



Philippine Public Procurement Challenges - Local Government Context: A Review

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Abstract

Procurement is one of the major events of the Government which is highly interconnected to the quality of public service delivery. It captures a significant amount of the budget allocation making it an interesting topic for a lot of critics including researchers. This review paper was conducted to identify and categorize the procurement challenges encountered by the implementing units in the Local Government of the Philippines. It also aimed to explore the relationship between these challenges and the unnecessary delays in the program and project implementation. Such unnecessary delays in the purchase of goods and services including infrastructure project implementation are inimical to public service delivery, hence, this article premised a well-informed conclusion and recommendation for the existing phenomena under review. A systematic review of related literature and content analysis was conducted to encapsulate the recurring themes resulting in procurement delays. Results showed that the legal framework, human resources, methods of procurement, and the procurement process itself are among the repetitive issues causing procurement challenges and delays.

Keywords

Legal framework, Human resource, Methods of procurement, Procurement process, Procurement challenges

INTRODUCTION

Public procurement is one of the crucial deliverables of the government, and it has been facing relatively significant challenges throughout its existence. These challenges are connected to varied aspects, including but not limited to, legal and regulatory frameworks, technological innovation, environmental considerations, organizational capacity, and available resources. The drawbacks in the procurement process resulting in delays to program implementation is not just a concern of the Philippine Government but also other countries across the globe. According to Thai (2016), procurement is a major activity in the government and its delays can be traced to dynamic market situations, the legislative structure, political interference, and social, economic, and environmental forces.

Davis (2014, p.88) as cited in the study of Ambe (2019), highlighted the money wasted due to procurement concerns. Many developing countries failed to facilitate effective procurement, monitor finances, and maximize the use of resources. Likewise, in the study of Dzuke and Naude (2015, p.3), scholars established the main problems in public procurement owing to; (1) ineffectual procedures (2) the procurement as an operative action instead of strategic undertaking, (3) accountability and transparency deficiency, (4) insufficient procurement capacities, (5) entrenched deception and corruption, and (6) lack of capability to implement fitting reforms.

In 2014, the Government Procurement Policy Board-Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO) organized a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the participation of various Philippine National Agencies. As a result of the FGD, it was

found that the causes of delay in the procurement can be inferred from “*Leadership Issues (15%), Poor Planning (20%), Peace and Order Situation (1%), Low Number of Bidder (11%), Numerous Motion for Reconsideration / Protest / Civil Cases & Injunctions (2%), Approval & Review Process (9%), Professionalization of the BAC and its Secretariat (20%), Delayed SARO (1%), Varying Interpretation of Rule (13%), Incompetence of Procurement Personnel (8%)*”.

As listed in the 2024 National Priority Plan of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the priority programs are “*education, health, youth and sports development, human settlements, science and culture, and economic development*”. Procurement is an essential tool in the realization of various programs. The timely and responsive procurement system remains a challenge despite its importance. Hence, this must be addressed.

This review is imperative as it was able to collate and analyze data pinpointing the difficult areas of local public procurement. This also forms part of the existing research which is causative to the useful information in the procurement sector.

METHODOLOGY

The authors used a systematic review and content analysis of relevant literature. Papaioannou, Sutton, and Booth (2016) emphasized the importance of employing systematic methods, such as devising effective search strategies using appropriate keywords and databases, to ensure a thorough, accurate, and relevant literature review. Qualitative content analysis is among the many research approaches to examine text data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The authors designed four steps to streamline the process of scrutinizing the related literature considering that public procurement was already massively reconsidered as an area of study. The first step was a referral to relevant procurement books available online; the second was an exploration of research articles within the last ten (10) years, the third was maximizing the use of website information of entities whose functions involve procurement matters, and the fourth is reference to policies, resolutions, circulars and enacted laws on procurement.

Definition of Terms

Legal Framework:	<i>Refers to the legal foundations of the procurement process.</i>
Human Resource:	<i>Refers to the individuals involved in the procurement process such as, but not limited to the Head of the Procuring Entity (HoPE), implementing units, Bids and Awards Committee, Technical Working Group, Secretariat, and Observers.</i>
Methods of Procurement:	<i>Refers to Competitive Bidding and Alternative Methods of Procurement as provided in the Government Procurement Reform Act.</i>
Procurement Process:	<i>Refers to the steps/stages involved in public procurement</i>
Procurement Challenges:	<i>Refers to the issues of public procurement.</i>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the review conducted, the authors conceptualize the following categories as the most contributory factors to the procurement challenges faced by the implementing units in the local government of the Philippines.

Legal Framework

The procurement system of the Philippines faced several challenges before 2002 such as fragmented regulations, absence of a central coordinating agency, lack of standardized procurement forms, transparency deficiencies, insufficient skills among the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) and the Technical Working Group (TWG) members, issues with conflict of interest, collusion, political intervention, insufficient avenues for complaints, ambiguous accountability measures, and limited opportunities for third-party oversight. As cited in the Country Procurement Assessment Report (2003, p. 10), the procurement system of the Philippines is defective with various regulations that are open to misuse and devaluing public funds (Suerte-Cortez, 2015). Subsequently, before the enactment of RA 9184, a study by Bustamante (2002) in the LGU-Island Garden City of Samal revealed that timeliness in the procurement process is considered a difficulty, especially after the pre-procurement phase. The internal system and policies created by the City Government were not adequate and effective. The author argued that the personnel involved including their attitude toward the entire procurement process were not taken into account, hence, jeopardizing the existing procurement system.

The Philippine Public Procurement System underwent various reforms until the enactment of the Government Procurement Republic Act (RA 9184), Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), Agency Procurement Compliance and Performance Indicators (APCPI), and the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS). However, eligibility requirements, standards for participation, procurement methods for effective spending, independent agencies to handle complaints, and fully operational PhilGEPS remained a challenge that needs to be addressed. Public procurement is necessary for the delivery of public service, proper governance, and viable economies aligned to growth. Governments approximately spend US\$9.5 trillion every year, making public procurement cater to at least twelve (12) to twenty (20) percent of a country's Gross Domestic Product (MAPS, 2023, p.4, 20).

The Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA) or the Republic Act 9184 took effect on January 26, 2003. It is “*An Act Providing for the Modernization, Standardization, and Regulation of the Procurement Activities of the*

Government and for Other Purposes”. Procurement transactions of all government agencies shall be administered by the ideologies of *transparency, competitive in nature, efficient process, responsibility, and public monitoring* (GPRA, 2003).

The 2016 Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (RIRR) as provided in Section 75 of RA 9184 was updated last July 3, 2023. The RIRR prescribes the essential procurement procedures that are aligned with the thrust of the Government of the Philippines (GoP) to espouse good governance by upholding the principles of transparency, competitiveness, streamlined process, accountability, and public monitoring. RA 9184 and 2016 Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184 (IRR), achieved fair improvement in standardizing procurement rules and procedures (MAPS, p.5, 2023).

Findings of the study of Castañeda et al. (2023) showed evidence that the GPRA including its IRR contributes to the delay in the bidding process. The author also highlighted in one of its indicators that the existing procurement law does not encourage small firms to expand because the Policy itself provides categorical participation of the contractors. This concerns the contractor’s license categorization and size ranges provided in PCAB Board Resolution No. 201 (2017).

Human Resource

Human resources are the implementing units of the procuring entity. As for the case of the Local Government of the Philippines, this refers to various departments such as but not limited to the Treasury, Accounting, Budget, Engineering, Agriculture, Health, Social Welfare, Tourism, Economic Enterprise, Employment Services Department, etc. The procurement organization is composed of the Head of the Procuring Entity (which refers to the Local Chief Executive of the Local Government Unit such as the Governor or Mayor) the Bids and Awards Committee, the Technical Working Group, the BAC Secretariat, and Observers, play an independent and interdependent part in the procurement process (Local Government Procurement Manual 3rd Edition, 2015). According to Section 11.2.3 of the 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184, the implementing unit shall also form part of the BAC Composition.

Human resources perform vital roles in the implementation of policies, delivery of service, decision-making, efficiency, compliance, talent management, and employee well-being, which is important to effectively carry the functions of the government (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2015). According to (Coff, 1997) as cited in the study of Choi, Ravichandran, and O'Connor (2018), human resources are significant organizational assets that do not easily diminish and are capable of decision-making, making human capital highly valuable, however, it also poses challenges in terms of human resource management.

Various researchers in the study of Ambe (2019) have regarded human factors as one of the dilemmas in the procurement process. The lack of sufficient competencies in the procurement legal framework, among the involved personnel including the Suppliers, exacerbated the procurement dilemmas of the procuring entity. The research study of Castañeda et al. (2023) suggests that proper collaboration among all the responsible personnel in the procurement process is sanctioned with accountability to avoid procurement delays. The formation of skilled procurement personnel reinforced by effective procurement organizations leads to quality production processes.

Methods of Procurement

The default mode of government procurement is Competitive Bidding (Section 10, GPRA), except as provided in Rule XVI - 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184 which provides the Alternative Methods of Procurement. The Procuring Entity may recourse to any of the alternative methods of procurement for economy and efficiency.

In the study of Querijero, Gumasing, Gutierrez, Ruelos, and Tingson (2023), the methods of procurement appeared to be one of the challenges encountered by the implementing units. The vagueness and the requirements of alternative methods of procurement which are specifically crafted for “specialized” procurement such as for research and development (Section 53.6 of GPRA) including Shopping B (Section 52.1b, GPRA), made the end-users hesitant to use the same, thus, leads to resorting in the default mode of procurement, which is competitive bidding. Accordingly, only one out of 44 Research and Development Institutes (RDIs) used Scientific, Scholarly, or Artistic Work, Exclusive Technology, and Media Services under Section 53.6 of the GPRA.

In a similar context in the study of Casiano et al. (2022), it was found that the majority of the suppliers who engaged in public bidding for one (1) to five (5) years, were hesitant to participate or likely refused to join public bidding, because of the complexities of the requirements of competitive bidding, low contract cost (ABC), and the delivery period schedule that is too limited.

Procurement Process

Public Procurement is a process by which the necessary items and services are purchased at the most favorable price such as goods, Consulting Services, Lease of Real Property, and contracting for Infrastructure Projects by the Procuring Entity (Section 5(n), RA 9184).

The procurement process starts upon identification of the need to purchase and concludes once the acquired item is used, sold, or the service is fulfilled, and the supplier or contractor receives the intended payment (PhilGEPS, 2024). From bid opening to contract award, the procurement process must be completed within three months. This period reflects the government's commitment to promptly execute procurement activities and ensure timely implementation of service delivery (GPRA, 2003).

Annex "C" of the 2016 RIRR of RA 9184 provides the recommended timelines for various procurement activities. For goods and services procurement, the suggested earliest time is 24 days, with a maximum duration of 105 to 119 days. For infrastructure projects, the earliest possible time is also 24 days, while the maximum period ranges from 110 to 124 days and/or 125 to 139 days. These timelines aim to streamline procurement processes, promoting efficiency and effectiveness in the utilization of resources (2016 Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9184, Annex "C"). The Philippines government procurement process includes (1) advertisement of opportunities, (2) invitation of eligible and reputable bidders, (3) bid evaluation, (4) contract award, (5) contract implementation, and (6) payment (PhilGEPS, 2024).

Governments are expected to provide good service delivery and safeguard the public interest through the conduct of an efficient and effective public procurement of goods, services, and works since this cater to a considerable portion of the people's money. However, public procurement is highly vulnerable to inefficiency, fraud, and corruption considering the amount of funds involved (OECD, 2019).

Public procurement is crucial to the project implementation process and must comply with established rules (Šostar & Marukić, 2017). Government procurement has garnered significant attention as a research area. However, the reformed system may not consistently produce the desired outcomes in terms of increased efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness in procurement processes despite extensive efforts aimed at procurement reform in certain countries (Williams-Elegbe, 2014). Despite extensive studies and recommendations, public procurement challenges persist with little improvement and are almost unchanged (Sandada & Kambarami, 2016).

The UNDP (2007) as cited in the International Handbook of Public Procurement by Thai (2017), viewed public procurement as a general method of obtaining goods, services, and civil works beginning with the assessment and selection of needs up until the full consumption of the acquired goods and services or the utilization of the infrastructure projects.

Baldi, Bottasso, Conti, and Piccardo (2016) posit that the procurement process is composed of several steps that require specific strategies to attain successful procurement results. Also, based on several authors as cited in the study of Kakwezi and Nyeko (2019), the link between Procurement Process, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Purchasing Performance is essential for the success of an organization. As highlighted, the efficiency and effectiveness of the procurement process affect procurement performance. The effectiveness of procurement undertakings, associated with operational efficiency, steers the procurement performance. Assessing procurement performance allows the establishment of parameters on areas of the organization that require improvement.

Procurement Challenges

Despite the existence of the Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA) for several years, a study by Navarro and Tanghal (2017) found that in 2014, total expenditures in the Philippines compared to the planned allocation was significantly lower by approximately Php302.7 billion. This underspending was largely attributed to government agencies with ineffectual fund disbursement and inefficient budget utilization. In 2015, the underspending remained substantial at Php328.3 billion although the difference between the allocation and expenditure narrowed slightly to 12.8%. One of the recurring factors for low disbursement outturn is "public procurement issues" due to difficulties in procurement timelines, delays in bidding, and incorrect technical specifications and costings.

Effective planning, precise execution, and thorough evaluation are crucial for achieving a timely and satisfactory result (Kassahun, 2021). Procurement activities of the Philippine Government Agencies shall only be undertaken if it is per the Annual Procurement Plan (APP) and the Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) (Section 6.2, 2016 RIRR of RA 9184).

Also, careful planning and capacity building are crucial for improved procurement processes (Tadesse, 2017). However, in the study of Querijero et al. (2023), results showed that the preparation of the Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) is considered the most difficult aspect because it involves both technical and financial components of the project which are integral factors of the process. The body agrees that most of the delays in the procurement system stem from flawed planning. Likewise, the study of Castañeda et al. (2023) showed that the research participants (PHilMechs' Bids and Awards Committee) consider defective planning as the primary cause of procurement delay.

According to PPDA (2005), as cited in the study of (Apiyo & Mburu, 2014), a procurement plan allows the procuring entity to establish data to maximize the use of appropriations before inviting prospective suppliers to provide the items or services needed. A procurement plan has various areas of consideration such as the value, nature, and type of procurement. The procuring entity must efficiently and efficiently utilize the resources by identifying procurement needs that are necessary and aligned with the objectives of the institution before even starting the procurement process. Procurement planning has a positive relationship between staff competence, management support, information communication (ICT) tools, and, budgeting procedures. An increase in staff competence, ICT, and the budgeting procedure creates a significant and positive impact on procurement planning. The support of Top Management is shown to be the major contributor to procurement planning success.

The Focus Group Discussion facilitated by the GPPB-TSO showed that procurement planning and professionalization of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) including the BAC-Secretariat garnered the highest percentage (20%) when it comes to reasons for procurement delays. Based on the APCPI of the government agencies that participated in the FGD, it showed that planning (50%) is the number one (1) reason for failed public bidding.

Public procurement delays can be traced to dynamic market situations, the legislative structure, political interference, and social, economic, and environmental forces. Unfavorable market conditions, such as limited availability of goods affect timely delivery. Inadequacies in the legal framework, especially in developing or transitional countries, may lead to bureaucratic delays. Political influence in the procurement process or budget allocation can also contribute to delays in decision-making and contract implementation. Strategies for economic stabilization, consideration of foreign policy, and environmental protection concerns may introduce difficulties and delays in the procurement process. These delays pose challenges for procurement professionals in achieving timely and optimal outcomes (Thai, 2017).

Human resource skill deficiencies, inadequate funding, and unfamiliarity with the policies are among the reasons for the delays in the procurement process, affecting procurement timelines and service delivery requirements. Addressing delays is central for improving efficiency and transparency in the procurement system, ultimately leading to better service delivery for the public (Dzuke & Naude, 2015).

Moreover, in the study conducted by Navarro and Tanghal (2017), several procurement challenges were also identified. Among the concerns in the procurement process were; (1) Principle in Awarding Contracts, referring to the phrase “most responsive bid”, which is ambiguous and lacking reference to quality. The 2016 IRR of RA 9184 requires the ‘lowest’ and ‘most responsive’ bid. Responsiveness is referring to the compliance to technical specifications. (2) Planning as a cause of Procurement Delays. Delays in the procurement arise from ineffective planning. For instance, the setting of the ABC. The ABC is the ceiling price for a procurement contract, hence, incorrect or low ABC discourages the suppliers from joining the public bidding. The absence of bidders, results in Failure of Bidding, thus, warrants the need to redo the procurement process from posting until the contract is implemented. Poor planning can be drawn back to the TWG and BAC. (3) Strengthening the BAC and the TWG. The poor planning can be gleaned from the lack of capacity of the BAC and TWG in the appropriate execution of the rules and regulations of RA 9184. This notwithstanding the procurement capacity building facilitated by the GPPB-TSO. Nonetheless, agencies (procuring entities) should also learn the procurement process themselves according to GPPB-TSO. (4) Procurement Law should Encourage Competition. The existing procurement law limits small businesses to grow bigger since they are only qualified to a certain government procurement section although, no provision in the procurement law explicitly restricts the competition. On another point, the GPPB-TSO also emphasized that competition is also regulated by various legislations. Even if bidders are contributory to the issues of procurement delays, the market is governed by laws that favor domestic preference. (5) Underspending in the Context of Procurement Planning was caused by poor planning due to budgetary concerns and lack of absorptive capacity by the procuring entity. Agencies submit their proposed budget to Congress, subject to approval as per request, or may be increased or decreased. In anticipation of limited approval, the Agencies overdo their annual plans with indicative projects. This became an issue in 2012 when agencies received beyond what was requested. The surplus in funds led to effective implementation due to the lack of absorptive capacity of the agency. For example, DSWD received 102 billion instead of its usual 1.5 to 2 billion, causing difficulties in the project implementation. Subsequently, the Department of Education received 17 billion instead of its usual 1.5 billion during a year of underspending. (6) RA 9184 is one of the best procurement laws. GPPB is the authorized policy-making body under RA 9184, however, investigations and enforcement of penalties are sanctioned to the Commission on Audit (COA) and the Ombudsman, resulting in challenges in coordination of ensuring effective procurement practices. Accordingly, procurement challenges are attributed to “human-borne difficulties”, and there's uncertainty among procuring entities because of the mixed signals from the COA and the Ombudsman. (7) Principle of Integrity in Procurement. There is a provision in the procurement law that indicts an act of collusion, however, those who are alleged must have the burden of proof beyond incidental. While 'whitelisting' of compliant bidders is seen as beneficial, its widespread use is not yet consistent.

Malihan (2023) in the study conducted in the City Government of Calamba, argued that the efficiency of public and private entities in reducing unnecessary purchases, streamlining infrastructure projects, and enhancing other relevant activities, contribute to economic standing. Accomplishing such efficiency comes with common difficulties in terms of procurement law compliance, concerns on appropriations, political interference, public scrutiny, management of suppliers, efficiency, transparency, as well as balance between local resources while adhering to international standards, and capacity development. Addressing these procurement challenges requires understanding the issue and going back to what is mandated by law.

In the study of Gabiana, Polinar, and Baquero (2023) in Cebu, among the procurement issues that emerged were uninterested bidders, unqualified bidders, and the availability of signatories. The unwillingness of the bidders to join public bidding is rooted in the ABC and technical specifications of the project. There is no assurance that they will be considered as the bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid despite all efforts spent to qualify. For the technical specifications, either the ABC is too low compared to the provided item specifications, or the item specifications are too high, while the quality of the item offered is inferior given the context of “lowest calculated and responsive bid”. As to the unqualified bidders, regardless of the efforts exerted by the latter, there is a high probability of non-compliance considering the tedious documentary requirements. On the availability of a signatory, the Governor as the Local Chief Executive and Head of the Procuring Entity (HoPE), takes ministerial responsibility to approve and sign procurement documents such as Notice of Award, Contract Agreement, and Notice to Proceed. With the unavailability of the HoPE, the delay in the contract implementation follows.

Moreover, in the study of Abrigo, Opiniano, Tam, Yee, and Estopace (2021) across national and local government agencies of the Philippines, a common procurement challenge is the limited number of bidders resulting in Failure of Bidding. Failure of bidding occurs because of the low ABC compared to the prevailing market price of the item. This becomes a concern because the procurement of medicines is limited by the price range set in the Drug Price Reference Index (DPRI) which is governed by the Department of Health. Another procurement concern is the geographical location of the procuring entity affecting the number of interested bidders. In addition, adjustments in the ABC can be made after two failed biddings, hence, contributing factor to the delay. There is also a question on the quality of medicines considering the award is based on the lowest cost offered. There are also medicines in the DPRI that cannot be found in the Philippine National Drug Formulary (PNDF). PNDF which is regularly updated by the Department of Health, is an official reference to ensure that medicines have a good quality and is commonly used by other health services in the country. Issues with prompt delivery of the Suppliers and availability of stocks are also part of the dilemma. Procurement personnel typically follow mandated public procurement rules even if it will result in procurement failure, thereby invalidating the opportunity from innovations. With these predicaments, there is a need to reassess the establishment of ABC for the procurement of drugs and medicines. Results of the study showed that DPRI compliance is associated with an extended procurement timeline and higher chances for failed procurement. According to the author, bulk procurement at the Provincial level is tantamount to lower prices of items.

Based on the study of Gabriel and Castillo (2020) on the Transparency and Accountability Practices of the Local Government Units in Cabanatuan City, Palayan City, Bongabon, Gabaldon, General Natividad, Laur, and Sta. Rosa, results showed that procurement is the leading issue when it comes to accountability.

Likewise, the study of Ratunil (2015) in DepEd, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, and Region 10, showed that 76% of the respondents are aware of the GPRA. However, a considerable percentage of 58.82% of the respondents agreed that the delay in the procurement procedure is attributable to the procurement law itself. All respondents agreed that procurement law training will address the issue.

The study of Si (2017) in Iloilo City, suggests that trainings and seminars are essential to advance the knowledge and skills of personnel involved in the procurement system. The respondents posit that awareness of the procurement procedures reduces errors, hastens the process, and increases the likelihood of compliance with procurement law. The factors causing procurement delays are related to the lack of expertise in the preparation of documentary requirements, personnel incompetency, and lack of proper coordination within the government agency. The employment status and length of service affect the familiarity of the procurement process. The procurement system in the agency has a significant impact on the accomplishment of the transaction. The author suggested that the concerned government agency must enhance the procurement capacity of the personnel through the intensification of relevant training.

Moreover, Dagohoy, Salvatierra, Constantino, Matudan, and Malang (2023) in assessing the level of awareness and challenges of the (10) Government Agencies in Manila found that procurement personnel are commonly aware of RA 9184. The respondents are “fully aware” of procurement planning and have a good level of awareness of the use of electronic procurement, contrary to the capacity in the preparation of procurement-related documents. The employment period of the respondents is also connected to the level of procurement process awareness. The substantial count of the respondents has no major difficulties in procurement practice, however, insufficient knowledge and skills, difficulty in setting technical specifications, lack of bidders, and failure of bidding are highlighted procurement issues.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical principle of this study is anchored on the Government Procurement Reform Act (or RA 9184) providing the modernized, standardized, and regulated procurement process for Philippine government agencies.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework provides the cause why the research is conducted. “*The conceptual framework (1) describes the state of known knowledge, usually through a literature review; (2) identifies gaps in our understanding of a phenomenon or problem; and (3) outlines the methodological underpinnings of the research project*”. It is made to answer 2 questions: “*Why is this research important?*” and “*What contributions might these finding*” (Varpio, Paradis, Uijtdehaage, & Young, 2020). It is a research tool of the study that allows the development of an understanding of the phenomenon and how it can be communicated.

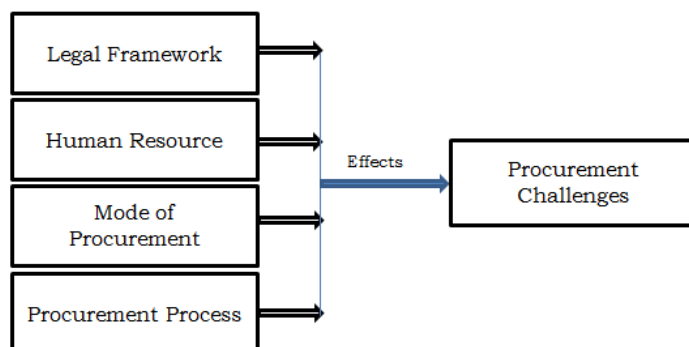


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The literature suggests that while the government continues to create actions to optimize the value of people's money, the procurement challenges also evolve with it. The issues on public procurement on the global, national, and local scale appear to be similar and repetitive in nature. This review allowed the author to categorize various factors affecting procurement challenges and concludes that there is a delay in the procurement process in the Government of the Philippines. Results showed that the legal framework, human resources, methods of procurement, and the procurement process itself are the pressing factors in the procurement challenges of the local implementing units. While the authors were able to categorize the procurement challenges, it can be inferred from the review that the implementing units (human resources) have the primary control over these challenges among others. The lack of capacity of the procurement personnel is directly connected to the ineffective planning, creating a domino effect on other areas of the procurement process.

The GPRA provided the timeline of the procurement process. The three-month period encompasses the timeline of the "necessary delay" in acquiring goods and services, including civil works until payment is made to the Supplier/Contractor. The procurement challenges negate the established procurement schedule and a successful procurement undertaking. Hence, the authors recommend the following:

- Creation of an organic Procurement Management Office in every local government, which shall be the channel for knowledge, skills, and capacity building of personnel involved in the public procurement process.
- The GPPB may craft additional procurement methods more suited to local government units geographically situated far from the source.
- Establishing a Price database in PhilGEPS or GPPB website as a reference for a reasonable Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for supplies that are regularly procured.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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