

**ETHICAL PROCUREMENT PRACTICES AND THEIR ROLE IN ENHANCING
ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTATION: A CASE STUDY OF UN REFUGEE AGENCY
(UNHCR)-KIRYANDONGO REFUGEE SETTLEMENT IN UGANDA**

MONICA KULANG KARAMA

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I **KARAMA MONICA KULANG**, declare that this dissertation was written with my own efforts and where other scholarly works have been used, they were duly acknowledged.

Sign..........

Date ..17/3/2026.....

APPROVAL

This confirms that the dissertation was prepared under my esteemed supervision and submitted with my endorsement as the supervisor of the university.

NAME; MR MULOOSI PASCAL SHIBI

SIGNATURE: 

APPROVAL DATE: 19/3/2016,

(University supervisor)

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is devoted to my, Dad may his soul rest in peace, Mr. Makur Martine Arok who from the time I stepped my legs in a classroom kept encouraging me even up to his time of death that his word kept me moving, my guardian, Mrs. Laker Concy Emmanuel who stood firm with me during the hard and good days and providing me with all the necessary supports that I needed during my course of study ,not forgetting my fiancee Dr. Ekwaro Joseph who was there for me supporting me financially throughout these period and then my beloved uncle Mr. Kulang Emmanuel Arok who provided all the necessary finances for my school fees right from primary may the God keep blessing your earnings.

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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	meanings
UNHCR	United Nation’s High Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
WHO	World Health Organization
RBV	Resource Based View
WFP	World Food Program
PPDA	Pubic Procurement and Disposal of public Assets
WBP	World Bank Publication

ABSTRACT

The research was to evaluate ethical procurement practices roles in enhancing organizational image, focusing on the research variables of transparency, fair supplier selection, and compliance and procurement standards. Ethical procurement is has become increasingly significant as companies seek to build trust, and demonstrate responsible a resource management within its frameworks. This research will examine how the ethical practices like open tendering, fair supplier selection and adherence to regulatory compliance influence peoples' perception on integrity among the donors, suppliers, employees and the public at large. Using a quantitative research and structured questionnaires, data was collected to investigate the extent to which ethical procurement is implemented and how it correlates with organizational image, indicators for instance trustworthiness, ethical image, and stakeholders' satisfaction. The findings are expected to clearlt identify the consistency of ethical procurement practices applied to enjoy stronger reputational outcomes for example improved relationships with stakeholders, and support from developmental partners. The study contributes to procurement and organizational management literature by providing knowledge into how ethical behavior in procurement can serve as a strategic tool for enhancing institutional image.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The study shows ethical procurement standards and their role in enhancing organizational image focusing on how concrete practical areas like transparency, fair supplier selection and compliance shape stakeholders' perceptions that leads into organizational reputation. This chapter will bring out clearly the context of this research, issues described, objectives, hypothesis, importance, constraints, opportunities, and then the framework of the study.

1.1 Study background

In the global world, organizational reputation serves as a critical non-physical resource for humanitarian organizations like the UN, influencing stakeholders' trust, donor confidence, and operational legitimacy in complex environments such as Kiryandongo refugee settlement case in Uganda. According to (Basheka, B. 2010,) he refer it as the collective perception of an organization's character, capabilities and trustworthiness as a supply chain partner. This encompasses of the collective perceptions of an entity's credibility, reliability, and ethical standards among the beneficiaries, governments, and international partners (Forbrun & Van Riel, 2012). Reputational risks comes up from struggle over resource allocation and accountability in an organization, potentially undermining public reliable strong support and funding streams (Israel, B. Mchopa, 2021). Enhanced reputation through ethical procurement standards are essential for sustaining long-term humanitarian impact among challenges like corruptions and bribery in aid delivery (Transparency International, 2022).

Ethical procurement standards include the integration of basic moral principles like fairness, transparency, and accountability, fair supplier selection into the sourcing processes to mitigate risks and promote sustainability according to Peterson Mwirigi, 2020. The practices include supplier vetting, anti-corruption measures, and environmental considerations, which directly influence organizational outcomes (Carter & Rogers, 2008). By examining how these practices reflection reputation of an organization, this study will address gaps in humanitarian supply chain ethics, contributing to improved governance in refugee response programs (Kovacs & Spens, 2011)

In response to the arising concern over corruption, fraud and unethical sourcing, many countries have adopted ethical procurement frameworks such as transparency, fairness and compliance with the regulation and they are expected only to improve efficiently. Previously studies have outlined frameworks on organizational reputation (AIB Insights, 2021; JCBS, 2021), but there remains a critical empirical gap that links ethical procurement practices to organizational reputation which have not been sufficiently investigated and therefore according to the (2023) global procurement policy review by the World Bank, less than 30% of the procurement assessment include organizational reputation, similarly, a Deloitte global survey (2022) found that 72% of executives believe that ethical sourcing improves brand reputation but only 26% measures it systematically.

In East Africa, particularly in Uganda, public procurement is the mother of the economic activity that accounts for approximately 70% of Uganda's public spending which is higher than the global average as stated by the PPDA 3rd integrity in procurement survey report in Uganda. However, the region faces persistent challenges with unethical procurement practices such as corruption, favoritism, fraud and lack of transparency that undermines the reputation of the organization. A PPDA survey report found that 71.8% of respondents perceived procurement as corrupt, with 59.8% admitting to having gratified public officers.

Locally, according to the office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Uganda Refugee statistics, the UNHCR operates tirelessly hosting over 1.5 million refugees positioning it one of Africa's biggest refugee-hosting countries. Their procurement activities in Uganda are critically for delivering humanitarian aid, including food, shelter and medical supplies. Public audits and investigators (UNHCR,2020) noted that UNHCR is struggling with procurement irregularities, mismanagement of donor's funds and allegation to corruption which affects how stakeholders perceive its integrity, reliability and capacity.

1.1.1 Theoretical framework

This study is anchored mainly on the resource-based view (RBV theory;

Resource based view (RSV) (Barney 1991)

This theory argues that organizations gain a competitive advantage by utilizing valuable resources (Barney 1991). Ethical procurement practices can be seen as a strategic resource as they foster long term supplier relationships, reduce risks and promote organizational reputation. When these practices are integrated into strategic procurement, they become intangible assets that differentiate the organization and hence strengthening its reputation.

Ethical procurement, when probably institutionalized can also be treated as a strategic resource that meets the criteria of the resource based view, this is vital because it builds up trust and stakeholders confidence when the organization maintain high ethical standards since it depends on the internal culture, governance structure (strategic journal, Kenya procurement study,2020). Through this resource, an organization like UNHCR in Uganda can enhance its reputation by demonstrating consistent ethical behavior, improving stakeholder trust and thereby facilitating access to donor funding. Resource based view highlights ethical procurement as a strategic resource that enhances reputation by providing credibility, trust and sustainable practices. (Lange, lee, & Dai, 2011; carpenter & Krause, 2011).

In conclusion, although a growing amount of research exists on procurement ethics, business governance and organizational performance, several gaps remain. The most existing studies have concentrated on financial outcomes of procurement practices such as cost efficiency and operational performance (Amann et al., 2014) with limited focus on the reputational dimension especially in the humanitarian and public sectors, institutional and resource based view provide explanations for how organizations should adopt ethical procurement practices and build legitimacy.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the context of the UN agencies globally, organizational reputation serves as a critical issue strictly influencing donor confidence, stakeholder' trust, and the general legitimacy of operations, particularly in the resource constrained environments kiryandong refugee sttelment camp (Choi et al., 2021). However, persistent ethical standards lapses in procurement practices ranging from procurement irregularities and overspending to unverified supplier compliance that have undermined this image leading to operational disruptions (OIOS, 2018). A crucial illustration of this vulnerability occurred in UNHCR's Uganda operations between the year 2016 - 2017, where

an internal audit by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) uncovered irregularities over spending on infrastructural projects like water systems and roads, alongside procurement inconsistency involving non-competitive bidding and inflated high costs totaling tens of millions dollars (OIOS, 2018). Such misconduct indicates how ethical breaches in procurement processes directly damages organizational image, as evidenced by a subsequent 15% dip in voluntary contributions to UNHCR's Uganda program in the year 2019 which attributed to perceived mismanagement (UNHCR, 2020). For instance, lapses in ethical oversight can cause reputational damage by 20-30% in stakeholder perceptions, leading to reduced relationships in the partnerships and heightened investigations from oversight bodies (Andersen & Skjoett Larsen, 2009).

Despite all the UNHCR's commitments to ethical procurement practices under the UN Financial Regulations emphasizing fairness, integrity, and sustainability, the implementation gaps in Uganda reveal a disconnect between the policies and practices, showing reputational vulnerabilities (UNHCR, 2021). This problem is particularly at an acute level given the sector's growing emphasis on accountability.

1.3.0 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Overall objective

Examining how ethical procurement practices act as a strategic organizational resource in enhancing the organizational reputation with focus on the humanitarian organizations like UN.

1.3.2 The specialised objectives

1. To examine how transparency in procurement processes enhances stakeholder's trust
2. To assess how compliance with ethical procurement standards strengthens public confidence and integrity.
3. To determine how fair supplier selection practices contribute to donor satisfaction and overall reputation.

1.4 Study queries

1. How transparency in procurement processes enhance stakeholder trust?
2. To what extent does compliance with ethical procurement standards strengthen public confidence and integrity?

3. How have fair supplier selection practices contribute to donor satisfaction and overall reputation?

1.5 Hypothesis

H1 increased transparency in procurement processes positively contribute to stakeholder's trust.

H2 Higher compliance with ethical procurement standards positively strengthens public confidence and integrity.

H3 Fair supplier selection practices positively contribute to donor satisfaction and overall reputation.

1.6 Study scopes

1.6.1 Geographically

The study will be conducted in Uganda focusing mainly on humanitarian organizations particularly concentrating on UN agency (UNHCR) which is currently operating with our country Uganda in Kiryandongo refugee settlement and in the mid-western part of the country. This choice was made due to its operations and Uganda hosting the largest number of refugees in Africa making it relevant to examine the ethical procurement practices and their role in enhancing organizational reputation.

1.6.2 Content of the scope

This study will investigate a relationship between ethical procurement practices and organizational reputation at United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees which will involve having transparency in the procurement processes through open bidding and communication with the stakeholders, compliance with procurement regulations by adhering to the organizational guidelines and proper accountability and then finally having fair supplier selection through equal opportunity and merit based evaluation.

1.6.3 The time frame

The research will focus on the period 2020 to 2024 because it represents the time which UNHCR Uganda faced high procurement activities due to the rise in humanitarian crisis including the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic which increased donor closing inspection regarding ethical

compliance and this shall allow me analyze how ethical procurement practices have shaped organizational reputation.

1.7 Justification of the study

1.7.1 Contribution to the theory

Resource based view

The study helps this theory to show that ethical procurement practices can served as an intangible asset that shall create a competitive advantage through its improved reputation.

1.7.2 Contribution to the practice

Managers

The research will guide managers in designing procurement policies that talks about fairness, transparency and compliance thus helping the organization to gain trust and avoid bad reputation.

Policy makers

Finding shall assist the policy makers like PPDA to design and enforce procurement regulations that will promote ethical behaviors in the public and humanitarian institutions in Uganda.

Society

Through ensuring ethical usage of the resources in the humanitarian organizations like UNHCR, the study indirectly benefits the community by promoting fairness, transparency and responsible use of donors' funds, which strengthen public confidence.

Researchers

The study act as reference for further investigations into the connections between ethical procurement practices and the organizational reputation in both private and public sectors in Uganda.

1.8 study significances

Students

This thesis topic will give students deeper understanding of the principles of ethical procurement practices and their impacts on organizational reputation and performance and this will serve as reference for academic assignments on procurement supply chain management.

Policy makers

The study shall help the regulators ensure that organizations especially the humanitarians sectors like UNHCR adhere to the ethical standards thus building public trust and confidence since the findings will inform policy formulation and implementation that emphasizes transparency, fairness and accountability.

Managers

The study provide guidelines on designing and implementing ethical procurement policies that enhance organizational reputation which helps them to use the insights in mitigating risks and strengthening compliance with ethical standards.

Researcher

It will provide a foundation of further research on the relationships between ethical procurement practices and company image.

1.9.0 Limits and delimitations

1.9.1 limits

Accessibility of the data

Humanitarian organizations like UNHCR may have restrictions of access to some procurement records due confidentiality, security or donor related restrictions and this could limit the availability of detailed data for analysis.

Bias response from the participants

Procurement staffs and managers may overstate ethical practices due to social desirability affecting the accuracy of the survey responses.

Variations in organizational practices

Differences in procurement procedures across the humanitarian organizations in Uganda may limit the generality of findings to all organizations in the sector.

External factors

Broader economic, political, and regulatory changes during the study may influence procurement practices and stakeholder perception, which the researcher may not control.

1.9.2 Delimitations

Study population

The study is limited only to humanitarian organizations in Uganda with particular focus on UNHCR thus excluding other organizations outside this study.

Geographically

The research will be conducted within Uganda and findings may not fully apply to other humanitarian organizations in other countries with different regulations and operations.

Period

The study covers the period 2020-2024 focusing on recent trends and practices in procurement and so events outside this period are excluded from analysis.

1.10.0 Theoretical and conceptual framework

1.10.1 Theoretical Framework

Resource based view (Barney, 1991)

The theory emphasizes that organizations achieve a competitive advantage by utilizing valuable, and no substitutable resources such as reputation, trust that cannot be easily replaceable by competitors; this theory frames ethical procurement practices as valuable resources that enhance reputation and provide a competitive advantage.

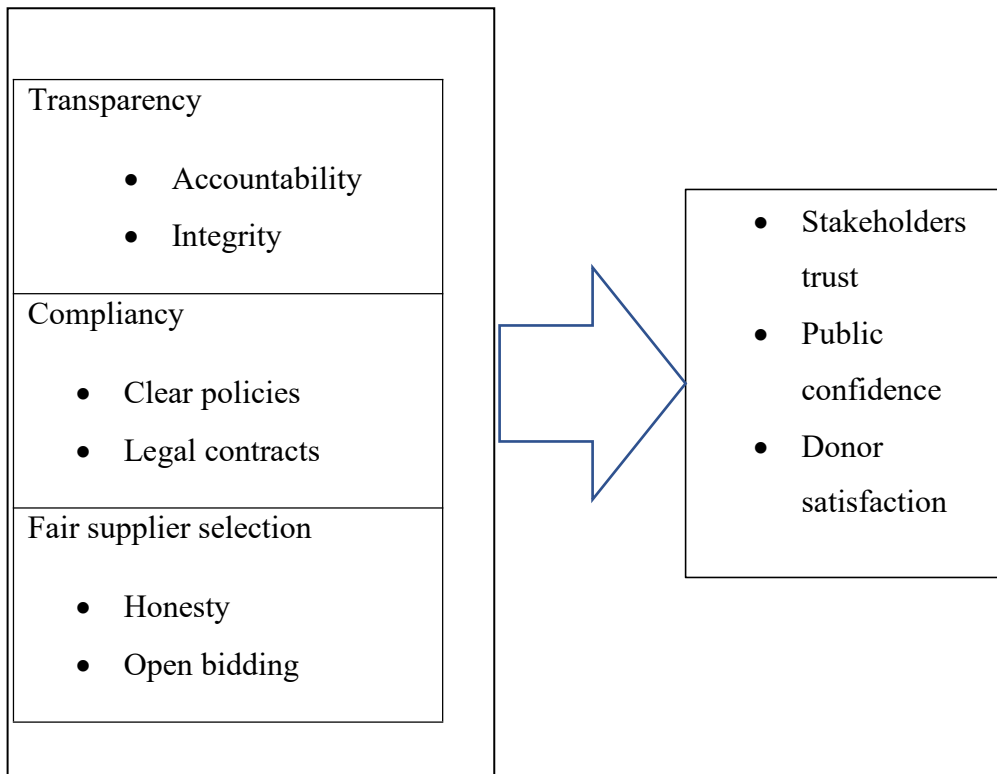
Ethical procurement practices serves as strategic intangible resources that strengthen an organizational reputation. Through implementing transparency, compliance and fairness, humanitarian organizations create long-term value and enhance donor confidence thus maintaining positive public image.

1.10.2 The framework concept

This framework indicates hypothesized relationships within the two variables of ethical procurement practices and organizational reputation. This framework has based on understanding that procurement practices are not only operational procedures but also strategic drivers of organizations credibility and stakeholder trust

.IV (ethical procurement practices

DV (organizational reputation)



Description of the expected linkages in this framework

This conceptual framework indicates the hypothesized relationships between these variables of ethical procurement practices and organizational reputation. This framework is based on understanding that procurement practices are not only operational procedures but also strategic drivers of organizations credibility and stakeholder trust.

1. Transparency and organizational reputation

Transparency in procurement for instance openness in bidding and open reporting channel are usually expected to positively influence organizational reputation. Organizations that operate transparently are also believed to be trustworthy, accountable which enhances stakeholder confidence and strengthen public awareness.

2. Compliance and organizational reputation

Complying up with procurement regulations and ethical behaviors are expected to have a direct positive effect on organizational reputation in that the organizations works within legal and ethical manners which enhances legitimacy, risk of corruption and stakeholder confidence.

3. Fair supplier selection and organizational reputation

Fair supplier selection based on merit, quality of opportunity and avoidance of favoritism are expected to positively influence organizational reputation. In that, the organizations that implement those practices are likely to achieve higher goals and objectives thus leading to public trust and stakeholder confidence.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The chapter talks about existing information about ethical procurement practices and their role in enhancing organizational reputation in humanitarian organizations like UNHCR in Uganda with specific emphasis in its context. These are also structured around the study's specific objectives, key concepts, theoretical review and the research gap.

2.1 key definitions

Ethical Procurement Practices

This refers to the application of fairness, transparency, anti-corruption, and social/environmental responsibility throughout the procurement process (Carter & Rogers, 2008; Monck et al., 2015).

Role

The functional influence or contribution of ethical procurement in shaping reputation outcomes (Saunders et al., 2019).

Enhancing

Improving stakeholder perceptions of trust, credibility, and responsibility (Forbrun, 1996; Walker, 2010).

Organizational Reputation

This is where stakeholders held evaluations of a firm's trustworthiness, ethical conduct, and social performance over time (Forbrun & Van Riel, 2004; Lange et al., 2011).

2.2 Theoretical review

The present study are anchored on the resources based view (RBV) theory, which was first advanced by Werner felt (1984) and later expanded by Barley (1991). This resource based view theory suggests that organizations can only achieve and sustain a competitive advantage by developing and effectively managing valuable and non-substitutable resources (Barney, 1991). These strategic resources include not only tangible assets but also intangible assets such as reputation, ethical culture and stakeholders trust (Hart, 1995). In this context, ethical procurement practices are conceptualized as a strategic organizational resource that contributes to the enhancement of organization's reputation.

According to the theory, firms that adopt ethical procurement standards like like fair supplier selection and transparency in tendering processes a strong foundation of trust that strengthens their positions in the market (Werner felt, 1984; barney 1991). Ethical procurement standards enhance the organization's inner and outer image by showing integrity and accountability, which are increasingly recognized as an important reputational assets (carter & Jennings, 2004). In UNHCR, adherence to ethical procurement shows the commitment to a responsible resource management, donor confidence and stakeholder's trust (UNHCR, 2023).

In the Uganda context, where the cases of procurement irregularities and corruption remain prevalent in both public and humanitarian sectors (transparency international, 2022), ethical procurement activities become particularly vital, and therefore applying the RBV framework to UN Uganda implies that ethical procurement should not only be identified as a compliance requirement but also as a strategic resource that reflects the organization's image and legitimacy hence providing a lens through which to understand how ethical procurement activities contribute to sustainability through coming up with unique and inimitable ethical valuable systems.

2.3 Conceptual Review

2.3.1 Transparency

To explore how transparency in the procurement process enhance stakeholder's trust. Transparency in procurement can simply mean the extent to which procurement information, procedures, and decisions are openly available, clearly communicated, and accessible to the

stakeholders (Ado, 2022). This involves practices like publishing tender notices, disclosing evaluation criteria, decision documentation, and maintaining open communication channels with their suppliers. By reducing information, transparency reduces opportunities for favoritism, bribes, and corruption risks (Williams, 2020).

Stakeholder's trust is defined as the confidence that suppliers, donors, beneficiaries, staffs, and oversight bodies have in the fairness, and integrity of the procurement processes (Mukokoma & Isingoma, 2019). Trust grows when stakeholders believe that procurement officers follow ethical standards, procedures consistently, and treat all parties equally. In humanitarian organizations like UN, where accountability is paramount, trust is essential for maintaining cooperation and reputational sustainability (Karimi & Kagia, 2021). The relationship between transparency and stakeholder's trust is strongly supported in this literature. Williams (2020) found that transparent procurement reporting systems positively reduce perceptions of corruption, which in turn strengthens supplier confidence. In a similar way, Ado (2022) demonstrated that organizations with open communication and accessible procurement data related activities attract more important suppliers, suggesting that transparency reflects fairness.

Mukokoma and Isingoma (2019) evidenced that when evaluation criteria and award decisions are openly communicated, stakeholders develop stronger trust in both the procurement process and its impacts. Their findings highlight that transparency does not only provide information but also reinforces perceptions of ethical conduct. Amemba et al. (2018) further went on to state that transparent procurement activities promote compliance and reduce disputes because suppliers feel confident that decisions are based on objectives of the what you are doing. Supporting this position, Karimi and Kagia (2021) found that transparency reduces rent-seeking behavior and strengthens donor confidence as an important dimension of stakeholder's trust in public and private procurement. Research shows that transparency is a key driver of stakeholder's trust that plays a foundational role in enhancing organizational image through ethical procurement activities. When procurement information is openly shared and decision are made willingly, stakeholders perceive the process as legitimate, fair and professional in nature. This reduces uncertainty, indispensable ethical procurement practices in strengthening stakeholder's relationship.

According to RBV (resource based view) theory (Barney, 1991) which portrays that firms gain sustained competitive advantage through valuable, inimitable, rare and non-sustainable resources. Transparency in procurement can be seen as a strategic capacity, a few organizational resource that enhances reputation as an invisible asset, differencing the firm in competitive markets and aligning with RBV's emphasis on internal resources for long term advantage. Under the RBV, ethical transparency standards create blockages to imitation, as they need embedded cultural and procedural commitments, ultimately leading to superior performance through reputational capital.

Despite these problems, a knowledgeable gap exists in the empirical studies exploring transparency's impact on organizational reputation in the emerging economies beyond the context of the healthcare, in particular how digital tools like block chain moderate the relationship in dynamic industries in Uganda.

While transparency establishes trust through open communications, ensuring follow up to ethical standards via compliance further solidifies organizational image.

2.3.2 Compliance

To examine how compliance with ethical procurement behaviors strengthens public confidence and integrity. Compliance with ethical procurement practices can be referred to as the extent to which an organization agrees to established rules, codes of conduct, regulations, and professional activities that guide procurement standards (Kiprotich, 2020). These standards often include fair supplier selection, accountability, conflict-of-interest controls, value for money, and adherence to legal frameworks. Compliance with regulations bring up that procurement professionals follow procedures consistently, diligent documentation of the decisions, and avoid unethical behaviors like favoritism, and manipulation of tender processes. By enforcing these behaviors, companies create predictable systems that operate within ethical and legal boundaries. This has key concepts, that include regulatory adherence, which ensures legal conformity, ethical auditing, involving regular monitoring and reviews for violations, and risk mitigation where compliance prevents scandals that could harm reputation (Carter & Rogers, 2008). This promotes accountability by enforcing supplier codes of conduct and internal policies hence reducing opportunities for misconduct and aligning procurement with corporate social responsibilities.

Public image and confidence shows the degree at which the public, suppliers, partners, donors, and oversight institutions trust that an organization acts responsibly, transparently, and fairly (Nderitu & Ngugi, 2019). Confidence grows when stakeholders observe that the organization applies rules consistently, handling public resources with much care and attention, and this demonstrates ethical leadership. Integrity, on the other hand, refers to the moral soundness and uprightness displayed in procurement decisions and organizational conduct (Mwangi & Kariuki, 2021). Integrity is shown when procurement professionals uphold honesty, openness and accountability even when dealing with complex procurement decisions.

Scholars argued that compliance with ethical procurement behaviour is the center of mechanism for strengthening organizational integrity thus enhancing public confidence. For instance, Kiprotich (2020) state that organizations that consistently follow procurement regulations experience lower audit queries and enjoy higher levels of trust from their key stakeholders. Compliance functions as a safeguard that reduces discretion that may lead to unethical behavior. Likewise, Nderitu and Ngugi (2019) argued that when procurement teams comply with the legal frameworks and professional codes of conduct, public trust increases since stakeholders view the organization as committed to responsible resource management.

Furthermore, Mwangi and Kariuki (2021) argued that compliance owns ethical practices by embedding rules that guide procurement professionals in an a company hence reducing the likelihood of corruption. Their study shows that integrity is strengthened when compliance activities for instance audits, approvals, and fairness are actively enforced. In another study, Akena and Matsiko (2022) found that following the ethical procurement practices enhances donor confidence in humanitarian and developmental organizations since compliance assures donors that those fundings will be used for intended purposes and not diverted through malpractical acts. Similarly, Kamau and Karanja (2020) reports that the organizations that demonstrate strong compliance records attract reputable suppliers and maintain strong and stable relationships with external stakeholders thus boosting confidence in procurement impacts.

Research shows that compliance is not a passive administrative function but a proactive ethical commitment. By following established procurement standards, organizations signal reliability, fairness, and accountability. This reduces the risks of fraud and mismanagement, thereby strengthening public confidence. At the same time, compliance reinforces organizational

integrity by ensuring that procurement officers and committees operate within clearly defined ethical boundaries. Thus, compliance with ethical procurement standards forms a cornerstone of ethical governance and directly contributes to building a positive organizational image, credibility, and stakeholder trust.

According to RBV, theory (Barney, 1991) compliance acts as a key capability, a valuable resource that is difficult to practice due to its integration with organizational culture/norms and process, providing a competitiveness by enhancing reputation with organizational assets to reduce risks. RBV suggests that firms leveraging compliance as inimitable resources can achieve a sustained advantages as it transforms its regulatory obligations into strategic ones for ethical leadership.

A notable knowledge gap is the limited longitudinal research on how compliance evolves with regulatory impacts in global supply chains, especially its quantifiable impact on public image in SMEs.

By building on compliance's role in regulatory integrity, the fair selection extends ethical practices by ensuring equity and diversity, which is addressed as follows.

2.3.3 Fair Supplier Selection

To assess how fair supplier selection practices contribute to donor's satisfaction and overall organizational image. Fair supplier selection defines it as the systematic application of objectives, and non discriminatory criteria when selecting the suppliers for procurement contracts (Ochieng, 2019). Fair supplier selection activities include establishing clear rules, using standardized evaluation matrices and measures, applying conflict-of-interest checkouts, and documenting decisions. These activities ensure that awards are based on merits such as quality, cost-effectiveness, and past performance rather than corrupt influence.

The donor's satisfaction in humanitarian and developing countries demonstrates the degree to which funding agencies, donors, and institutional partners feel confident that their financial contributions are managed effectively, transparently, and are in a straight line with intended program objectives (Lule & Sserunjogi, 2020). Donors expect procurement systems to deliver value for money, mitigate risks, and also demonstration of accountability. Organizational image refers to a broader public and stakeholder perception of an organization's reliability, ethical

conduct, and capacity to fulfill its mission (Otieno, 2018). Reputations are built over time through consistent performance, integrity, and positive stakeholder's experiences.

Scholarly, evidence connects fair supplier selection to donor satisfaction and reputation through several measures, fairness reduces agency risk and show donors that procurement decisions are defensible and audit-ready, additionally Ochieng (2019) also argues that organizations that use transparent evaluation matrices faced fewer donor questions and achieved higher satisfaction scores. Lule and Sserunjogi (2020) reports that a competitive and fair supplier selection increases cost-efficiency and donor confidence in the resource use. According to Otieno (2018), when suppliers view selection processes as equitable, they are more likely to comply with contract terms leading to engagements in long-term partnerships, improving service delivery times and strengthening good reputation. Bukenya and Ainebyoona (2021) in their argument say that robust prequalification and due diligence practices correlate with fewer contract failures and higher donor trust. Ssembatya (2022) also emphasizes that documented, consistent selections act as reputational signals to outside stakeholders, donors, and the local communities that the organization operates ethically, enhancing both short-term satisfaction and long-term.

Research suggests that fairness isn't only in the technical procurement step but also strategically a tool in safeguarding donor relationships and enhancing organizational image. By applying the objective criteria, maintaining openness, and ensuring that awards are justifiable, organizations reduce procurement related risks and deliver better impacts. This leads donors to perceiving a higher accountability and value. Over time, repeated application of fair supplier selection practices creates a positive feedback loop where satisfied donors are more likely to renew fundings, endorse the organization to other partners, and publicly praise its governance, thereby amplifying reputational gains that support sustainability and mission impact.

In relation to RBV theory (Barney, 1991), fair supplier selection represents a dynamic capability, a rare resource combining ethical screening with strategic alliances, creating networks that enhance reputation as a source of competitive advantage. RBV views this as leveraging heterogeneous resources for superior outcomes where fairness build relation assets that are not substitutable.

However, a knowledgeable gap persists in behavioral studies exploring cultural variations in to fair supplier selection reputational effects across industries, particularly with the emerging technologies like using artificial intelligence in bid evaluation.

2.4 The Research gap

Despite the increasing literature, highlighting emphasizes on the need for transparency, compliance, and fair supplier selection in ethical procurement, limited empirical evidence exists on how the practices jointly influence organizational reputation within humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR. The existing studies focuses on public/ private sectors in developed countries, emphasizing policy compliance and cost efficiency rather than reputational impacts. Additionally, not much is known about how ethical procurement standards operate in complex humanitarian contexts characterized by donor accountability, emergency operations, and diverse supplier selection bases. Therefore, the gap lies in having some knowledge about the extent to which ethical procurement behaviours collectively enhance organizational image in international humanitarian organizations operating in developing countries like Uganda

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.0 Introduction

The chapter provides informations about the design of the study, study size, the technologies used, collection method, the validity and its reliability in the study, data analysis then finally summary of the analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study uses a quantitative design in investigating relationship between ethical practices and organizational reputation. A quantitative approach is chosen for this study whereby it enabled the numerical data collectings from a bigger sample, that can be analyzed to know the relationships, and the strength between the research variables. This study is to findout the level to which companies like UNHCR implement ethical procurement activities and how they influence their perspeptions on reputation. Using the questionnaires, data will be collected people who have experience in the procurement related activities and relevant stakeholders. Their responses will be coded using stata software and subjected to statistical analysis to show how the hypotheses in the research tests and give answers to the research questions. By adopting this approach, the research ensures objectivity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings. The quantitative design minimizes researcher bias and enables the statistical research tools like Pearson's co-efficiency and analysis of regression for testing the hypothesized relationships in ethical standards in organizational reputation.

3.3 Study population size

The study was conducted at the UN refugee agencies (UNHCR), Uganda office. UNHCR has been a humanitarian organization established in 1950 with a mandate to protect and support refugees, worldwide. In Uganda, UNHCR works in collaboration with the Government of Uganda and other developmental at partners to ensure the protection, assistance, and durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons. The organization operates through various departments such as procurement, finance, logistics, child protection, community service, legal and WASH, which collectively support its humanitarian operations. The target population for this study will be 96 (N=96) consisting of UNHCR staff members who are directly or indirectly involved in procurement and supply chain activities because only participants who have direct experience, and responsibility related to ethical procurement practices are involved. These include procurement officers, logistics officers, finance officers, administrative staff, and senior managers responsible for overseeing ethical compliance and accountability within procurement processes. These groups were purposively selected because they possess relevant knowledge and experience regarding ethical procurement practices and their influence on the organization's reputation.

3.4 Sample size

The reseach thesis will use a purposive sampling technique to select respondents who are only directly involved in procurement activites or procurement related activities within UN to ensure that only those individuals with relevant knowledge contribute to the research findings and analysis. To determine an appropriate sample size; the study applied Yamane's (1967) formula which provides simplified method for calculating sample size based on the known population of 96 (N=96) staff members and assumption/margin of error of 0.05 ($e=0.05$), the sample size was computed through substituting the values into the formula to a sample size of 77 ($n=77$) which was considered sufficient to provide reliable and representative data for the research.

3.5 Data collection methods used in the research

This study has primarily used questionnaires as the main data collection method. This approach is chosen because questionnaires allow me to gather standardized information from a larger number of respondents within the shortest period.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Using questionnaires as the primary data collection method will enable me to systematically operationalize the study variables by translating each construct into measurable indicators and corresponding survey items. Ethical procurement practices specifically transparency, compliance and fairness will be broken down into measurable behaviors such as openness of procurement information, adherence to procurement rules and fairness in supplier evaluation. The responses will be captured using Likert scale statements that will allow respondents to rate their knowledge on the standards that are applied within their organization. Similarly, organizational image is to be done through the item assessing perception of trustworthiness, ethical image and stakeholder confidence. The idea of coming up with the use of the structured questionnaires ensured uniformity and this shall help in generating quantitative data that could be statistically analyzed to assess the relationship between ethical procurement standards and their role in enhancing organizational image.

3.6 The Validity and the reliability.s

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is the extent in which the research tools measures what is intended to. Therefore coming up with a good validity, knowledgeable people in Procurement and supply chain will review its questionnaires, and their responses from it will be incorporated to refine the tools. Validity will be made though aligned questionnaires with the research framework and its objectives.

3.6.2 The reliability

This is define as the consistency of the research requirements in producing stable and dependable results over time. The dependability of the results will be evaluated by re-testing method. The pilot research study shall be conducted, the questionnaires shall be reviewed

twice in three-week intervals. Then its correlation coefficient will be mathematically calculated in stata, producing dependency to indicate the level of internal consistency.

3.7 Data analysis

The study used numerical data to analyze the trends using Stata software and a descriptive statistic, including frequencies maximum, minimum, mean results, and its standard deviations, will be calculated to summarize its data. Correlation will be conducted to assess the relationships in ethical procurement standards and then organizational reputation.

3.8 Ethical consideration

This research study will assure that the respondents' rights and privacy will be fully protected. Participated are encouraged to participate voluntarily and they will provide informed consent after being clearly informed on the reason of the research study, procedures, risks, and importance. To keep their confidentiality, individual identities like age, positions will be excluded or replaced with codes, and all data shall be probably securely and stored on protected devices with passwords which is only accessible by me. The study will adhere to ethical practices for the ones that have human subjects, ensuring dignity, privacy of the participants.

3.9 Summary

This research study uses a single methods approach to examine how ethical procurement practices influence UNHCR's organizational reputation. The purpose of the sampling only targets staff involved in procurement activities, with data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations, its reliability and validity will be ensured through a pre-testing and consistency checks, data will be analyzed using stata software, with results presented in tables, and descriptive summaries to highlight the relationship between ethical procurement and organizational image.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ITS ANALYSIS AND THE INTERPRETATION

4.1.0 introduction

In this part, the results were obtained in the field of study, it was analyzed in relation to the stated objectives, which offered interpretation in accordance the context of ethical procurement practices and their role in enhancing organizational reputation at UNHCR Kiryandongo refugee settlement. The presentation follows a logical flow from the responses, then the respondents profile, reliability of the measurement scales, descriptive findings, group correlation efficiency, regression result and the validating the hypotheses of the study.

4.2 study response rate

categories	Questionnaires issued	responded/ rereturned	Response Rate (%)
Targeted UNHCR staff	77	70	90.9
Overall	77	70	90.9

Table o1. Response rate

Source: Primary data, 2026

A response rate of 90.9% was encouraging for a study of this nature in a humanitarian organization. Therefore, this has reflected a strong willingness among the targeted staffs who participated and suggests that the findings can be taken as a reasonable representative of procurement-related perspectives. Finch am (2008) notes that response rates of 50% and above are generally acceptable in survey-based research, the rate achieved here comfortably qualifies for the threshold and provides confidence in the results.

4.2.1 Response rate by departments

Department	Questionnaires distributed	Responses received	Response rate (%)
Procurement	22	22	100
Finance department	20	17	85
Stores management	6	4	66.6
WASH(water, sanitation and hygiene)	6	6	100
Community service	6	6	100
Health department	4	4	100
Child protection	7	5	71.4
Legal department	6	6	100
TOTAL	77	70	90.9

Table 02 response rate by departments

Source (primary data 2026)

Out of the 77 questionnaires were distributed amongst eight professional departments that run procurement activities in the organization, 70 responded positively resulting into rate of 90.9%. The responses are enough in an academic sitting so this shows the more level of collaboration within the study size.

Largest portion of the respondents was found in the procurement department, whereby, out of 22 questionnaires distributed, all responses were received making a response rate of 100% followed by other small departments like the legal, community service, health and WASH department. The most responses from procurement department indicates the role that procurement officers have in ensuring ethical procurement practices in enhancing the reputation of the organization. The organization using a decentralized system of administration, other departments also procure their own goods though the same donor especially the legal, community service, child protection, and WASH department funded them all. The stores department receive the goods that have been delivered to the organization and therefore they participate in the process since they check, count

and give accountabilities for the goods in the stores, they were given 6 questionnaires and 4 responses were received at a rate of 66%.

The finance department also played an ethical role because out of 20 questionnaires distributed, 17 responded making response rate of 85% and their responses were of benefit since they also involve themselves in the procurement processes with professionalism.

4.3 Background

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender/sex	male	37	52.9
	female	33	47.1
	Overall	70	100
Years in Organization	> 1 year	13	18.6
	1-3 years	26	37.1
	3-6 years	19	27.1
	More than 6 years	12	17.1
	Total	70	100.0
Level of education	diploma	5	7.1
	Bachelor	31	44.3
	Masters	24	34.3
	Others	10	14.3
	Total	70	100.0

Table 03. Response rate by background

Source: Primary data, 2026

Out of the 70 respondents, there were 37 males and 33 females in total during the collection of the data, the sample is fairly balanced with males making up just over half (52.9%). This shows that the majority of males which is not surprising given the often male dominated nature of technical and logistics roles in humanitarian operations in Uganda, though the small difference is encouraging.

In terms of experience, the largest group had worked at UNHCR for 1 to 3 years (37.1%), followed by those with 3 to 6 years (27.1%). Together, these two groups account for more than 64% of the sample. Fewer respondents had very short service of less than a year (<1 year) with a rate of 18.6% and those with very long service of above 6 years (>6 years) with 17.1%. Therefore the pattern suggests a reasonably experienced workforce, with many people still relatively early, which is typical in dynamic humanitarian standards.

The respondents were well educated with experience and skills whereby 44.3% held a bachelor and 34.3% with masters, which signifies that nearly 79% had at least undergraduate level qualification/education. Only 7.1% had a diploma as their highest qualification, and 14.3% who were falling under the “others” category that probably may include professional certificates or other qualifications. This aligns well with the specialized demands of procurement, compliance, and donor accountability work in UN agencies.

Additionally, the respondents profile which were balanced by gender, mostly mid-experience, and highly educated staffs gave a reasonable confidence to the views captured to reflect those staffs who understand and engage themselves in ethical procurement processes on a day-to-day activities of the organization.

4.4 Cronbach’s alpha

constructs	Items No	Cronbach’s alpha	interpretations
Transparency	5	0.594	Marginal
Compliance	5	0.573	Marginal
Fair Supplier Selection	5	0.667	Acceptable
Organizational Reputation	9	0.537	Questionable

Table 04. Cronbach coefficients

Source: Primary data, 2026

Cronbach’s alpha digits begins from 0.537 - 0.667. In research management, Cronbach’s alphas of 0.70 or more are often said to be acceptable/accepted, 0.80 or more good, and values below

0.60 questionable. Therefore, in this case, the results fall in the marginal to borderline range, with fair supplier selection performing the best (0.667) and organizational reputation the weakest (0.537).

These alphas are uncommon in exploratory studies, especially those with a modest sample size (N=70) and when respondents show very high agreement across items, high agreement tends to reduce variability in responses of individuals, which in turn can lower alpha even when the items are conceptual. Almost the same patterns appear in other studies of ethical standards in the humanitarian or public sector contexts, where ceiling effects and contextual pressures lead respondents to rate their organization positively and consistently. The reliability results are considered sufficient for an exploratory study at this level.

After identifying this reliability, the next thing is to look closely at how respondents rated the key variables: transparency in procurement processes, compliance with ethical standards, fair supplier selection, and lastly organizational reputation that were measured on a Likert scale. Their mean scores, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values for each construct are showed below.

4.5 descriptive statistics of the main constructs

Construct	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum	Interpretation
Transparency	70	4.28	0.35	3.00	4.80	Very high
Compliance	69	4.29	0.29	3.60	4.60	Very high
Fair Supplier Selection	70	4.17	0.52	2.40	5.00	High level
Organizational Reputation	70	4.14	0.31	3.22	4.56	High level

Table 05. main constructs descriptive

Source: Primary data, 2026

The mean scores for all the constructs were notified as being higher ranging from 4.14 to 4.29. This shows that, on average, respondents strongly agreed that ethical procurement practices are

being applied effectively at UN Kiryandongo and the organization benefits from a positive reputation among stakeholders. Compliance recorded the highest mean (4.29) and the lowest variability (standard deviation of 0.29), stating that staffs perceived adherence to rules and standards as consistent and strong. Transparency followed closely with a mean of 4.28 and similarly low spread.

Fair supplier selection variables have the lowest mean (4.17) but the with the highest standard deviation (0.52), meaning there were more diversity of opinion, some respondents felt this aspect was handled very well, while others were less convinced. Organizational reputation scored a solid 4.14 with modest variability, showing generally favorable perceptions but with some space for improvement.

4.6 Mean according to demographic groups

To have deeper insight into how perceptions varied across the different groups of respondents, the mean scores for the four main constructs were examined by gender and years of service in the UN. This comparison helps to notify whether certain similarities for instance length of experience and gender were associated with noticeably different views on ethical procurement behaviour and image.

Table 4.6.1: Mean Scored by Gender

Gender	Transparency	Compliance	Fair Supplier Selection	Organizational Reputation
Male	4.24	4.30	4.09	4.14
Female	4.32	4.28	4.25	4.15

Table 06. Means by gender

Source: Primary data, 2026

The female respondents had slightly higher rating responses for transparency (4.32 & 4.24) and fair supplier selection (4.25 & 4.09) compared to the males because females are believed to be transparent in whatever they do, similarly this states that women in the sample may perceive

slightly have stronger transparency and fairness in supplier dealings, therefore reflecting different experiences in these areas.

Table 4.6.2 Means scored by years of service in the organization

Years in Organization	Transparency	Compliance	Fair Supplier Selection	Organizational Reputation
Less than 1 year	4.05	4.23	3.95	3.91
1–3 years	4.37	4.24	4.15	4.13
3–6 years	4.34	4.38	4.22	4.25
More than 6 years	4.25	4.35	4.35	4.23

Table 07. Means scored by years in organization

Source: Primary data, 2025

Respondents who have been with UNHCR for less than one year consistently gave the lowest rating responses across all the four constructs mostly noticeably for fair supplier selection (3.95) and organizational reputation (3.91), similarly, those with more than three years of service tended to rate everything high with those of 3 to 6 year groups showing the strongest overall perceptions on the topic (e.g. reputation at 4.25).

These shows that newer staffs may enter with higher expectations or less familiarity with internal processes, leading to having views that are more critical. After some times, as people become more adaptive to the organization’s culture, routines, and accountability, their confidence in ethical behaviours and the organization’s reputation appears to grow. This makes sense in a humanitarian environment where trust in systems often builds through direct experience rather than initial participation.

4.7 Pearson’s correlation

The Pearson’s correlation is helpful to look at the easy pairwise relationships between the research variables, correlation coefficients were calculated to describe how strongly transparency, compliance, fair supplier selection, and reputation were connected to one another.

Table 4.7.1: combined correlation efficient among the variables of study

Construct	Transparency	Compliance	Fair Supplier Selection	Organizational Reputation
Transparency	1.000			
Compliance	0.58	1.000		
Fair Supplier Selection	0.52	0.45	1.000	
Organizational Reputation	0.55	0.48	0.62	1.000

Table 08. Pearson correlation coefficient among the variables

Source; primary data 2026

NB; p < 0.01. Correlations are based on pairwise deletion of missing values (N ranges from 69 to 70). this is because one individual didn’t answer the questions under compliance with regulations.

All these correlations were positively and significantly statistical at the level of 1%. This means that when staffs have better transparency, stronger compliance, and more fairness in supplier selection, they also tend to view the organization’s reputation more positively hence creating good public image.

The most identical link was between fair supplier selection and organizational reputation ($r = 0.62$), showing how suppliers are chosen was the most direct bearing on how credible and trustworthy the organization appear to their staffs and their stakeholders. Transparency follows closely with ($r = 0.55$), while compliance shows a moderate but still meaningful association with regression ($r = 0.48$)

For the independent variables, the correlations are moderate (ranging from 0.45 to 0.58). This shows that transparency, compliance, and fair supplier selection are related (as one would expect in ethical procurement), but they are not so highly overlapping that they measure exactly the same thing.

4.8 regression analysis and the tested hypotheses

Multiple linear regression is used to examine its unique and combined effects of transparency, compliance, and fair supplier selection on organizational reputation. Organizational reputation served as the dependent variable, while the three ethical procurement constructs were the independent variables. The analysis helps to give answers of the research questions and provides a direct test of the hypotheses of the study.

Table 4.8.1: Multiple Linear Regression Results Predicting Organizational Reputation

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std.	T_value	P_value	95% confidence interval		Significance
					low	up	
Transparency	0.241	0.103	2.33	0.023	0.034	0.447	*
Compliance	0.204	0.108	1.89	0.064	-0.012	0.421	marginal
Fair Supplier Selection	0.193	0.071	2.71	0.009	0.051	0.335	**
Constant	1.427	0.554	2.57	0.012	0.319	2.534	*

Tables 09. Multiple regression results

Source: Primary data, 2026

Model Summary

- Number of observations: 70
- $R^2 = 0.365$ (adjusted $R^2 = 0.335$)

- $F(3, 65) = 12.44$, where $p=0.000$
- This model explains 36.5% of their variance in organizational reputation.

Therefore the biggest mode is highly significance whereby; ($F = 12.44$, $p.>0.001$), meaning the three ethical procurement practices together explain a small portion of how staff perceive UNHCR’s reputation. Its adjust; R^2 of 0.335 shows about 33.5% variations are accounted for after considering the number of predictors and sample size a meaningful amount for an exploratory study in this setting.

To ensure the predictors, were not too closely related (which could make individual effects unreliable), variance inflation factors were checked.

4.8.2: variance inflation factors (VIF)

Variables	VIF	1/VIF
Fair Supplier Selection	1.5	0.665
Transparency	1.4	0.707
Compliance	1.1	0.926
Mean of VIF	1.33	

Table 10. VIF

Source: Primary data, 2026

All VIF values are low (well below 5, mean 1.33); confirming that they are not highly correlated and therefore, the three predictors are independent enough for confident interpretation.

4.8.3: Hypothesis Testing

H1: Increased transparency in procurement processes positively contributes to stakeholder’s trust (indicators by organizational reputation). Transparency is having a stronger and significant coefficient; ($B = 0.241$, and $p = 0.023$). Holding other factors constant, higher perceived transparency are linked to better reputation. Hypothesis 1 is supported.

H2: Higher rate of compliancy with ethical procurement behaviors positively strengthens stakeholders confidence and integrity (indicators by organizational reputation, where compliance shows a positive effect ($B = 0.204$), but the p-value is 0.064 just outside the conventional 0.05 level. The direction are as expected and the results are significantly close, but it does not reach the strict threshold her and therefore hypothesis 2 is partially supported.

H3: Fair supplier selection practices positively lead to donor satisfaction and overall organizational reputation. Fair supplier selection has the strongest and most significant effect ($B = 0.193$, $p = 0.009$). the most perceived fairness in supplier choices strongly indicates better organizational reputation and so hypothesis 3 is supported.

Therefore, transparency and fair supplier selection stood out as reliable predictors of organizational image in the humanitarian context, while compliance contributes positively but with less statistical certainty in this sample during the above tests.

4.9 summary of findings

This chapter got the information or data from 70 respondents at UN Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement with a response rate of 90.9%. Respondents were balanced by gender, mostly mid-career (1 to 6 years) with 64.2% and with educational levels at a rate of 79% having bachelors or higher.

Cronbach's alpha 0.537 to 0.667, was acceptable for an exploratory study given by high agreement and small sample, and the descriptive results showed strong positive perception of the staffs, compliance and transparency highest with a means of 4.29 and 4.28 respectively, fair supplier selection lower with a mean of 4.17, and reputation with mean of 4.14. New staffs rated everything lower because they had less knowledge about the internal policies of the organization, while longer-serving respondents were more positive.

Correlation analysis showed that there was moderate to strong positive links between ethical practices and reputation, with fair supplier selection having the strongest regression of ($r \approx 0.62$). Regression explained 36.5% of variance in reputation, ($p < 0.001$). Transparency, ($p = 0.023$), and

fair supplier selection ($p = 0.009$) were significant predictors, compliance has positive but marginal ($p = 0.064$).

Hypotheses:

- H1 (transparency) supported.
- H2 (compliance) partially supported.
- H3 (fair supplier selection) supported.
- Finally, transparency and fair supplier selection strongly predict reputation, supporting the RBV theory shows that ethical procurement builds credibility in humanitarian settings and compliance shows promise but needs further exploration within the process.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RESEACRH RECOMMENDMENTS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explain the main findings from chapter four relatively to existing literature of chapter two and the RBV theory. It draws conclusions on where ethical procurement practices influence organizational reputation at UN agency. It also presents practical impacts, recommendations for UNHCR and policy makers, acknowledges limitations, and suggests areas for future references.

5.1 Discussions

5.1.1 Demographical Profile and Response Rate

The response rate of 90.9% from my 70 questionnaires responded to reflects good engagement and support that the staffs had towards the reliability of the findings. This sample was fairly balanced by gender with 52.9% male, mostly the mid-careers with a rate of 64.2% and with 1–6 years of service, and highly educated 79% with bachelor or higher. This group had enough knowledge on procurement ethics in a humanitarian context in uganda.

5.1.2 Perceptions of Ethical Procurement and Reputation

Respondents perceived ethical procurement standards are positively the overall, with means above 4.1. Compliance and transparency ranked highest 4.29 and 4.28, fair supplier selection lower with 4.17 with more variation, and reputation strongly having 4.14. Newer staffs gave lower ratings, while longer-serving staff were more positive to a pattern that fits humanitarian settings where trust grows with experience.

5.1.3 Relationships and Predictive Power

Correlations were positively and significantly with a regression of ($r \approx 0.48-0.62$), and fair supplier selection showing the strongest linkage to reputation. Regression explained 36.5% of variance in reputation, transparency ($p = 0.023$) and fair supplier selection ($p = 0.009$) were significant predictors, compliance positively but marginal ($p = 0.064$) hencin supporting the Resource-Based View that states that ethical procurement builds intangible assets that enhance legitimacy and trust.

5.1.4 Hypotheses

H1 transparency was greatly supported through open processes that clearly build trust.

H2 compliance was partially supported and positive but has no definitive.

H3 fair supplier selection also supported fairness through strong signals of integrity.

5.2 In conclusion

This research is to evaluate how ethical procurement standards such as transparency, compliance, and fair supplier selection contribute to organizational reputation at UN Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. These findings indicate that these ethical practices do matter, whereby staffs' perceptions were generally very positive, with high mean scores across all constructs and a solid rating for image (4.14).

Transparency and fair supplier selection became the most consistent drivers of organizational reputation, supporting the idea that openness and equity in procurement provides a strong signals of integrity and trustworthiness. Compliance had a positive association but was only marginally significant, perhaps it is seen as a basic requirement rather than a standout feature in this context of procurement.

In summary, ethical procurement is not just about avoiding risks but shows a strategic way to reinforce UN's credibility in challenging refugee responses to the environment. The study provides evidence that assess these practices to pay offs in terms of how the organizations are viewed internally and externally within its context. The findings point out the several practical steps that could help strengthen ethical procurement standards and protect organizational image, and therefore the university, the organization, and students or future researchers are highly recommended as below;

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 For the University (Uganda Christian University and other similar institutions)

- The university should integrate more real-world case studies from humanitarian organizations into procurement and logistics management courses, because there is high high perceptions of compliance but greater variability around fairness which suggest that students would benefit from practical examples showing how transparency and supplier selection actually work in high pressure settings like refugee operations in the community.
- Encourage third year projects to include a small knowledge or survey on the components in scale. For instance this study showed that even with N=70, meaningful information can

emerge and it would give students the experience with primary data collection and analysis while building a body of local knowledge on ethics in procurement in the course.

- The university should also strengthen partnerships with humanitarian organizations for student internships placements or attachment in procurement units. Their exposure to real ethical dilemmas for example balancing speed in emergencies with fairness could help bridge the perception gap seen among newer staffs and prepare graduates better for such environments.

5.3.2 For the Organization (UNHCR Kiryandongo and similar humanitarian agencies)

- The organization should continue prioritizing open communication about procurement processes and standards especially around tendering and evaluation criteria. In this research, staffs already rated transparency highly, but keeping it visible for instance through short internal updates that could help sustain and reduce any lingering doubts within an organization.
- The organization should focus on deliberate effort on supplier selection, fair documentation criteria, training committees on bias awareness, and perhaps sharing knowledge for example fair awards. These areas indicates the most variability in perceptions and could be a quick win for reinforcing donor and partner trust.
- UNHCR should build a short module into induction programmers explaining how its procurement ethics work in practice, with real success stories of other individuals who might have worked there before, in this case newer staffs rated everything lower, and by coming up with this, it will help them understand the safeguards early that could shorten the adjustment period and build confidence faster.

5.3.3. For Students and Future Researchers

- The students or future researcher should build on this work by extending it to multiple UNHCR operations or other agencies for example WFP and LWF to see whether transparency and fairness remain the strongest drivers elsewhere.

- The students or future researchers should combine surveys with interviews or focus groups to dig deeper into why newer staffs are more critical and what specific experiences shift their perceptions over time.
- The researchers should include external voices like the donors, suppliers, or even local partners in future designs to check whether internal staffs view match outside impressions of organizational reputation and ethics.
- The researchers should test more additional ethical elements such as sustainability in procurement behaviors like anti-corruption training to see how they interact with the dimensions studied in the course.

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APPENDIX

1. QUESTIONNAIRES

Dear esteemed respondent,

I am **Karama Monica Kulang**, a student in third-year at UCU (Uganda Christian University) doing Bachelors of Procurement and Logistics. Carrying out a study on “**Ethical Procurement Practices and Their Role in Enhancing Organizational Reputation**”. You are selected to take part in this because of your experience in the organization. This information shall be maintained confidentiality and it shall be used strictly for the research purposes. Kindly answer all questions honestly.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) in the boxes provided.

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Highest Level of Education

Diploma

Bachelor’s Degree

Master’s Degree

Others (Specify) _____

3. Department.....

4. years of service in the company

> 1 year

1–3 years

4–6 years

Above 6 years

SECTION B; ETHICAL PROCUREMENT PRACTICES

Please tick (✓) Your level of agreement using the scale below;

Scale:

1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 Agree, 5 Strongly Agree

A. Transparency of Procurement

1. Procurement procedures in this organization are open and clearly understood by staffs.

1_ Strongly Disagree

2_ Disagree

3_ Neutral

4 _Agree

2. Information about procurement opportunities is clearly communicated to all potential suppliers.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5– Strongly Agree

3. Tender evaluation criteria is communicated before the procurement process begins.

1– Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3– Neutral

4– Agree

5– Strongly Agree

4. Staffs involved in procurement provide accurate and reliable information.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

5. Procurement decision is properly documented, accessible for review.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

B. Compliance with Procurement Policies and Regulations

1. The organization complies with national procurement laws and donor guidelines.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5- Strongly Agree

2. Staffs consistently follow internal procurement policies and procedures

.1Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3– Neutral

4 – Agree

5– Strongly Agree

4. Procurement practices are regularly audited or reviewed for compliance.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

4. Ethical standards are upheld during procurement processes.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

5. Cases of non-compliance are addressed promptly and appropriately

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

C. Fair Supplier Selection

1. All suppliers are given equal opportunity to compete for contracts.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

2. Supplier selection is based on merit rather than personal relationships or influence.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

3. Suppliers are evaluated using clear and objective criteria.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

4. Contracts are awarded without favoritism or bias.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

5. The organization promotes fair and competitive bidding practices.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

D. Policy Understanding and Implementation

1. I clearly understand the ethical procurement policies that guide my work.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

2. Ethical procurement guidelines are applied consistently across departments.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

3. There is a gap between written procurement policies and actual practice.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

4. Staff receive adequate training on ethical procurement standards.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

5. Ethical procurement procedures are practical and easy to implement.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

6. At times, I am unsure whether certain procurement decisions fully comply with ethical standards.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

SECTION C: ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTATION

1. The organization is widely recognized for its integrity.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

2. Stakeholders trust the organization's procurement practices.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

3. The organization maintains a positive public image.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

4. Ethical procurement practices contribute to improving the organization's reputation.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

5. The organizations consistently demonstrates professionalism in procurement activities.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

6. Donors have confidence in how procurement funds are managed.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

7. Ethical procurement practices positively influence donor satisfaction.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

8. Procurement integrity influences donors' willingness to continue funding the organization.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

9. Procurement-related challenges can negatively affect the organization's reputation.

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

APPENDIX 2. MAP OF UGANDA SHOWING KIRYANDONG DISTRICT AS CASE OF THE STUDY

