

## **EXPLORING THE TECHNIQUES THAT CAN ELIMINATE IRREGULAR EXPENDITURE ON PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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### **Abstract**

South Africa is confronted with critical challenges of colossal irregular expenditure on procurement and contract management in most government Departments. Non-compliance with the public procurement and contract management guidelines and non-compliance with the legislative frameworks governing public procurement and contract administration continue to critically affect the country, particularly the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Health. This paper explores and examines the techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. Mixed methods approaches were applied in the data collection and analysis procedures, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to explore and discover approaches or techniques that could assist in eliminating irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. The results of this study proved that clean audit, creation of a legal department for contracts, the establishment of positive staff ethics, improved staff attitude to work, in-service training, monitoring and evaluation, proper planning, timely review of contracts, financing capacity development, etc., are amongst the key factors to be considered in preventing and eliminating irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. Thus, this paper recommends that South Africa's National Treasury should articulate an innovative approach for compliance with public procurement processes, regulations, laws, and standards, which is crucial in ensuring the effective implementation of government policies. In addition, the national and provincial accounting officers should strengthen ethics, integrity, transparency, and accountability in efforts to eliminate irregular expenditure within the KZN Department of Health.

**Keywords:** Irregular expenditure, supply chain management, procurement management, public procurement, and government policies.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper explores the techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. Public procurement and contract management policies and guidelines in most government departments, including the KZN Department of Health have been experiencing critical irregularities or challenges aligned to human resources, appropriate skills, updated technologies, implementation of consequences management, and monitoring and evaluation (Ngcobo and Malefane, 2017). Issues like the unavailability of Supply Chain Management (SCM) staffing norms, shortage of staff, lack of supervision, shortage of skills, unavailability of technology, negligence, etc., are among the major factors that are fueling irregularities in non-compliance with public procurement and contract management guidelines. However, arguments have indicated that policies and

guidelines alone cannot prevent irregular expenditure (South Africa's Department of Health, 2019). Therefore, this paper explores and examines the techniques that can be used to prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure within the KZN Department of Health. The background to the government departments' expenditure in public procurement and contract management, the techniques to promote the best practice policies and guidelines in most government departments, as well as to prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure, etc., are examined in this paper. Materials, methods, findings, and discussions are also provided in this paper.

### **Background of irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health**

According to the report of South Africa's Department of Health (2019), the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Health received a qualified audit opinion for incurring irregular expenditure on procurement and contract management. The qualified audit outcomes were due to non-compliance with procurement and contract management practices. These irregularities were mostly detected in public Supply Chain Management (SCM), which is an enterprise that integrates a wide range of activities that can be overwhelming for the public as well as private sectors (Hyatt, 2016). SCM is a key system that government utilizes for the procurement of goods and services. The Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Health received undervaluation as a result of supply chain management standards not being met. Mnguni (2012) acknowledged that there are some existing challenges and deficiencies that hinder the appropriate implementation of procurement and contract management, which results in irregular expenditure. Furthermore, Mazibuko (2018) stated that public procurement is most exposed to irregularities and non-compliance with legislation. He further confirmed that the South African public sector is experiencing huge challenges in the administration of procurement practices, despite the provision of government policies and supply chain management codes of conduct (Mazibuko, 2018). However, the South African Constitution (1996) regulates and guarantees the best practice of contracts for goods or services, which must be done following a system that is equitable, transparent, competitive, and cost-effective (South Africa, Local Government, 2003). Unfortunately, there seems to be a continuing exhibition of unethical procurement practices in the country, as well as in the KZN Department of Health. Consequently, irregular expenditure on procurement management and non-compliance with the legislation governing public procurement come with a high cost to the government and the public as taxpayers. The Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Health is therefore one of the entities in South Africa that showed non-compliance with the procurement and contract management guidelines. Mnguni (2012) stated that the deficiencies that hinder the proper implementation of procurement management practices are caused by various factors. This paper examines the techniques that could prevent and eliminate factors that are causing irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health, as well as approaches that could improve compliance with procurement and contract management guidelines.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Weaknesses or irregularities in the procurement and contract management implementation processes are mostly found in public Supply Chain Management (SCM). Therefore, the review of various literature supported this study tailoring the techniques and approaches that can be used to alleviate the practice of procurement and contract management in the KZN Department of Health.

### 1. MATERIALS

#### 1.1 Theoretical perspectives on the Supply Chain Management

The concept of supply chain management is commonly described as a crucial system of managing the flow of goods and services within an organization by competitive bids or through sourcing (The Global Compact Network India, 2017 and the South African National Treasury, 2015). Felea, (2022) defined SCM as the automated flow of information, products, and finances. Most authors considered SCM as a process of planning, procuring, storing, utilizing, and disposing of goods. For example, Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss (2012) suggested that the purpose of SCM is to promote efficiency in the procurement process and that the value of procurement should be seen from the first stage till the last stage of public SCM. In addition, Bhardwaj (2020) proposed five basic components or stages in the practice of supply chain management, namely planning, sourcing, making, delivering, and returning.

- Planning as the first stage in the Supply Chain Management process allows SCM to get the details of all procurement requirements, which seems to be essential for the achievement of the long-term success of any project (Dent 2021). It involves quantifying, budgeting for, delivering goods and services at the right locations on time, and ensuring the appropriate quality (South Africa, National Treasury, 2020).
- Sourcing as the second stage in the process of SCM consists of determining or establishing the relationships between procurement officials with suppliers that supply the desired products or services. This stage ensures the discovery of reliable suppliers as well as choosing the most efficient methods for distribution, delivery, and payment of the products (Tutorial Point, 2021). In addition, sourcing involves a process of purchasing goods and services that includes evaluating and engaging suppliers to provide goods and services to the organization. Therefore, sourcing practitioners must ensure that goods and services are procured on time for delivery and that the organization's plan is put into action (Dent, 2021). In the context of South Africa, the National Treasury (2020) indicated that goods and services are sourced through the following means:
  - ❖ Petty cash purchases up to the transaction value specified in the Delegation of Authority;
  - ❖ Written quotations for the procurement of goods and services up to the transaction value specified in the Delegation of Authority;
  - ❖ Formal written price quotations for the procurement of goods and services up to the transaction value specified in the Delegation of Authority; and

- ❖ A competitive bidding process for the procurement of goods and services above the transaction value specified in the Delegation of Authority”.
- Making is the third stage in the process of SCM. It involves the making of merchandise in line with the end-users needs. This is a vital step in the Supply Chain Management process, where goods are designed, created, verified, packaged, and synchronized for delivery (Tutorials Point, 2021). It also includes an important section of the delivery chain, manufacturing output, and employee productivity.
- The delivery is the last stage of the supply chain, which ensure that product or service are finally delivered to the customer (Dent, 2021). According to Hyatti (2016), the stage of delivery comprises all of the steps from processing consumer questions to deciding on distribution techniques and transportation methods.

In the South African context, the National Treasury (2016) and Bhardwaj (2020) argued that the supply chain management must be analyzed to determine which stage requires improvement to shorten the time it takes to deliver the product to the end-users without sacrificing the quality of the product and service delivery. However, the stages of supply chain management that need to be analyzed for optimal supply chain results in South Africa or the KZN Department of health are illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Supply Chain Management analysis**



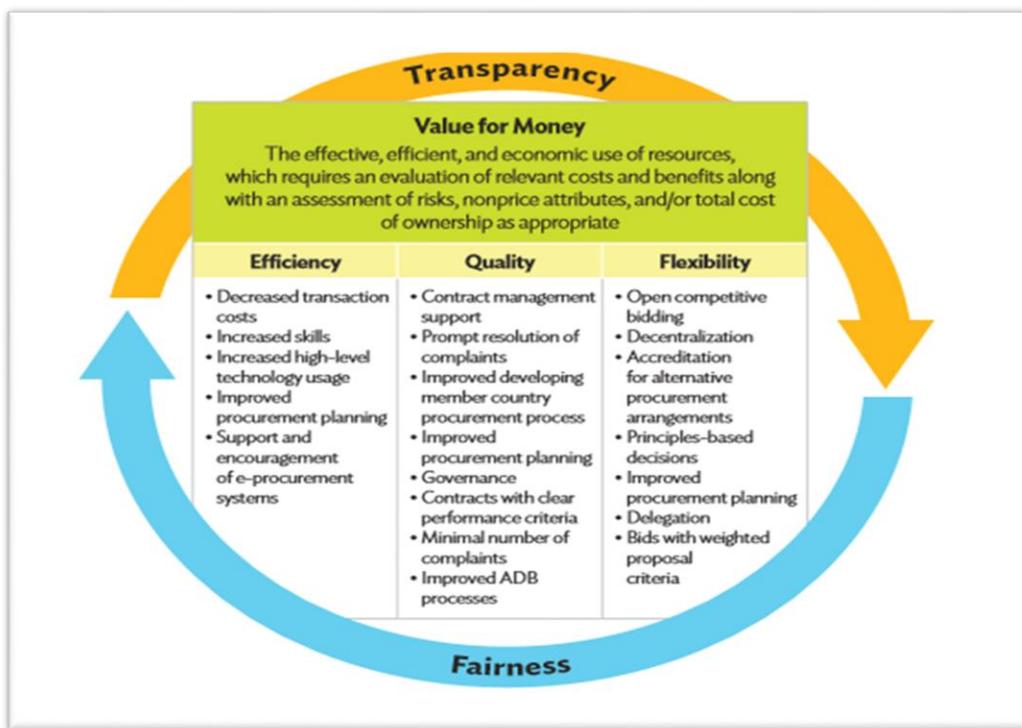
Source: Adapted from the South African National Treasury (2016)

Figure 1 demonstrates the stages of Supply Chain Management that are expected to provide optimal and value-for-money provisioning of SCM. Such as stated earlier, the SCM practice in the KZN Department of health has been experiencing irregularities and/or challenges in the procurement of goods and services. This implies that in many of the stages of this SCM, there has been a lack of transparency, accountability, ethical practices, and lack of best practices of procurement policies and guidelines. La Pointe (2017) argued that transparency in different stages of SCM can allow for making Supply Chain Management more efficient in all indicated stages.

Furthermore, La Pointe (2017) indicated that challenges in the implementation of SCM, including non-compliance with the relevant legislative frameworks, may affect/deteriorate the entire system. Therefore, in the case of the KZN Department of Health, all stages of SCM need to be analyzed continuously to ensure that it performs according to the required standards. Also,

inclusive efforts and actions will be necessary to identify and terminate factors causing non-compliance with procurement and contract management guidelines in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Health. Thus, transparency in the SCM process was suggested by the Asian Development Bank (2018) as key to compliance with procurement and contract management. Figure 2 illustrates components that backup transparency when adhering to fairness for procurement provisioning improvement.

**Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.. Transparency: Elements of Value-for-Money**



Source: Adapted from the Asian Development Bank (2018)

Figure 2 shows that transparency in compliance with procurement and contract management can engender effective, efficient, and economic use of resources, which requires an evaluation of relevant costs and benefits along with an assessment of risks, and/or total cost of ownership as appropriate (Asian Development Bank, 2018).

- Efficiency takes into consideration factors like decreased transaction costs, increased skills, increased high level of technology usage, improved procurement planning, support, and encouragement of the e-procurement system (Asian Development Bank, 2018).
- Quality implicates factors such as contract management support, prompt reduction of complaints, improved developing country's procurement process, improved

procurement planning, governance, contracts with clear performance criteria, minimal number of complaints, etc., (Asian Development Bank, 2018)

- Flexibility entails factors like open competitive bidding, decentralization, accreditation for alternative procurement arrangements, principles based-decisions, improvement procurement planning, delegation, and bids with weighted proposal criteria (Asian Development Bank, 2018)
- Techniques to prevent and eliminate irregularities in expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health may comprise factors including clean audit, measures to mitigate fraud and corruption, monitoring, and evaluation of office of the audit opinion, positive view on electronic procurement, etc., (South Africa, National Treasury, 2020 and La Pointe, 2017).

The consideration of the above description implies that argue that, more often, irregularities in public procurement occur because public institutions lack, transparency, fairness, strategic maturity, and critical issues, particularly around the way to demonstrate and evaluate its impact and success (Grandia and Meehen, 2017). Most studies have concluded that poor performance has been observed concerning procurement practices despite the set regulations and guidelines (Ivambi 2016). However, Majemula (2014) postulated that if public procurement could be done carefully, it could help to save the government's finance. Thus, the public sector should consider procurement actions/operations as one of the activities which should be carefully monitored and given particular importance.

## 2. METHODS

This paper explored the techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. The investigation targeted factors influencing non-compliance with procurement practices using the case study of the Head office supply chain management directorate and hospitals within eThekweni District in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province. Therefore, the key objective discussed in this paper was to explore the techniques that can eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. The Convergent parallel design assisted the researcher with fieldwork, as well as for the analysis of data collected. Venter (2017) briefly described the research design as a specific procedure chosen by the researcher for conducting the actual study. Creswell (2014) postulated that the research design is choosing a data collection approach and that the main constituent in the research framework is the specific research methods that involve the types of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies. T

herefore, Edmond and Kennedy (2017) defined the convergent parallel design as a methodology that comprises the simultaneous gathering of quantitative and qualitative data. According to Creswell (2014), Venter (2017) and Edmond and Kennedy (2017), this design allows the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data concurrently; analyze the two data sets separately, and mix the two databases by merging the results during interpretation.

Furthermore, this design (convergent parallel mixed methods) facilitated the researcher to compare the quantitative and qualitative findings which provided corroboration with the study (convergent parallel mixed methods). Razali et al. (2019) agreed that convergent parallel mixed methods have numerous advantages, including obtaining supplementary understanding from two databases; corroborating results from diverse methods; comparing various levels within a system; both qualitative and quantitative data have equal value for understanding the research problem, and providing quantitative and qualitative research skills. In data collection, mixed methods played a vital role in balancing the shortfalls of qualitative and quantitative methods. It provided more clarity and enhanced coverage (Barbour, 2014). However, in this study, the qualitative method was used in conjunction with the quantitative method to achieve the desired study objectives.

Venter et al. (2017) described the survey method of gathering information about a population and stated that there is a range of methods used to collect numerical data, including interview-based surveys, which involve personal face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews; and questionnaire-based surveys, which comprise mail/postal surveys, systematic observation, and web-based surveys.

This study adopted a web-based survey because the researcher wanted a system that was easy and convenient for both the researcher and respondents. The purposive sampling for qualitative data collection, as well as the web-based survey questionnaire for quantitative data, were adopted and applied to collect data. Therefore, the web-based survey questionnaires were sent to 380 participants, which included Finance managers, Supply Chain Management Supervisors, and Supply Chain Management Officers from various hospitals within eThekweni District. Furthermore, 20 interviews were planned to be conducted from different hospitals within the eThekweni District and Head Office Supply Chain Management component which involved Finance Directorate Managers and Chief Executive Officers.

Thus, 321 responses were collected from the web-based survey questionnaires and 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with the members of the eThekweni District. A total of 336 respondents participated in this study, out of 400 respondents that were targeted. The web-based survey was found to be the most effective way of collecting data for this study, given that the study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic where social distancing was enforced. Hence it helped the researcher to comply with Covid-19 regulations. This method of data collection, therefore, empowered the researcher to get feedback from a large number of participants, as it was intended.

According to Venter et al. (2017), this technique was relevant and appropriate for this study because participants were selected according to their pre-specified criteria based on the characteristics of the population (e.g., senior management, line managers, supervisors, and officers) working in Supply Chain Management components. Probability sampling and simple random sampling were used in this study. These techniques were selected because the researcher wanted to get participants from each site who were directly involved in procurement and contract management as she wanted to get suitable and relevant answers to the research problem. Questionnaires were formulated in a manner that enabled the respondents to express

their opinions (e.g.: 1 = Agree and 2 = Disagree), which were emailed to the participants with an attached invitation letter with instructions on what was required to be done during the survey submission as well dates. Furthermore, this study adopted the descriptive statistics approach for analyzing numerical data to understand the views of the details of the sample better.

The survey results were loaded onto the SPSS statistical software package (Version 25) and the necessary statistical tests were conducted. Graphs and charts were utilized to analyze and present the data. In addition, this study used thematic analysis as this method was found to be relevant to the study's aims and objectives to learn about people's experiences and views on the techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. The qualitative data generated from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed by the use of a thematic approach through NVIVO software.

A pilot testing was conducted on three finance managers and two SCM supervisors that were selected randomly and who were not part of the sample population. Pre-testing assisted in the checking of the formulation of questionnaires to ensure that instruments met the requirement for validity. In maintaining anonymity and confidentiality in this study, the questionnaires were distributed by the researcher electronically through emails directly to the selected participant's email address. The results of the study, including personal details regarding respondents' names, sex, age, profession, and rank, were anonymously processed for the study used only. However, the following abbreviations were applicable in this paper:

- **KZN:** Kwa-Zulu Natal
- **OECD:** Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- **SCM:** Supply Chain Management
- **SPSS:** Statistical Package for Social Science

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings and discussions in this paper are predominantly focused on the techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. A web-based survey was applied to gather quantitative data from 321 participants, while the qualitative data from the interview included 15 participants in the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) health department.

Quantitative data were analyzed by applying the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) IBM version 23, while the interview data were transcribed and analyzed using deductive and inductive approaches via NVivo 12 software. The results related to the techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Techniques explored to eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management**

| S/N   | Agreed | %  | Disagreed | %  | Total |
|-------|--------|----|-----------|----|-------|
| 7     | 54     | 64 | 30        | 36 | 84    |
| 8     | 57     | 68 | 27        | 22 | 84    |
| 16    | 71     | 85 | 13        | 15 | 84    |
| 17    | 63     | 75 | 21        | 25 | 84    |
| TOTAL | 245    | 73 | 91        | 27 | 336   |

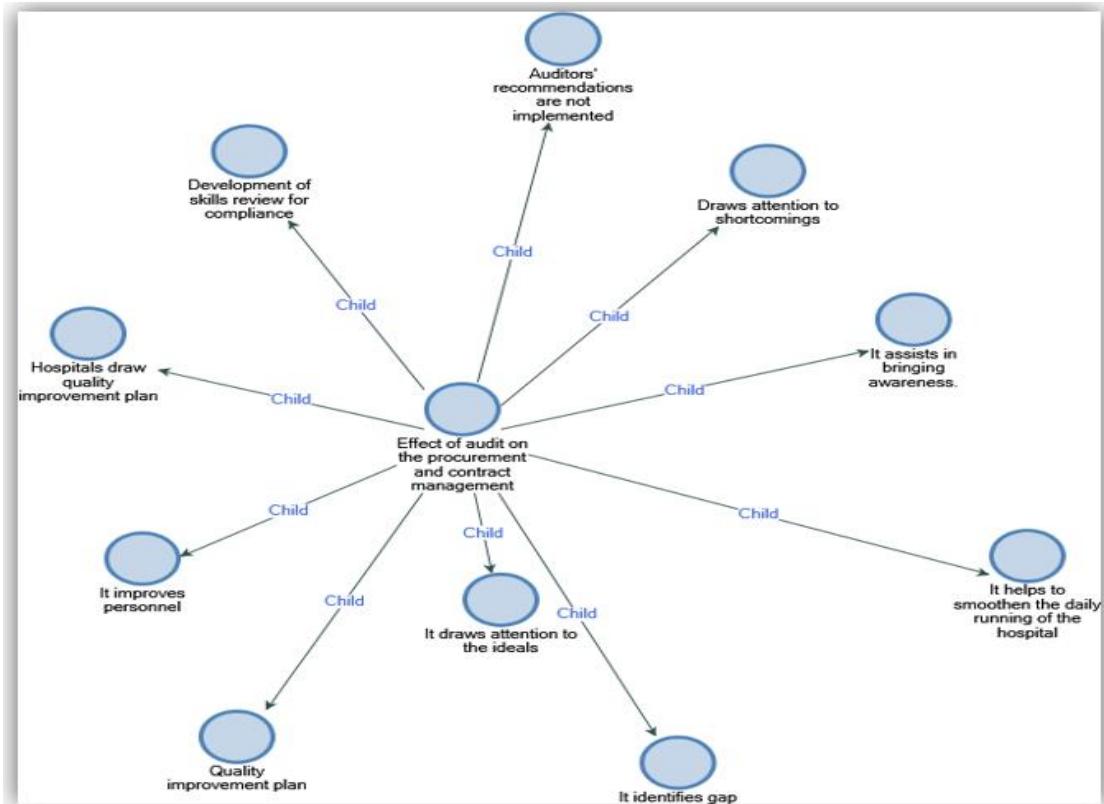
Source: Self-generated by the researcher

Table1 discloses the analysis of techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. Results reveal that 73% (245) of respondents agreed, while 27% (91) of them disagreed that division of labour, employment of supervisors in SCM units, the establishment of positive staff ethics, financing capacity development, and improved staff attitude to work, in-service training, monitoring and evaluation, and proper planning among the critical techniques, etc., can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management.

However, the interview results identified similar techniques that could be used to prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management in the KZN health department. Considering the above results, respondents were required as well to indicate the measures that could mitigate fraud and corruption in the procurement and contract management process. Most respondents agreed on the approval of payments by the finance manager and that all quotations should be verified and approved by senior management. Likewise, the appointment of quotation committees, checking of documents, checklists in place, filing of disclosure forms, and in-service vacancies monitored by the finance manager, installation of CCTV in SCM, etc, should be taken into consideration when trying to prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement and contract management.

Moreover, keys to the tender box should be kept by two different offices, making sure that procurement is approved by QAC based on procurement plan, random review of transactions, regular monitoring of access control, rotation of staff, SCM code of conduct, segregation of duties, signing of attendance registers, and signing of SCM code of conduct. Additionally, staff training and the procurement plan should be also aligned to the budget-making. Respondents also specified that a clear audit could have a positive effect on procurement and contract management. Figure 4 illustrates the effect of audits on procurement and contract management.

**Figure 4. Effect of clear audit on the procurement and contract management**



**Source:** Self-generated by the researcher

Figure 4 shows the effect of a clear audit on procurement and contract management. For example, a clear audit can assist in bringing awareness, promoting a quality improvement plan, supporting the development of skills review for compliance, identifying gaps, improving personnel, etc. Therefore, to ensure a clear audit to prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement and contract management in the KZN Department of Health, respondents identified fourteen techniques which comprise the creation of a legal department for contracts, division of labour, employment of supervisors in SCM units, the establishment of positive staff ethics, financing capacity development, improved staff attitude to work, in-service training, monitoring, and evaluation, proper planning, provide valid reasons for bypassing suppliers, recruitment of more staff for SCM, regular staff and transaction audit, setting up quotation committee, and timely review of contracts. In addition, the interviewees approved that a clean audit could be achieved through the employment of supervisors in SCM units who will be responsible for verifying work and providing in-service training to staff. Furthermore, in achieving a clean audit, Hartman (2017) stated that employees who lack motivation may stop caring about the quality of their work. He also suggested that managers need to take steps to address a lack of morale in their organizations. Additionally, investing in motivational factors,

such as giving incentives when due, is important in improving employees' work ethics and commitment. It is crucial to signify that employees' motivation and commitment, could harmoniously increase production activities (Al-Madi et al. 2017).

It was found in this study that fraud and corruption are the most factors affecting the best practice of procurement and contract management. Therefore, to mitigate fraud and corruption in the KZN Department of Health various techniques were suggested by the respondents. However, OECD (2016) attested that corruption is extensive in the public sector because consequence management is not effectively implemented. He further emphasized that the public sector is struggling to recover irregular expenditure because consequence management is not effectively implemented. Zitha et al. (2016) added that conflicts of interest, a lack of proper procurement planning, and not having a credible supplier database are the major contributory factors to fraud and corruption. Therefore, in mitigating fraud and corruption in the procurement processes, Dza et al. (2019) suggested that the authorities must also strengthen their monitoring systems to ensure that delinquents are apprehended and sanctioned accordingly. Arguments related to the techniques that need to be applied to prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement and contract management are as follows:

- **Monitoring and evaluation office on audit opinion:** Seven indices were raised as signs of the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation office. These include: the elimination of irregular expenditure, improving audit outcomes, it ensures reports submission, it improves compliance, monitoring and evaluation should take place at the institutional level, posts are frozen, and no structure is approved, and turnaround in auditing. In addition, respondents postulated that M&E is not needed in hospitals; the hospital needs SCM supervisors and managers to monitor and evaluate SCM transactions.
- **The implementation of internal control:** Internal control implementation is vital in guiding managers and employees on how the tasks should be performed and how to adhere to the established legislation (Ngcobo and Malefane, 2017). Respondents argued that it is evident that monitoring and evaluation are necessary, whether it is done by SCM supervisors, or Monitoring and Evaluation managers.
- **Electronic procurement in the KZN Department of Health:** Respondents identified fourteen benefits of e-procurement. These include assistance in alleviating the pressure on SCM, convenience for suppliers and staff, cost-effective, electronic monitoring of stock, safe storage space, safe time, less interaction with suppliers, less paperwork, minimizing risk, minimizing unnecessary delays, and procurement will be more effective. In addition, it could assist in mitigating irregular expenditure as it has less paperwork, it will eliminate the risk of fraud and corruption, and that information is easily accessible. Thus, Khan (2018) stated that there is a need to establish technical standards for information technology systems and computer software applications within public procurement. Ngobese (2018) added that the unavailability of procurement software is the main factor that hinders the achievement of efficient procurement provisioning. The OECD (2016) further added that the use of technology

can increase transparency, facilitate access to public tenders, and decrease direct interactions between procurement officials and companies. Finally, technology can facilitate detecting irregularities and corruption, such as bid-rigging schemes. This implies that electronic procurement could contribute to reducing challenges faced by the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Health. Online platforms (like Open Tenders) could allow citizens to search for government contracts and submit bids and facilitate outreach and competition among businesses.

## CONCLUSION

This paper explored and examined the techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on procurement management within the KZN Department of Health. Hyatti (2016) claimed that the supply chain comes to an end when the product or service is delivered to the customer. Therefore, one of the key stages in the delivery process consists of deciding on the distribution techniques and transportation methods that can prevent fraud and corruption, eliminate irregularities, or promote the best practice of expenditure on procurement and contract management, as well as promote compliance with procurement guidelines. Unfortunately, the KZN Department of Health has been experiencing various challenges contributing to non-compliance with procurement guidelines, which also caused perilous expenditure irregularities in procurement and contract management. Accordingly, one of the objectives of this study was to investigate the techniques that could prevent and eliminate irregular expenditure on public procurement and contract management within the KZN Department of Health.

This study found that the current SCM Skills are one of the critical issues that are contributing to fuel irregular expenditure on procurement and contract management within the KZN Department of Health. Respondents attested that computer skills, correct attitude, and work ethics, financial management skills, good organizational skills, knowledge of SOP and prescripts, project management skills, SCM skills, teamwork skills, time management skills, and willingness to explore new methods and streamline work are lacking within the KZN Department of Health. Therefore, the deficiency of these required skills was enumerated among the factors that are fueling irregular expenditure on public expenditure and contract management. Consequently, the deficiency of required skills has resulted in poor policy implementation, poor contact management, non-compliance with procurement guidelines, poor supervision, poor use of the internet for information dissemination, repeated mistakes, etc. Thus, this study revealed that one of the significant techniques that can prevent and eliminate irregularities in public procurement and contract management is “a clean audit” within the KZN Department of Health. In addition to the clean audit, respondents affirmed that the creation of a legal department for contracts, division of labour, employment of supervisors in SCM units, establishment of positive staff ethics, financing capacity development, improved staff attitude to work, in-service training, monitoring and evaluation, proper planning, provision of valid reasons for bypassing suppliers, recruitment of more staff for SCM, regular staff and transaction audit, setting up quotation committee, and timely review of contracts could prevent

and eliminate irregularities (fraud and corruption) on public procurement and contract management within the KZN Department of health.

However, several measures to prevent and eliminate irregularities, as well as to mitigate fraud and corruption were suggested by respondents. These include approving the appointment of quotation committees, in-service vacancies monitored by the finance manager, regular monitoring of access control, the procurement plan must be aligned to the budget-making, Installation of CCTV in SCM, filing of disclosure forms, checking of documents, signing of attendance registers, signing of SCM Code of Conduct, staff training, approval of payments by the finance manager, all quotations must be verified and approved by senior management, etc. Therefore, the effects of clean audits and appropriate monitoring and evaluation offices on audit opinion could result in preventing and eliminating irregular expenditure, improving audit outcomes ensuring quality reports submission, improving compliance, etc. Thus, the government of South Africa, as well as the KZN Department of Health will have to take drastic measures/actions that will promote a clean audit and encourage the development of required skills. Efforts and resources will be required to improve compliance with public procurement policies, guidelines, and contract management within the KZN Department of Health.

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