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A Benchmark Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Public Procurement System (PPS) in Cameroon: Views from Suppliers

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Abstract
Purpose: This scientific research article examines the effectiveness of public procurement practices in Cameroon, focusing on the extent of compliance to regulatory framework, transparency, efficiency, competitiveness, value for money, timeliness and accountability of the system.
Design/methodology/approach: This study collected primary data from private entities involved in the public procurement system in Cameroon and analysed the data using Benchmark Analysis of Variance.
Findings: The analyses revealed that the PPS in Cameroon was found to perform significantly lower than the benchmarks for all the parameters of the effectiveness of a PPS provided by the respective regulatory frameworks. It was therefore recommended that the government of Cameroon needs to strengthen measures to improve on the compliance of the entities to the regulatory frameworks in the country, transparency and accountability, efficiency, value for money, timeliness and competition in the system.
Originality: The study contributes to knowledge by empirically assessing the effectiveness of the public procurement system in Cameroon and providing guide to the government of Cameroon to improve on its effectiveness using multidimensional indicators.
Research limitations/implications: However, an extension of the study could be in the public sector so as to give a more comprehensive assessment of the system.

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1. Introduction

The success of every organisation lies in her ability to have control over her supply chain activities to ensure that it is effective and delivers the expected customer value. This comprises all the activities leading to the acquisition of the inputs needed for production activities, all the activities dealing with the transformation of inputs into outputs and all the activities leading to the flow of the finished products into the hands of the final consumer(s). An organisation that is sure of her supplies and also sure of a market for her products is bound to succeed. It follows that every organisation's supply chain can be broken down into both the internal and the external supply chains. The external supply chain constitutes the downstream and the upstream supply chains. The upstream supply chain begins from the supplier and leads to the organisation with the acquisition of supplies while the downstream supply chain ends with the final consumers. A principal activity in the downstream supply chain is the procurement of inputs used by the organisation in the transformation process [10]. While procurement is a central activity to all types of organisations [23], public sector procurement practices differs from the private sector procurement practices following the fact that the public sector is of a not-for-profit making nature besides other factors that may

be considered of prime importance when making state decisions.

Public procurement comprises of the process through which government and public sector institutions acquire goods, services and works from private sector entities that are vital for economic growth, development and the delivery of public services. It follows that even in the public sector which is of a non-profit-making nature, procurement is indispensable. Without procurement, the nation will not meet her objectives. As a result, every government, just like Cameroon, involves in procurement activities.

Public procurement in Cameroon plays a vital role in the execution of government projects and the provision of public services. Effective procurement practices are essential for ensuring transparency, accountability and optimal use of public funds. However, Boykin *et al*. (2024) establish that as far as public procurement performance is concerned, countries (even when they operate within a standardised framework) are heterogeneous policy actors with varying legal and cultural systems that do not lend themselves to easy theory-driven comparability. This falls in line with the contingency theory of Management that the best practice is a matter of the situation as everyone situation differs from the other based on background factors. To this effect, the Public Procurement System (PPS) in Cameroon is unique and different from every other system in the world. Hence assessing its effectiveness must be made to capture KPIs relevant to the PPS in Cameroon. Over the years, public procurement in Cameroon has been guided by a number of regulatory structures including Regulatory Framework, Procurement Methods and Oversight Mechanisms. These structures are put in place to regulate the PPS to ensure that it meets her objectives (free access to public procurement, equal treatment of bidders, transparency in the process and value for money).

The PPS in Cameroon has undergone a good deal of evolution with a number of regulatory structures put in place to ensure that the system is effective. One of the first officially constituted mechanism was the post-independence adoption of French-inspired procurement regulations enforced by the Decree No. 59/144 of August 1959 running up to 1978 [14]. It actually engaged in regulating the public procurements and giving policy advice to the state, conducting monitoring of the system, collecting, centralising and archiving the data, capacity building, carrying out audits, investigating and proposing sanctions for defaulters. Other public procurement mechanisms include the centralised administrative control mechanism from 1978 to 1986 (World Bank, 2000), the regulatory Control Mechanism from 1986 to 2004 [33], Modern Procurement Code Mechanisms from 2004 to 2011 [13] Ministerial Centralisation Mechanism from 2011 to 2018 [20] and a Modernisation System ARMP from 2018 to the present. However, the mechanisms have left much to desire as the PPS failed to improve. Unfortunately, there seem to be a disconnect between laws and their implementation and enforcement. This gap in the implementation and enforcement of the laws could be seen from the fact that in 2015 the average procurement process lasted 167 days and involved over 28 administrative stages (and for some ministries it lasted 366 days and involving 58 stages). Also, ARMP itself has reported a range of corrupt practices in

public procurement across stages of the process: project initiation (launching without studies, targeted criteria favouring contractors), tender stage (non-disclosure of documents, accepting late bids) and evaluation (skewed criteria, favouring certain bidders) among others. Poor project execution and abandonment of some public contracts has been a call for concern. For example, the contract for paving the 24 km Pont de la Mape-Carrefour Mwoumban road was cancelled in June 2024 after only about 19.5% progress. Also, the contract for the Bouam-Diang-Andom section (25 km) in Eastern region (CFA 4.7 billion) was terminated in March 2024 due to delays, insufficient mobilisation and poor performance. The failure of ARMP was also exacerbated by the insufficient oversight of contract execution and gaps in accountability and sanctioning of defaulters. The failure of ARMP led to the creation of the New Public Contract Code (NPCC) by Decree No 2018/366 of 20 June 2018 which anchored core principles of public procurement. The reform separated the roles of awarding, controlling and regulating of public contracts. Contracting authorities (e.g., ministries) got greater responsibility for awarding contracts; MINMAP's prior review role reduced while ARMP took on regulatory/monitoring tasks. In the recent past, the system has equally seen significant reforms as the quest for an effective PPS led to the government launching the Cameroon Online e-Procurement System (COLEPS). Being a digital/online platform, it has increased public availability of all tender information, speed in tendering, evaluation and award processes and reduced paperwork and travel costs. Consequently, the implementation of COLEPS is expected to bring about a fall in prices of contracts, increase in speed of operations in the entire process bet to name a few performance indicators. In the forgoing, the increasing importance of the need for achieving value for money and the need for strategic choices on how to spend taxpayers' money in Cameroon is a 'Florian call' for attention on the effectiveness of public procurement system in Cameroon vis-à-vis benchmarks of PPS relevant to Cameroon.

1.1. Research Question

What is the effectiveness of the PPS in Cameroon relative to benchmarks against international best practices and standards?

1.1.1. Specific Research Questions

- To what extent does the PPS in Cameroon comply with benchmark procurement regulations?
- To what extent does the PPS in Cameroon meet the transparency benchmark requirements?
- How efficient is the PPS in Cameroon compared to benchmark procurement timelines?
- How competitive is the PPS in Cameroon compared to benchmark competition standards?
- To what extent does the PPS in Cameroon achieve value for money compared to benchmark systems?

1.2. Research Objectives

1.2.1. Main Research Question

To examine the effectiveness of the public procurement system in Cameroon relative to benchmarks against international best practices and standards?

1.2.2. Specific Research Objectives

- To examine the extent to which the PPS in Cameroon

complies with benchmark procurement regulations?
- To determine whether there is a significant difference between the PPS in Cameroon and transparency benchmark requirements?
- To find out the efficiency of the PPS in Cameroon compared to benchmark procurement timelines?
- To investigate the extent to which the PPS in Cameroon measures up with benchmark competition standards?
- To analyse the extent to which the PPS in Cameroon achieve value for money compared to benchmark systems?

1.2.3. Hypothesis
H_0: There is no significant difference between the PPS in Cameroon and benchmark standards in line with compliance, transparency, efficiency, competition and value for money.
H_1: There is a significant difference between the PPS in Cameroon and benchmark standards in line with compliance, transparency, efficiency, competition and value for money.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Conceptual Review
2.1.1. Public Procurement System
Thus far in this work, it is important to look at what we refer to as a public procurement system. For convenience in the ease of understanding, it was thought to look at the definitions from various backgrounds. Form the System stand point, Thai (2009) [31] defines a public procurement system as the structure of laws, regulations, institutions and processes used by governments to obtain goods, services and works from the private sector to achieve public objectives. However good, the definition does not accommodate situations where the government can get supplies from other governments and or their institutions. Governance-Oriented view by the World Bank (2016) [37] defines a public procurement system as the set of rules, organisations and procedures governing the acquisition of goods, works and services by public entities using public funds. The Legal Framework on its part borrows from the view of Arrowsmith (2010) [2] which describes the public procurement system as the legal and regulatory framework that governs how public bodies purchase goods, services and works to ensure fairness, transparency and competition. The OECD (2015) [19] sees it as a strategic public management function posting that it is the system of principles, procedures and institutions that guide public purchasing to achieve value for money and support policy objectives. From the Public Administration stand point, Thai (2001) [30] defines public procurement as a system that includes procurement planning, sourcing, contracting and monitoring undertaken by public organisations. Basheka and Bisangabasaija (2010) [4] on their part, look at a public procurement system from the Performance orientation as the institutional and operational arrangements used by governments to ensure efficient, transparent and accountable acquisition of public resources. Putting all the definitions together and for the sake of this work, the public procurement system is considered to be the legal, institutional, procedural and managerial framework through which public sector organisations plan, acquire, manage and control the procurement of goods, works and services using public funds achieve value for money, transparency and service delivery objectives.

2.1.2. Conceptual Requirements of a Public Procurement System
It follows from this view that the public procurement system embodies public procurement laws, regulations, standard bidding documents, processes and contracting rules (Thai, 2009) [31]. Institutional frameworks associated here include regulatory and contracting authorities, tender boards, procurement units and oversight bodies (Worlld bank, 2016) [37]. The procurement planning system covers need assessment, procurement plans, budget alignment, annual procurement schedules and market analysis (Thai, 2001) [30]. The procurement methods and procedures by OECD (2015) [19] requires that a public procurement system includes open competitive bidding, restricted tendering, request for quotations, direct procurement and framework agreements. The view of Arrowsmith (2010) [2] establish that tendering and evaluation mechanism include bid invitation, bid opening committee, evaluation criteria, technical evaluation, financial evaluation and award decision. Contract award and management on its part includes contract signing, performance monitoring, delivery tracking, payment procedures, contract amendments and dispute resolution (Harland *et al*., 2007) [15]. For oversight and control mechanisms Basheka and Bisangabasaija (2010) [4] position that the PPS involves internal audit, external audit, procurement review bodies, anti-corruption mechanisms and complaint handling system. On the part of procurement capacity and human resources, OECD (2015) [19] requires ensuring professional training, procurement certification, staff competence, ethics and integrity and capacity building. In line with procurement information and technology system requirements, World Bank (2016) [37] holds that the PPS include the use of E-procurement platforms, Procurement databases, Supplier registry, Contract management systems and Reporting dashboards. Finally, the supplier/market management system requirements include supplier registration, vendor evaluation, supplier performance tracking, market competition and blacklisting procedures (Thai, 2009) [31].

2.1.3. The PPS in Cameroon
The public procurement system in Cameroon is governed by laws and regulations aimed at ensuring transparency, competition, fairness and value for money in the acquisition of goods, services and works by public entities. Below is an overview of the key's steps and stages in the public procurement process in Cameroon:

2.1.4. Legislative Framework
The public procurement process in Cameroon is primarily governed by:
- Public Contract Code enacted by Presidential Decree No. 2018/366 of 20 June 2018
- Law No. 2018/011 of July11 2018 on the Cameroon public procurement code.
- Minister of public contracts (MINMAP), which oversees the entire procurement process.

These laws provide the regulatory framework for public procurement, ensuring it is conducted in an open, competitive and transparent manner.

- **Preparation of Procurement Plans**

Each entity, including ministries and state-owned enterprises, must develop an annual procurement plan based on their budget. This plan identifies the goods, services or works required and outlines their estimated cost and timeliness for procurement.

- **Procurement Methods**

Depending on the value and complexity of the project, different procurement methods maybe used:

- Open tender (competitive bidding): the most common method, especially for large contracts, where initiation to tenders are publicly advertised.
- Restricted tender: used when there are only a limited number of qualified suppliers or contractors.
- Request for quotations (RFQ): used for smaller, less complex procurements usually below a certain monetary threshold.
- Direct award: in exceptional cases, contracts can be awarded directly without competitive bidding, usually for reasons such as urgency or the uniqueness of a supplier.

- **Preparation and Publication of Tender Notices**

For open tenders, a Notice of Invitation to Tender (NIT) is prepared and published in national newspapers, online and on public procurement platforms. The notice contains:

- The description of goods/services/works to be procured.
- Eligibility criteria
- Dateline for submission of bids
- Other relevant instructions for bidders.

- **Submission of Bids**

Interested bidders must submit their bids according to the requirements set out in the tender notice. Bids are typically submitted in sealed envelopes before a specified dateline to ensure confidentiality and fairness.

- **Bid Opening**

Ones the submission dateline is reached, a bid opening ceremony is held in public. Names of bidders, their bid amounts and other key information are read aloud and recorded. This is done to ensure transparency in the process.

- **Bid Evaluation**

After bid opening, a committee is tasked with evaluating the bids based on predefined criteria, which typically include:

- Technical capacity of the bidder
- Financial offer (price competitiveness)
- Compliance with the tender specification

- **The evaluation is conducted in two stages:**

- Technical evaluation to determine if the bidder meets the technical specifications
- Financial evaluation to compare cost among technically qualified bidders.

- **Contract Award**

Following the evaluation, the contract is awarded to the bidder with the most economically advantageous offer. The results are publicly announced and all bidders are informed of the decision. In some cases, unsuccessful bidders may have the right to appeal the decision.

- **Contract Signing**

Ones the contract is awarded, the winning bidder and the contracting authority sign the contract which outlines the terms and conditions of the agreement, including deliverables, datelines, and payment terms.

- **Contract Execution and Monitoring**

The contractor is responsible for fulfilling the terms of the contract while the public entity monitors the progress of the work or delivery of goods and services. This includes regular supervision, reporting and quality control checks to ensure that the contract is executed as agreed.

- **Payment and Financial Acceptance**

Upon successful completion of the contract, the contractor submits their final invoice. The public entity then conducts a final inspection or audit to ensure that the work or service was completed satisfactorily. Ones the contract is deemed fulfilled, the final payment is made.

- **Dispute Resolution**

If any dispute arises during the procurement process or the execution of the contract, they may be resolved through mediation, arbitration or legal proceedings, depending on the terms of the contract.

- **Oversight and Anti-Corruption Measures**

Cameroon has established institutions like the Public Contract Regulatory Agency (ARMP) to oversee procurement processes and ensure compliance with laws and regulations. In addition, anti-corruption mechanisms are in place to reduce fraud, favouritism and other irregularities in public procurement

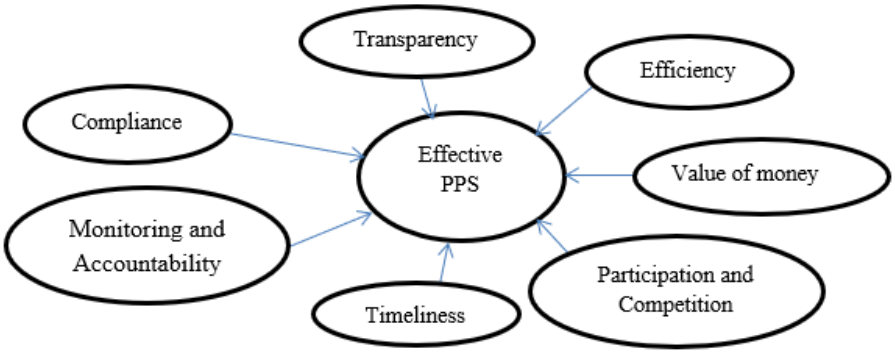
- **Relationship between COLEPS and Other Actors**

It can be remembered that the Public Procurement System in Cameroon is regulated by a public contracts code and various presidential decrees. The main governance structure here involves the Ministry of Public Contracts (MINMAP) – tasked with oversight of public procurement, 'Comité de Lecture des Projets de DAO et d'Évaluation des Offres' (COLEPS) and the Public Contracts Regulatory Agency (ARMP). In large-scale organizational transformations, effective coordination among stakeholders, alignment of competing priorities, leadership involvement, and sustained stakeholder engagement are important conditions for successful implementation (Tasleem & Gangadharan, 2022) [29] The flow in the public procurement system begins with contracting authorities (Ministries, Public Entities, Councils) preparing tender documents and submission to COLEPS. COLEPS then does technical review and validation and finally submits a report to MINMAP for approval of tender for publication. Then the Tender publication and bidding takes place and evaluation committee is set up by the contracting authority to evaluate the bids, prepare their evaluation report and submit to COLEPS again for review of evaluation report for compliance and fairness. At this time the

tender can either be validated or a request for revision is made. MINMAP then approves and award the contract. The last stage in the process comes with ARMP during execution and monitoring where she audits and oversees compliance, handles complaints/disputes and publishes annual reports relating to the contract.

- **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of the study is represented thus:



***Source*:** Researcher's field data (2026)

Fig 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Figure 1 represents the conceptual framework of this study. The framework is anchored on the premise that the effectiveness of the public procurement system in Cameroon is a multidimensional construct formed by several key governance and performance attributes. Specifically, the framework conceptualises the public procurement system's effectiveness as a formative latent construct, composed of seven distinct but complementary dimensions: transparency, efficiency, value for money, participation and competition, timeliness, compliance, and monitoring and accountability. Arrows are directed from the indicators to the construct, indicating that these dimensions collectively define and determine the level of procurement system effectiveness.

2.2. Empirical Review

A couple of studies motivated this work amongst which Boykin *et al*. (2024) [5] was the first to pay attention to. Boykin *et al*. (2024) [5] were bordered on how scholars and practitioners gauge the efficiency and effectiveness of their PPSs through performance measurement. To answer this question, they applied a theoretical framework to analyses of measures currently used in practice. Secondary data came from the Official Journal of the European Union's Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) dataset that is commonly used in public procurement scholarly work. The data comprised of contract awarded and contracts raised for 33-member states of the European Economic Area within a five-year period (2017–2021). The data was analysed using descriptive analyses (means and proportions) in line with efficiency and effectiveness of Procurement Data on procedures divided into Lots (PDL), contract Transaction Time (TT), and small to medium sized enterprises' participation in the process. Based on their analyses, they therefore recommended that public organisations should assess the multidimensional nature of their policy outcomes, thereby contextualising their public procurement KPIs within an appropriate level of procurement analysis. Although making significant strides in the field of Public Procurement, their work focuses only on three KPIs of public procurement performance leaving out the need for compliance to a regulatory framework, transparency and time value of money.

It was found helpful to also commend the work of TĂLPIG (2024) [32] on the efficiency of the public procurement system and its implications on public budgets. The study examines how efficiency in public procurement systems affects public budgets, emphasising transparency, legislation, corruption control and digital procurement reforms. It adopted a systematic empirical literature review approach collecting data from academic studies on procurement efficiency, public finance and budgeting literature, governance and anti-corruption studies. It built on the OECD and international procurement frameworks to integrate evidence on efficiency, sustainability and budget impact of procurement systems from empirical reviews on the topic of interest. The study concludes that legislation and public policy play a major role in designing procurement practices. It further sees the achievement of efficiency, sustainability, and budgetary objectives of a PPS to be seriously handicapped by corruption. They therefore recommended the adoption of a holistic approach to public procurement that balances the need for efficiency, sustainability and transparency by policymakers and procurement professionals.

Another effort in the domain of public procurement was made by Nzitunga (2019) [18] who took interest in strengthening the effectiveness of the procurement Function in the Public Sector of Namibia. His work was motivated by the fact that although the Namibian government had made a lot of effort towards improving the public procurement function following its importance in poverty reduction and in the economic development of the country, the sector was still raided with a lot of challenges like - inter alia – corruption and weak integrity and enforcement mechanisms including resources, expertise and quality assurance evaluation and mechanisms. This led the study to examining three hypotheses including the association between organisational processes and public procurement effectiveness, the relationship between employee skill development and public procurement effectiveness and the link between organisational resources and the effectiveness of public procurement and Information Technology (IT) on public procurement effectiveness in Namibia. The study analysed data collected from 100 employees from each of the 25 government ministries. The tool of data collection was a 6-point likert scale questionnaire assessing processes, skill

development, resources and information technology for the independent variable. The data was analysed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) Regression technique to establish that the positive association between the independent variables and public procurement effectiveness were all significant. Despite these efforts, it can be seen that it is not clear what sampling procedure was used in the study as the purposive sampling mentioned is a non-probabilistic sampling procedure. This makes it wanting as the study goes further to mention the use of a random sampling method. Also, the use of organisational performance as a measure of public procurement effectiveness leaves much to desire as a lot more parameters which do not have a direct connection with the PPS come into place.

Also, the contribution of Senzu and Ndebugri (2017) [28] on Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Procurement Acts in Public Financial Administration in Ghana was found helpful. The study built on the fact that having recognised the importance of an Effective financial management and procurement systems to the development of developing countries especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa, the Ghanaian government put in place a Public Financial Management Reform Programme (PUFMARP) to improve financial management in Ghana. Yet, the system over the years, noticed some weaknesses which led to an increase in the cost of procuring materials, logistics and services for public entities to the extent that the cost of advertisement sometimes out-weighs the real cost of the items. This certainly was a challenge to the Public Financial Management Reform Programme. They made use of the descriptive research design with a purposive sampling of one hundred (100) Public Sector Institutions. The data collection tool employed a semi-structured questionnaire. The descriptive parameters used in the analyses led them to the conclusion that the procurement Act (Act 663) impacted positively on public procurement practice in the area of transparency, accountability and non-discrimination. However, they equally found out that when the procurement law is silent on a clear-cut procedure to adopt, it gives room for single sourcing which is a major channel of malpractices in the process. These malpractices are the reasons for which the worth of the deliverable turns out to be far below its actual cost in the market. Of course, this implies a waist of public financial resources. Patrucco *et al*. (2016) [22] investigated the architecture of Public Procurement performance measurement systems (PP-PMSs) in local governments, drawing on four case studies from Italy and four from Wales. They made use of the literature from both the private and the public sector to constitute the theoretical background. In line with the performance measurement of public performance, they made use of cost, quality, time, compliance, innovation, sustainability. They made use of a case base research method to design two convenient samples from Italy and the UK. They collected primary data through interviews as it was found more suitable for qualitative understanding. The results led them to recommend that performance dimensions should be extended beyond traditional cost measures, and that KPIs should not be limited to those imposed by national/regional regulation and that the procurement function should be recognised as strategic in the public institution. Despite the rich contribution to the literature, the study leaves much to desire in the type and method of data collection and analysis.

2.4. Theoritical Foundation

The theoritical foundation of this study rests the Public Procurement Measurement framework of OECD, CEMAC, African Development Bank (AfDB), CIPS and the United Nations. Face with the challenges of evaluating the effectiveness of the PPS, OECD (2023) [21] went into an extensive study to develop indicators to measure performance, effectiveness and savings of PPSs to benchmark progress and support strategic policy making on public procurement. At the end of the day, they categorised KPIs of public procurement into two groups. The first being indicators applicable to different levels of the public procurement cycle while the second were indicators applicable to the entire procurement cycle. The first cateegory included various indicators applicable to the tender/contract level (micro-level), the contracting authority level (macro level) and at the national/system level (meta level). Also, they categorised the indicators of performance in public procurement into three being compliance with regulatory frameworks, strategic and efficiency indicators. These indicators were later applied to the entire public procurement cycle being the second main categorisation of the KPIs applicable to the public procurement cycle. For the sake of this study, the KPIs applicable to the entire public procurement cycle were given more attention. These indicators can be seen as presented on figure 2.



Source: (OECD, 2023)

Fig 2: KPIs applicable to the entire Public Procurement Cycle.

Figure 2 reveals that the public procurement cycle is sequential beginning from pre-tendering activities through tendering activities to contract management activities. While the indicators of performance at each of these levels were compliance, efficiency and strategic, the evaluation at each of these levels make use of different measures but found relevant to the activities at each of these respective levels.

To begin with, compliance has to do with evaluating the extent to which the activities carried out by the different actors of the public procurement cycle comply with the laws or structures and policies regulating the process. Some of these indicators relate to the publication/transparency requirements, ex-ante control / audit findings, sanctions, integrity matters, appeals/litigation, and compliance with payments delays. At the pre-tendering level, compliance has to do with the share of procedures published on national e-procurement system. At the tendering level, it has to do with the number of challenged public procurement procedures while at the contract management level it includes the share of contracts with complaints.

Efficiency on its part deals with assessing whether the procurement processes helps to achieve the best procurement outcomes and effectiveness as well as the best "value for money". The indicators at this level could include procurement planning activities, the implementation of different efficiency tools, contract modification, professionalisation issues and payment considerations. At the pre-tendering level, efficiency indicators relate to the extent of preparation/publication of annual procurement plans. At the tendering level, it relates to the average number of bidders while at the contract management level, it relates with the number of contracts using multiple award criteria.

The third category of indicators the strategic indicators being those that assess how public procurement processes and outcomes contribute to achieve strategic policy goals set-up by governments such as those mitigating climate change, promoting innovation, creating jobs, social aspects of sustainability (i.e. human rights including labour rights, consideration of gender concerns or inclusion of vulnerable groups, etc.) or the development of small and medium enterprise (OECD, 2015) [19]. A breakdown of these indicators reveals that at the pre-tendering level, the strategic indicators relate with the number of procurement procedures with the GPP criteria. At the tendering level it assesses the number of bidders who are SMEs and at the contract management level, it assesses the share of the number of contracts with GPP criteria.

On its part, the CEMAC public procurement system refers to the community directives and regulations governing public contracts financed by public funds within member countries. These rules define procurement procedures for goods, works, and services, and establish uniform standards for competition, transparency, and accountability. The CEMAC procurement framework was introduced through public financial management harmonization directives adopted by the Council of Ministers to modernize budget management and public expenditure control in member states (CEMAC, 2011) [7]. The CEMAC procurement system is governed by regional directives adopted in 2011 as part of six public finance directives. These include directive on transparency, Competition, Economy and Efficiency, Accountability and Integrity. The procurement process under the CEMAC system follows a structured cycle running from Procurement planning, Preparation of bidding documents, Tender publication, bid submission, bid opening, bid evaluation, contract award, Contract execution, Monitoring and control and Contract closure.

Also, the African Development Bank (AfDB)'s procurement system is governed by the Procurement Policy for Bank Group Funded Operations, which establishes procedures for the acquisition of goods, works and consulting services under Bank-financed projects. The policy applies to sovereign and non-sovereign operations financed by the Bank and aims to promote efficiency and accountability in project implementation (African Development Bank, 2015) [1]. The framework places responsibility for procurement on the borrowing country, while the Bank provides oversight and ensures compliance with procurement principles (African Development Bank, 2015; World Bank, 2017) [1, 38]. The AfDB procurement framework is built on key principles including value for money, economy and efficiency, transparency, fairness and equal opportunity, integrity and fit-for-purpose procurement.

The CIPS public procurement system is a structured procurement management framework based on professional standards, ethical codes, and lifecycle procurement processes for acquiring goods, works, and services in the public sector. The framework emphasizes governance, accountability, and strategic sourcing in procurement operations (CIPS, 2021; Lysons and Farrington, 2016) [8, 17]. CIPS promotes procurement as a strategic function that supports organisational performance and responsible use of public funds (CIPS, 2021) [8]. The CIPS procurement system is based on key principles like value for money, transparency, ethics and integrity, competition, accountability and sustainability. The system follows a structured procurement lifecycle beginning with defining business needs, developing procurement strategy, selecting supplier, evaluating and awarding the contracts, managing and eventually closing the contract.

The United Nations procurement system is a global procurement framework that governs the sourcing of goods, works, and services by UN organisations in support of development, humanitarian, and peacekeeping operations. Procurement is conducted through centralised and decentralised procurement units across UN agencies, following common procurement principles and financial regulations (United Nations, 2020; UNOPS, 2019) [34, 36]. The system is coordinated through bodies such as the United Nations Procurement Division and procurement units in specialised agencies (United Nations, 2020) [34]. The United Nations procurement system is built on fundamental principles including the Best Value for Money, Fairness, Integrity and Transparency, Effective, International Competition, Interest of the United Nations and Sustainability. It covers activities ranging from needs identification, procurement planning, preparation of solicitation documents, advertisement, bid submission, bid opening, bid evaluation, contract award, contract management and delivery and payment.

- **Knowledge Gap**

Existing studies on public procurement systems have mostly focused on developed economies, with little attention to developing countries. In this connection, empirical studies in Cameroon remain limited and fragmented. While some reports and institutional assessments (e.g., from 'Agence de Régulation des Marchés Publics') provide descriptive

insights into procurement practices, there is a lack of rigorous empirical studies that quantitatively assess the effectiveness of the public procurement system in Cameroon in terms of cost efficiency, transparency, accountability, and service delivery outcomes.

Also, the assessment of public procurement effectiveness has predominantly been guided by conventional theoretical frameworks such as Principal–Agent Theory, Transaction Cost Economics, and New Public Management. While these theories provide valuable insights into issues of accountability, efficiency and governance, they often fail to adequately capture the complexities of public procurement systems in developing countries especially Cameroon, where institutional weaknesses, political interference and informal practices significantly influence procurement outcomes. They also fail to conduct a benchmark analysis relative to some universal standards to bring out the level of effectiveness of the system. Moreover, there is limited integration of context-sensitive frameworks that incorporate institutional theory and governance perspectives specific to Cameroon and Sub-Saharan Africa at large.

In terms of methodology, prior studies on public procurement effectiveness have made use of qualitative approaches. While these methods provide valuable descriptive insights, they often lack robustness in objectively measuring the effectiveness of PPS. There is also limited use of advanced quantitative techniques, such as econometric modeling or performance efficiency analysis.

3. Methodology

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of public procurement practices in Cameroon. The effectiveness of the public procurement process in Cameroon was assessed in line with the compliance with legal and regulatory framework, transparency and accessibility in the process, efficiency of procurement procedures, competition and participation, value for money, timeliness of project delivery and in terms of accountability and monitoring of the process. Primary data was collected from officials of the private establishments or entities involved in the public procurement process in the country. The number of private entities that participate in the country's PPS could not be ascertained and so were considered to be infinitely large. Following Cochran (1977) [9] on representative sample size for an indefinitely large population, a sample of 532 such entities were selected following convenience sampling technique; taking at least 50 from each of the 10 regions of the country. A semi-structured questionnaire was used in the data collection process capturing the parameters of effectiveness in the public procurement process mentioned above. Room was also given for the respondents to give any other information they find necessary to reveal. The data collected was analysed and the results interpreted in line with the parameters of Benchmark Analysis of Variance. A variety of benchmarks were taken into consideration following the different dimensions from which to assess the effectiveness of a public procurement system in line with CEMAC (2010) [6] on the Transparency and accessibility of the procurement system, OECD (2015) [19] on Efficiency of the Procurement Process, Graham and Briscoe (2018) [12] on Cost-Effectiveness (Value for Money), African Development Bank –AfDB (2015) [1] on Supplier Diversity and Inclusivity.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1. Description of the Effectiveness of the PPS in Cameroon

After cross examining the questionnaires for consistency in the responses, 532 questionnaires were retained for analyses beginning with descriptive analytical tools. Furthermore, it was found necessary to verify the conditions suitable for the generalisation of the findings prior to inferential analysis using the technique of analysis of variances from acceptable standards of the indicators of effectiveness of a PPS. This comprised of test for normality, test for skewness and kurtosis. A more detail analyses of the data was done by examining the responses following the different options for the various questions. The results can be seen on table 1, table 2 and table 3 below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Pre-tender Compliance	532	1.00	4.00	2.1233	0.82283	0.275	0.14	-0.544	0.281
Tendering Compliance	532	1.00	5.00	1.9500	0.78073	0.427	0.14	-0.162	0.281
Contract Management Compliance	532	1.00	5.00	2.4367	0.83765	0.305	0.14	0.014	0.281
Transparency	532	1.00	3.67	2.2144	0.54960	0.407	0.14	-0.447	0.281
Efficiency of the Process	532	1.33	3.67	2.6678	0.47883	-0.197	0.14	-0.130	0.281
Competition & Participation	532	1.67	2.33	1.9944	0.17341	-0.023	0.14	0.734	0.281
Value for Money	532	2.40	4.00	2.9720	0.29941	0.681	0.14	-0.141	0.281
Timeliness	532	2.00	4.25	3.2075	0.40023	-0.060	0.14	0.176	0.281
Monitoring and Accountability	532	1.00	4.00	2.7533	0.58589	-0.398	0.14	-0.302	0.281

***Source*:** Researcher's field data (2026)

The overall situation of the respondents with respect to the items on the questionnaire was presented following the different parameters of an effective PPS. In the first place, compliance of the different parties to the PPS was assessed. The data gave a mean score of 2.1. This value, going by the five-point likert scale developed for this work, shows that majority of the respondents seem to be neutral about the compliance of the pre-tendering activities in the PPS in Cameroon. However, this value is below the average score giving the impression that pre-tendering activities are below average in terms of complying with the regulations in force. The analyses show a positively skewed distribution with a value of 0.275. Going by the standard of George and Mallery [8], the mean is greater than the median and the mode and more of the responses are on the lower side of the mean. The skewness coefficient close to zero indicates that the distribution is close to normal making the result good for generalisation. Hence the result, very closely, reflect the true

situation for majority of the cases. The coefficient of Kurtosis was also employed to examine the spread of the responses. Based on the standard of George and Mallery (2010) [11], a value of -0.544 reveals that the distribution fails to peak and broadens at the negative side of the mean. Hence, majority of the responses confirm that the PPS in Cameroon, at its best, complies with the pre-tendering requirements of the regulatory framework of public contracts only to a limited extent. The situation is even worst when we look at the tendering activities proper which shows a mean below 2 and a coefficient of Kurtosis much closer to 0 than in the case of pre-tendering activities. However, the situation gets a little better with respect to contract management compliance although the average situation is not yet on the high side of the five-point scale. Generally, therefore, the results lead one to conclude that the system is yet to adequately comply with the regulatory framework of public procurement contracts in Cameroon. The study went further to examining the transparency of the system. The scores for the responses to the questions here ranges from 1 to 3.67. This means that none of the respondents strongly agreed that the procurement system in the year 2023/2024 was transparent. Rather, about 67% of the respondents fail to agree that the system was transparent in the year 2023/2024 while about 19% of them chosed to be indifferent. This means only about 14% of the respondents think that the system was transparent in the year 2023/2024 and none of these respondents strongly affirmed this position. The coefficient of skewness of 0.55 indicates normality at 14% significance while the Kurtosis coefficient of -0.45 indicates that the distribution flattens at the base with a concentration of responses on the negative side of the mean corresponding to denial of transparency in the PPS in Cameroon during the 2023/2024 procurement cycle.

Going further to the efficiency of the system, the study focused on the time spent in the process as well as the delays in contract execution and project completion. A detail examination of the responses shows that about 70% of the respondents, going by the five-point scale developed for the study, either agrees or strongly agrees that the average time spent on tender announcement, contract award through evaluation of bids and signing of contract is always either small or too small. On the contrary with contract execution and project completion, it was surprising to find that about 74% of the respondents affirm that the amount of delays in contract execution and project completion were either many or too many. This follows that the actors in the system hurriedly announce tenders, award and sign contracts but fail to do same when it comes to execution and completion of the contracts. The coefficients of skewness and Kurtosis do not only affirm a near normal distribution but reveal a distribution which flattens at the negative end of the mean meaning many more of the respondents fail to agree that the procurement procedures are efficient.

The next consideration to the work was to assess the system in line with the extent of competition and participation in the system. While all the participants attended to the questions on this heading, this finding revealed the worst outcome with a range from 1 to 2.33 and a mean score of the responses being 1.99. This means that majority of the respondents, at best, disagrees to the there is competition and participation in the system. Here the results reveal that about 99.8% of the respondents affirm that there is not competition and participation in the process as only one bid is most often submitted per tender and in most cases only one out of every five tenders had more than three bidders in the 2023/2024 procurement cycle. The coefficient of skewness shows that this variable was the most normalised of all the variables considered in this study. This leads one to the generalisation that the PPS in Cameroon fails to give room for competition and participation in the process. The great worry then is that if the system is not competitive and open for participation, what then are the practices surrounding the PPS in Cameroon? OECD (2015) [19], World Bank (2016) [37], UNCITRAL (2011) [35] and ADB (2017) [3] describe such a system as being non-competitive, closed or restricted and single-source/direct procurement system respectively. They outline that a PPS that is not open to competition and participation is associated with limited transparency, restricted bidder access and reduce value for money. This is typical of the case here as some of the respondents who were willing to give more information added.

In relation to the value of money in the PPS in Cameroon, the results leave one very worried about the value given to the use of the country's resources. The average situation presents a situation of indifference of the respondents as the mean value of their responses (2.97), going by the five-point scale developed for the study, falls in the region where respondents are neutral. That both the coefficients of skewness and kurtosis are very low indicates that the finding is good for generalisation as it closely assumes a normal distribution although it is heavier on the negative slope. This then gave the confidence to get more detailed by looking at the responses on the individual questions assessing the value of money in the PPS in Cameroon. The first question in this category verifies if goods, services, or works delivered often meet contract specifications. The responses reveal that more than 62% of the respondents align with the fact that goods, services, or works delivered do not often meet contract specifications while some 18.5% of the respondents are indifferent. Furthermore, more than 99% of the respondents affirm the fact that goods, services, or works delivered often need additional contract modifications. This finding is also confirmed by the next question wherein more than 99and of the respondents affirms that the actual cost of project execution is always less than the estimated cost. This leaves much to worry about the value attach to money in the PPS in Cameroon. The last but one parameter on which the PPS in Cameroon was assessed is the timeliness of project delivery. Here, the study particularly assessed (out of every 5 goods, services, or works) how many are delivered on, before or after the agreed dateline. The mean of 3.2 falls in the quadrant for 4. However, the question here is whether the four out of five works are delivered before time, on time or after required time. To get into the matter, the study looks at the individual responses of the questions. Over 46% of the respondents hold that goods, services, or works delivered are not done on the agreed dateline compared to 74.3% who attest that the goods, services, or works are not delivered before the agreed dateline. Finally, about 62% of the respondents found that the goods, services, or works delivered are actually done after the agreed dateline. This again leaves much to desire about the PPS in Cameroon as it often fails to meet the expectation with respect to the timeliness of project delivery. The study ends the assessment by examining the accountability and monitoring of the system. The study assessed, on a scale of five, how many times a public procurement contract is monitored, evaluated and feedback given to the stakeholders. In terms of monitoring, 45% of the respondents revealed that

monitoring is done twice in the life time of the contract. While 27% establish that monitoring is done trice. Also, some 23.7% of the respondents affirm that monitoring is done just ones in the life of the project and 4.6% say it's done four times. Interestingly enough, no single respondent agrees that monitoring is done five times in the entire life of every public procurement contract. The evaluation and giving of feedback also reveal a similar trend with the highest number of respondents revealing that evaluation and giving of feedback are done two times, followed by those who think it's done three times, one time, four times and five times; in that order. The worry here is what is the acceptable number of times for the monitoring and evaluation of contracts in an effective PPS?

4.2. The Findings Relative to the Benchmarks

The findings of the study were then examined in relation to benchmarks against international best practices and standards. Prior to this however, the results presented about were transformed to percentages following the unit of measurement of the various standards. The situation was presented on table 2 below:

Table 2: Scores of the effectiveness of the PPS in Cameroon

S/N	Variable	Indicators	Percentages of the different response's options				
			1	2	3	4	5
1	Compliance	Pre-tendering Activities	23.7	45	27	4.6	0
		Tendering Activities	30.6	45.9	22.3	0.997	0.33
		Contract Management Activities	11.3	44.03	35.4	8.3	0.993
2	Transparency and accessibility	Advertising tenders publicly	18.9	38.4	16.89	25.17	0.66
		Availability of procurement documents online or in public repositories	16.23	36.09	33.44	14.23	0
		Public access to contract award results and bidding evaluation reports	41.58	49.84	6.93	1.65	0
3	Efficiency of procurement procedures	The average time taken from tender announcement to contract award	36.31	40.92	16	6.46	0.31
		The time taken to evaluate bids and sign contract	29.93	33.55	29.28	6.91	0.33
		The amount of delays in contract execution and project completion	2.30	7.57	16.45	29.61	44.08
4	Competition and participation	Number of bids submitted per tender	99.67	0	0.33	0	0
		Tenders with more than three bidders	100	0	0	0	0
		Contracts awarded to local firms and SMEs	0	0.33	14.57	72.52	12.58
5	Value for money	Goods, services, or works delivered meeting contract specifications	21.12	41.25	18.48	14.19	4.95
		Goods, services, or works delivered needing additional contract modifications	0.33	0.33	0.33	48.19	50.83
		By the end of project execution, the actual cost is always less than the estimated cost	0	0.33	0.33	0	99.34
		By the end of project execution, the actual cost is always more than the estimated cost	99.34	0.66	0	0	0
		The percentage of the actual cost on the estimated cost of projects is usually high	24.67	57.57	17.11	0.66	0
6	Timeliness of project delivery	Goods, services or works delivered on the agreed dateline	11.55	35.64	36.30	13.53	2.97
		Goods, services or works delivered before the agreed dateline	37.17	37.17	19.41	5.59	0.66
		Goods, services or works delivered after the agreed dateline	0	0.66	37.5	42.76	19.08
		Contracts experiencing extensions or delays in project delivery	0	0.66	4.28	45.72	49.34
7	Accountability and monitoring	Monitoring of public procurement contracts	8.58	37.95	36.30	14.19	2.97
		Evaluation of public procurement contracts	13.53	28.38	26.07	21.78	10.23
		Communicating performance feedbacks to the stakeholders	15.18	31.35	28.05	16.17	9.24

Source: Researcher's field data (2026)

Although the CEMAC Public Procurement Code does not explicitly provide a detailed list of benchmarks in the same manner as international organisations like the OECD or World Bank, it outlines general principles and performance expectations for procurement practices. These are in line with broader goals such as improving procurement efficiency, ensuring transparency, and preventing corruption. However, key performance benchmarks and standards can be inferred from these Code's objectives and provisions, as they align with the standards on table 3.

Table 3: Scores of the effectiveness of Cameroon's PPS vis-à-vis various standards

	Organisation/Individual	Standard set	Actual situation
Procurement Transparency and accessibility	CEMAC (2010)	100% of tenders should be published publicly Disclosed within 15 days of award	16%
Efficient Procurement Process	OECD (2015)	100% and complete within 3-6 months for goods and services complete 6-12 months for more complex projects	14.5%
Cost-Effectiveness (Value for Money)	Graham & Briscoe (2018)	100% should use cost-quality criteria 80% price and 20% quality	12.94%
Supplier Diversity and Inclusivity	African Development Bank (AfDB). (2015).	At least 30% contracts done by local suppliers or SMEs	24.2%
Public Procurement Monitoring and Oversight	CIPS. (2020).	100% of public procurement contracts should be audited annually by an independent body	17.5%
Complaint and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms	Kwak & Ibbs (2002).	90% of complaints should be resolved within 30 days	7.6% compliant
Contract Management and Performance Monitoring	Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2013).	95% of contracts should be completed following specifications (time, within budget and functionality)	27.1%

Source: Compiled by Researcher (2026)

The outcome of the assessment at this level showed that the PPS in Cameroon is far below the standard measures defined by the different organisations in line with the different parameters to assess the effectiveness of a PPS. However, these measures are purely descriptive in nature and so cannot adequately give sound insights into the effectives of the PPS in Cameroon. For this reason, a more inferential tool of analysis was employed: the one-way analysis of variance. The results can be seen on table 4.

Table 4: One-Sample Test

Parameters of PPS effectiveness	Test Value = 5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Pretender Compliance	-60.554	531	0.000	-2.87667	-2.9702	-2.7832
Tendering Compliance	-67,665	531	0.000	-3.05000	-3.1387	-2.9613
Contract Management Compliance	-53.003	531	0.000	-2.56333	-2,6585	-2.4682
Transparency	-87.786	531	0.000	-2.78556	-2.8480	-2.7231
Efficiency	-84.362	531	0.000	-2.33222	-2.3866	-2.2778
Value For Money	-117.316	531	0.000	-2.02800	-2.0620	-1.9940
Timeliness	-77.572	531	0.000	-1.79250	-1.8380	-1.7470
Accountability and Monitoring	-66.418	531	0.000	-2.24667	-2.3132	-2.1801
Competition and Participation	-0.555	531	0.579	-0.00556	-0.0253	0.0141

Source: Researcher's field data (2026)

Table 4 shows results of the one-sample test comparing the means of the different parameters of the effectiveness of a PPS and the respective standards. The parameters include compliance with regulatory frameworks, transparency, efficiency, value for money, timeliness, accountability and monitoring as well as competition and participation. Beginning with compliance, the study examined compliance following the view of OECD which examines compliance at the pre-tendering, the tendering and the contract management stages. At the pre-tendering stage, the results revealed that the t value is negative signifying that the procurement activities at the pre-tendering stage fails to measure up to the standard set. Similar results were gotten for measures of compliance to regulations at both the tendering and the contract management stages. To get the matter worse, the p-value for compliance at all of these stages is 0.00. Being less than 0.05 it indicates that the differences are all significant meaning that the PPS in Cameroon significantly fails to measure up to the standard in terms of compliance with the regulations in force at all the three levels of the procurement process.

The result in terms of transparency of the system gives a mean value being lower than the standard (on a scale of 5) by 2.79. The negative sign reveals that in terms of transparency, the PPS in Cameroon is performing below the standard set by CEMAC. The corresponding p-value is 0.00. As it is less than 0.05, it reveals that this difference is significant. Hence, the PPS in Cameroon is significantly less transparent following the standard set by CEMAC. It suggests that Cameroon's public procurement system does not fully meet the regional transparency requirements of CEMAC in areas such as public access to tender information, open competitive bidding, publication of contract awards, availability of public procurement documents as well as the disclosure of the evaluation criteria. It is important to note at this point that the analysis reveals similar results to transparency in line with efficiency, value for money timeliness of deliveries and accountability and monitoring. This is in other words saying that the analysis reveals that the PPS in Cameroon is significantly less efficient that the standards set by OECD, significantly has less value for tax payers' money than the standard set by Graham and Briscoe (2018) [12], significantly less timely and significantly less accountable. In terms of competition and participation, the findings reveal that the PPS in Cameroon, although still measuring below expectation, fails to reveal a significant difference with the standard set by the African Development Bank - AfDB (2015) [1].

5. Recommendations

- To improve compliance, effort must be made to ensure that participants in the system comply with the regulatory frameworks in force. At the planning stage, this include ensuring that annual procurement plans are approved before execution, linking procurement to the approved budgets, justification of procurement needs and ensuring a central validation by the regulatory authorities. At the tendering stage, it will be particularly helpful to enforce mandatory advertisement of tenders, ensuring a minimum bidding period is respected, equal access to bidding documents, no selective invitations, transparent bid opening, objective evaluation criteria. At the contract management phase, it will be important to implement standard contract monitoring mechanisms, control payments strictly, evaluate performance of suppliers regularly and conducting both internal and external post-award procurement audits
- Transparency reforms need to be enforced by ensuring public access to tender information, open competitive bidding, publication of contract awards, making public procurement documents readily available to interested suppliers as well as the disclosure of the evaluation criteria.
- To ensure efficiency in Cameroon's Public Procurement System, reforms must target speed, cost-effectiveness, quality delivery and value for money across the procurement cycle. This may take the form of reducing the average time taken from tender announcement to contract award, as well as the time taken to evaluate bids and sign contract and the amount of delays in contract execution and project completion.
- The results also show that there is need increase the value for money in the PPS in Cameroon. In line with this, goods, services or works delivered must be made to meet contract specifications and must be done accurately such that additional modifications will not need. Also, there should be strict follow up to ensure that the actual cost of the goods, services or works delivered is not more than the estimated cost. Finally, payment to the suppliers should be made promptly immediately after the goods, services and or works have been properly executed and delivered as required. Furthermore, the government must ensure that public funds achieve the best combination of cost, quality and outcomes across the procurement cycle. Policies in this regard should be directed towards strengthening procurement planning, promoting competitive tendering, adopting a life-cycle coting approach, strengthening technical specifications, implementing a robust contract management and audit mechanisms, strengthening market price benchmarking and encouraging bulk purchase. To improve timeliness in the PPS, the system must make appropriate effort towards establishing and respecting clear procurement timelines, reducing bureaucratic approval levels, strengthening the capacity of procurement officers and releasing budgets (funds) early enough to give time for project implementation and control before the end of the season. To improve on accountability in the system, the government should strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks, the internal control system especially sanctioning defaulters appropriately, introducing performance monitoring indicators and ensuring citizen and civil society monitoring. To ensure competition and participation in the system, the government should focus on creating an open, fair and accessible procurement environment.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of the public procurement system in Cameroon using key performance dimensions including transparency, accountability, competition and participation, value for money, efficiency, and timeliness. The findings reveal that while Cameroon has made significant institutional and regulatory efforts to strengthen public procurement governance, notable gaps persist in the operationalisation and enforcement of procurement rules. These gaps manifest in limited competition, procedural delays, inadequate contract management, weak monitoring mechanisms and insufficient transparency in some procurement processes. Such shortcomings undermine the ability of the procurement system to deliver optimal outcomes and hence reducing the overall effectiveness of public expenditure.

The analysis further indicates that transparency and accountability mechanisms, although formally established, require stronger enforcement and broader disclosure practices to enhance public trust and reduce procurement-related irregularities. Similarly, delays in procurement planning, approval processes, and contract execution affect timeliness and efficiency, thereby increasing project costs and limiting service delivery outcomes. In addition, barriers to participation, including restrictive qualification requirements and limited access to procurement information, constrain competition and reduce opportunities for achieving value for money. These challenges collectively weaken the capacity of the public procurement system to serve as a strategic tool for national development.

Despite these limitations, the study acknowledges ongoing reforms aimed at improving procurement performance, including the introduction of regulatory oversight structures, standard bidding documents and enhanced audit procedures. These initiatives provide a foundation upon which Cameroon can build a more effective procurement system. Strengthening e-procurement adoption, improving procurement planning, professionalising procurement personnel, enhancing independent oversight and enforcing compliance with procurement regulations are critical steps toward improving system effectiveness. In addition, promoting open competitive bidding, strengthening contract management practices and ensuring timely budget releases will further enhance procurement outcomes.

Finally, the effectiveness of Cameroon's public procurement system depends largely on the government's commitment to improving transparency, accountability, competition, efficiency, timeliness and value for money across the procurement cycle. By addressing existing institutional and operational challenges, Cameroon can transform public procurement into a strategic instrument for sustainable development, improved public service delivery and prudent management of public resources. Strengthened procurement effectiveness will not only enhance fiscal discipline but also promote economic growth, reduce corruption risks and increase public confidence in government spending.

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Conflict of Interest
The author declares no conflict of interest.

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