

DRIVERS OF WOMEN OWNED SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES ACCESS TO PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MARKET IN KENYA: A CASE OF NAIROBI COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of the study was to establish the drivers of women owned SMEs access to public procurement market in Kenya, with special reference to women owned SMEs in Nairobi Central Business District (Nairobi CBD). More specifically, the study sought to determine the effect of tendering process; establish the effect of information accessibility; examine the effect of financial accessibility and establish the legal and regulatory framework to public procurement market in Kenya. The target population for the study were the 175 women owned SMEs in Nairobi CBD. The census survey design technique was carried out and primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires. The secondary data was obtained from published documents such as journals, periodicals, magazines and reports to supplement the primary data. A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument. The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS version 22. The study adopted regression analysis at 5% level of significance to determine strength and direction of the relationship of the variables under study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data in frequency distributions and percentages presented herein in tables of frequency distribution, percentages, bar graphs and pie-charts. ANOVA was used to analyze the degree of relationship between the variables in the study. The study established that most women owned SMEs have no experience in their lines of business and it is difficult for them to win tenders that require experience. Majority of them are not trained in procurement/supply chain management making it hard for them to do business in highly regulated and technical market like public procurement. Majority of MSEs do not regularly access tender information limiting their chances of participating in public tenders. The study established that laws and policies which govern public procurement in Kenya are technical, elitist, hard to follow and difficult to implement leading to low participation of MSEs in public procurement market in this country. The study has confirmed that regulation and policy frameworks influences SME capability, access to information, financial accessibility, the tendering process in which businesses operate and the level of competition which businesses encounter in the market place. Regression analysis findings indicated that there is correlation between the predictors' variables (Tendering process, information accessibility, financial accessibility and legal & regulatory framework) since P-values of individual predictor variables were all less than 0.05. Tendering process was confirmed as the most significant factor

INTRODUCTION

The public procurement is a vital component of a country's public administration that links the financial system with economic and social outcomes (Schapper & Veiga Malta, 2011). It is seen as an objective and efficient way of contracting between the state and private entities (Schooner, 2012) and is widely used to promote socio-economic development objectives of a nation, such as the economic development of disadvantaged social groups (Arrowsmith, 2010). The state of government procurement greatly determines the governance and performance of community services and cuts across almost every area of planning, program management, and budgeting. It is therefore, an important market in any economy as it consumes a substantial percentage of public revenue of a country (Schapper & Veiga Malta, 2011).

The public procurement market in Kenya like other countries worldwide deal with a wide range of supplies. Though these contracts vary mainly in size, some are clearly within the capabilities of Small and Micro Enterprises. However, women owned Small and Micro Enterprises are sidelined from participating in public procurement despite their qualifications, sizes and level of production and despite this preferential treatment of Small and Micro Enterprises, comparative tallies of public contracts secured by Small and Micro Enterprises against those secured by other enterprises are still very small (Afande, 2015). This study seeks to investigate the drivers of effective participation of women micro and small-sized enterprises (SMEs) in public procurement market in Kenya. Enterprises qualify as micro or small-sized if they fulfill maximum ceilings for staff headcount, turnover ceiling or a balance sheet ceiling. An enterprise can be classified as either micro or small depending on the number of employees in the business, the nature of the industry, ownership structure and revenue base. Microenterprise is a common aspect in business communities everywhere (WB, 2012). The government of Kenya's initiative to help SMEs through the public procurement process has uncovered a range of problems including administrative issues with e-procurement systems, cancelled tenders and exclusive contract conditions. The Vision 2030, the blueprint of the country's development, has clearly articulated the need to support SMEs which account for 20% of the country's GDP (GOK, 2011).

It is now widely recognized that women owned SMEs have an important role to play in the growth and development of countries through job creation and distribution of the benefits of economic development (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1999). Even more importantly the sector can help boost productivity by increasing competitive pressure within the economy. SME participation in public procurement has been used in several countries to create markets for their goods and services. However their participation is often plagued by a myriad of constraints including; competition from large firms, constraints in accessing information, low quality service and products due to financial constraints and finally, interference from scrupulous middle-men to then sub-contract to SMEs (Odhiambo & Kamau, 2003).

Global Perspective of Public Procurement

Globally, many countries have made deliberate steps to streamline the administration and management of public procurement through the enactment of legal and procedural framework (Jones, 2011). Governments all over the world have got specific mandate to provide among other things, food, security, education and infrastructure to enable a conducive environment for economic growth. In order to offer these services effectively, the government has to outsource some of them from the outside market different from the system. This basically means that the government has to do business with the private entrepreneurs which then give rise to the need of allowing all and sundry to participate in the public procurement process. Value for money is the core principle governing

public procurement, and is supported by the underpinning principles of efficiency and effectiveness, competition, accountability and transparency, ethics and industry development. (Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, 2005).

Although estimation of public procurement size has proven to be difficult due to lack of data and the secrecy surrounding it, there have been some recent attempts to estimate it. According to OECD/World Bank (2004) report, public procurement constitutes about per cent of the World's Gross Domestic Product. In developing economies, public procurement offers a large domestic market given that over 70% of developing countries budgetary resources are channeled through this system. Elsewhere the International Trade Centre data show that public procurement requirements account for about 50 – 70 per cent of their developing countries imports. These figures indicate that public procurement is important for every developing economy and Kenya is not left behind hence our intention to conduct this research.

The public procurement has been used by many governments all over the world to support the development of domestic industries, overcome regional economic imbalances, and support minority or disadvantaged communities. The size of public procurement varies between 5 and 10 percent of the GDP in industrialized countries. In most developing countries, it accounts for a significant proportion of the GDP; even as much as 60% in some cases. By managing such a margin of the GDP and 60 percent or more of annual government budget of emerging economies, a public procurement system that optimizes the inclusion of small and medium enterprises has wide-ranging socio-economic benefits (Schapper & Veiga-Malta, 2011).

In the European Union, statistics indicate that public procurement accounts for over 17 percent of the EU's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and was in excess of €2.6 trillion in 2011 (Prieb, Harvey & Friton, 2011). The UK public sector spends around £240 billion each year on the procurement of goods, works, and services, which accounts, as a share of total spending, for around a third of overall public sector expenditure (UK, 2012). The US federal government has the world's largest purchasing budget which exceeded \$380 billion in 2012 (US, 2013). In addition to supplying federal agencies with required goods, services and works, US government acquisition is also used as a public policy tool to achieve certain socio-economic goals (Drabkin & Thai, 2012).

Kenyan Perspective of Public Procurement

In Kenya, unlike most developing countries, has in official development policies recognized informal enterprises as more than a residual employer for survival of poor households. Since Independence, the Government has recognized the potential of the SME sector in employment creation and poverty reduction in its numerous policy documents. Public sector procurement can be broken down into two categories, namely project specific procurement and general consumable procurement. In project specific procurement, goods, works or services are sought for a particular initiative (e.g. a new road, a hospital, plant and equipment), whereas general consumable procurement relates to items that are required for a ministry or authority to perform its duties (e.g. fuel, stationery, vehicle parts, road maintenance, and security). The focus of the study will be on general consumable procurement, as this is the area in which most women SMEs are active. It is difficult to estimate the volumes and values of procured goods. It is understood that the Government of Kenya (GoK) procured about KSh. 300 billion worth of goods and services in the 2013 financial year. It is not clear if this includes parastatal and local authority procurement, as they are dependent in part on their own revenue streams. Interviews at district and local authority levels indicate that larger town/district procurement ranges from between KSh. 100 million to KSh. 500 million annually.

In Kenya, public procurement consumes about 60 percent of the country's annual revenue (Lewa,

2014). It is estimated that public procurement amounts to between 10-20 percent of the country's GDP (Odhiambo & Kamau, 2013). Further statistics indicate that 30 percent of each county government's annual allocation is meant for development expenditures. For example, in 2013-14 fiscal years, a total of 61.1 billion shillings was used to procure goods, works and services in the 47 county governments (RoK, 2013b). This is by any description a big market and a major expenditure area for any government which if made accessible to the SMEs, can lead to an accelerated wealth creation, economic growth and development, increased employment opportunities, socio-economic and political stability and balanced regional development (ACEPD, 2011).

A streamlined procurement system will allow the Government to invest more resources in other needy areas such as the health and education of its citizens and offer better salaries to its employees, a venture that has the potential of greatly improving productivity and service delivery by public entities. Similarly, a modernized procurement system will ensure fairness and competition among suppliers of goods, works and services to the Government. This increased competition will not only raise the confidence of Kenyans in the public procurement process but will also ensure the Government gets value for its money and encourage participation of women SMEs in public procurement. Overall, a reformed Public Procurement System will be a vehicle for delivering to the Kenyan people such benefits as economic growth and poverty reduction, optimized resource application, commitment control, timely delivery of services and reduction of fiduciary risks to acceptable levels, among others (Kimunya, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Public procurement accounts for as much as 10–15% of gross domestic product (GDP) in developed countries and over 30% of GDP in developing countries. This translates into trillions of dollars of government spending annually (International Trade Centre (ITC), 2014). According to Transparency international (2013), in Kenya special groups (women, youth and people living with disabilities) constitute of over 85% of the entire population yet they contribute to less than 10% of public procurement involvement thus this hampers economic growth and achievement of vision 2030. Mccrudden (2004) portends that public procurement is an effective tool to create jobs and provide foundation for economic recovery and sustained growth. It is against this background that public procurement policy was realigned to governments women agenda to provide preferential treatment of women in public procurement. Women entrepreneurs have cited many of their problems to included capacity building, lack of access to credit, inadequate skills, poor information and inhibitive legal regulatory framework (Brinkerhoff, 2014).

In the financial year 2013/2014, 20 billion (30% of government procurement) was allocated for the women (WEF, 2014). However, analysis of the financial year 2013/2014 expenditures by the Women enterprise fund on special group access reveal that only Kshs. 2.8b against an allocation of Kshs.20b was expended showing that only 1.4% of the allocation was actually spent on AGPO instead of the mandatory 30% (WEF, 2014). The Kenyan women who constitute over 55% of Kenya's population continue to contribute less than 40% of public procurement involvement thus hampering economic growth and achievement of vision 2030 (Transparency international, 2014) even with current preferential treatment. This issue has attracted interest among scholars and academicians. WEF (2014) interrogated the factors influencing public bidding by women entrepreneurs, while Gitari & Kabare (2014) assessed Factors affecting access to procurement opportunities in public secondary schools by small and medium enterprises in Kenya. These studies barely focused on women access to public procurement. More specific to the issues under study were Talal (2014) and Gatere and Shale (2014). Little literature exists on women access to government procurement in Kenya. While all these empirical literatures have alluded to factors affecting women SMEs participation in public procurement there is scanty studies on how tendering process, legal & regulatory framework, financial accessibility and information accessibility influence women SMEs access to public procurement

market. It is on this premise this study, presents a gap for research to establish the reasons behind women SMEs inaccessibility to the public procurement market in Kenya.

Study Objectives

The study sought to be guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To establish how tendering processes influence women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya.
- ii. To find out how information accessibility influence women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya.
- iii. To establish how financial accessibility affects women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya.
- iv. To determine how legal & regulatory framework affect women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Theoretical frameworks are explanations about a phenomenon. According to Abeywardena & Tham (2012) a theoretical framework provides the researcher with a lens to view the world. A theory is an accepted fact that attempts to provide a plausible or rational explanation of cause- and-effect (causal) relationship among a group of observed phenomenon (Adamov, 2012). The study is built upon certain theories that have much links with public procurement market. Some of the relevant theories discussed include the Auction theory, Agency theory, Resource Based Theory and Public Interest Theory of Regulation.

Auction Theory

According to Auction theory, using competitive tendering when contracting out public services is similar to performing common value auctions with a sealed-bid procedure. The procuring public authority typically evaluates the competing bids regarding both price and quality once the bidding process has ended. According to Hultkrantz and Nilsson (2011) a pure auction is better than a beauty contest because it offers a more market-oriented, objective and transparent method for awarding tenders. In this theory, firms in the auction process, through offering more and more money, reveals information about their estimation of the value of the goods and services involved. Hultkrantz and Nilsson (2011) further suggest that, even when social concerns are important, an auction is a better alternative since it can also include minimum requirements and can allow both positive bids in attractive regions and negative bids in unattractive regions. Auctions also have some notable risks and potential disadvantages, for instance, in many auctions, as well as competitive tenders, firms have made unrealistically optimistic forecasts about future revenues and costs.

Milgrom and Weber (2012) in their study established that an open English auction, in which the bidders continuously follow the bids of their rivals, may stimulate aggressive bidding but yet decrease the risk of too optimistic bids and the related winner's curse, however, there will be an increased risk of collusion in the open auctions (Robinson, 2015). It also important to note that winner's curse in tenders of public services are also related to the bidders' attitude towards risk, for instance their view of whether the government will be willing to bail them out or renegotiate the contract if they fail. In this study, the above theory supports the influence of tendering process on access to public procurement market.

Procedural Justice Theory

The procedural justice theory ensures access to information, that is, the process of selecting the bidders and entities and their treatment should be fair (Gist, 2007). Greenberg (1990) suggests that procedural theory focuses on the fairness of the "means" used to achieve the outcomes or the fairness of the processes that pertain to how decisions are made. Fairness of the procedure and fairness in the interpersonal treatment build trust and enhance closer and more open exchange relationships among

the stakeholders and also produces obligations for the successor as well as those selected and who are not selected for the job to remain loyal and committed the organization (Croponzano, Rupp, Mohler & Schminke, (2004). Procedural justice theory affects an individual's sense of fairness in two different ways: by giving an individual decision control and process control (Thibaut & Walker, 2006). Barr (2004) state that, decision control involves the degree to which individuals have actual influence over the decision made. Process control on the other hand, involves the degree to which a procedure gives those affected by a decision an opportunity to express their views or provide inputs on how decisions should be made enabling them to have an indirect means of decision control (Sten, 2006).

A mechanism to enhance procedural fairness is the use of formal and informal family or stakeholder get-together as means to candid and open communications, which enhance personal emotions, family relations, and the smoothness of transition (Fox, Nilakant & Hamilton, 1996). Other mechanisms include use of a board of advisers to be populated by outside directors, or at least a family council, to shift the decision making from a single person to the group (Osborne, 1991). How far can succession planning influence sustainability of an SMFE after the exit of the founder? These motivated research question five.

Resource Based Theory

Penrose (1959) provided initial insights of the resource perspective of the firm. However, the resource-based view of the firm (RBV) was put forward by Wenerfelt (1984) and subsequently popularized by Barney's (1991) work. Many authors for example Nelson & winter (1982); Dierick & Cool (1989); Mohoney & Pandian (1992); Eisenhardt & Martin (2000); Zollo & Winter (2002); Zahra & George (2002) and Winter (2003) made significant contribution to its conceptual development. The theory emphasized the importance of organization resources and their influence on performance and competitive advantage in the market. According to RBV, every organization has its own unique resources that enable it to remain competitive in the market, by addressing the rapidly changing environment (Helfat, 2007). These resources may be financial, human, physical, technological and information. These may be valuable, rare and non-substitutable (Crook, Ketchen, Combs & Todd, 2008).

Critiques of the RBV have pointed out that some resources contribute to competitive advantage while others do not; hence, not all resources of an organization have the ability to contribute to competitive advantage. Secondly, the mere availability of resources are coordinated and integrated (Lopez, 2005). To execute procurement function, there is need to have adequate financial resources in the field of procurement. In this study, the above theory supports the influence of financial accessibility on access to public procurement market.

Public Interest Theory of Regulation

Regulation in public service is aimed at the public interest which is the best possible allocation of scarce resources for individual and collective goods. In developed economies for instance in the west, the allocation of scarce resources is to a significant extent coordinated by the market mechanism. As demonstrated by Arrow (1985), allocation of resources through the market mechanism means is optimal under certain circumstances; this is because these mechanisms under certain circumstances are frequently not adhered to. In practice, the allocation of resources is not optimal thus a demand for methods for improving the allocation arises (Bator, 1958).

Government regulation is one of the methods of achieving efficiency in the allocation of resources (Shubik, 1970; Arrow, 1970). According to public interest theory, government regulation is the instrument for overcoming the disadvantages of imperfect competition, unbalanced market operation and undesirable market results. In the first place, regulation can improve the allocation by maintaining, facilitating, or imitating market operation. According to Pejovich (1979), the exchange of goods, services and production factors in markets assumes the definition, allocation and assertion of individual property rights and freedom to contract, whose guarantee in any necessary enforcement of contract compliance can be more efficiently organized collectively than individually. The costs of market transactions are also reduced by a large extent by property and contract law.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Jabareen (2008) argues that a variable is a measurable characteristic that assumes different values among subjects. An independent variable is that variable which is presumed to affect or determine a dependent variable (Jabareen, 2008). A dependent variable is a variable dependent on another variable like the independent variable. A dependent variable is the variable which is measured in the research study (Everitt, 2002). Conceptual framework, according to educational researcher Stratman and Roth (2013) are structured from a set of broad ideas and theories that help a researcher to properly identify the problem they are looking at, frame their questions and find suitable literature.

Conceptual framework, according to educational researcher Stratman & Roth (2013), are structured from a set of broad ideas and theories that help a researcher to properly identify the problem they are looking at from their questions and find suitable literature. The conceptual framework comprises of the independent variables or exploratory variables which are the presumed cause of changes in the dependent variable and the dependent variable also called the criterion or predictor variable which the researcher wishes to explain (Kothari, 2004). This conceptual framework tries to explain drivers of women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. It assumes that drivers comprise the financial accessibility (access to credit, collateral); tendering processes (pre-qualification evaluation, bureaucratic processes); information accessibility (ICT application, networking) and legal & regulatory framework (politics and public contracting) which influences women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. This is as illustrated in Figure 2.1

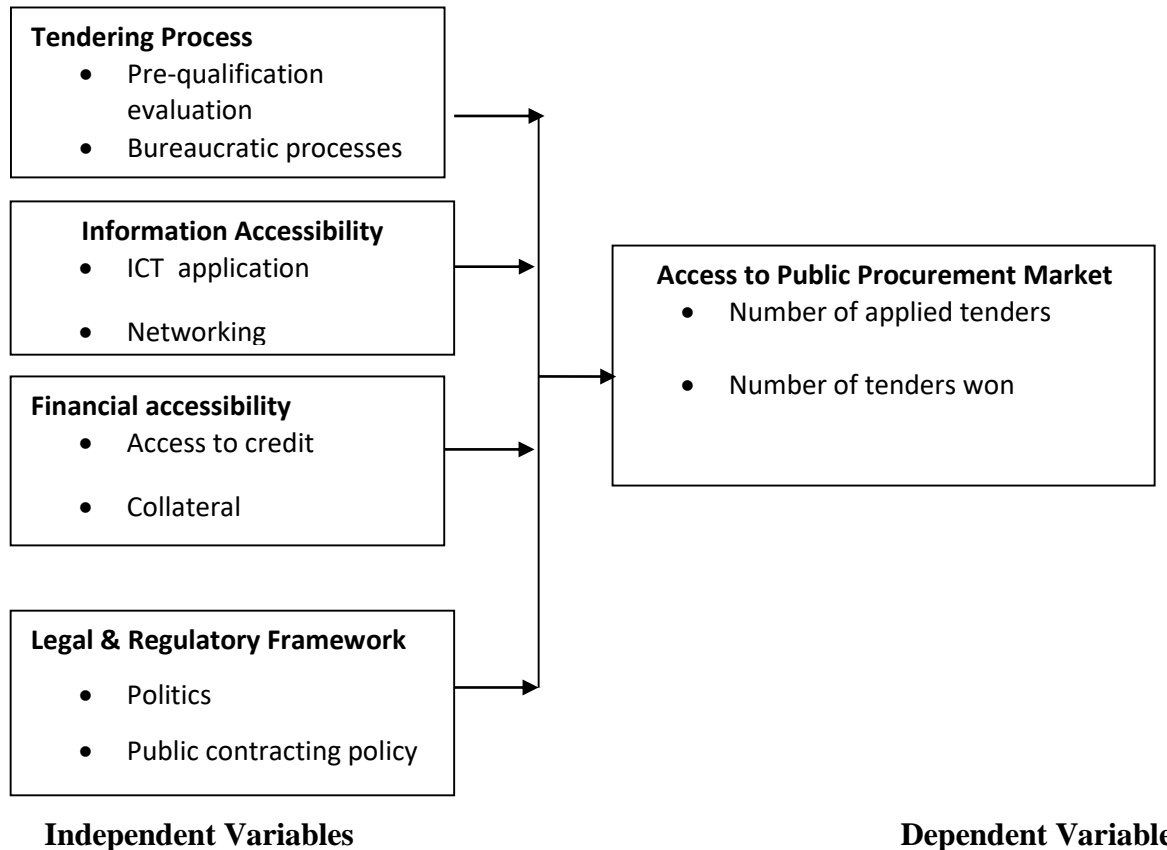


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework for the Study

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A research design describes how the study addresses the specific aims and objectives of the research. This study was a descriptive survey designed to establish the drivers of women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya. Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of phenomena and whenever possible to draw valid general conclusion from the facts discovered. Descriptive survey attempts to describe characteristics of subjects or phenomena, opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of persons of interest to the researcher. Moreover, a descriptive survey aims at obtaining information from a representative selection of the population and from that sample the researcher is able to present the findings as being representative of the population as a whole (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Against this background, descriptive survey provided the current study with appropriate procedure for examining the drivers of women SMEs access to public procurement market in Kenya.

Target Population

According to Borg and Gall (2009), population is defined as the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research. Nairobi County has 175 registered Women SMEs which active and involved in public procurement (PPOA, 2015). The owner-managers targeted for information by this study because they are the decision makers in these businesses and are actively involved in their day to day operations. The City of Nairobi is home to a variety of Women SMEs who were a reasonable number of subjects for the purpose of this study. The population will be used as the respondents for this study to offer

information majorly about the challenges they face while trying to do business with the government. Since enterprises can be managed by managers employed to do so by the owners of the enterprise, they were seen as most appropriate to give out the required information by this study. Also, since the owners of the enterprises, that is, the entrepreneurs may act as managers of their business. In this sense, those who manage their own businesses were found to be information rich for the purpose of this study and therefore were targeted as respondents for the study.

Table 3.1: Target Population of the Study

| Category | Population | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------|
| Financial Services | 25 | 35.83% |
| Beauty Services | 122 | 40.54% |
| Professional services | 25 | 18.33% |
| Total | 175 | 100% |

Source: PPOA (2014)

Sampling Technique and Sampling Size

Orodho (2010) defines sampling as the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. Any statement made about a sample should also be true of the population. It is however agreed that the larger the sample the smaller the sampling error. The sample size depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources (Thompson, 2012). However, in this case the study adopted a census design since the population of the study is not a large one and manageable. Therefore sampling technique is not applicable owing to the suitable number of population which was easily accessible to the study.

Research Instruments & Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected using open and closed ended questionnaires. Closed ended questions was used because they are easier to analyse and administer, due to the restricted nature of the questions, and the uniformity that is enforced due to giving limited options for the answers. Open ended questions were included in the questionnaire as it allowed the interviewee to give depth to his or her response, as well as giving opinion on a matter. The questionnaires consisted of questions, which had both multiple choice and structured questions. The major purposes of the questionnaires were for primary data collection. The data collection procedure for the study begun by obtaining a letter from the University Department of EPD of JKUAT and introducing it to managers or entrepreneurs of the SMEs to permit the study to be carried out. The two research assistants will be recruited to assist in data collection. They were briefed on the ethical issues, process and procedures for administering and recording data prior to embarking on the study

Pilot Study

Gerson & Horowitz (2002) indicates that a pilot test is conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide proxy data for selection of a probability sample. According to (Orodho, 2003), a pilot study is conducted when a questionnaire is given to just a few people with an intention of pre-testing the questions. Pilot test is an activity that assists the research in determining if there are flaws, limitations, or other weaknesses within the interview design and allows him or her to make necessary revisions prior to the implementation of the study (Orodho, 2003). A pilot study was undertaken on 17 SMEs. The purpose of a pilot study was to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and enable the study to amend the questionnaire as appropriate so as to capture data accurately. According to Yin (2013) a pilot test of 10% of the population can be used for pilot testing. The findings of the pilot test were not included in the

actual study

Reliability of the instrument

Reliability is the consistency of measurement, or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects. (Cronbach, 1951). A measure is considered reliable if a person's score on the same test given twice is similar. It is important to remember that reliability is not measured, it is estimated. Reliability does not, however, imply validity because while a scale may be measuring something consistently, it may not necessarily be what it is supposed to be measuring. The study will use the most common internal consistency measure known as Cronbach's alpha (α). It indicates the extent to which a set of test items can be treated as measuring a single latent variable (Yin, 2013). The recommended value of 0.7 was used as a cut-off of reliabilities.

Validity of the research Instrument

Validity of the research instrument is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results.(Mugenda&Mugenda, 2008). According to Patton (2002) validity is the strength of the conclusions, inferences or propositions. It is the best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition or conclusion. Data need not only to be reliable but also true and accurate. If a measurement is valid, it is also reliable (Creswell, 2003). The research adopted Content Validity Index which refers to the extent to which a measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the topic under study. The Content Validity Index was achieved by subjecting the data collection instruments to an evaluation group of experts who provided their comments and relevance of each item of the instruments and the experts indicate whether the item was be relevant or not. The content validity formula by Amin (2005) to be used in this study. The formula is; Content Validity Index = (No. of judges declaring item valid) / (Total no. of items). It is recommended that instruments used in the study should have CVI of about 0.78 or higher and three or more experts can be considered evidence of good content validity (Amin, 2005).

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is a mechanism for reducing and organizing data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher (Yin, 2013). The data to be collected will be quantitative. Once the questionnaires were received they were coded and edited for completeness and consistency. To ensure easy analysis, the questionnaires were coded according to each variable of the study to ensure accuracy during analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics and inferential analysis using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 22. The study further adopted multiple regression model, F-test at 5% level of significance to establish the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variables (tendering processes, information accessibility, financial accessibility and legal & regulatory framework) and the dependent variable (Women SMEs access to public procurement market). The Women SMEs access to public procurement market was regressed against four independent variables. The equation was expressed as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon, \text{ Where;}$$

Y= Women Owned SMEs access to public procurement market; β_0 = constant (coefficient of intercept),

X_1 = Tendering process;

X_2 = Financial accessibility;

X_3 = Information accessibility

X_4 = Legal and regulatory framework;

ε = error term; $\beta_1 \dots \beta_4$ = regression coefficient of four variables. Descriptive statistics by use of standard deviation, percentages and frequency distribution will also be used to analyze data. Data

was presented in the form of frequency distribution tables, graphs and pie charts that facilitated description and explanation of the study findings. The findings were presented using tables, charts and graphs for further analysis and to facilitate comparison. This generated quantitative reports through tabulations, percentages, and measure of central tendency. Descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency and dispersion along with percentages were used to organize and summarize numerical data whose results were presented in tables, bar graphs for easy interpretation of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The study targeted a total population of 175 respondents from which 100 filled in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 57.14% as shown in Figure 4.1. This response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) states that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. Based on the findings of this study, the response rate was to the acceptable level for analysis. This high response rate can be attributed to the data collection procedures, where the researcher pre-notified the potential participants and applied the drop and pick method where the questionnaires were picked at a later date to allow the respondents ample time to fill the questionnaires. The response rate was therefore adequate for the study to make relevant conclusions basing on the responses.

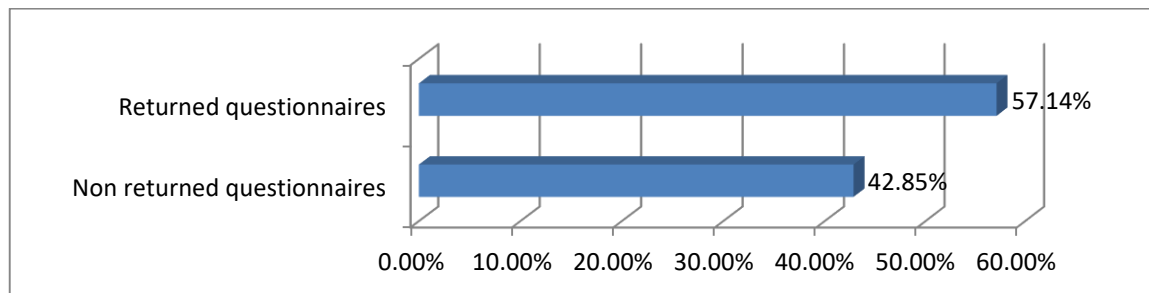


Figure 4.1: Response Rate

Pilot Test Results

A pilot study was carried out to determine reliability and validity of the questionnaires. The pilot study involved the sample respondents. Reliability analysis was subsequently done using Cronbach's Alpha which measured the internal consistency. Gliem & Gliem (2003) established the Alpha value threshold at 0.7, thus forming the study's benchmark. Cronbach Alpha was established for every objective which formed a scale. The Cronbach's alpha results were ranging between 0.795 and 0.911 and therefore the constructs were acceptable. Table 4.1 illustrates that all the four variables were reliable as their reliability values exceeded the prescribed threshold of 0.7. The content validity formula by Amin (2005) was used in this study to establish the validity of the research instrument. The formula is; $\text{Content Validity Index} = (\text{Number of judges declaring item valid}) / (\text{Total number of items})$. It is recommended that instruments used in research should have CVI of about 0.78 or higher and three or more experts could be considered evidence of good content validity (Amin, 2005). From the results in Table 4.2, it illustrates that all the four variables were valid as their CVI values exceeded the prescribed threshold of 0.78 as emphasized by Amin (2005).

Table 4.1: Reliability Test Results

| Scale | Cronbach's Alpha | CVI | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------|----------|
| Tendering Process | .850 | .889 | Accepted |
| Information Accessibility | .885 | .989 | Accepted |
| Financial accessibility | .795 | .878 | Accepted |
| Legal & regulatory framework | .798 | .798 | Accepted |
| Access to public procurement market | .911 | .900 | Accepted |

Tendering Process

The first objective of the study was to establish how tendering processes influence women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate whether the pre-qualification evaluation affect number of tenders applied for the SMEs. As illustrated in Figure 4.3, the study results show that 45% of the respondents indicated that it enhance efficiency of the procurement process, 26% of the respondents stated that it reduces procurement cycle, 14% of the respondents stated that it creates fairness for the business and 13% of the respondents stated that it enhance transparency levels. The findings corroborated with findings by Simpson and Power (2007) that high level of tendering processes with procurement regulations compliance in the public procurement market in developing nations hampers effective execution of procurement functions and participation, hinders key impediments towards effective access to public procurement market in East Africa.

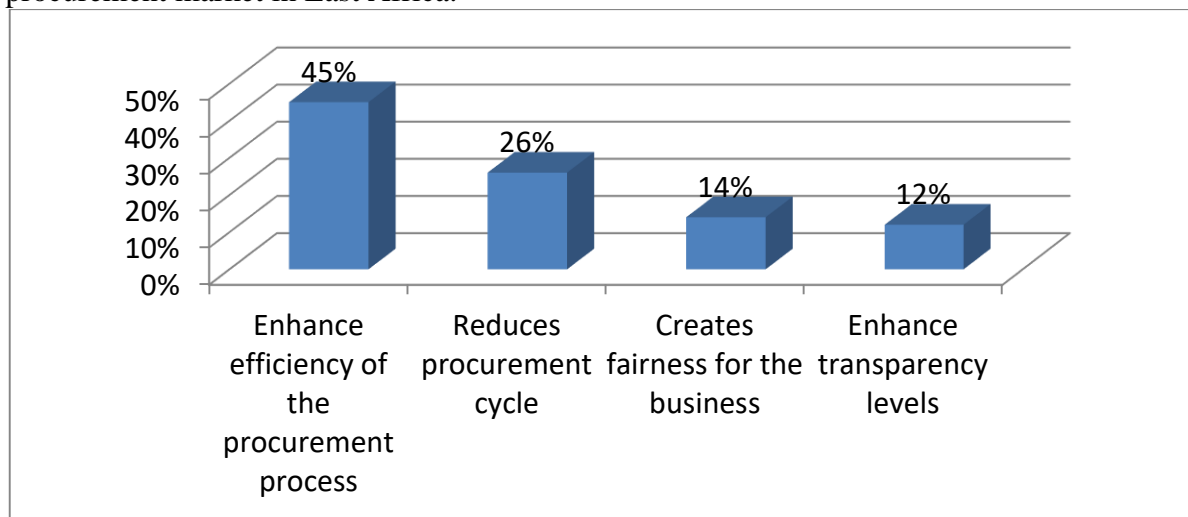


Figure 4.3: Pre-Qualification Evaluation Affect Number Of Tenders Applied

Respondents were requested to indicate how pre-qualification evaluation affects number of tenders won by the SMEs in the public procurement market. The study established that it enhance business to identify the reliable tenders, 34% of the respondents stated that it encourage competition from bidders, 26% of the respondents stated that it creates fairness for the business and 12% of the respondents stated that it leads to a higher chance of getting best offer. The findings corroborated with findings by Arthur (2009) notes that many women SMEs in Kenyan lack competitive knowledge and skills on how to formulate and embrace effective procurement policies in public procurement market in Kenya. The study, therefore, deduced that the key procurement policy factors that affect access to women owned SMEs in the procurement market in Kenya includes; level of procurement regulations compliance, prequalification

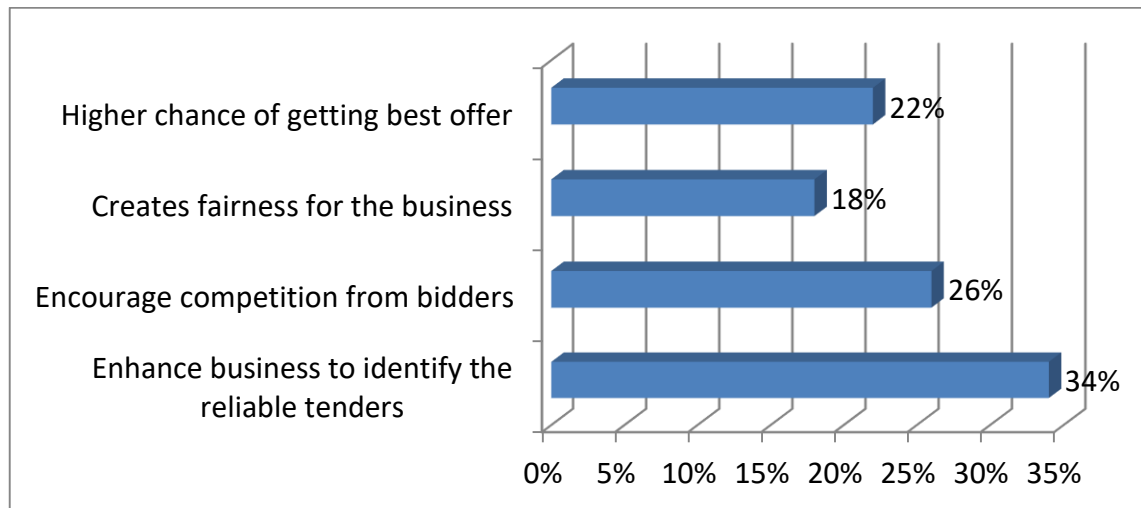


Figure 4.4: Pre-qualification evaluation affect number of tenders won

The study went further to find out how bureaucratic processes affect number of tenders applied for the SMEs in the study area. According to Figure 4.5, 35% of the respondents stated that it affects efficiency of the procurement process, 30% of the respondents stated that it reduces procurement cycle, 20% of the respondents indicated that it creates unfairness for the business and 15% of the respondents stated that it hinder transparency levels. The findings corroborated with findings by Tanzi (2009) notes that bureaucratic processes and lack of top management support hinders key impediments towards access to public procurement market in East Africa. Arthur (2009) notes that many procurement the level of procurement regulations compliance, type of procurement policies, management support, procurement procedures, relationship between management, organizational resources and policy-making process due to stringent bureaucratic processes hinders their participation in public procurement market.

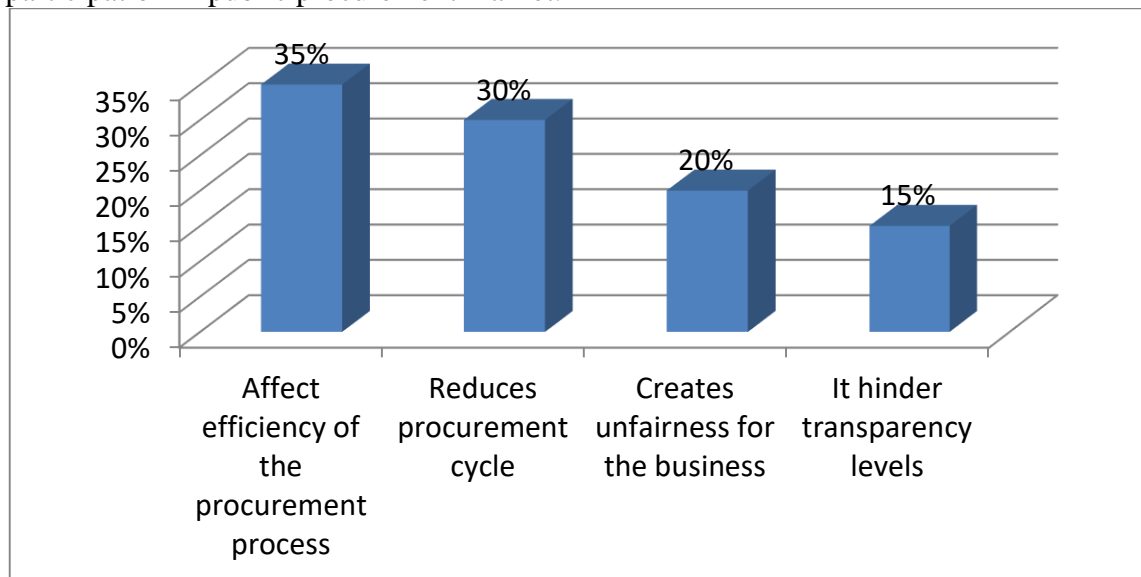


Figure 4.5: Bureaucratic Processes Affect Number Of Tenders Applied

The respondents were requested to find out how bureaucratic processes affect number of tenders won in the study area. According to study findings in Figure 4.6, 25% of the respondents stated that it ddiscourage the business to identify the reliable tenders, 30% of the respondents indicated that it does not encourage competition from bidders, 23% of the respondents stated that it creates unfairness for the business and 22% of the respondents indicated that it does not offer chance of getting best

offer. The findings corroborated with findings by Tanzi (2009) notes that bureaucratic processes and lack of top management support hinders key impediments towards access to public procurement market in East Africa. Arthur (2009) notes that many procurement the level of procurement regulations compliance, type of procurement policies, management support, procurement procedures, relationship between management, organizational resources and policy-making process due to stringent bureaucratic processes hinders their participation in public procurement market.

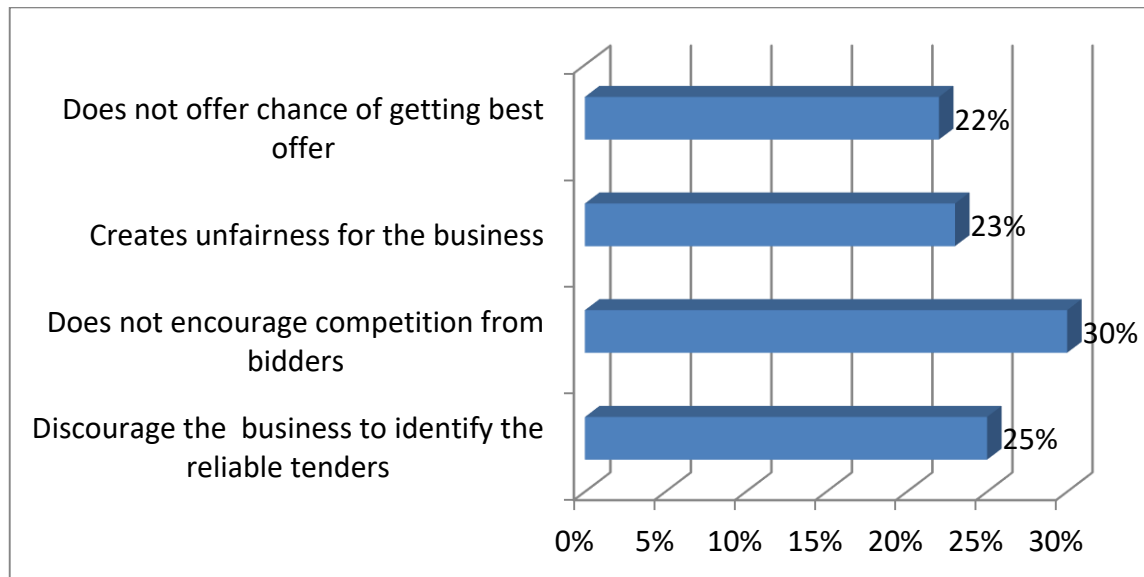


Figure 4.6: Bureaucratic Processes Affect Number Of Tenders Won
Information Accessibility

The second objective of the study was to establish how information accessibility influences women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya. The study established that ICT application increase number of tenders applied for as 39% of the respondents stated that 39% of the respondents stated that it enhance efficiency of the procurement process, 30% of the respondents indicated that it reduces procurement cycle, 25% of the respondents indicated that it creates fairness for the business and 15% of the respondents stated that it enhance transparency levels. The findings concur with those of Moyi *et al.* (2009) who observed that Women owned MSEs have limited means in obtaining effective and relevant information on market availability to enable them market or sell their products. According to Moyi *et al.*, even though such information should be provided by centers that include Chambers of Commerce, MSE development agencies, and associations as well as trade, industry and tourism bureaus, many of these are not within easy reach of most MSEs.

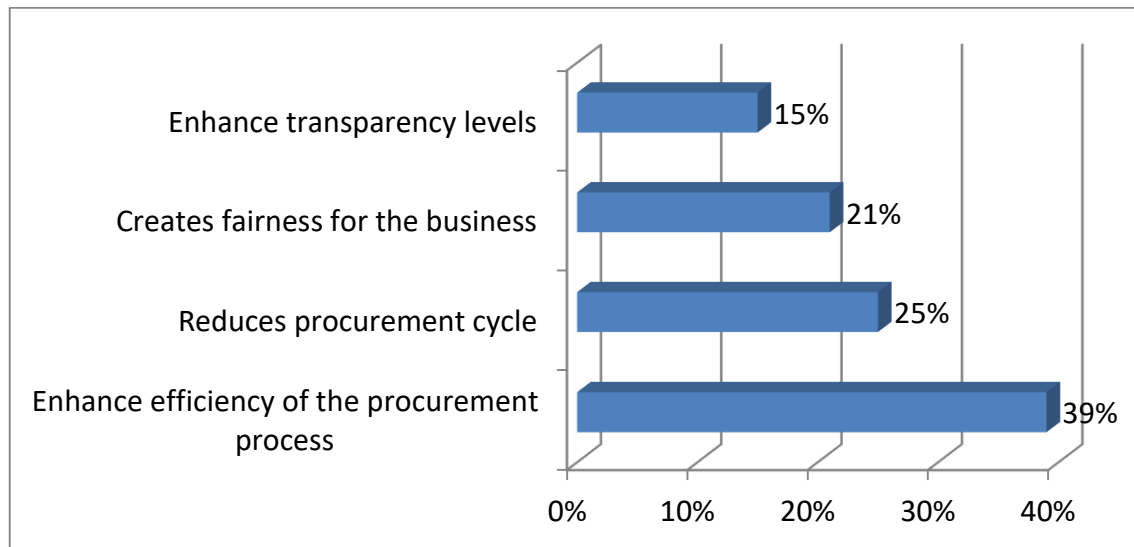


Figure 4.7: ICT Application Increase Number Of Tenders Applied For

The study requested respondents to indicate whether ICT application increase number of tenders won by the SMEs in the study area. As illustrated in Figure 4.8, 35% of the respondents stated that it enhance business to identify the reliable tenders, 28% of the respondents indicated that it encourage fair competition from bidders, 22% of the respondents stated that it leads to improvement in market and competition and 15% of the respondents stated that it can lead to promotion of integrity, transparency and accountability levels. The findings concur with those of Moyi *et al.* (2006) who observed that MSEs have limited means in obtaining effective and relevant information on market availability to enable them market or sell their products. According to Moyi *et al.*, even though such information should be provided by centers that include Chambers of Commerce, MSE development agencies, and associations as well as trade, industry and tourism bureaus, many of these are not within easy reach of most MSEs. The women entrepreneurs need to be trained on the application of the ICT to enhance their chances of participation on the public procurement market in Kenya.

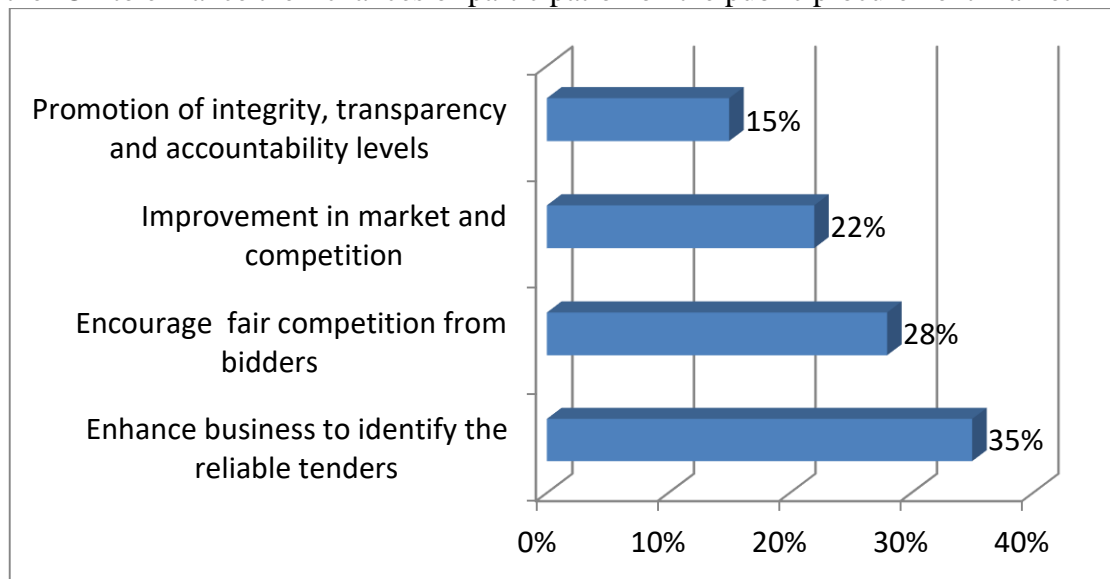


Figure 4.8: ICT Application On Number Of Tenders Won

The respondents were kindly requested to indicate whether networking influence affect the number of tenders applied for by the SMEs in the study area. As illustrated in Figure 4.9, 34% of the respondents stated that it enhance provision or quality management information, 25% of the

respondents stated that it reduces information costs, 14% of the respondents stated it reduces procurement cycle, 10% of the respondents creates fairness for the business and 17% of the respondents indicated it facilitates transparency levels. Again, the above results corroborate the findings of an Economic Recovery Strategy Paper (2003) which identified poor infrastructure as a critical factor that constrains profitable business in Kenya. The strategy paper also identified the poor state of the country's ICT network, inaccessibility of print, electronic and other communication networks in rural areas, absence of power connections and other utilities as negatively affecting small businesses in the country. In conclusion, inadequacy of physical infrastructure is identified as a principal cause of low levels of investment and unsatisfactory performance of SMEs. However, it is notable that tremendous efforts have been made to improve ICT infrastructure in the last two decades.

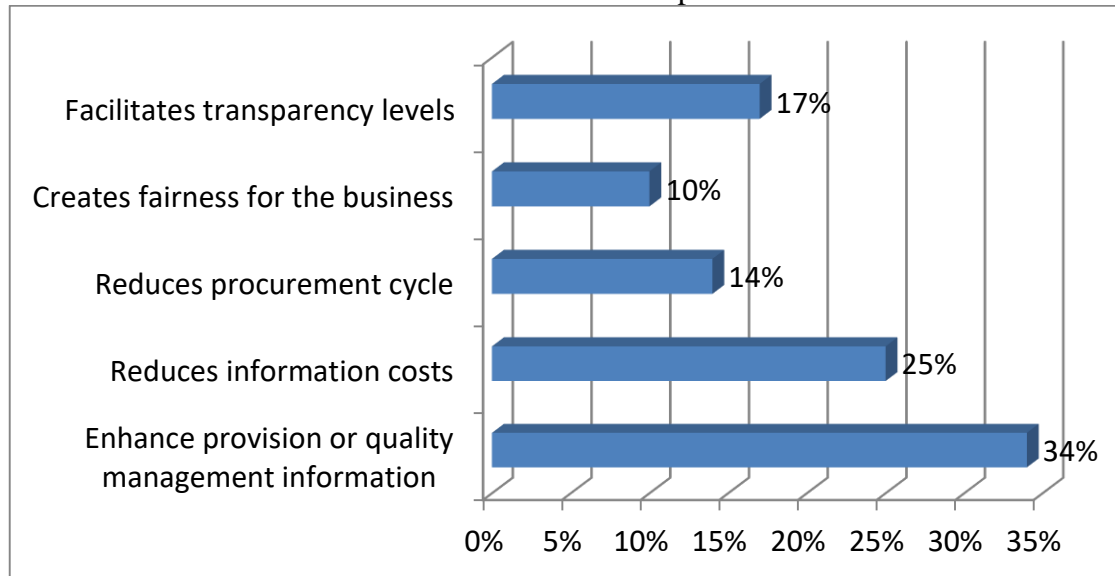


Figure 4.9: Networking On Number Of Tenders Applied For

The study sought to find out whether networking influence number of tenders won by the SMEs in the public procurement market. As illustrated in Figure 4.10, 25% of the respondents stated that they enhance provision or quality management information, 35% of the respondents stated that it reduces information costs, 14% of the respondents stated that it reduces procurement cycle, 16% of the respondents stated that it creates fairness for the business and 10% of the respondents stated that it facilitates transparency levels. The findings concur with those of Moyi *et al.* (2009) who observed that Women owned MSEs have limited means in obtaining effective and relevant information on market availability to enable them market or sell their products. According to Moyi *et al.*, even though such information should be provided by centers that include Chambers of Commerce, MSE development agencies, and associations as well as trade, industry and tourism bureaus, many of these are not within easy reach of most MSEs.

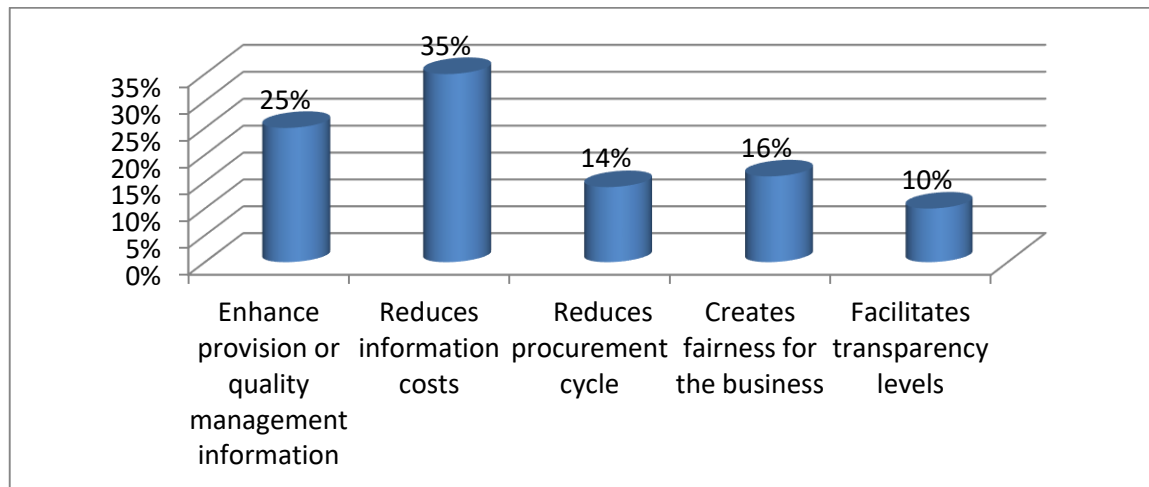


Figure 4.10: Networking On Number Of Tenders Won

Financial Accessibility

The third objective of the study was to establish how financial accessibility influence women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya. As illustrated in Figure 4.11 on how lack of access to credit affect number of tenders applied for the SMEs, 28% of the respondents stated that it affects technology choice by limiting the number of alternatives to be considered, 20% of the respondents stated that it affects reliability on higher cost of short term finance, 28% of the respondents stated that it affects efficiency of the procurement process, 16% of the respondents indicated that it creates unfairness for the business and 15% of the respondents stated that it affects transparency levels. This finding is in agreement with the conclusions of another study by Mwania, (2011) on the effect of *Biashara Boresha* Loan (BBL) on the performance of micro and small enterprises owned by Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) Ruiru branch. Mwania concluded that infant businesses need support in their early years when their motivation is high and innovation is low and that collateral requirements at KCB Ruiru should be made a bit flexible and repayment period should be increased to at least a year because SMEs only manage to access a small amount of loan due to short repayment periods.

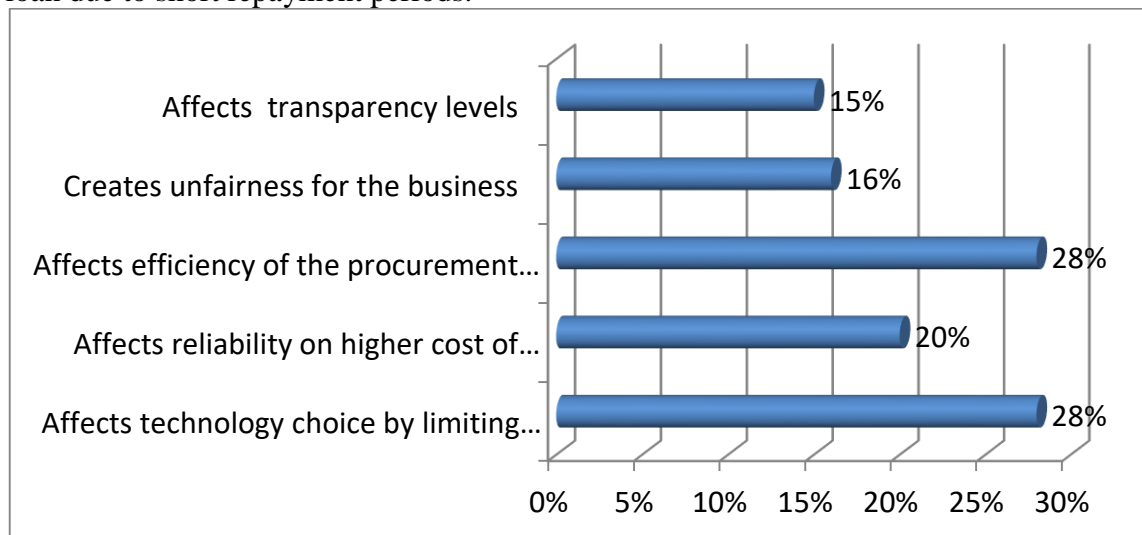


Figure 4.11: Networking On Number Of Tenders Won

According to Figure 4.12 on how lack of access to credit increase number of tenders won by the SMEs, 34% of the respondents stated that it discourages the business to identify the reliable tenders, 26% of the respondents stated that it does not encourage competition from bidders, 30% of the

respondents indicated that it creates unfairness for the business and 10% of the respondents stated that it does not offer chance of getting best offer. This finding is in agreement with the conclusions of another study by Mwanja, (2011) on the effect of *Biashara Boresha* Loan (BBL) on the performance of micro and small enterprises owned by Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) Ruiru branch. Mwanja concluded that infant businesses need support in their early years when their motivation is high and innovation is low and that collateral requirements at KCB Ruiru should be made a bit flexible and repayment period should be increased to at least a year because SMEs only manage to access a small amount of loan due to short repayment periods.

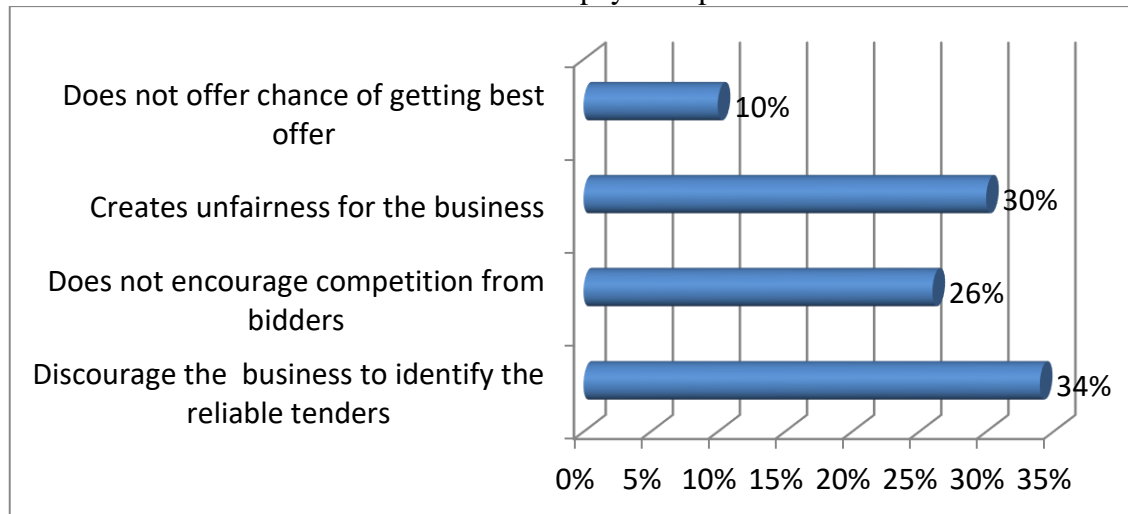


Figure 4.12: Access To Credit Increase Number Of Tenders Won

The study went further to find out whether the lack of collateral affect number of tenders applied for by the SMEs in the public procurement market. As established in Figure 4.13, 34% of the respondents stated that it affects technology choice by limiting the number of alternatives to be considered, 22% of the respondents indicated that it affects reliability on higher cost of short term finance, 18% of the respondents posited that it affects efficiency of the procurement process, 12% of the respondents stated that it creates unfairness for the business and 14% of the respondents indicated that it affects transparency levels. Again, this is in agreement with the findings of Mwanja (2011) that the process of securing funds for women owned SMEs is cumbersome. Some felt that after providing the necessary documentation, the time taken to approve such loans was unnecessarily long and anti-business. According to some of the respondents, while loan approval takes long, government tenders comes with very strict timelines which automatically leads to disqualification if not adhered to. When they receive such moneys after the expiry of a tender period, there is the likelihood that such moneys will be used for other purposes other than the intended one and repayment becomes a challenge compounding the problem even further. Hence, if enterprises can't access funds in time, they can't do business with the government.

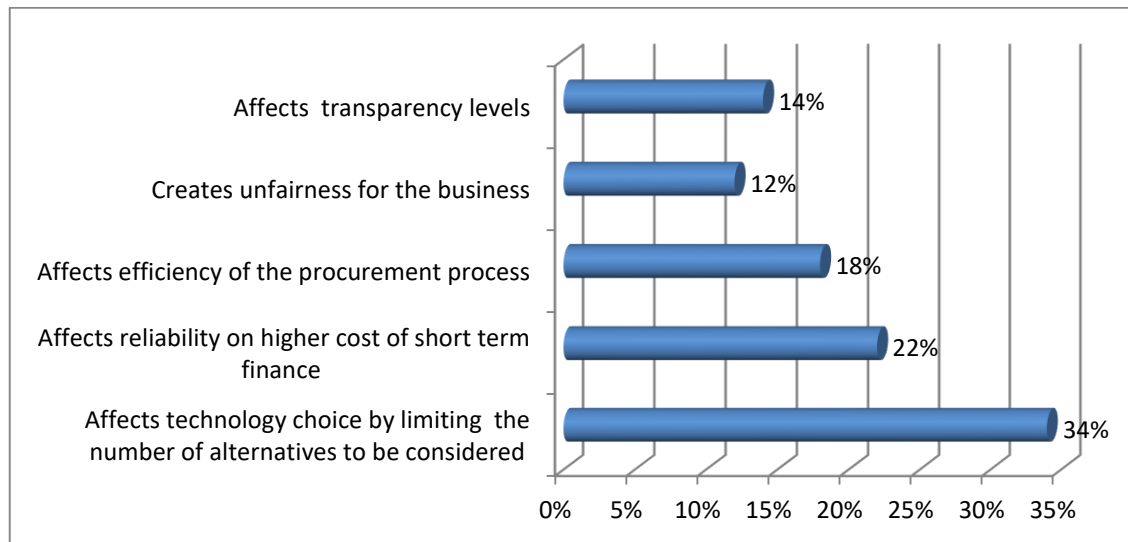


Figure 4.13: Lack Of Collateral Affect Number Of Tenders Applied For

The study went further to find out how lack of collateral affects number of tenders won by the SMEs in the study area. As established from the study results in Figure 4.14, 38% of the respondents stated that it discourages the business to identify the reliable tenders, 24% of the respondents stated that it does not encourage competition from bidders, 18% of the respondents stated that it creates unfairness for the business and 20% of the respondents posited that it does not offer chance of getting best offer. These findings agree with those of Mwanja (2011), Mugo (2012) and Kinyua (2014) that finance affects performance of SMEs since finance aspect is key in any business. That the process of securing funds for women owned SMEs is cumbersome. Some felt that after providing the necessary documentation, the time taken to approve such loans was unnecessarily long and anti-business. According to some of the respondents, while loan approval takes long, government tenders come with very strict timelines which automatically leads to disqualification if not adhered to

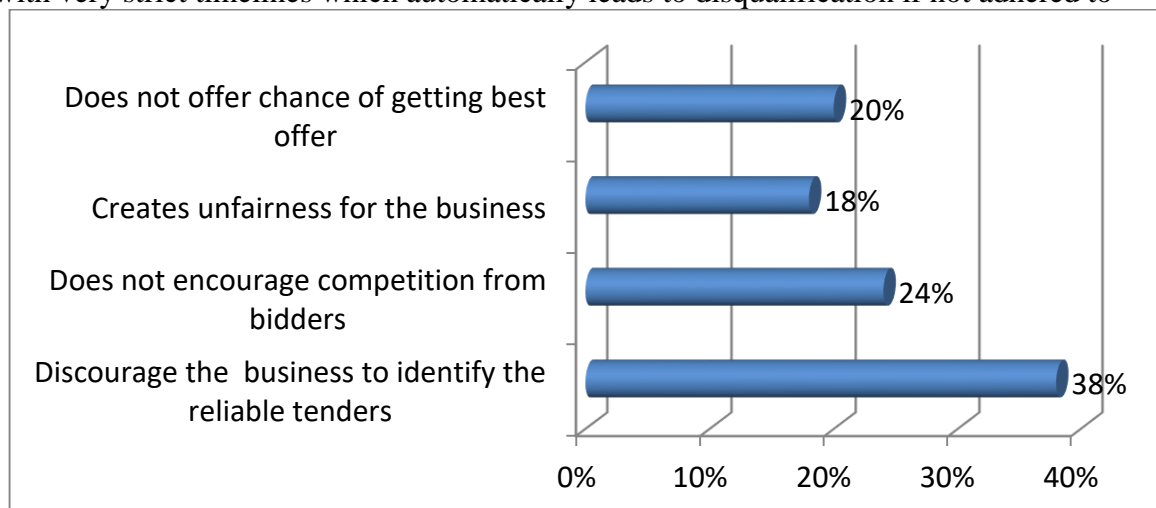


Figure 4.14: Lack Of Collateral Affect Number Of Tenders Won

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The fourth objective of the study was to establish how financial accessibility influence women small and medium enterprises access to public procurement market in Kenya. According to figure 4.15, the study established that politics affect number of tenders applied for by the SMEs in the study area. It was found out that 28% of the respondents stated that it affects technology choice by limiting the

number of alternatives to be considered, 26% of the respondents indicated that it affects reliability on higher cost of short term finance, 18% of the respondents stated that it affects efficiency of the procurement process and 16% of the respondents stated that it creates unfairness for the business. This concurs with a study by Moyi *et al.* (2006) who established that the role of government is one of providing an enabling business environment that ensures access to markets and reduces policy-induced biases against SMEs. However, more needs to be done to encouraged MSEs to do business with the government especially after a study by USAID (2011) established that the national policy and regulatory environment have an important impact on technology and other important decisions made at the enterprise level.

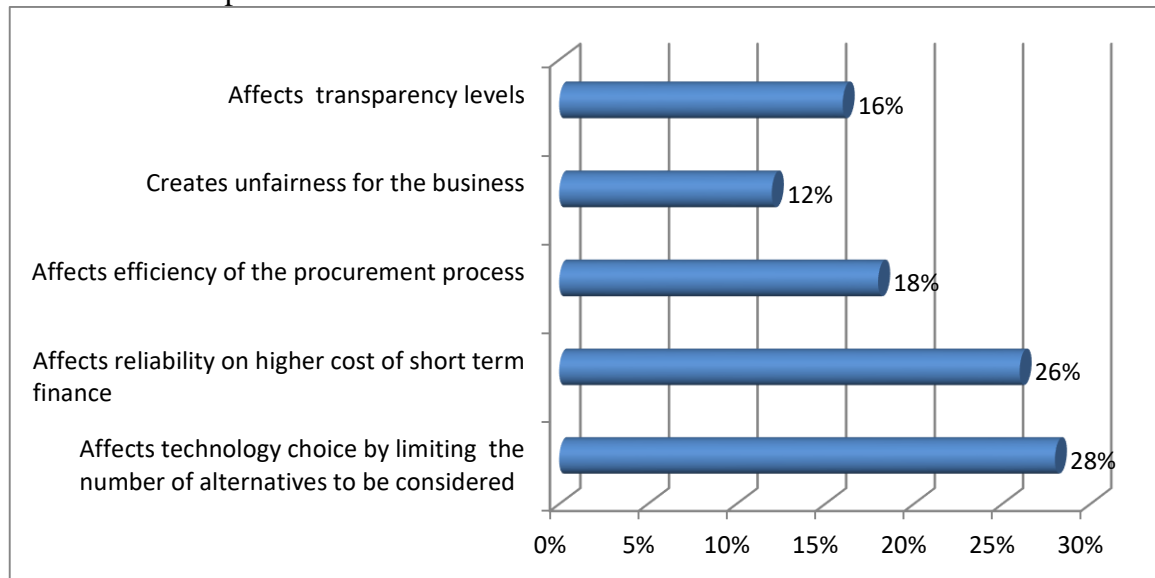


Figure 4.15: Politics And Number Of Tenders Applied For

The study sought to find out from the respondents whether the politics affect the number of tenders won by the SMEs in the public procurement market. As illustrated in Figure 4.16, 34% of the respondents stated that it discourage the business to identify the reliable tenders, 16% of the respondents stated that it does not encourage competition from bidders, 24% of the respondents stated that it creates unfairness for the business and 26% of the respondents stated that does not offer chance of getting best offer. he findings corroborated with findings by Simpson and Power (2007) that low level of procurement regulations compliance in many public training institutions in developing nations hampers effective execution of procurement functions and implementation of institutional

development projects. Tanzi (2009) notes that application of poor procurement policies and lack of top management support hinders key impediments towards effective implementation of procurement practices in many government institutions in East Africa. The study, therefore, deduced that the key procurement policy factors that affect effective implementation of procurement practices in women owned SMEs in Kenya includes; level of procurement regulations compliance, type of procurement policies, management support, procurement procedures, relationship between management, organizational resources and policy-making process.

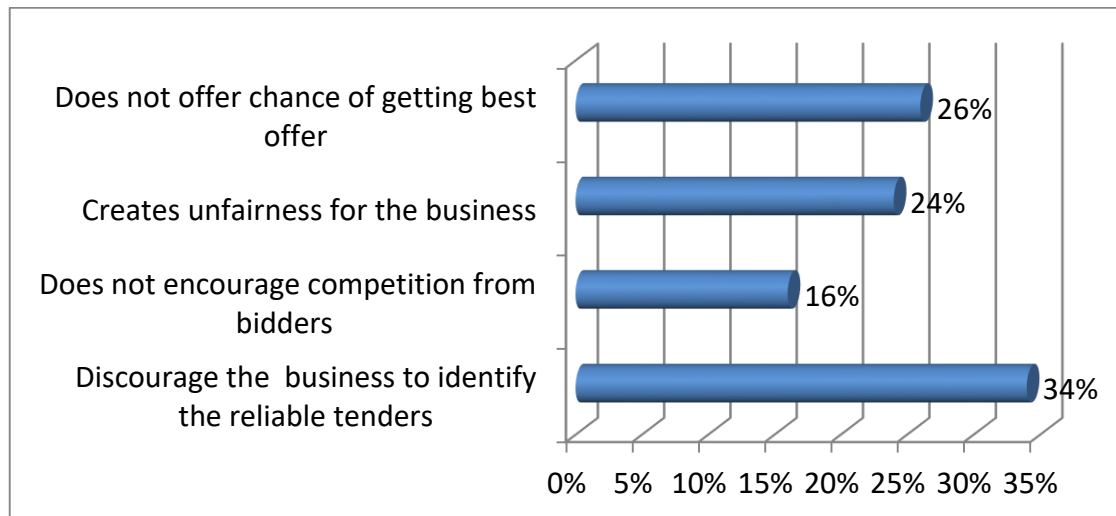


Figure 4.16: Politics And Number Of Tenders Won

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the lack of public contracting policy affect number of tenders applied for by the SMEs. According to figure 4.17, 30% of the respondents stated that it affects technology choice by limiting the number of alternatives to be considered, 24% of the respondents stated that it affects reliability on higher cost of short term finance, 20% of the respondents indicated that it affects efficiency of the procurement process, 14% of the respondents stated that it creates unfairness for the business and 12% of the respondents stated that it affects transparency levels. The findings corroborated with findings by Arthur (2009) notes that many procurement managers in Kenyan state corporations lack competitive knowledge and skills on how to formulate and embrace effective procurement policies in many public institutions in Kenya. The study, therefore, deduced that the key procurement policy factors that affect effective implementation of procurement practices in tertiary public training institutions in Kenya includes; level of procurement regulations compliance, type of procurement policies, management support, procurement procedures, relationship between management, organizational resources and policy-making process.

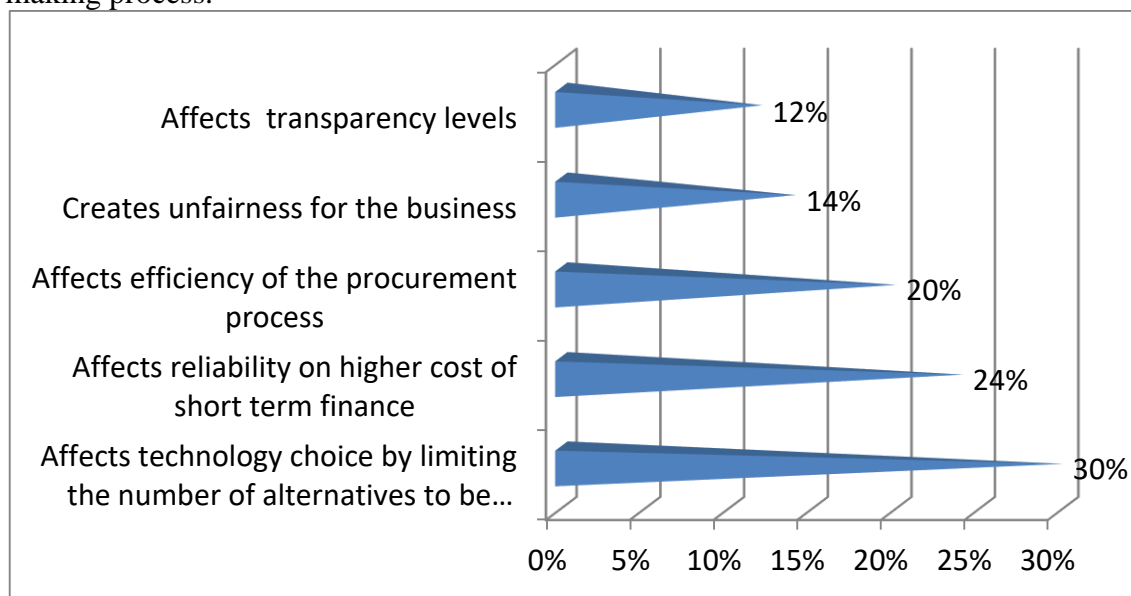


Figure 4.17: Public Contracting Policy Affect Number Of Tenders Applied For

The study went further to find out whether lack of public contracting policy affect number of tenders

won the SMEs. As illustrated in Figure 4.18, 36% of the respondents stated that it discourage the business to identify the reliable tenders, 22% of the respondents indicated that it does not encourage competition from bidders, 24% of the respondents stated that it creates unfairness for the business and 18% of the respondents stated that it does not offer chance of getting best offer. This concurs with a study by Moyi *et al.* (2006) who established that the role of government is one of providing an enabling business environment that ensures access to markets and reduces policy-induced biases against MSEs. However, more needs to be done to encouraged MSEs to do business with the government especially after a study by USAID (2011) established that the national policy and regulatory environment have an important impact on technology and other important decisions made at the enterprise level.

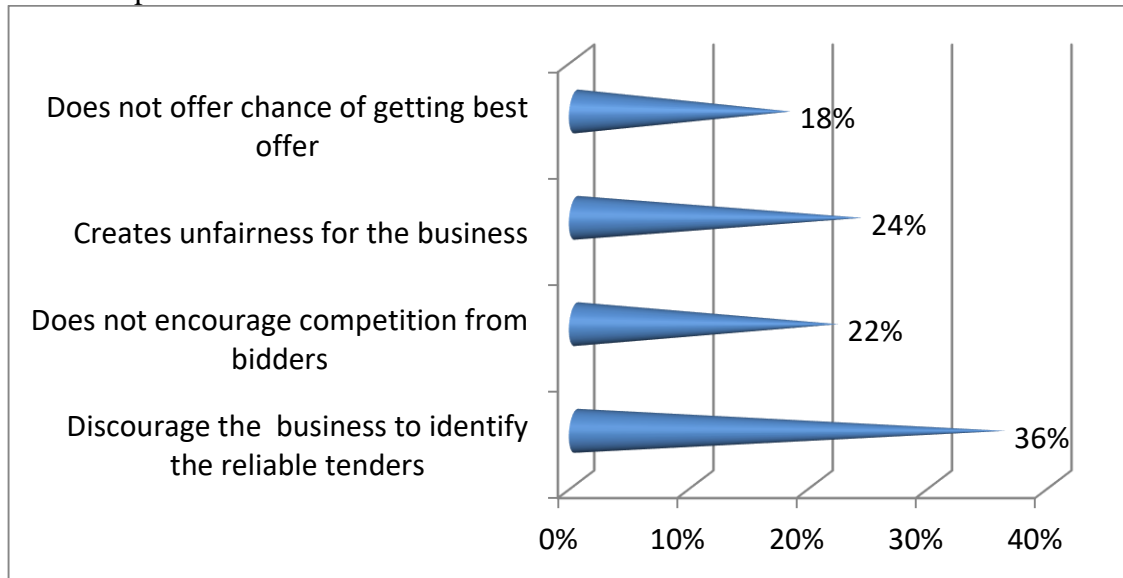


Figure 4.18: Public Contracting Policy Affect Number Of Tenders Won

4.9. Access To Public Procurement Market

The study went further to establish from the respondents to indicate the number of applications made to the public procurement market for the last five years. The study findings are as shown in Table 4.6 The study established that majority (43%) of the respondents indicated that the 1 application in year 2011; 40% indicated 3 applications in the year 2014 while 38% % indicated 5 applications in the year 2014 and 34% of the respondents indicated that 43% stated 15 applications in the year 2015. This implies a low increase of the number of applications made by the women owned SMEs to the public procurement markets for the last five years.

Table 4.6: Number Of Applications

| Applications | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | |
|--------------|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|
| | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| 1 | 19 | 27 | 26 | 37 | 29 | 41 | 44 | 63 | 26 | 37 |
| 3 | 20 | 29 | 13 | 18 | 15 | 21 | 33 | 47 | 50 | 71 |
| 5 | 22 | 31 | 26 | 37 | 29 | 41 | 25 | 36 | 34 | 49 |
| 10 | 20 | 29 | 15 | 21 | 27 | 39 | 26 | 37 | 19 | 27 |
| 15 | 25 | 36 | 22 | 31 | 19 | 27 | 16 | 23 | 12 | 17 |
| Over 15 | 29 | 41 | 20 | 29 | 24 | 34 | 9 | 13 | 6 | 9 |

The study went further to establish from the respondents to indicate the number of tenders won in the public procurement market for the last five years. The study findings are as shown in Table 4.7,

the study established that majority (23%) of the respondents indicated that the 3 tenders in the year 2011; 40% indicated 3 tenders in the year 2014 while 38% % indicated 5 tenders in the year 2014 and 34% of the respondents indicated that 43% stated 15 tenders in the year 2015. This implies a low increase of the number of tenders won in the years by the women owned SMES in the public procurement market for the last five years.

Table 4.7: Number Of Tenders Won

| | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | |
|---------|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|
| | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| 0 | 17 | 24 | 23 | 33 | 26 | 36 | 39 | 55 | 23 | 33 |
| 3 | 18 | 26 | 11 | 16 | 13 | 18 | 29 | 41 | 44 | 62 |
| 5 | 19 | 27 | 23 | 33 | 26 | 36 | 22 | 32 | 30 | 43 |
| 10 | 18 | 26 | 13 | 18 | 24 | 34 | 23 | 33 | 17 | 24 |
| 15 | 22 | 32 | 19 | 27 | 17 | 24 | 14 | 20 | 11 | 15 |
| Over 15 | 26 | 36 | 18 | 26 | 21 | 30 | 8 | 11 | 5 | 8 |

Multiple Regression Analysis

In addition, the researcher conducted a multiple regression analysis so as to test relationship among variables (independent) on the Access to public procurement market. The study applied the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS V. 22) to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions for the study. According to the model summary Table 4.8, R is the correlation coefficient which shows the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. It is notable that there exists a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable as shown by R value (0.867). The coefficient of determination (R^2) explains the extent to which changes in the dependent variable can be explained by the change in the independent variables or the percentage of variation in the dependent variable and the four independent variables that were studied explain 75.20% of the access to public procurement market as represented by the R^2 . This therefore means that other factors not studied in this research contribute 13.30% to the access to public procurement market. This implies that these variables are very significant therefore need to be considered in any effort to boost women owned SMEs access to public procurement market in the study area. The study therefore identifies variables as critical determinants of women owned SMEs access to public procurement market in the study area.

Table 4.8: Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .867 | .752 | .643 | .023 |

Further, the study revealed that the significance value is 0.001 which is less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significant in predicting how tendering process, information accessibility, financial accessibility, legal and regulatory framework affect women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. The F critical at 5% level of significance was 11.543. Since F calculated (45.876) is greater than the F critical (value = 11.543), this shows that the overall model was significant.

Table 4.9: ANOVA

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 32.543 | 4 | 4.245 | 45.876 | .001 ^a |
| | Residual | 33.765 | 95 | .1683 | | |
| | Total | 66.308 | 99 | | | |

NB: F-critical Value = 11.543; **Predictors: (Constant):** Tendering Process, Information Accessibility, Financial Accessibility, Legal & Regulatory Framework

The study ran the procedure of obtaining the regression coefficients, and the results were as shown on the Table 4.10. Multiple regression analysis was conducted as to determine the relationship between women owned SMEs access to public procurement market and the four variables. According to the regression equation established, taking all factors into account (Tendering process, information accessibility, financial accessibility, legal and regulatory framework) constant at zero women owned SMEs access to public procurement market was 25.876. The data findings analyzed also shows that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in tendering process will lead to a 0.887 increase in women owned SMEs access to public procurement market.; a unit increase in information accessibility will lead to a 0.786 increase in women owned SMEs access to public procurement market, a unit increase in financial accessibility will lead to 0.654 increase in women owned SMEs access to public procurement market and a unit increase in legal & regulatory framework will lead to 0.581 increase in women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. This infers that access to tendering process contributed most to women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. At 5% level of significance, tendering process had a 0.002 level of significance; information accessibility show a 0.003 level of significance, financial accessibility show a 0.004 level of significance and legal & regulatory framework show a 0.009 level of significance hence the most significant factor was tendering process.

Table 4.10: Regression Coefficient Results

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | P-value. |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|----------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 25.876 | .223 | | 2.615 | .007 |
| Tendering Process | .887 | .293 | .602 | 7.098 | .002 |
| Information accessibility | .786 | .150 | .554 | 6.087 | .003 |
| Financial accessibility | .654 | .247 | .416 | 5.008 | .004 |
| Legal & regulatory framework | .587 | .273 | .403 | 4.546 | .009 |

As per the SPSS generated table below, the model equation would be ($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \epsilon$) becomes: $Y = 25.876 + 0.887X_1 + 0.786X_2 + 0.654X_3 + 0.581X_4$. This indicates that Women owned SMEs access to public procurement market = $25.876 + 0.887(\text{Tendering process}) + 0.786(\text{Information Accessibility}) + 0.654(\text{Financial accessibility}) + 0.581(\text{Legal \& regulatory framework})$.

Conclusion of the study

Based on the study findings, the study concludes women owned SMEs access to public procurement market is affected by tendering process, information accessibility, information accessibility, legal & regulatory framework are the major factors that mostly affect women owned SMEs access to public procurement market in Kenya.

The study concludes that tendering process is the first important factor that affects women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. The regression coefficients of the study show that tendering process has a significant influence of 0.887 on women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. This implies that increasing levels of tendering process by a unit would increase the levels of women owned SMEs access to public procurement market by 0.887 This shows that tendering process has a positive influence on women owned SMEs access to public procurement market

Information accessibility is the second important factors that affect women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. The regression coefficients of the study show that information accessibility has a significant influence of 0.786 on women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. This implies that increasing levels of information accessibility by a unit would increase the levels of women owned SMEs access to public procurement market by 0.654. This shows that information accessibility has a positive influence on women owned SMEs access to public procurement market.

In addition, the study established that financial accessibility is the third important factor that affect women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. The regression coefficients of the study show that financial accessibility has a significant influence of 0.654 on women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. This implies that increasing levels of financial accessibility by a unit would increase the women owned SMEs access to public procurement market by 0.654. This shows that financial accessibility has a positive influence on women owned SMEs access to public procurement market.

Finally, the study concludes that legal and regulatory framework is the third important factor that

affects women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. The regression coefficients of the study show that legal and regulatory framework has a significant influence of 0.587 on women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. This implies that increasing levels of legal and regulatory framework by a unit would increase the levels of women owned SMEs access to public procurement market by 0.587. This shows legal and regulatory framework has a positive influence on women owned SMEs access to public procurement market.

Recommendations of the study

The study recommends for changes to be implemented in tendering process to enhance women owned SMEs access to public procurement market. The pre-qualification evaluation, reduction of bureaucratic processes in order to enhance efficiency of the procurement process, reduces procurement cycle, creates fairness for the business and enhances transparency levels. There is need for the entrepreneurs to source for source of information on the tenders available in the public market. They need to be techno savvy as ICT application increase number of tenders applied for in their SMEs. It was established that it enhances efficiency of the procurement process, reduces procurement cycle, creates fairness for the business and enhance transparency levels. This can encourage fair competition from bidders, improvement in market and competition and it encourage promotion of integrity, transparency and accountability levels. The networking influence increase the number of tenders applied for by the SMEs as it enhance provision or quality management information, reduces information costs and facilitates transparency levels for the women SMEs

There is need for ensuring that women owned can easily access the required finances to finance their enterprises to compete in the public procurement market. Access to credit and offering adequate collateral can enhance access to public procurement market; following the conclusions drawn from a determination of how financial accessibility affects SMEs' participation in public procurement market, this study recommends that the government should increase its funding opportunities to women owned SMEs to boost their business activities. Government agencies charged with the responsibility of funding women SMEs, commercial banks and other financial institutions should relax their lending conditions to enable many Women SMEs who lack some of the requirements like securities, guarantors, years of experience, operational bank accounts and many more access those funds.

The regulatory and policy environment and recommends that the government should educate the women owned SMEs about the existing legal and policy framework that control and direct the management of public procurement and SMEs operations in this country. The government should strictly implement the provisions of the Public Procurement and Disposal Act (PPDA) of 2015 and MSE Act of 2012 to ensure SMEs benefit from preferential treatment envisaged in Section 2 of the PPDA. The government should think of revising the laws and policies which govern public procurement in Kenya to remove unnecessary procedures in public procurement process and make the laws easy to understand and operationalize the women owned SMEs.

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