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Research Article

Level of Awareness and Challenges in Republic Act 9184 Procurement Procedures: A Basis for Training and Internal Policy Development

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ABSTRACT

End-users, who act as the origin of all procurement requests, are responsible for providing technical specifications, scope of work, and terms of reference, conducting a market survey, recommending the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), providing technical advice, assisting in the preparation of bidding documents, and attending all stages of the procurement. This study aims to evaluate two essential aspects related to the execution of procurement activities: the level of knowledge and understanding among end-users and the difficulties they encounter while conducting procurement activities.

This research used a mixed-methods approach, involving surveys and interviews, to collect data about the awareness levels and difficulties encountered by the participants regarding RA 9184 procurement procedures. In research, "mixed method" refers to a methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques in a single study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a research issue by harnessing the advantages of both data types.

The survey assessed respondents' knowledge of various procurement processes, revealing that they generally have good awareness. Procurement planning was well understood, while document preparation and electronic procurement had slightly lower but still decent awareness levels. Statistical analysis, including Pearson correlation and p-values, showed that awareness was significantly related to years of service in certain procurement aspects but not in post-qualification and awards. Respondents reported occasional difficulties, with the majority having no major issues. However, challenges in areas like canvassing, market study, and document preparation were identified, indicating the need for adjustments or

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assistance. Other difficulties included a lack of training, technical specification preparation, supplier availability, and failed bidding.

In conclusion, policymakers should implement clear procurement request guidelines following RA 9184. These guidelines should specify procedures and required documents, reducing delays and inefficiencies and saving time and resources. Additionally, issuing agency memoranda designating specific End-Users fosters coordination. It serves as a direct point of contact with the BAC Secretariat, ensuring informed Project Management Officers (PMOs) have access to guidance and support. The establishment of a dedicated committee for updating End-Users on specifications and providing annual GPPB-recognized training, which ensures alignment with changing requirements, market conditions, and legal compliance, enhancing procurement efficiency and expertise, should also be imposed.

Keywords: BAC, Challenges, End-users, Level of awareness, Procurement process, RA 9184

Introduction

Public procurement plays a crucial role in how the government uses public funds to acquire the necessary goods and services and works on public programs and projects. This process involves various stages, including government agencies estimating their annual needs, planning for procurement based on budget allocations, and ultimately carrying out the procurement plans (Khan, 2018). According to Zaman (2011), many factors need to be in place for a procurement process to work smoothly and deliver desirable results. However, to prompt a successful procurement management system, it is essential to embrace changes in technology, personnel, and mindset. In 2016, the World Bank released its Procurement Framework, which includes four key points: a) a thorough analysis of a project's needs and potential risks using a Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD); b) ensuring that there is good value for the resources invested; c) addressing any concerns or complaints related to the procurement process; and d) effective management of contracts for high-value and high-risk procurements.

According to the 2003 Country Procurement Assessment Report, the public procurement system in the Philippines is dysfunctional. It is characterized by multiple laws, rules, and regulations that, while adhering to the principles of competition and transparency, are

inefficient and prone to abuse. It also contributes to lowering public funds' value for money.

In a report made by Bombay (2012), despite significant advancements in implementing the system within the Philippine Government, numerous challenges persist and new concerns continue to arise. These challenges encompass: a) limited IT infrastructure and internet access for both buyers and suppliers, b) ongoing reluctance to incorporate PhilGEPS into agency procurement processes, c) Problems related to integration and compatibility, d) the capacity of PhilGEPS to provide training to an expanding user base, e) procurement policy issues affecting the consistent use of PhilGEPS, f) a seeming lack of awareness among both buyers and suppliers regarding the system, g) adherence of buyers to PhilGEPS rules and procedures, h) the organization's ability to adapt to new demands from its users, and i) many of these issues are intricate and will require substantial time and resources to find effective solutions.

The updated rules and regulations from 2016, also known as the IRR, have been introduced under Section 75 of Republic Act No. 9184. These rules are established to define the essential guidelines for modernizing, standardizing, and overseeing the procurement processes carried out by the Government of the Philippines (GoP). Thus, every government agency in the Philippines is mandated to follow

through with the procurement process as prescribed by the above-mentioned law. Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA) of 2003, was enacted as a result of a reform process in the public procurement system. The successful passing of a significant procurement reform law in the realm of Philippine politics is a notable accomplishment. However, the real challenge lies in ensuring this law is effectively enforced, which has historically been a weak point in Philippine legislative efforts (Campos & Syquia, 2006). According to Henke and Martin (1989), in light of the evolving landscape in procurement, it is essential for procurement professionals to refresh their current skill set and embrace new viewpoints and capabilities; this way, they can actively contribute to their organizations' achievements.

The Act also mandates the use of streamlined procurement processes and monitoring of government procurement activities by the public. More importantly, the GPRA created the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) as the central policy and monitoring body with the following functions: a) protect national interest in all matters affecting public procurement, having due regard to the country's regional and international obligations; b) formulate and amend, whenever necessary, the implementing rules and regulations and the corresponding standard forms for procurement; c) ensure that Procuring Entities regularly conduct procurement training programs and prepare a Procurement Operations Manual for all offices and agencies of Government; and e) conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the Government Procurement Reform Act and recommend any amendments thereto, as may be necessary. In addition, the GPPB has absorbed all the powers, functions, and responsibilities of the Procurement Policy Board that was created under Executive Order (EO) 359, Series of 1989.

According to Thai (2009), given that the procurement process can be time-consuming, it is strongly recommended that planning commence as soon as departments identify their needs to ensure timely implementation by forming a team that involves individuals responsible for key aspects of the procurement

process. This also includes collaborating with and gaining the agreement of user departments in the planning phase. Furthermore, consulting with requirements and logistics personnel who determine product specifications, quality, and delivery needs is essential. Electronic procurement, alternatively referred to as e-procurement or supplier exchange, involves the online requisition, ordering, and purchase of goods and services. In contrast to e-commerce, e-procurement operates within a supplier's closed system, accessible exclusively to registered users. E-procurement streamlines interactions between approved suppliers and customers, enabling processes like bidding and purchase orders (Awati et al., 2021).

The procurement process will initiate once the user department prepares and transmits a request to the central procurement office. This action ensures that the procurement official receives the request with the essential information and approvals needed to initiate the procurement (Bolton, 2007; Thai, 2009; Kovacs, 2004). The procurement officials are responsible for preserving the integrity of the evaluation criteria when choosing suppliers. The user department and its procurement personnel should acknowledge that each situation may vary, and the evaluation process should be customized to meet the specific needs (Thai, 2009; 2007). It was also discussed that the procurement official should once again assess the exact needs and specifications to determine the approach that will deliver the greatest value. The most suitable and frequently used selection techniques include choosing based on the lowest cost and choosing based on the most highly rated acceptable proposal within a pre-determined maximum budget.

The GPRA likewise provided for the creation of the GPPB Technical Support Office (TSO), which provides technical and administrative support to the GPPB, in accordance with Section 63.2 of the 2016 Revised IRR. The GPPB-TSO and anti-corruption provisions developed standard bidding documents and generic procurement manuals were incorporated in the law, including provisions for sanctions and penalties for non-compliance with the rules and guidelines. To enhance transparency in government procurement processes, the law

also required the invitation of observers from the Commission on Audit, civil society or professional organizations, and non-government organizations to sit in procurement proceedings conducted by government agencies. The GPPB-TSO also embarked on a comprehensive training program to educate, professionalize, and improve the skills of government procurement practitioners.

Thai (2009; 2007) continued that opting for the lowest evaluated price alone may not be cost-effective if there is a significant risk of subsequent issues like default, delays, or unsatisfactory performance. Instead, procurement experts may choose to award contracts only to companies that have actively proven their responsibility and, when required, the responsibility of subcontractors. In 2013, guidelines for the procurement of goods, works, and services (other than consultancy services) funded by a loan or a cash advance from the West African Development Bank (BOAD) contained other methods of procurement that may be used. Such methods of procurement are: a) limited international competitive bidding; b) local competitive bidding; c) shopping of suppliers; d) framework agreements; e) procedures applicable to standing offer contracts; f) procedures applicable to client-based contracts; g) direct labor delivery; h) procurement agents and representatives of contracting authorities; i) inspection and certification services; j) procurement under loans granted to intermediary finance institutions or agencies; k) procurement under public-private partnerships (PPP); l) procurement financed through loans guaranteed by the bank; and m) community participation in the procurement process.

In order to effectively carry out procurement within provincial departments and the public sector, the National Treasury of Ghana provided assistance through the creation of suitable training materials for government departments, municipalities, and municipal entities. Sheoraj (2007) noted that it has been recognized that a lack of skills and capacity represents the primary obstacle to the success of public procurement. States that insufficient capacity and knowledge in managing procurement procedures have resulted in poor governance (Thai, 2007). Raymond (2008) affirmed

that ethics constitutes a fundamental principle in government procurement and that insufficient knowledge and information among procurement officials can lead to significant repercussions in public procurement, potentially resulting in violations of codes of conduct.

Despite the efforts to improve government procurement, it continues to face significant challenges, such as not following the rules, a lack of clear procurement policies, slow processes filled with red tape, spending more than necessary, a need for greater transparency and accountability, the ongoing battle against waste and corruption, addressing unfair practices in evaluating and awarding contracts, and inadequate training for procurement officers, especially in technical areas. These are some of the problems that contribute to the inefficiencies in the procurement function within government entities (Gutierrez et al. 2019). Transparency plays a crucial role in the context of a public procurement process, emphasizing the importance of openness and accessibility in procurement procedures (Smith-Deighton, 2004). It is a fundamental element in ensuring accountability and reducing corruption. It has become a prominent feature in countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It is closely associated with the growing emphasis on governance, given that transparency is considered a central value in governance.

Another important breakthrough in the Government Procurement Reform Act is the provision mandating all government agencies to utilize the Government Electronic Procurement System (now the PhilGEPS, <http://philgeps.gov.ph>) as the single portal that shall serve as the primary source of information on all government procurement, as prescribed in Section 8 of the 2016 Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9184. The procurement process across all government agencies, from all branches of government to local government units and public schools and universities, now involves announcing and advertising all procurement opportunities, inviting qualified parties to bid, evaluating the bids, awarding the contracts, monitoring the delivery and performance, and payment. The whole

process is recorded and posted electronically for others to see.

A closer look at these challenges will be beneficial in understanding what needs to be improved in how government entities handle the procurement process. It can shed light on why these problems occur and, more importantly, how we can reduce them. This, in turn, can clear the path for a more effective execution of the Act through policy implementation or training.

Methodology

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews, to gather data on the level of awareness and challenges faced by end-users regarding RA 9184 procurement procedures. The term "mixed method" in research typically refers to a research approach known as "mixed methods research." Mixed methods research is a methodology that combines both qualitative and quantitative research techniques within a single study or research project. This approach is employed to provide a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the collected data by leveraging the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data. With this method of research, the researchers will also identify and come up with a development plan to address the gaps in the level of awareness and challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of RA 9184 procurement procedures.

The researchers used purposive sampling on the selected ten government agencies in Metro Manila. Each agency comprises 10% of the total sample size. Also, the researchers will utilize the validated, self-made survey questionnaire. The data was collected using the Google Forms survey tool and a hard-copy survey questionnaire. Respondents received clear and comprehensive instructions and explanations of the study's objectives and data collection process. The respondents were also assured of the confidentiality of the data they provided. The questionnaires formulated by the researchers used in this study were distributed through a courier system, e-mail, and other social networking sites like Facebook Messenger and Viber, while others were hand-carried.

The first part of the questionnaire will contain questions about the personal information of the respondents. The second part contained a structured questionnaire to determine the level of awareness of RA 9184 procurement procedures, which contains thirty-four (34) items that were measured by a response on a 5-point Likert scale in awareness, ranging from one (1) fully not aware to five (5) fully aware. Lastly, the third part is developed to determine the challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing RA 9184 procurement procedures.

Five (5) experts in the field of RA 9184 procurement procedures, which includes two (2) Bid and Awards committee members, two (2) experienced end-users, and one (1) third-party consultant, extensively validated the questionnaire. The researchers ran a pilot test and used Cronbach's Alpha to analyze the results. Ultimately, the expert's suggestions were incorporated into the questionnaire, resulting in the reliability test result being 0.9312 with a verbal interpretation of "very reliable."

In this study, the researchers employed descriptive statistics using Jamovi software to determine the frequency and percentage of the demographic profile; the standard deviation and weighted mean were calculated to determine the verbal interpretation of the level of awareness in RA 9184. Furthermore, Pearson Correlation was used to determine if there is a significant relationship between the duration of service and the level of awareness of RA 9184 procurement procedures among the respondents.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 demonstrates the demographic classifications of the respondents from randomly selected government agencies whose procurement process is under Republic Act 9184, also known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. The researchers covered ten (10) selected government agencies, each with ten (10) respondents, for a total of 100 respondents (100%). The respondents were all government employees whose ages ranged from **31 to 60 years**, with the highest frequency of seventy-eight (78), at 78% out of 30% ages **below 30 years old** and 3% of ages

61 years and above, which comprised both males (46%) and females (54%) who were determined to be the end-users or the requesting party. The majority of the respondents in terms of duration of service were from **5 years below** and **6-10 years** in service, with the most

frequency distribution of twenty-nine (29) and a percentage of 29%. Following are the **11-15 years** in service at 14%, the **16-20 years** at 13%, and 6% both from the **21-25 years** and **31 years and above** in service.

Demographic Profile

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents (n=100)

Classification/s	Frequency	Percentage
Selected Government Agency		
Agency 1	10	10%
Agency 2	10	10%
Agency 3	10	10%
Agency 4	10	10%
Agency 5	10	10%
Agency 6	10	10%
Agency 7	10	10%
Agency 8	10	10%
Agency 9	10	10%
Agency 10	10	10%
Age		
Below 30 years old	19	19%
31 - 60 years	78	78%
61 years and above	3	3%
Gender		
Female	54	54%
Male	46	46%
Duration of Service		
5 years below	29	29%
6 - 10 years	29	29%
11 - 15 years	14	14%
16 - 20 years	13	13%
21 - 25 years	6	6%
26 - 30 years	3	3%
31 years and above	6	6%

Similar findings in the age profile of respondents in the Gutierrez et al. study indicate that the majority belong to the age bracket of 41-50 years old. According to the findings, in terms of age contribution, the majority are in their productive years and are able to deal with the stress and tedious procedures involved in the procurement.

Table 2 shows that the respondents' awareness of procurement planning had the highest weighted mean (4.33) with a verbal

interpretation of "fully aware" on the first aspect, the 'procurement is within the approved budget of the contract.' While 'the end-user units prepare their respective Project Procurement Management Plans (PPMPs) individually for the update of their PPMPs and are consolidated in the Annual Procurement Plan (APP), which is undertaken every six (6) months' had the lowest weighted mean (3.88) with the verbal interpretation of "aware".

Table 2. Level of Awareness in the Area of Procurement Planning

A. The area of Procurement Planning includes the respondents' awareness that:	Standard Deviation	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Procurement is within the approved budget of the contract.	0.75	4.33	Fully Aware
2. Procurement is undertaken in accordance with the approved Annual Procurement Plan (APP) by the Head of the Procuring Entity (Hope)	0.41	4.07	Aware
3. The end-user units prepare their respective Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) for different programs and activities.	0.2	4.02	Aware
4. The end-user units prepare their respective Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) for different Supplies and Equipment.	0.96	4.2	Aware
5. The end-user units prepare their respective Project Procurement Management Plans (PPMPs) individually for the update of their PPMPs and are consolidated in the Annual Procurement Plan (APP) which is undertaken every six (6) months.	1.04	3.88	Aware
6. The end-user units prepare their respective Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) for their Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). They must be aligned with the appropriation set/authorized in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).	0.96	4.08	Aware
Overall Weighted Mean		4.10	Aware

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Fully Aware; 3.41 – 4.20 Aware; 2.61 – 3.40 Neither aware nor not aware; 1.81 - 2.60 Not aware; 1.00 – 1.80 Fully not aware

As a whole, the level of awareness of respondents in this area generated an overall weighted mean of 4.10. The result showed that the end-users in the selective national government agencies are aware of the procurement planning process. This finding aligns with the results from the study of M. Duyan et al., indicating that the respondents exhibit a high level of awareness across all aspects of procurement planning. Their average score of 2.43 demonstrates a strong understanding that procurement activities should adhere to the approved Annual Procurement Plan (APP) and that the end-user is responsible for preparing the Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) for various office projects.

Under Table 3, the following aspects were presented as nos. 1-4 generated “aware” responses with weighted means of (4.09), (4.00), (3.80), and (3.77), respectively. The end-users are aware that the procuring entity must be duly registered with the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS), and this aspect obtains the highest weighted mean (4.09). The overall weighted mean of (3.92) showed that respondents are “aware” of the aspect of procurement by electronic means. The study conducted by M. Duyan et al. yielded comparable outcomes. Regarding the respondents' awareness of electronic procurement methods and posting in the PhilGeps bulletin, the findings indicated that the mean scores for all bidding-related aspects were the highest.

Table 3. Level of Awareness in the Aspect of Procurement by Electronic Means

B. The aspect of Procurement by Electronic Means includes the respondents' awareness that:	Standard Deviation	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The Procuring institution is duly registered with the PhilGEPS.	1.02	4.09	Aware
2. The Procuring Entities shall post on the PhilGEPS bulletin board all procurement opportunities, bidding results and related information.	0.93	4.00	Aware
3. The Procuring Entities shall post in the PhilGEPS bulletin board, PhilGEPS shall have a centralized electronic database of stakeholders.	1.02	3.80	Aware
4. The Stakeholders must have a digital certificate issued from the government-accredited certification authority to participate in the procurement activities of the PhilGEPS.	1.00	3.77	Aware
Overall Weighted Mean		3.92	Aware

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Fully Aware; 3.41 – 4.20 Aware; 2.61 – 3.40 Neither aware nor not aware; 1.81 - 2.60 Not aware; 1.00 – 1.80 Fully not aware

Table 4 exhibits the end-users level of awareness in the aspect of the preparation of bidding documents and an invitation to bid.

Table 4. Level of Awareness in the Aspect on Preparation of Bidding Documents and Invitation to Bid

C. The aspect of Preparation of Bidding Documents and Invitation to Bid include the respondents' awareness that:	Standard Deviation	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Brand names are not allowed.	0.97	4.00	Aware
2. Bid/Request for Expression of Interest is posted continuously in the PhilGEPS.	1.03	3.95	Aware
3. Bid/Request for Expression of Interest is posted continuously on the procuring entities' official website.	1.03	3.95	Aware
4. Bid/Request for Expression of Interest is posted continuously in any conspicuous place reserved for that purpose (Bulletin Board).	0.97	3.93	Aware
5. Bid/Request for Expression of Interest is posted continuously in the contracts to be bid with an approved budget of One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00) or more; the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) shall convene at least one (1) pre-bid conference.	1.12	3.92	Aware
Overall Weighted Mean		3.95	Aware

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Fully Aware; 3.41 – 4.20 Aware; 2.61 – 3.40 Neither aware nor not aware; 1.81 - 2.60 Not aware; 1.00 – 1.80 Fully not aware

'Brand names are not allowed' had the highest weighted mean of 4.00 with a verbal interpretation of "aware." While 'bid/request for expression of interest is posted continuously in the contracts to be bid with an approved budget of One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00) or more, the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) shall convene at least one (1) pre-bid conference' had the lowest weighted mean of 3.92 with a verbal interpretation of "aware." The overall weighted mean was 3.95, with a verbal

interpretation of "aware." According to the study conducted by Gutierrez et al. on the understanding in the stage of the Pre-Bid Conference, the researcher got a total mean of 3.347, indicating a high understanding. This demonstrates that the respondents have a high level of understanding of the procurement process.

Table 5 shows the respondents' level of awareness of the post-qualification and award, implementation, and termination of the contract.

Table 5. Level of Awareness in the Aspect on Post-Qualification and Award, Implementation and Termination of the Contract

D. The aspect on Post-Qualification and award, Implementation and Termination of the Contract includes the respondents' awareness that:	Standard Deviation	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The Lowest Calculated Bid undergoes the post-qualification to determine whether the bidder concerned complies with the bid requirements.	1.02	4.00	Aware
2. The Lowest Calculated Bid undergoes the post-qualification to determine if they are responsive to all bid requirements and conditions.	0.97	4.00	Aware
3. The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) declares the bidding a failure when no bids are received.	0.97	3.98	Aware
4. A single calculated/rated and responsive bid shall be considered for award if after the advertisement only one prospective bidder submits a Letter of Intent (LOI) and meets the eligibility requirements.	1.00	3.90	Aware
5. A single calculated/rated and responsive bid shall be considered for award if after the advertisement more than one prospective bidder submits a Letter of Intent (LOI) but only one bidder meets the eligibility requirements.	1.05	3.86	Aware
6. A single calculated/rated and responsive bid shall be considered for award if after the eligibility check more than one bidder meets the eligibility requirements. However, only one bidder submits to bid, and its bid is found to be responsive to the bidding requirement.	1.02	3.86	Aware
7. A single calculated/rated and responsive bid shall be considered for award if the procuring entity reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids, and declares a failure of bidding.	1.08	3.85	Aware
Overall Weighted Mean		3.92	Aware

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Fully Aware; 3.41 – 4.20 Aware; 2.61 – 3.40 Neither aware nor not aware; 1.81 - 2.60 Not aware; 1.00 – 1.80 Fully not aware

These aspect numbers 1-7 generated weighted means of (4.00), (4.00), (3.98), (3.90), (3.86), (3.86), and (3.85), respectively. In a study by Gutierrez et al., it was found that the average level of understanding in the post-qualification phase was 3.347, which suggests a significant understanding similar to that of the

pre-bid conference stage. As a whole, the generated overall weighted mean of (3.92) showed that end-users are knowledgeable and well-informed about the post-qualification procedure.

Table 6 reveals that the following aspects 1-6 obtained weighted means of (4.06), (3.70), (3.87), (3.86), (3.70), and (3.93), respectively.

Table 6. Level of Awareness in the Aspect on Alternative Methods of Procurement

E. The aspect on Alternative Methods of Procurement includes the respondents' awareness that:	Standard Deviation	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Procuring institutions resort to alternative methods in order to promote economy and efficiency.	0.94	4.06	Aware
2. Limited Source Bidding involves direct invitation to bid of goods and consulting services.	1.07	3.70	Aware
3. Direct Contracting is allowed if the procurement of goods can be obtained only from one proprietary source; the supplier is asked to submit a price quotation or a proforma invoice together with the conditions of sale.	0.98	3.87	Aware
4. Repeat Order is used to replenish goods procured under a contract previously awarded through Competitive Bidding.	1.03	3.86	Aware
5. Shopping is allowed when more competitive methods are not justified based on cost or efficiency; the procuring institution simply requests for the submission of price quotations from the suppliers of known qualifications.	1.04	3.70	Aware
6. Negotiated procurement is allowed when the procuring entity directly negotiates a contract with a technically, legally and financially capable supplier, contractor, or consultant.	1.01	3.93	Aware
Overall Weighted Mean		3.85	Aware

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Fully Aware; 3.41 – 4.20 Aware; 2.61 – 3.40 Neither aware nor not aware; 1.81 - 2.60 Not aware; 1.00 – 1.80 Fully not aware

As a whole, the level of awareness of the respondents on the aspect of alternative methods of procurement generated aware responses with an overall weighted mean of 3.85. According to the study by M. Duyan et al., the mean scores obtained regarding the respondents' level of awareness indicate a high degree of familiarity with the other procurement methods.

Table 7 represents the significant relationship between the respondents' level of awareness and their years of service. The Pearson r value, p-value, decision, and interpretation are shown in the table.

Table 7. Significant Relationship on the Awareness of the Respondents and Years of Service

Level of Awareness	Pearson r	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
A. Procurement Planning	0.282	0.004	Reject null hypothesis	Significant
B. Procurement by Electronic Means	0.205	0.04	Reject null hypothesis	Significant
C. Preparation of Bidding Documents and Invitation to Bid	0.204	0.042	Reject null hypothesis	Significant
D. Post Qualification and Awards	0.191	0.057	Accept the null hypothesis	Not Significant
E. Alternative Mode of Procurement	0.252	0.011	Reject null hypothesis	Significant

Table 7 presents the p-value corresponding to the years of service in the government agency and the level of awareness. It is shown that the resulting p-value of procurement planning ($p = 0.004$), procurement by electronic means ($p = 0.040$), preparation of bidding documents and an invitation to bid ($p = 0.042$), and

alternative modes of procurement ($p = 0.011$) denote that the relationship is significant. While the level of awareness post-qualification and awards and the years of service had a p-value of 0.057, which indicates an interpretation of not being significant.

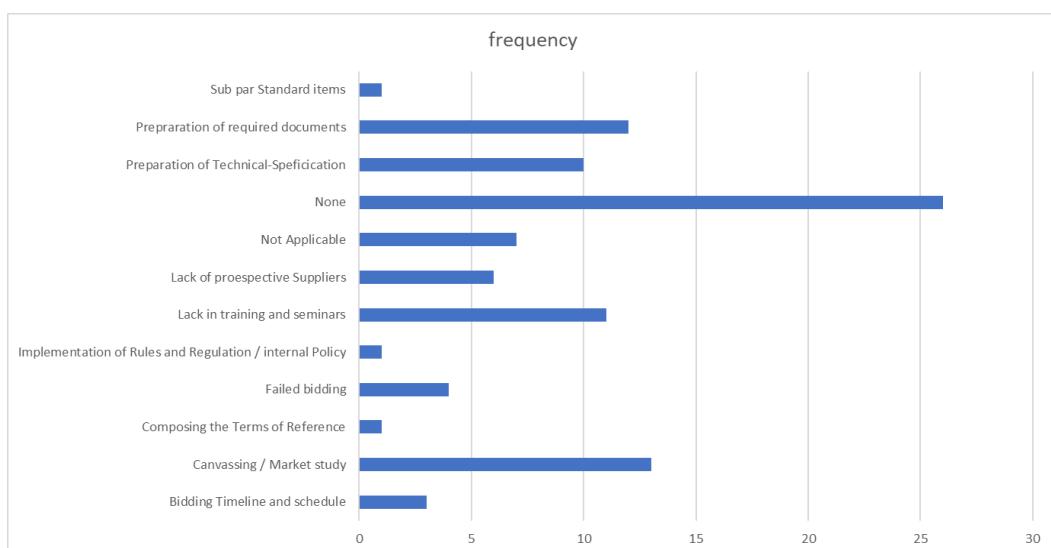


Figure 2. Graphed Interpretation of the Challenges Encountered

Figure 2 shows the graph interpretation of the frequency of various problems and challenges encountered during the implementation of procurement procedures. The most common issue is the "none" category, which occurred 26 times, suggesting that in many instances, there were no significant challenges. Other notable challenges include "canvassing/market study" (18 occurrences), "preparation of required documents" (12 occurrences), and "lack of training and seminars" (11 occurrences). These

results suggest that while some procurement processes face minimal issues, a significant number involve challenges related to research and documentation. Additionally, issues such as "lack of prospective suppliers" (6 occurrences) and "failed bidding" (4 occurrences) indicate occasional difficulties in finding suitable suppliers and executing successful bids. The remaining challenges are relatively infrequent, occurring only a few times each.

According to the report of Dennis S. Santiago, Executive Director of the Government Policy Board Technical Support Office, entitled Challenges in Public Procurement in 2015, the common challenges in public procurement are the low number of bidders, poor planning, and leadership issues. Under these challenges, the difficulties specified that conform with the research are cost estimation, poor crafting of technical specifications, a low number of bidders, failed bidding, and approval or review of required documents.

Conclusion

The survey measured respondents' knowledge of several areas of procurement processes. With weighted means showing varying levels of awareness in various areas, it suggests that respondents are generally aware of these procedures. The majority of respondents, for example, were found to be "fully aware" of procurement planning, in contrast to aspects related to document preparation and invitations to bid, which had a slightly lower level of awareness but were still deemed "aware" by respondents, and the use of electronic means for procurement, which also demonstrated a good level of awareness among respondents.

The study used statistical analysis, including Pearson correlation and p-values, to determine if there was no significant relationship between the awareness of respondents and their years of service. The results indicate a significant relationship between awareness and years of service in several aspects of procurement procedures, such as procurement planning, procurement by electronic means, preparation of bidding documents, and alternative modes of procurement. However, in the area of post-qualification and awards, the relationship between years of service was not found to be significant.

The study also looked into the difficulties respondents had in putting RA 9184 procurement processes into practice. The most frequent problem was "none," which indicates that a sizable percentage of respondents did not experience major difficulties. On the other hand, difficulties with "Canvassing/Market Study" and "Preparation of the Required Documents" were among the obstacles. These issues

show that while some aspects of procurement go easily, there are some areas where adjustments or assistance may be required. Other difficulties included "lack of training and seminars," "preparation of the technical specification," "lack of prospective suppliers," and "failed bidding."

In conclusion, the study sheds light on respondents' awareness of and difficulties with procurement procedures and their connection to years of employment. It implies that there is potential for progress in tackling certain difficulties and that awareness levels vary across various parts of procurement.

Based on the findings and conclusion derived from this study, the following recommendations were suggested:

- I. The policymakers should implement clear guidelines for the submission of procurement requests in accordance with RA 9184. By establishing well-defined guidelines that outline the necessary procedures and required documents for requesting goods, services, and infrastructure projects, delays, errors, and inefficiencies would be minimized, ultimately saving time and resources. The recommended guidelines are as follows:

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROCUREMENT REQUESTS

As per Section 7.3.2 of the 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184, based on the specific needs, the end-user or implementing units of the Procuring Entity shall be responsible for the preparation of all documents necessary for the procurement activity, including but not limited to the technical specifications, scope of work, or terms of reference. In line with this, the concerned shall submit the following documents for their requests:

- 1. Purchase Request** – Contains complete Technical Specifications for goods; for equipment projects, it shall contain the required list indicated below as per Item A(b)(1.1) of DOH AO No. 2022-0006:
 - i. Detailed equipment technical specifications
 - ii. Accessories
 - iii. Technical documents

iv. *Compliance with applicable product standards*
 v. *Warranty*
 vi. *Completion period for the delivery and installation (if applicable)*
 vii. *Functional testing and commissioning*
 viii. *Training for end-users and maintenance staff*
 ix. *Preparation of the installation site (if applicable)*
 x. *Payment terms, etc.*

2. Scope of Works – Applicable to Infrastructure Projects. Attached are plans/ blueprint and General Technical Specifications for the Project.

3. Terms of Reference – Applicable to Services and Consultancy

4. Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) – Shall be dated prior to the date of the Purchase Request

5. Market Study – Must be from at least three (3) suppliers. Market Study coming from Shopee, Lazada, or any other online shop used is not acceptable. End-User must attach an Abstract of Canvass showing the average amount of the Market Study as it is the basis for obtaining the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), which is stipulated in the Purchase Request.

6. Certificate of Availability of Funds – Must be approved by the Chief of Finance Service.

II. Issuance of agency memorandums designating the specific end-users; as this fosters coordination and a direct point of contact for inquiries, clarifications, and updates with the BAC Secretariat. This ensures that end-users are well-informed about their duties as Project Management Officers (PMOs) and have the resources to reach out for guidance. Below is the template of the memorandum formulated by the researchers:

MEMORANDUM ORDER NO._____

In the exigency of service, the following personnel are hereby designated as the End-Users of the procurement of the following projects for CY_____:

NAME OF PROJECT	ITEM DESCRIPTION	END-USER	DESIGNATION
(Indicate the name of the project. e.g., Supply, Delivery, Installation, Commissioning, and Testing of General Hospital Equipment)	(Specify the goods to be procured. e.g., 1 unit of telemetry Monitoring System & and 1 unit of ENT Treatment Unit with Hydraulic Pneumatic Chair)	(Name of the Project Management Officer responsible, e.g. Dr. Juan Dela Cruz)	(Section/ Office / Unit, e.g. General Hospital)

Functions of the Project Management Officers (PMO's) or End-Users:

- Provide the Technical Specifications of the goods it will procure
- Conduct a Market Study that will include a study of the credible products or services, industry developments
- Recommend the ABC
- Provide technical advice
- Assist in the preparation of bidding documents
- Attend all stages of procurement
- Ensure that the Chief Finance Service of the Procuring Entity issues a CAF for the project

This Order is hereby declared official and made of record.

(Signed by the Head of the Procuring Entity)

III. Establishment of a dedicated committee to update end-users on the specifications, terms of reference, and scope of work for goods, services, and infrastructure projects. This provides a structured channel for end-users to stay informed about changing requirements and standards. This also enables the agency to align its procurement

needs with current market conditions, such as prices and technological advancements. In line with this recommendation, the researchers developed a memorandum for the creation of the committee:

MEMORANDUM ORDER NO._____

*In the exigency of service, to ensure that the requests made by the End-Users are complete and that the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of the item to be procured is in accordance with the current market price, the creation of a **Clearing House Committee** will now be implemented. This shall consist of five (5) members from different services.*

The duties and responsibilities of this Committee shall:

- a. *Conduct monthly meetings with End-Users*
- b. *Monitor and conduct monthly consumption as part of cost analysis*
- c. *Analyze and Review submitted requests based on the necessity of respective offices/pavilions*
- d. *Standardize the Technical Specifications, Terms of Reference, and Scope*

of Works based on the necessity of the End-Users

This Order is hereby declared official and made of record.

(Signed by the Head of the Procuring Entity)

IV. Enhancing knowledge on RA 9184 through yearly training conducted by GPPB-recognized trainers, which will cover not only the bidding process but also the latest amendments and best practices, thereby equipping the end-users with the skills and knowledge required to execute procurement processes efficiently and in accordance with the law. The training program may be visited at the Government Procurement Policy Board website. The GPPB-TSO will process the training requests; agencies and institutions are required to submit a signed formal letter addressed to the Executive Director of the GPPB-TSO, Indicative Program, and Signed Conforme. Indicated below is the training module for the training on Republic Act (R.A.) Nos. 9184 and 9184 and its 2016 Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations:

TRAINING MODULES FOR NGAs/LGUs/Private Sector

(For associations, kindly scroll down to find the modules)

1. Specified mandatory modules cannot be replaced by other topics.
2. In addition to the mandatory modules below, the requesting party shall choose other applicable modules based on the training type chosen above and in consideration of the needs of target participants.
3. Take into consideration the allotted duration per module.
4. A period for an Open Forum after every module shall be included in the Program of Activities.

TICK	CODE	MODULE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (Exclusive of Open Forum)
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BASIC MODULES

Recommended for newly designated procurement officers or currently designated procurement officers who could not attend any procurement training within the past two (2) years from the date of request.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B01	MANDATORY: Latest GPPB Issuances and Updates	This module covers various policy updates and or the latest procurement mechanisms instituted by the GPPB.	1 hour
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B02	MANDATORY: Government Procurement 101	This module covers the basics and salient features of the Republic Act No. 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act, including the several procurement actors and methods.	2 hours
TICK	CODE	MODULE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (Exclusive of Open Forum)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B03	MANDATORY: Procurement Planning and Budget Linkage, including Early Procurement Activities	This module discusses the linkage between budget and procurement, including the steps on how to process early procurement activities.	2 hours and 30 minutes
<input type="checkbox"/>	B04	Standard Bidding Procedures for: <input type="checkbox"/> Goods and Services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Projects	This module discusses the step-by-step bidding procedures for the procurement of goods and services and infrastructure projects.	3 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	B05	Standard Bidding Procedures for Consulting Services	This module discusses the step-by-step bidding procedures for the procurement of consulting services.	3 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	B06	Preparation of the 6 th Edition of Philippine Bidding Documents for: <input type="checkbox"/> Goods and Services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Projects	This module discusses the steps on how to prepare the bidding documents for the procurement of goods and services and infrastructure projects.	2 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	B07	Preparation of Technical Specifications, Scope of Work, and Terms of Reference	This module discusses how to develop a responsive technical specification/ scope of work/ terms of reference properly and completely.	2 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	B08	Preparation of the 5 th Edition of Philippine Bidding Documents for Consulting Services	This module discusses the steps on how to prepare the bidding documents for the procurement of consulting services.	2 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	B09	Alternative Methods of Procurement	This module discusses the alternative modes of procurement, including the negotiated procurement.	3 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	B10	Protest Mechanism and Blocklisting Guidelines, with Overview of Online Blocklisting Portal (OBP)	This module discusses how protests are managed, how to blocklist suppliers, and how to use the blocklisting portal.	2 hours

<input type="checkbox"/>	B11	Penal, Civil, and Administrative Provisions	This module discusses the penal, civil, and administrative penalties for those who are non-compliant or for those who violate the law.	1 hour
<input type="checkbox"/>	B12	Procurement Monitoring (Procurement Monitoring Report and Overview of Agency Procurement Compliance and Performance Indicators)	This module discusses the indicators of agency procurement compliance and its relevance.	2 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	B13	Green Public Procurement	This module discusses the GPP's definition, basic concepts and benefits, its roadmap, the use of life cycle thinking, and how to select products for GPP.	1 hour
<input type="checkbox"/>	B14	Preparation of Cost Estimates	This module discusses how to secure cost estimates that are advantageous to the Government.	2 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	I03	Agency Procurement Compliance and Performance Indicators	This module discusses how to answer the performance indicators accurately for agency procurement compliance.	3 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	I04	Negotiated Procurement - Community Participation	This module discusses the basic concepts of Community Participation in Procurement and its difference from unorganized CSGs and their specific requirements.	1 hour
<input type="checkbox"/>	I05	Framework Agreement	This module discusses the benefits of using framework agreement, its requirements, and procedures.	1 hour

REFRESHER MODULES

Recommended for currently designated BAC members and end users with current updates.

TICK	CODE	MODULE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (Exclusive of Open Forum)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	R01	MANDATORY: Latest GPPB Issuances and Updates	This module covers various policy updates and or the latest procurement mechanisms instituted by the GPPB.	1 hour
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	R02	MANDATORY: Government Procurement 101	This module covers the basics and salient features of the Republic Act No. 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act, including the several procurement actors and methods.	2 hours
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	R03	MANDATORY: Procurement Planning and Budget Linkage, including Early Procurement Activities	This module discusses the linkage between budget and procurement, including the steps on how to process early procurement activities	2 hours and 30 minutes

<input type="checkbox"/>	R04	Preparation of the 6 th Edition of Philippine Bidding Documents for: <input type="checkbox"/> Goods and Services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Projects	This module discusses the steps on how to prepare the bidding documents for the procurement of goods and services and infrastructure projects.	2 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	R05	Preparation of Technical Specifications, Scope of Work, and Terms of Reference	This module discusses how to develop a responsive technical specification/ scope of work/ terms of reference properly and completely.	2 hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	R06	Preparation of Cost Estimates	This module discusses how to secure cost estimates that are advantageous to the Government.	2 hours

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