

**RISK ASSESSMENT AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT PRACTICES IN UGANDA. ACASE OF
UNRA, UGANDA.**

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on risk assessment and sustainable procurement practices in UNRA as viewed by the respondents. In this study the risk assessment (measured by work environment, system of work and foreseeable conditions attributes) was the independent variable and sustainable procurement practices (measured by organizational structure, organizational resource capacity and cost of sustainable procurement attributes) was the dependent variable.

The study used cross sectional design which enabled the researcher to draw the samples from the population over a short period of time. The study focused on the respondents from different departments of UNRA. Each of the departments was used as a cluster in which stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents from all layers in the cluster. Primary data and secondary data collection methods were used. Quantitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data. From the findings, it was observed that all the predictors were good and significant, with work environment being the best predictor because it had the highest Beta value (.308). This is further supported by the sig. values ($p = .000 < .001$), followed by foreseeable conditions with Beta value (.355), $p = .000 < .01$ and systems of work with Beta value (.272), $p = .000 < .01$ respectively. It was recommended that work environment be given priority, though, systems of work and foreseeable conditions also significantly contributed to sustainable procurement practices

Key words: risk assessment and sustainable procurement practices

Background of the study

This study focused on risk assessment on sustainable procurement practices in Uganda; a case of UNRA as the major topic of the study (Richard et al., 2022). Sustainable procurement practices dimensions (organizational structure, organizational resource capacity and cost of sustainable procurement) were used to measure the sustainable procurement practices whereas risk assessment dimensions (work environment, systems of work and foreseeable conditions) were used to measure risk assessment (Isaac et al., 2023).

Broadly speaking, risk assessment is the combined effort of identifying and analyzing potential events that may negatively impact individuals, assets or the environment and making judgements on tolerability of the risk on the basis of a risk analysis while considering influencing factors (Mwelu et al., 2019). Sustainable procurement is a process whereby organizations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a life-cycle basis while addressing equity principles for sustainable development, therefore, benefiting societies and the environment across time and geographies (Frank et al., 2023).

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Statement of the problem

Risk is the exposure to loss as a consequence of uncertainty. Risk is unavoidable in public procurement and exists at each stage in the procurement process (Moses et al., 2022). Managing risk in public procurement is an operational activity that is the responsibility of the procuring organization or entity that “owns” or is accountable for the procurement. Good practice in public procurement involves putting in place measures to understand and manage these risks (Moses et al., 2022). Risk assessment has the advantage of recognizing and controlling hazards, creating awareness among employees, setting risk management standards and reducing incidents in the work place. Despite the continued attempt by Uganda Government through Uganda National Roads Authority to assess risk, more often than not, road users and the general public continue to complain of poor sustainable procurement practices. Even when there are efforts by Government and UNRA management to address this, there seems to be no significant change in sustainable procurement practices. However, it is not clear whether this results from lack organizational structure, organizational resource capacity or cost of sustainable procurement.

Specific objectives

1. To analyze the relationship between work environment and sustainable practices in Uganda National Roads Authority.
2. To analyze the relationship between systems of work and sustainable procurement practices in Uganda National Roads Authority.
3. To analyze the relationship between foreseeable conditions and sustainable procurement practices in Uganda National Roads Authority.

Methodology**Research Design**

The study used both cross sectional and quantitative research design. Cross sectional design was be used to allow the study draw one or more samples from the population at one time and was used to give in depth investigation of the relationship between variables (Sekaram, 2000). The study focused on the staff of UNRA at the head office.

Study population

A target population is any indefinable total set of elements about which the researcher wishes to make inferences (Collins & Hussey, 2009). In this case, the population of 380 workers was considered (Kagina 2016)

Table 1 Population size

Department	Population	Sample size
Top management	20	4

Legal services	55	11
Procurement	55	11
Roads and bridges	250	50
Total	380	76

Source: Primary data 2021

Sample size

The sample size was determined basing on the population with the help of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) tables. Thus, a sample size of respondents was considered for interviews since the minimum sample size in this case was 265 for a population of 380 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Sampling design

Stratified random sampling was used whereby each of the departments was a stratum. In each stratum, simple random sampling was applied to select the representative sample in which case each member had the same chance of being selected. The number of respondents in each stratum was calculated by dividing the sample size by the number of strata. In case, the number of respondents in a given stratum is less than the calculated one, then a census was taken for that particular stratum whereby all the workers in that stratum were considered. To avoid biasness, the total number of workers to be interviewed in a given stratum (department) was spread appropriately so that each of the department is appropriately represented.

Data collection methods and instruments

Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents/workers and then collected after they have been filled. The questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert scale anchored on “strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)”.

Data Analysis

After collecting data from respondents using self-administered questionnaires, it was edited, coded, entered into a computer, and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022). Frequencies and percentage distributions were used to analyze data on the demographic characteristics of respondents. Correlations and regression analysis was also used to measure the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

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RESULTS

Table 1: Pearson Correlations Matrix

		Correlations			
		Work environment	Systems of work	Foreseeable conditions	SUSTAINABLEPROCUREMENTPRACTICES
Work environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.539**	.164**	.513**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.008	.000
	N	265	265	265	265
Systems of work	Pearson Correlation	.539**	1	.325**	.554**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	265	265	265	265
Foreseeable conditions	Pearson Correlation	.164**	.325**	1	.494**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.000		.000
	N	265	265	265	265
SUSTAINABLEPROCUREMENTPRACTICES	Pearson Correlation	.513**	.554**	.494**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

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N	265	265	265	265
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**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data 2022

Relationship between work environment and sustainable practices.

Table 1 indicated that there was high and significant positive relationship between work environment and sustainable procurement practices since, $r = .513$ and $p = .000 < .01$. This implied that a change in the work environment leads to a change in sustainable procurement practices in the same direction (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). Therefore, to enhance sustainable procurement practices during risk assessment, UNRA needs to ensure there is suitable and conducive work environment. If $.1 < r \leq .3$, implied that there was a medium positive relationship while those which show Pearson correlations of such that $.3 < r \leq .5$ imply that there was larger positive relationship between the attributes (Faridah et al., 2023).

It is important to note that the diagonal correlation values are such that $r = 1$, because the relationship between a variable and itself is perfect.

Relationship between systems of work and sustainable procurement practices.

Table 1 showed that there was high and significant positive relationship between systems of work and sustainable procurement practices since $r = .535$, $p = .000 < .01$. As the systems of work changes, sustainable procurement practices change in the same direction. Thus, to enhance sustainable procurement practices in the view of respondents during risk assessment, there is need for the UNRA management to ensure improved systems of work during risk assessment. Therefore, UNRA management should ensure that work systems are available and that they are put to proper use by the employees during risk assessment (Zowena et al., 2023).

Relationship between foreseeable conditions and sustainable procurement practices.

Table 1 showed that the correlations between foreseeable conditions and sustainable procurement practices was large and significant since $r = .494$ and $p = .000$. This implies that generally, foreseeable conditions and sustainable procurement practices were positively correlated. The significant value $p = .000 < .01$, implying that the relationship between them was also significant. Therefore, the UNRA management needs to provide the employees with the support they deserve in order to ensure improved foreseeable conditions during risk assessment (Tasha et al., 2023).

Regression analysis

Table 2: Regression Model for the study variables

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Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.382	1.691		4.365	.000
Work environment	.803	.138	.308	5.828	.000
Systems of work	.802	.162	.272	4.938	.000
Foreseeable conditions	.601	.080	.355	7.537	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SUSTAINABLEPROCUREMENTPRACTICES

R Square =.484

F Statistic = 81.468

Adjusted R Square =.478

Sig. F Statistic =.000

Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Work environment, Systems of work and foreseeable conditions: $Y=7.382+B_iX_i$

$i = 1,2,3,4$

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 showed that R Square =.484 was adjusted to .478 to provide for the potential errors in the raw data. This means that a combination of work environment, systems of work and foreseeable conditions accounted for only 47.8% variation in the sustainable procurement practices. The other 52.2% variation in the sustainable procurement practices is explained by other factors. This is because there are other factors other than the ones under study that influence sustainable procurement practices (Nelson et al., 2023). From Table 2, it was observed that all the predictors were good and significant, with work environment being the best predictor because it had the highest Beta value (.308). This is further supported by the sig. values ($p = .000 < .001$), followed by foreseeable conditions with Beta value (.355), $p=.000<.01$ and systems of work with Beta value (.272), $p=.000<.01$ respectively (Derrick et al., 2023).

Conclusions

There was a significant positive relationship between work environment and sustainable procurement practices. Thus, there is need for the UNRA management to make sure that they focus on the work environment during risk assessment. In relation to the second objective, it was observed that all correlations between systems of work, and sustainable procurement practices was positive and significant as evidenced by the values of “ r ” and “ p ” which are such that $r = .554$; $p = .000 < .01$

Recommendations

It was recommended that work environment be given priority, though, systems of work and foreseeable conditions also significantly contributed to sustainable procurement practices

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