Factors Affecting the Implementation of E-Procurement for Government Sector in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: *Procurement is known as a substantial instrument in both public and private sector organizations. However, the manual procurement system creates considerable issues, and it can affect to the country. Therefore, the countries are tempted to implement the E- Government Procurement system because it helps to generate an income more effectively. E-procurement was built to reduce corruption and conspiracies, increase public accountability, and enable the purchase of goods and services more effective, efficient, and affordable. The main purpose of this study is to measure the relationship between E-GP implementation and technology, organizational and environmental factors. The population for this study included procurement divisions in Departments, State Managed Boards, Authorities, Commissions, Corporations, Bureaus, Institutes and Institutions, and Government Banks. Data were collected via a cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey. Relevant respondents were chosen from a sample of 162 firms using a convenient and random sampling techniques. This resulted in an overall response rate 43%. This study uses quantitative research methods to identify the variables affecting the adoption of e-procurement. All variables from technology, organizational and environmental context are positively correlated with the dependent variable of E-GP implementation. Results revealed that human capacity and awareness was the most important factor. This study suggests, for further researches to determine other independent factors which influence for electronic procurement implementation.*

Keywords: *Procurement, promise system, E-GP implementation*

1. Introduction

Modern economic growth and social progress have been driven by technological innovation and globalization in many regions of the world. Governments are utilizing modern technologies more and more to secure their people and maintain public safety (Kim & Kim, 2020). ICT (information communication technology) has been adopted by governments in both developed and developing nations to increase public efficiency, increase transparency, and encourage increased participation in civic affairs. As a result, the majority of the countries have grant public participation in government bidding (Prasteyo , 2019) processes by facilitating access to opportunities provided by these organizations, such as procurement processes (Asare & Prempeh, 2017).

The procurement is known as the process of acquiring goods and services for a firm (Premathilaka and Fernando, 2018). Latest supply chains have made procurement a key component as a competitive strategy for establishing and keeping strong connections. Over the decades, it has evolved and changed in many countries. Government procurement policies and procedures have previously undergone reviews in the past to improve efficiency and reduce the cost (Toroitich, et al.,2017). Mohammed (2017) stated that the governments frequently use the public procurement process to get consumers the basic goods and services they need. Better use of public resources and services is made

possible by efficient and accurate public procurement. Transparent and accountable procurement can increase a country's GDP (Gross Domestic Production), which has a significant impact on the expansion of the economy. Additionally, a crucial requirement for establishing a proper procurement system is effective public investment. When it comes to purchasing products and services, the government is the biggest purchasing agency in any nation. According to Mohammed (2017), the government of Sri Lanka is the most significant buyer in the country's domestic market. In 2015, the government of Sri Lanka spent around 597 billion rupees on public procurement, which is equivalent to 5.3% of the country's GDP. This is because the government is responsible for meeting the demands of its inhabitants. National Procurement Agency (NPA) published rules and procurement manual are Sri Lanka's most critical compliances for purchasing goods and services from the government. The government issued procurement rules in 2006, defining the procurement techniques it uses. According to Thai (2001), public procurement is a crucial role of the state that requires it to meet requirements for products, systems, and services in a timely way.

2. Literature Review

There were severe failures in public procurement in Sri Lanka under the different regimes, which cost billions of dollars and damaged the economy, ecology, and society of the country as a whole (Ekanayaka , 2015). With the existing manual procurement system in place, Sri Lanka's government procurement is now dealing with several weaknesses (Mohammed, 2017). Currently, there is a shortage of information that can be easily accessed about public procurement opportunities. It is essential of procuring entities that they announce tenders in the government Gazette as well as in media that are published nationwide. Manual procurement management methods have a number of limitations, but two of the most significant ones are that they need a lot of manpower and a lot of time. Due to the significant amount of human participation that is present during each stage of the procurement process. In most cases, the preparation of bids involves a significant amount of human and material resources, and this is particularly true for bids that are highly specialized. The manual procurement system has an effect on the suppliers as well since it requires a significant amount of time and effort to put up bids. In addition, there is a lack of transparency for the company's suppliers since all of the company's procurement operations take place inside. In Sri Lanka's procurement system, anti-competitive activities have also surfaced as an issue in recent years. Anti-competitive behaviors have a substantial effect on the escalation of procurement corruption. These behaviors include accepting unsolicited bids for big projects and modifying specifications to suit the supplier. Both of these practices are anti-competitive. In addition to that, Liyanage (2005) has investigated the procurement performance of a total of 64 tender boards, 32 of which were locally funded and 44 of which were foreign funded. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Survey Results of Sri Lanka Procurement Performances of Tender Boards

Progress of Tender Boards (CATB)	**Local Funded Tender Bards (32)**		**Foreign Funded Tender Boards (44)**	
	No. of Tenders	Percentage	No. of Tenders	Percentage
Completed as scheduled	11	34%	17	38%
Delayed from three months	21	66%	27	62%

Source: Liyanage (2005)

E-procurement (electronic procurement) which is a subset of e-commerce (electronic commerce) can be regarded as a primary component of e-government processes. It is responsible for the automation of a company's procurement of goods and services, with the goals of increasing transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, dematerialization, and competition through the activities of the procurement process (Gardenal (2013) as cited by Bandara 2020). Considering of these positive outcomes, e-procurement is still bieng used by very less amount of countries during the past decades (United Nations, 2013). Sri Lanka government sector organizations also lag in e-procurement implementation. Even Sri lanka government has implemented a Electronic governement procurment (E-GP) system named "promise" (https://www.promise.lk/), a very less number of public entities have been adopted this system in to their procurement departments.

Strategic factors heavily influence E-procurement adoption because E-technologies improve firm performance, increasing competitive advantage. the Internet has become an influential source of competitive advantages when integrated into firms' terms of strategies Tsuma & Kanda (2017). The advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) creates new opportunities for ent erprises all over the world, hastening rivalry among firms and professions. Despite the fact that effective communication is a vital element for the procurement and consultation process, the use of IT in public procurement in the Sri Lankan construction industry is not as prevalent as in other sectors, despite the that the other developed and developing countries are practicing and benefiting from it Amarapathy et al. (2013).

According to previous studies, many countries have encountered a variety of issues while attempting to implement electronic government procurement. Those studies revealed a variety factor may affect in order to adopt the E-GP system. Therefore, technological, organizational, and environmental aspects could have an impact on the adoption of E-GP, according to previous study articles. There is a considerable knowledge gap in identifying the relationship between the factors influencing the adoption of e procurement. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to measure the relationship between E-GP implementation and technology, organizational and environmental factors.

A. Key Fcators for Electronic Governement Procurement Implementation

Davila et al. (2003) conducted a study in North America using coefficient analysis to determine which companies are moving quickly into these technologies, how

experimentation is taking place to learn about the business opportunities that may emerge through these technologies, the risks and benefits associated with them, and the expected evolution of e-procurement technologies in the near future. The information was collected from a large number of managers who were active in e-procurement, both as users and as suppliers. According to the findings of this survey, just 34% of respondents had been active in any technology-related effort relating to E-Procurement for a period of one year or more. According to users of electronic procurement, just 15% of the supplier base is capable of delivering items over the internet. On the other hand, e-procurement software is acquiring a significant amount of acceptability (25%), and it is anticipated that it will continue to retain its dominant position in the near future. Bangladesh is a developing nation, and as such, it has undertaken research on examining the obstacles and implementation involved in implementing an electronic government procurement system. The information for this study was obtained from 217 government workers. When attempting to adopt an electronic procurement system, they were forced to deal with a number of obstacles since they lacked the necessary ICT infrastructure. The conclusions of the research indicate that just 9.3 lac lines are being distributed around the nation, despite the fact that the population of the country is 15.74 million. The population of the nation reveals that 0.58% of people make use of telephone lines, 0.3% of people have subscriptions to fixed-wired services, and 2.2% of people have subscriptions to mobile internet services (Liton & Habib, 2015) In governement organizations, there is a knowledge gap regarding the IT tools, apps, and procurement. In addition, the individuals have less competence in IT, and some of them have less information about procurement (Altayyar, 2017). A research carried by Arunga & Paul (2017) , they have collected information from respondents about the degree to which technical skills have influenced the implementation of e-government procurement in Kenya. According to the findings, the majority of respondents (33%) have strongly agreed with to a very great degree, 29 % of respondents agreed with to great extent, 26 % of respondents indicated that it was a moderate aspect, and 8 % of respondents agreed with very little extent. Implementing E-Government Procurement necessitates a strong link between educational outcomes and technical skills (Liton & Habib, 2015).

Gunasekaran & Ngai (2008) stated, human capacity and awareness are important factors in e-procurement adoption, top management must appreciate its advantages. Many managers don't grasp E-intangible Procurement's and strategic advantages. Many organization members vote against E-Procurement because of financial and short-term advantages

According to Premathilaka & Fernando (2018), suppliers must to be concerned about every development and problem pertaining to electronic procurement. When consumers recognize the benefits that the E-GP system brings to their activities, adaptation to the system is a lot simpler and quicker. The present standards and manuals for procurement in Sri Lanka are very difficult to comprehend and adhere to, according to the country's suppliers. E-GP systems have the potential to increase the availability of government guidelines and manuals to suppliers. These systems also have the potential to assist suppliers in reducing the likelihood that they will make procedural errors, which will ultimately reduce the likelihood that they will fail to comply with bid specifications. According to Prasetyo (2019) the top management aspect is a more significant component to consider when implementing E- GP systems to organisations, and it provides more options to achieve better results in procurement for the company.

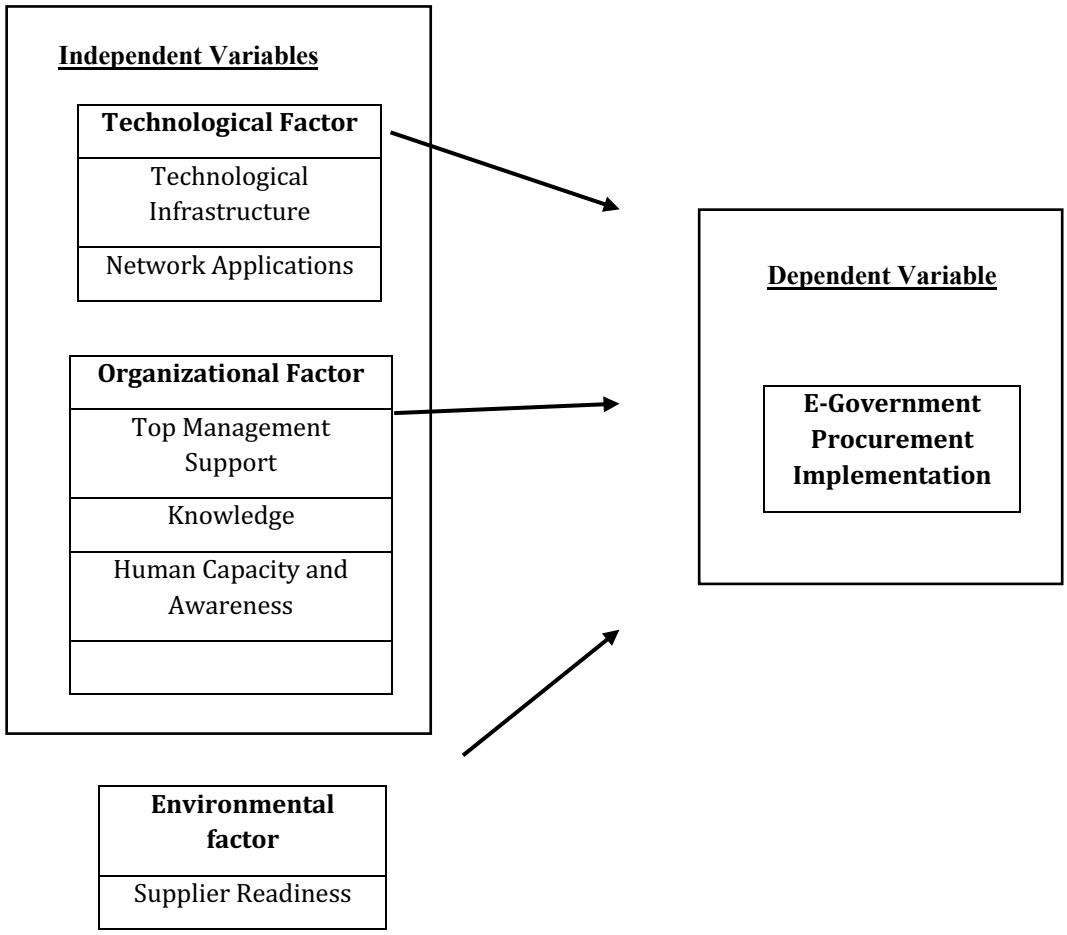

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors' compilation based on literature review

The above figure 1 represents the things that researchers should find throughout the research cycle, and it will be used to examine the effect of technical, organizational, and environmental aspects on the implementation of electronic government procurement. Technological, organizational, and environmental factors are the independent variables. The reason for use E-Government Procurement as a dependent variable is that implementing E-Procurement for the public sector varies depending on a variety of factors within independent variables like technology, organizational and environmental factors.

3. Main Hypothesis of the Study

There is a substantial and positive association between the factors found from the literature review and the adoption of e-procurement in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. The following are the hypotheses that may be drawn:

H0: There is no relationship between facilities of technology infrastructures and E-Government Procurement implementation.

H1: There is a positive relationship between facilities of technology infrastructures and E-Government procurement implementation.

H0: There is no relationship between facilities of network applications and E-Government Procurement implementation.

H2: There is a positive relationship between facilities of network applications and E-Government procurement implementation.

H0: There is no relationship between facilities of top management support and E-Government Procurement implementation.

H3: There is a positive relationship between facilities of top management Support and E-Government Procurement implementation.

H0: There is no relationship between facilities of knowledge and E-Government Procurement implementation.

H4: There is a positive relationship between facilities of knowledge and E-Government Procurement implementation.

H0: There is no relationship between facilities of human capacity and awareness and E-Government implementation.

H5: There is a positive relationship between facilities of human capacity and awareness and E-Government implementation.

H0: There is no relationship between facilities of supplier readiness and E-Government Procurement implementation.

H6: There is a positive relationship between facilities of supplier readiness and E-Government Procurement implementation.

4. Methadology

The quantitative research methodology was used for this study in order to measure the relationship between E-GP implementation and technology, organizational and environmental factors. For this research unit of analysis was "national level government organizations" and key informant was the departments which delegated for procurement activities. According to the government information center, the population of the study consisted of Departments, State Managed Boards, Authorities, Commissions, Corporations, Bureaus, Institutes and Institutions and Government Banks.

According to the Morgan's table, 162 organizations considered as the sample which is 61% of the population. This resulted in an overall response rate 43%. Convenience and random sampling were the sampling techniques which are used to select the sample of the study.

Data was collected from primary sources using questionnaires. Survey was consisted of two major sections. The purpose of the first section was to gather demographic information about the respondents and assess their awareness and implementation of Promise E-GP system into their organizations. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of thirty questions that were connected to one of four categories of e-procurement adaption factors: technology, organizational, environmental, and E-GP implementation. In order to build a scale for the items included in the second section of the questionnaire, a Likert scale with five points was used. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyze the data and correlation analysis were used. Pearson Correlation analysis was used to measure the strength of the relationship among variables. Reliability analysis measures internal consistency, how closely variables are connected.

5. Results of Discussion

A. Correlation Analysis

The significance and degree of relationship of the variables, as well as the percentage of variation in the dependent variable influenced by the independent variables, were all determined through the use of correlation analysis. Correlation is a statistical method for determining how closely two variables are linked. The results of correlation analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of correlations

Variables	E-GP Adoption	Infrastructure	Network Applications	Top Management Support	Knowledge	Human Capacity and Awareness	Supplier Readiness
E-GP Adoption	1	.436 (.000)	.483 (.000)	.535 (.000)	.515 (.000)	.716 (.000)	.562 (.000)
Infrastructure	.436 (.000)	1	.079 (.516)	.091 (.452)	.291 (.015)	.301 (.011)	.251 (.036)
Network Applications	.483 (.000)	.079 (.516)	1	.526 (.000)	.339 (.004)	.345 (.003)	.202 (.094)
Top Management Support	.535 (.000)	.091 (.452)	.526 (.000)	1	.275 (.021)	.535 (.000)	.195 (.106)
Knowledge	.515 (.000)	.291 (.015)	.339 (.004)	.275 (.021)	1	.496 (.000)	.456 (.000)
Human Capacity and Awareness	.716 (.000)	.301 (.011)	.345 (.003)	.535 (.000)	.496 (.000)	1	.551 (.000)
Supplier Readiness	.562 (.000)	.251 (.036)	.202 (.094)	.195 (.106)	.456 (.000)	.551 (.000)	1

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey data

According to the correlation summary that is shown in Table 2, all of the correlations that were assessed between the independent variables and the dependent variable were significant at the level 95% confidence level. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed at 5% significance level to determine the relationship between technological infrastructures and E-GP implementation. According to the findings there is a positive moderate correlation (r = 0.436) between technological infrastructures and E-GP implementation. Also, researchers found that the relationship was significant at 5% as (p=0.000 <0.05). The results indicated that there is a positive moderate correlation (r = 0.483) between network application and electronic government procurement implementation. in addition, the study observed that the correlation was significant at the 5% significance level as p = 0.000 <0.05.

From the organizational context, there is a positive moderate relationship (r=0.535) between top management support and E-GP implementation and the results indicated that as p = 0.000< 0.05, the correlation was significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed at 5% significance level to determine the relationship between knowledge and E-GP implementation. Based on the results, there is

a positive moderate relationship (r = 5.15) between knowledge and E-GP implementation. Researchers found that the correlation was significant at 5% significance level. Furthermore, as shown in table, there is a strong positive relationship (r=0.716) between human capacity and awareness and E-GP implementation, and it was significant at 5% significance level (p=0.000<0.05).

From the environmental context, The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed at 5% significance level to determine the relationship between supplier readiness and E-GP implementation. According to the results as shown in the table, there is a positive moderate relationship (r= 0.562) between supply readiness and electronic government procurement implementation and researchers identified that the correlation was significant at 5% significance level (p=0.000< 0.05).

6. Conclusion

This study provides a significant contribution to measure the relationship between E-GP implementation and technology, organizational and environmental factors. Based on the results, it is possible that officials who responsible for procurement activities are aware of the most significant factors that influence of electronic procurement system into their organizations. Accordingly, they can focus on particular factors which need to be developed in their organizations. However, based on the results of correlation analysis, researches can conclude that all independent variables (Technological Infrastructure, Network Application, Human Capacity and Awareness, Knowledge, Top Management and Supply Readiness) were important in implementing electronic government procurement system in public sector organizations. All variables from technology, organizational and environmental context are positively correlated with the dependent variable of E-GP implementation. in addition, results revealed that human capacity and awareness was the most important factor as shown in the table. Furthermore, based on the results supply readiness was the third most important factor for E-GP implementation as r= 0.562. According to the results, technological infrastructures were the least important factor for the implementation of E-GP.

This study suggests, for further researches to determine other independent factors which influence for electronic procurement implementation like government factors. In addition, since this study has focused on public sector organizations, future researches can conduct their assessment on private sector institutions. There are few limitations in this study. Researches could collect only 43% of respondents because of the prevailing situation in the country as some government officers were not found frequently in the offices. As this research is based on government sector, researches had to follow certain government rules and regulations when collecting data from officials.

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