

**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

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