations of government MDAs, but the goodwill of the government in implementing recommendations was seen to be lacking. In fact, they report that the government does not implement any recommendations and even if the Auditor General reports on the failure to implement recommendations, the government takes no action and this is seen as a systematic ploy by the government to promote the uneconomical use of resources.

Looking at the statistics on gender of the respondents, out of a total of 149 (39.1%) male and 233 (60.9%) female who participated in the study, 30 (25%) male and 90 (75%) female strongly agreed that encouraging competition in every procurement of service is the top most factor in ensuring economy. It is therefore, highly argued from the gender perspective that this way, both qualified female and male candidates should be favorably and equally taken into account, as females are less extravagant than their male counter parts when it comes to costing the provision of services.

Similarly, looking at the statistics on regional distribution of the respondents, out of a total of 176 (46.1%) of the respondents who participated from Central region, 54 (47.0%) strongly agreed while 69 (38.0%) agreed that transparency in financial evaluation is the second most top factor in ensuring economy regarding value for money. Out of a total respondent of 68 (17.8%) from Northern region, 23 (20.0%) strongly agreed while 29 (16.0%) agreed that transparency in financial evaluation is very important. Out of a total respondent of 61 (16.0%) from western region, 0 (00.0%) strongly agreed while 45 (24.7%) responded in the affirmative that transparency in financial evaluation is important. From Eastern region, out of a total of 77 (20.2%) of the respondents, 38 (33.0%) strongly agreed while 39 (21.4%) agreed that transparency in financial evaluation is the cornerstone of economy. What this means is that almost all the regions of the country do recognize and believe that transparency in financial evaluation is a significant factor in ensuring that economical spending leads to attainment of value for money in the public sector of Uganda.

Relatedly, on reviewing availability of alternatives to the provision of services as one of the key elements in economy which leads to ensuring value for money in the public sector of Uganda; a close tabulation of educational status of the respondents is done as follows. Out of a total of 7 (1.8%) of the respondents with doctorate degrees, none of them strongly agreed nor agreed in the affirmative. However, all the 7 were also not decided whether or not to review alternatives to hiring consultants to conduct specific assignments on behalf of the government of Uganda. This means rating does not help considering that doctorate holders should be able to make appropriate decisions based on many available parameters. Out of 253 (66.2%) of the respondents who have Master's degree, 92 (81.0%) strongly agreed which was further reinforced by another 78 (48.1%) who agreed in the affirmative. This has several meanings and implications. Firstly, before spending government resources on providing services, the Masters degree holders are saying that there is need to review whether there are alternatives or not, secondly, if another resource person could be seconded from the government MDAs and is paid a motivational honorarium instead of hiring a consultant wholly. Of the 16 (4.2%) who have post graduate Diplomas, none strongly agreed but all the 16 agreed in reviewing alternatives and this is in agreement with what the masters' respondents equally said. The same number did reinforce what the post graduate respondents said which is none on strongly agree and 16 for agree. Out of the 90 (23.6%) of the respondents who have Bachelor's degree, 22 (19.3%) strongly agreed and was substantiated by another 52 (32.1%) who agreed.

Efficiency in procurement of services

Efficiency is the relations between the output from the services and resources put in to produce the results. This also means spending the resources well.

According to the cross tabulation of the results using employment statistics, out of a total of 138 (36.1%) of the respondent employed with Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs), 71 (38.6%) which also constitute the majority strongly agreed and the same was confirmed and agreed by 65 (35.3%) out of a total of 117 (30.6%) respondents who are employed by international civil service specially the UN. From the District local governments, out of a total respondent of 48 (12.6%), 24 (13.0%) of them strongly agreed while 11 (7.7%) of them agreed. Overall, 184 (48.2%) of the total respondents strongly agreed while another 143 (37.4%) agreed the major and very important element of efficiency is submitting reports to the relevant government MDAs in time as and when required.

On tabulation of the demographic statistics related to marital status of the respondents regarding whether all outputs as per the Terms of Reference (TOR) are delivered, the statistics shows that out of a total of 113 (29.6%) of the respondents who are single, 23 (21.3%) strongly agreed while 90 (38.1%) agreed. The majority of those who are married did say anything opposite because of the total 262 (68.4%), 78 (72.2%) strongly agreed whereas 146 (61.9%) agreed. The results mean that the married people strongly consider delivery on the outputs of the terms of reference to which they were engaged. This also relates and is connected with the findings that efficiency which means spending the resources well is a key factor for married people, more than the single. This understanding was also the case with divorced people, as all 7 who participated strongly agreed that all outputs as per the engagement terms should be delivered.

Regarding the third top element of efficiency which is if the engagement of those providing services will help to solve an issue within society, I used the cross tabulation of length of service or duration of the period of service of the respondent to dig deeper into the issue. Out of a total of 120 (31.4%) of the respondents who have been employed for more than 5 years, 46 (35.1%) strongly agreed whereas 44 (23.3%) agreed. On the other hand, out of a total of 106 (27.7%) of the respondents who are single, 23 (17.6%) strongly agreed and 83 (44.0%) agreed. Overall, 131 (34.3%) strongly agreed while 189 (49.5%) agreed. This means that those who have stayed in MDA for at least five or more years know the problem and if a consultant is engaged to try research an issue, the outcome of the consultancy would help resolve a problem in government. Indeed, those who have also just joined have echoed the same, unlike those who have stayed between one to four years who could have become complacent and think that the outcome of the consultancy may not help resolve a problem within society.

Effectiveness in procurement of services

Effectiveness which is the relations between the intended results of the public spending or outcomes. This also means spending the resources very wisely.

Among the top three key considerations in ensuring effectiveness were; checking performance against the set objectives, ensuring the achievement of the intended results and documenting evaluation of the performance of the consultants. To have a deeper understanding, I ran a cross tabulation of the above issues in relation to age bracket and religion of the respondents.

On checking performance against the initial set objectives in recognition of the age bracket of the respondents, out of a total of 113 (29.6%) of the respondents who fall between 21-30 years, 60 (42.3%) strongly agreed while 53 (24.6%) agreed. Whereas out of a total of 193 (50.5%) of the respondents who fall between the age bracket of 31-40 years, 51 (34.2%) strongly agreed and 130 (60.2%) agreed. In terms of the overall position, 149 (39.0%) strongly agreed while 216 (56.5%) agreed and reiterated that checking performance at all times against each of the set objectives is very important in ensuring effectiveness in value for money in the public sector. In the report of the (OAG, 2016), the same position was presented very clearly that MDAs should regularly monitor and check the performance of consultants and not wait

until the end when evaluation is being done. This way, errors and any mismatch between actual results and set objectives can be corrected and/or minimised.

In relation to the issue of achievement of the intended results as one of the key issue within effectiveness, the researcher also ran a cross tabulation in regards to religion of the respondents. Out of a total of 177 (46.3%) of the respondents who belong to the Anglican faith, 41 (33.1%) strongly agreed while 122 (50.4%) agreed. Similarly, out of a total of 106 (27.7%) of the respondents who are Catholics, 62 (50.0%) strongly agreed meanwhile 42 (17.3%) agreed. The Muslims and other religious faiths like the Pentecostal and SDAs equally had the same opinion with the Anglican and Catholic faith and there was no disagreement from Muslims or others whether achievement of results should be ensured. Therefore, it can be deduced that generally, in terms of religion, all denominations are in total agreement that the results for which the consultants were hired should be achieved under all circumstances in order to have full value for money on resources being spent.

Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations from the study are imperative for the government to ensure that value for money considerations are addressed adequately to avoid loss of public resources through intentional and sometimes collusive practices with the so-called “consultants” whose value is not always the best as per the findings.

Conclusion

The study sought to establish whether there is value for money in the provision of services in the public sector of Uganda. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that efficiency is the most important and driving factor in value for money considerations with an overall mean score of 4.20. This is followed by effectiveness with a mean score of 4.19, although there is a very thin line in terms of the mean score between efficiency and effectiveness, both seem to be key within the public sector.

It can further be concluded that economy is not much taken into consideration while procuring professional and advisory services for the government of Uganda. This has to be taken much care of by all the MDAs so that there is economy in recruitment of consultants either long term or short term. However, from each independent variable, the top three factors which need to be taken into account while considering economy in provision of professional and advisory services in the public sector of Uganda are; Competition in every procurement of a service with a mean of 3.99, Transparency in financial evaluations with a mean of 3.94 and reviewing availability of alternatives with a mean of 3.84.

Meanwhile, the top three factors to be considered in efficiency while acquiring professional and advisory services in the public sector of Uganda are; When reports are submitted timely with a mean of 4.32, When all outputs as per the TOR are delivered with a mean of 4.14 and When reports help to solve an issue/problem in society with a mean of 4.12.

Lastly under effectiveness, the top most elements to consider are the following; When performance against objective is checked with a mean of 4.26, Achievement of intended purpose for each contract with a mean of 4.20 and documenting evaluation of performance provided with a mean of 4.11.

Recommendations

Owing to the findings of the study, the study concluded with the following recommendations:

- An appropriate and operational definition of value for money must be institutionalized in the MDA, Local Government units and other entities;
- Substantial investments must be made in improving reporting systems;
- Inter-governmental relationships and co-ordination, across all three spheres, should be addressed to ensure that roles are clear and enabling towards achieving value for money in service delivery;
- Future assessments of value for money should aim to measure value for money as a holistic oversight process rather than as an ex-post assessment;

- Departments should not only ensure that users are consulted about their needs, preferences, and service concerns, but also that they use these customer inputs as critical information towards better planning within departments and affecting service delivery improvements;
- Departments should be encouraged to describe the skills gaps in their sectors according to levels of skills, and develop practicable and innovative strategies for addressing their critical capacity challenges.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my student coordinator Ms. Yasotha for the good coordination. My research Methodology Lecturer Dr. Rheeta Majery and the Dean of the Doctorate Programme Dr. Ashish Sri for the guidance. And to all academic staff of the School of Business and Management whose names I cannot mention individually. I am indeed very grateful to Dr. Mitra Sadananda for the guidance and reviews and to Francis Eswap and Lisa Dardis for the editorial work. I am equally very grateful for the cooperation and support given to me from the respondents especially during data collection.

And to my family, special thanks to all of you for your understanding, encouragement and good perseverance including being kind to me during the time I needed you. May God bless you abundantly?

References

- [1]. Adjo, Amakudzi (2008) A review of VfM for comparing PPPs to traditional procurements.
- [2]. African Parliamentary Index, (2012). Summary country report parliament of Uganda.
- [3]. Ali Ramezani Ghotbabadi, Setareh Feiz, Dr. Rohaizat Baharun (2015). Service Quality Measurements: A Review. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences February 2015, Vol. 5, No. 2 ISSN: 2222-6990.
- [4]. Client Earth (2012). Procuring best value for money. Identifying opportunities for sustainable public procurement. Why eliminating the 'lowest price' approach to awarding public contracts would serve both sustainability objectives and efficient public spending.
- [5]. Communication Com (2011). 896 Final. Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Public Procurement.
- [6]. Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. Psychometrika. 16, 297-334
- [7]. Field, A. (2009) Discovering Statistics Using SPSS. 3rd Edition, Sage Publications Ltd., London. Kalubanga Matthew, Kakwezi Patrick (2013). Value for Money Auditing and Audit Evidence from a Procurement Perspective - A Conceptual Paper. International Journal of Advances in Management and Economics. ISSN: 2278-3369.
- [8]. George L. Harris (1998). Five steps to effective procurement. 83rd Annual International Conference Proceedings – 1998. George L. Harris, President, Harris Consulting, Inc., Lexington, MA 01824, 781-674-0041
- [9]. Mugenda OM, Mugenda AG (2003). Research Methods. Quantitative and qualitative approaches. African Centre for Technology Studies Nairobi.
- [10]. Mugenda OM, Mugenda AG (2009). Sampling procedures and research design in Kenya, University of Nairobi.
- [11]. Micheni C. (2011). The effects of Portfolio Management strategies on financial performance of investment companies in Nairobi.
- [12]. Nicola Dimitri (2012). Best Value for Money in Procurement. Working Paper No. 2012/02. Maastricht School of Management
- [13]. Nunnally, C.J (1978). Psychometric Theory, New York, McGraw-Hill
- [14]. OECD (2008), Public-Private Partnerships: In Pursuit of Risk Sharing and Value for Money, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- [15]. Office of the Auditor General (2015). Annual Report of the Auditor General for The Audit Year Ended December 2015. Volume 5 Value for Money Audit.
- [16]. Office of the auditor general (2016). Annual Performance report of the auditor general for the period ending 31st December 2016. Performance report.

- [17]. Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia (2014). Receiving Value for Money from Procured Professional and Advisory Services.
- [18]. Philippe Burger and Ian Hawkesworth, (2011). How to Attain Value for Money: Comparing PPP and Traditional Infrastructure Public Procurement. OECD Journal on Budgeting. Volume 2011/1.
- [19]. Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act (2003). Statutory Instruments 2014 No. 20. The Acts of Parliament (Reprint of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, 2003), Order, 2014.
- [20]. Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (2010). Final Report Baseline Survey on the Public Procurement System in Uganda.
- [21]. Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (2016). The 3rd Public Procurement Integrity Survey Final Report.
- [22]. Tang (2008). Value for money audit and improvements in project planning
- [23]. Uma, Sekaran, (2000). Research Methods for Business: A Skill-building Approach. Third Ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., p. 288.
- [24]. World Bank (2012). With efficient Procurement, Government can deliver more with less.
- [25]. Yamane, Taro (1973). Statistics: an introductory analysis. New York: Harper & Row.