

Moral Schemas and Corruption in Ugandan Public Procurement

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Abstract This study investigates the relationship between moral schemas and corruption in public procurement. It adopts a moral schema framework to examine procurement-induced corruption from Uganda. Experiences, attitudes, and values of respondents are used to construct future behavior of public procurement staff. The schema framework was built around the premise that procurement-related corruption is a function of the social framework and human nature paradox, constructing logical justification for the acts of corruption. The study uses data from 474 public procurement staff to demonstrate that social identity, ethical egoistic, legislative, amoral, and religious moral schemas account for 78.51% of the variance in moral schema of respondents. All these schemas were found to be significant predictors, accounting for 73.3% of public procurement corruption. The paper urges managers of procuring and disposing entities to utilize moral scripts in reducing corruption. Managers are encouraged to engage in morally responsible behaviors to promote ethics and value-for-money transactions. The paper provides an alternative framework for examining

corruption in sub-Saharan Africa where explicit elaboration of insights on corruption is still lacking.

Keywords Moral schemas · Corruption · Uganda · Ethics · Social values · Religious values

Introduction

The public procurement profession continues to suffer from high level incidence of immoral conduct (Ntayi et al. 2010). In Uganda, it is estimated that approximately \$107Million is lost annually to corruption, mostly through public procurement-related transactions (Mugazi 2005). Procurement-related corruption refers to the deviant behavior which manifests itself in abuse of public procurement to favor a certain supplier, “occurring on one’s own or the other’s initiative in order to achieve an advantage for oneself or a third party” (Rabl and Kuhlmann 2009, p. 268).

The World Bank (1998, p. ix) notes that “abuse of the procurement function occurs at preparation of tender documents, advertising of tenders, bid opening, evaluation, approval, contract award and in contract execution. Officers responsible for procurement may find ways to circumvent the guidelines governing the thresholds for competitive bidding; tenders may be structured to favor particular suppliers, bidders may attempt to exert improper influence on board members, or officials and contractors may collude during project implementation to unjustifiably escalate project costs”. Ware and Noone (2003) have revealed that kickbacks are a common feature in public procurement in developing countries. Kickbacks typically occur when a company that wins a public contract to supply goods or construct a road, kicks back a bribe to a

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public servant who influenced the award of the contract to that company.

National Integrity Survey Report (2002, 2006), reveals a presence of bid rigging in public procurement. This usually happens when a public procurement officer writes certain requirements into the technical specifications of the bidding document or by providing inside information to a favored bidder. For example, some companies are assisted by staff handling the procurement process to submit bids bearing low prices with an intention of revising the values once the contract is awarded. In such circumstances, once the bidder with the lowest price is awarded the contract, he/she submits change orders that materially change the contract price. This results in increased contract price and inflates the profit margin of the bidding firm. The resulting profit from this venture goes to the public official in charge of the procurement process. Additionally, previously unknown companies (commonly referred to as front companies) with no track record of implementing government contracts are used to disguise the illegal influence of public officials over contract awards for which they are formally responsible (J. Nasasira, personal communication, 2011).

These “front” companies are used by public officials to rig the tender and to exert coercive influence over the other genuine bidders. They win contracts and sometimes serve as subcontractors to contractors on a project and enjoy the illegal gain. Usually, these subcontractor firms have an opaque ownership structure, hiding the identity of the individuals who benefit financially from the company’s business operations. It is astounding to find such behaviors in a procurement environment that is regulated by a legal framework which criminalizes corruption, causing financial loss and abuse of office. Sections 268, 269, 325, 323, and 87 of chapter 120 of the Uganda Penal Code Act, reveals that, it is unlawful for public officers to engage in embezzlement, cause financial loss, get involved in fraudulent false accounting, fraudulent offences and abuse of office, respectively.

According to Transparency International (2009), corruption Perception Index (CPI), showed that 129 of the 180 nations reviewed scored below five on a 0-to-10 scale, with 10 indicating the least corrupt. Olivier de Sardan (1999, p. 29) reveals that in sub-Saharan Africa, “at the everyday level, there is scarcely a conversation without hostile or disgusted references to corruption.” Manyak and Katono (2010) using data from local government attribute corruption to the social political context of decentralization in Uganda. They aver that the continued social conflicts fuelled by poverty, illiteracy, ethnic differences, dishonest, and ineffective government undermine value-for-money public procurement. This has created a general feeling for the existence of moral decadence where the new generation public servants promote selfish interests (Manyak and Katono 2010).

Despite the credibility of these findings, absence of data from Ugandan procuring and disposing entities (PDEs) may limit generalization. This study examines corruption in Ugandan central government PDEs of ministries, parastatals, hospitals, and commissions. The National Integrity Survey (2002, 2006) reveals that there is limited detection of corruption due to high private returns from the act and little or no negative consequences when corruption is detected. As a result, many public servants are motivated to act corruptly in matters related to procurement. The World Bank (1998) has revealed that over 90% of the corruption complaints received by the inspector general of government (IGG) in Uganda relate to procurement.

Several scholars have examined the determinants of corruption using macroeconomic, cultural, institutional, economic, and political constructs (Clarke and Colin-Xu 2002). However, these constructs do not fully explain the non-corrupt behaviors’ of some staff handling public procurement who remain ethical in notoriously corrupt and difficult economic circumstances. In this paper we argue that extant literature on corruption has tended to ignore moral schemas of staff handling public procurement, yet behaviors are embedded in the schema theory and the theory of personal constructs. According to Kelly (1955), people utilize past experiences to organize and anticipate future events or behavior. According to Ntayi et al. (2010), future behavior in public procurement is socially constructed. This view is consistent with the findings of Barr and Serra (2006), p. 4) who note that “finding a partner with whom to engage in a corrupt transaction and escaping detection or punishment becomes easier as the proportion of individuals who are corrupt increases.”

National Integrity Survey Report (2002, 2006) reveals that, generally public servants in Uganda have been on record for having been involved in false accounting on matters pertaining to public duty, escaped detection and punishment. The Uganda Country Report (July 2003) and the third National Integrity Survey (2006) support the presence of corruption, rent seeking, poor accountability, and decadent behaviors among public procurement officers. This account compares well with the findings of Transparency International (2010), which reveals that, globally, nearly six out of 10 people say corruption has increased in their country over the past 3 years.

This study attempts to systematically explore and document the moral schemas of public servants handling the procurement function in PDEs in Uganda. There is limited sub-Saharan Africa focused research exploring moral schemas and explaining their effects on procurement-related corruption in public enterprises. The few available studies have examined healthcare ethics and very little on moral schemas for procurement-related transactions. This study, therefore, provides an alternative framework for

examining corruption in a context where scholarly elaboration of corruption is still limited. Thus, the main objectives of this study are to examine and explain the moral schemas of staff in Ugandan public procurement enterprises involved in procurement-related corruption, and to draw theoretical and policy implications from the findings. In the next section, we derive hypotheses from a review of literature relating to moral schemas and corruption, which we then test empirically.

Literature Review

Corruption and Its Antecedents

The most quoted definition of corrupt behavior emphasizes “the abuse of public power or position for personal benefit” (Amanda 1998, p. 8). Corruption is as old as the world (Dike 2005). This is supported by widespread traces of illegality and corruption. In the Bible, Luke 19:8 and Luke 16:3–8 present two interesting cases of corruption that are estimated to have taken place around AD 33. Luke 19:8 presents an account involving Zacchaeus, a tax collector, who gained riches through corruption. Meanwhile, Luke 16:3–8 relates the parable of the unjust steward who conspired with debtors to defraud his master. These two examples point to corruption at the individual level and the fact that it is an age-old phenomenon straddling nations and races. Okunola (1991) and Oyebode (1999) agree that corruption transcends political, economic, religious, and cultural frontiers.

Transparency International presents comparative annual country reports which reveal that the incidence and magnitude of corruption varies from continent to continent with Africa ranking high. African countries experience endemic corruption with slight national differences. Although Transparency International (TI) has presented the most prominent studies on corruption using Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), their findings exhibit some limitations. First, these studies over-rely on a handful of country experts, ignoring socio-cultural settings, personal experiences/interests, freedom, and independence of media (Sík 2002). Secondly, TI identifies the state as a culprit of corruption, discounting individuals who commit corrupt behaviors. This results into formulation and implementation of misguided public policies on corruption (Krastev 2004).

Alternative studies on corruption have been conducted by the World Bank using the Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS). BEEP is a survey of over 4,000 firms in 22 transition countries conducted in 1999–2000 that examines a wide range of interactions between firms and the state. Based on face-to-face

interviews with firm managers and owners, BEEPS is designed to generate comparative measurements in fields like corruption, state capture, lobbying, and the quality of the business environment (World Bank Institute and EBRD 2000). These studies are credited for their ability to describe corruption related to administration and state capture, largely ignoring systemic corruption (Hellman et al. 2000).

Corruption and Moral Schemas

This study attempts to contribute to the body of knowledge on corruption using moral schemas. We complement Stefes’ (2007) note that, although considerable effort has been made to conceptualize corruption, systemic corruption largely remains unexplored, yet it tends to blur the formal divide between the public and the private spheres through myriads of networks. Stefes (2007, p. 7) states that:

Systemic corruption is characterized by extensive corrupt activities such as bribery, extortion, and embezzlement, ranging from petty to grand corruption. Corruption becomes the rule rather than the exception. Moreover, systemic corruption is characterized by the presence of rules and norms (institutions) that are commonly known and adhered to by most officials and citizens most of the time. These institutions are informal insofar as they are neither explicitly codified nor externally enforced. Nevertheless, they powerfully shape the interests and strategies of public officials and citizens.

Although public procurement in Uganda is highly regulated by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Authority (PPDA) Act of 2003, it is experiencing the highest number of corruption cases (Ntayi et al. 2010).

Using ethnographic data from Nigeria, Smith (2006) has attributed corruption to cultural production, social action, and collective imagination. These results have gained support from studies conducted in Sierra Leone which have tended to assert that corruption is a function of the clash between modern and traditional cultures as predisposing influences. Park (2003), Husted (1999), Davis and Ruhe, (2003) have demonstrated that corruption and cultural values are significantly related. Given the foregoing, one would expect corruption to be largely a result of moral schemas derived from socio-cultural set ups that pre-occupy most public servants.

Schemas are conceptual cognitive structures and processes, which enable human beings to acquire and store perceptual and conceptual information about the world and make interpretations of events through abstraction (Rock 1997). Schemas “reflect the experiences, conceptual understanding, attitudes, values, skills, and strategies

...[we] bring to a text situation” (Vacca and Vacca 1999, p. 15). Smith (1994, p. 8) has stated:

Everything we know and believe is organized in a theory of what the world is like, a theory that is the basis of all our perceptions and understanding of the world, the root of all learning, the source of hopes and fears, motive and expectancies, reasoning and creativity. And this theory is all we have. If we make sense of the world at all, it is by interpreting our interactions with the world in the light of our theory. The theory is our shield against bewilderment.

Schemas affect our lives by structuring impressions, influencing how we observe, perceive, and also interpret information. Kuklinski et al. (1991) aver that schemas depend on how we code what we notice, hear, smell, or touch in our minds. Many people construct reality basing on information that sticks out or using encoded experiences in our minds which were lately used or that is used regularly (D’Andrade 1992, 1995). Schemas enable individuals to use experience to fill in missing unspecified information “slots” (D’Andrade 1992, 1995) with “default values.” Default values emerge naturally during the learning of a given schema through repeated experiences and interactions with specific instances or events.

Young (1999, p. 11) states that, “... most schemas are probably caused by ongoing patterns of everyday noxious experiences with family members and peers, which cumulatively strengthen the schema.” Moral schema results from interpersonal experiences with members of one’s network, like parents, friends, workmates and peers. Once formed, these moral schemas represent an established and rigid prototype of how one should interact with other individuals. Extant literature has identified three types of moral schemas: personal interest schema, maintaining norms schema, and post-conventional schema.

Personal Interest Schema and Corruption

According to Hannah et al. (2005) morality is a function of one’s memories as encoded and stored from one’s moral experiences and reflections. Individuals develop a system of learned attitudes about social practices and individual behavior used to evaluate situations and behavior as good or bad, right or wrong (Lefton 2000). Staffs handling public procurement develop knowledge structures which determine how they act and the outcomes of those actions. Rest et al. (1999) describe the personal interest schema as the most primitive schema. It is characterized by: obedience to avoid punishment; instrumental egotism and simple exchange to consider the cost and/or benefits to oneself; and interpersonal concordance to cooperate with those in one’s environment. It focuses on consequence of actions

and justifies decisions by appealing to personal stake in consequences of action.

This coincides with stage one of Kohlberg’s (1981) stages of moral reasoning. Stage one is determined by obedience and punishment. This implies that procurement staff will perceive certain procurement-related actions as morally wrong because there are schemas that reveal punishments of culprits. As Kohlberg (1981) has put it, the worse the punishment for the act is, the more “bad” the act is perceived to be. Ntayi et al. (2010) state that Ugandan public procurement staffs pretend to be obedient to the procurement law, rules and regulations, when in fact they are not. This is supported by the PPDA procurement audit reports, which have revealed widespread non-compliance.

According to PPDA procurement Audit report (2008, p. 14), the principle of segregation and independence of functions and powers among the procurement structures was not adhered to in a number of PDEs. While some PDEs were not totally sure of the roles of each of these structures, other PDEs deliberately usurped the roles of other structures like the user departments. In a number of instances, PDEs took over the role of the Procurement and Disposal Unit by inviting, receiving, and opening of bids. This finding augments Ntayi et al. (2010) who assert that some procurement staffs operate at the self-interest level (Kohlberg’s stage two). At this level, right behavior is defined by what promotes the procurement officer’s self-interest. In Uganda there is a common local terminology used to refer to this behavior: “*Nfunira wa?*”, which literally means, “What’s in it for me?”

Cognitive structures, patterns, images, or templates begin early in one’s development and are repeated throughout life. It should therefore not be surprising to find egoistic moral schema manifested in a typically poor economy where access and distribution of resources is uneven. Given this situation, systemic corruption in a developing economy may not be a result of greed or low pay, but rather of moral behaviors that have developed as schema response mechanisms to need deprivation.

The procurement officers’ feelings of need deprivation, expectations and uncertainty about survival and the economic environment may trigger moral schema. Feelings of isolation from the procurement profession, poor pay, and society social roles (Ntayi et al. 2010) of procurement staff result into cumulative toxic experiences and lead to the emergence of moral schemas which direct them to fight for survival, through corruption (Young and Brown 2001). Procurement officers regard these schemas as the absolute truths which influence the processing of later experiences.

The personal interest schema extends to Kohlberg’s fourth stage of moral development. This stage is driven by interpersonal accord and conformity, where actions are either approved or disapproved, depending on the social

roles played in society. Haidt (2001) argues that individuals often make moral judgments without weighing concerns such as fairness, law, human rights, or abstract ethical values. Consistent with Ntayi et al. (2010), the desire to implement the procurement laws, rules and regulations only exists to promote ones social roles.

Consistent with Young and Brown (2001), when procurement officers find themselves in a procurement work situation that activates their earlier schemas, their behaviors automatically tend to reflect such moral schemas. Ntayi et al. (2010) assert that as procurement staff get grounded in the procurement profession, their peers and bosses become increasingly important in the development and modifications of their schemas. Procurement staff go through identification with significant others in the profession by selectively internalizing their peers and superiors' thoughts, ideas, advice, feelings, experiences, and behaviors. From the foregoing we hypothesize that procurement-related corruption is predicted by the egoistic moral schema (H1) and social identity moral schema (H2).

Maintaining Norms Schema and Corruption

The maintenance norms schema corresponds to Kohlberg's fourth stage of moral reasoning, which advocates for obeying laws, dictums and social conventions because of their importance in maintaining a functioning society. This moral schema is consistent with the divine command theory which derives practice from religious teachings. Procurement staff with a religious background would support being obedient to the procurement law, rules and regulations because their religious teachings command it.

Normative rules are considered necessary in providing stability, predictability, and coordination. Obedience to authority through maintaining norms is one's duty. It is therefore perceived as morally wrong for a procurement staff to violate the procurement laws, rules and regulations. We therefore hypothesize that, procurement-related corruption is predicted by the legislative moral schema (H3) and religious moral schema (H4).

Post-conventional Schema and Corruption

The post-conventional moral schema combines stages five and six of Kohlberg's moral development. Stage five is social-contract driven. It focuses on the sharable ideal of fairness of the law or rule, while stage six emphasizes non-arbitrary social cooperation, fairness of the law or rules derived from general principles of justice and right as determined by rational people (Kohlberg 1971). The post-conventional schema treats individuals as separate entities from society with their own superior independent views and perspectives about moral issues. In the context of this

study, procurement staffs have an option of disobeying procurement laws, rules and regulations inconsistent with their own principles. They are guided by the thinking that procurement laws, rules and regulations are useful but changeable mechanisms. Although procurement laws, rules and regulations can promote fair, competitive, transparent, non-discriminatory and value-for-money procurement and disposal standards and practices, they should not be seen as ideal, utopian and absolute decrees to be obeyed without question (Colby and Kohlberg 1987).

Consistent with Kohlberg and Lickona (1976), proponents of the post-conventional schema contend that procurement laws, rules and regulations that do not promote the greatest good for the greatest number of people should be changed. In stage six, procurement laws, rules and regulations are valid only insofar as they are grounded in justice, and that unjust laws should be disobeyed. Using results from Tyler (1990), we infer that procurement staff's reactions to their procurement experiences are shaped by their evaluations of the fairness of the public procurement laws, rules and regulations. Perceived unfairness of the procurement laws, rules and regulations will lead to alienation, defiance, and non-cooperation. Procurement officers at this stage of moral reasoning will take procurement-related decisions that they perceive to be right, and not because they are legal. This tends to breed a group of people who do not see the moral dimensions of procurement-related situations or deliberately define it in terms of moral neutrality (amoral) (Litz and Mahoney 2000, p. 256). From the above discussion we hypothesize that amoral moral schema would significantly predict procurement-related corruption (H5). In our next section, we provide the mixed methodology that was followed in testing hypotheses which were derived from the review of related literature.

Methodology

Research Design, Participant Selection, and Procedure

In order to test the study hypotheses, both descriptive (Creswell 1994) and analytical research paradigms were used. The descriptive research design was used in verifying hypothesis that required examining the various moral schemas and corruption in public procurement. In order to address the study hypotheses, we recruited respondents who were procurement staff of the PDE's participating directly or indirectly in public procurement. All respondents selected had participated either as staff of the procurement and disposal unit (PDU), or as a member of the contracts and evaluation committees, or was an accounting officer.

Self-administered questionnaires and an interview guide were sent to procurement staff to try and capture descriptive data on the study constructs. The major objective of collecting additional detailed descriptive qualitative data was to explain the behaviors of procurement staff on the study constructs. Consistent with Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), this study adopted a mixed model design with an objective of corroborating findings. Qualitative research was undertaken simultaneously with the quantitative data collection (Morgan 1998; Morse 1991). This was done in order to ensure that the research findings accurately reflect procurement staff's cognitive structures and experiences that promote procurement-related corruption.

Qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews is particularly useful in capturing the cognitive processes and provides an explanation of the activated moral schema (Weber 1993). Consistent with Stainback and Stainback (1988), qualitative data was particularly useful in increasing the credibility of the research findings. A sample of 45 participants was selected for the qualitative study. Researcher-participant corroboration was done through cross-examination of a randomly selected sample of respondents who had earlier participated in filling the fixed response format questionnaire.

Personal interviews were conducted by the principal investigator and five Ugandan research assistants who were specifically recruited for this study. The language of the interview was English since it is the official language in Uganda. All interviewers were trained in interviewing techniques using the Defining Issues Test (DIT) for a period of 1 month prior to the commencement of the research study. Interviewers were selected from graduate students pursuing their Masters in Procurement and Logistics Management at Makerere University Business School. The selection of research assistants was based on their previous experience and knowledge in data collection. All field interviewers were closely supervised and data collection challenges were discussed with them on a daily basis.

All records of field interviews were maintained in the form of detailed notes and transcribed at the end of every field visit. The research team met at the end of every working day, modeled and discussed the data collected. This exercise continued back and forth until the end of the final report. This was an exciting and enriching experience through which comparison of notes by researchers, collection of additional data, and refining the interviewing process were undertaken. Validity and reliability of the qualitative data was ensured through repeated interviewing and by availing the unabridged interview transcripts to the interviews for verification. Qualitative data was analyzed by the experienced researchers using QSR NVivo 8 software. Data analysts were relatively comfortable handling

both qualitative and quantitative data on moral schemas using the DITs. Only content and case analyses were considered adequate for this paper. These texts are utilized in “[Discussion and Implications](#)” of this paper.

Sampling Design

Four categories of PDEs totaling to 110 entities were targeted. These included commissions (14), hospitals (12), parastatals (64), and government ministries (21). A simple random proportional sample of 92 PDEs was selected for this study with a target average sample size of 14 people who had participated in public procurement for the PDE. The study targeted 1,281 staff of PDEs. A sampling frame containing a list of all members involved in procurement was obtained from the PDUs of the various PDEs. The geographical scope of the study was limited to PDEs in Kampala, Uganda's capital city, where the head offices of most of the PDEs are located. All item scales were derived from previous studies. Osuagwu (2006) and Bigne et al. (2003) recommend adapting item scales which were used in previous studies due to their wide item scales reliability and validity.

The final questionnaire was screened by eight experts; two from the Ministry of Ethics and Integrity (chosen on the basis of their expertise and experience with corruption-related issues in Uganda), two from the PPDA (selected on the basis of their regulatory role in public procurement), two from the Institute of Psychology, Makerere University (chosen due to their technical knowledge on schemas), and two from Department of Leadership and Governance, Makerere University Business School (due to their role in training executives in matters of ethics). The pool of items for the study constructs were edited through a pilot test process recommended by Hurmerinta-Peltomaki and Nummela (1998).

Measurement of Study Variables

Data on moral schemas were collected using a modified scenario-based questionnaire, commonly referred to as the DIT by Rest et al. (1999). Scenarios were considered appropriate for eliciting data because they are commonly used to examine ethical judgments and intentions (Cappel and Windsor 1998). Measures of moral schemas were adapted from prior research by Leung et al. (2008). A number of in-depth interviews were undertaken with the experts from the PPDA and Ministry of Ethics and Integrity with an objective of identifying issues that were particularly relevant to the moral schemas of staff handling public procurement.

The original questionnaire had eight issues which were reduced to six. Two issues related to preparation of bidding

document and advertisements of tender documents were eliminated from the questionnaire due to lack of conceptual relevance. Their Cronbach alpha coefficients were below 0.5. All measurement items for moral schemas were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree.” Sample questions included: “I am well adapted to the PDEs style of living in procurement-related matters”, “I feel at home in this PDE’s procurement-related processes and transactions”. (Refer to Table 3 in the [Appendix](#) for the complete list of measurement items under each schema.)

Corruption of Public Procurement Staff

Realizing the difficulties involved in measuring corruption, this study used ideas of earlier researchers to develop an instrument that was used to capture the construct of corruption in a public procurement environment. In search for a systematic and comparative measure of corruption, we relied heavily on the work of Osei-Tutu et al. (2009). All items were anchored on a 5-point scale with 5 = Always and 1 = Never. Sample questions included: “In this PDE, suppliers pay tips and bribes to get things done: This is the case”, “Lack of sanctions for corrupt practices in public procurement is likely to increase corruption”, “Bribery and corruption in public procurement is common in this country”, “Corruption in public procurement is culturally acceptable in this country”, “Accounting officers who are also political appointees in PDEs are generally more corrupt than other members who participate in the procurement process”.

Pilot Test, Validity, and Reliability

A pilot study was carried out using a purposive sample of 40 PDEs from Local Government to test for validity and reliability of the measurement items. This sample was considered appropriate since it had characteristics similar to the sample used in the full survey. The procurement work and ethics of the pre-test sample closely resembled that of Ugandan Central Government PDEs. During the pre-test, respondents identified item scales that were redundant, ambiguous or not clear. All ambiguous and redundant questions and item scales with Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.3 and below were reviewed and improved by the researchers prior to the final survey. The final questionnaires were accompanied by a covering letter from the research team explaining the purpose of the study and requesting the respondents to cooperate. The Cronbach alpha coefficients obtained were: moral schemas 0.75 and corruption 0.83. These Cronbach alpha values exceeded the acceptable value of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Control Variables

A review of the literature (e.g., Swamy et al. 1999; Dollar et al. 1999), suggest the need to control for several variables. The variables controlled in this study included gender, age, and tenure (Leung et al. 2008) because each of these could influence the moral schema and actual corruption behavior. Dollar et al. (1999), using a cross-section of up to 66 countries demonstrated that gender negatively impacts on the level of corruption.

Analysis of Data

Response rate was 37% corresponding to 474 respondents. In Uganda, this is a normal response rate for surveys relating to sensitive topics (Ntayi et al. 2010). Similarly, Baruch and Holtom (2008) analyzed 1,607 studies published in the years 2000 and 2005 in 17 refereed academic journals utilizing surveys and reported an average response rate of 52.7% with a standard deviation of 20.4 and a minimum response rate of 32%. The corresponding average response rate for studies that utilized data collected from organizations was 35.7% with a standard deviation of 18.8%.

Data for this study was checked for data entry errors, out-of-range values, missing values, presence of outliers, and normality of data prior to the multivariate analysis. After establishing that data exhibited a normal distribution pattern, all missing values were filled using linear interpolation. Outliers were not a serious problem in the data. Data analysis using factor analysis revealed low to moderate communalities of 0.40 to 0.70, without cross loadings, plus several variables loading strongly on each factor (for details see Table 3, appended). We did not find any factor with fewer than three items, meaning that our measures were generally strong and stable (Widaman 1993).

Results

Data from 474 respondents of the 1,281 targeted staff involved in public procurement from PDEs were received. Of these, 77.44% (367) were male and 22.6% (107) were female. This is a normal trend of the gender distribution of employees in Uganda. The average organizational tenure was 6.8 years. On the level of education, 97.7% had attained university education, leaving 2.3% with less education. Factor analysis was conducted to examine what constitutes moral schemas of staff involved in public procurement. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the SPSS routine of dimension reduction to generate factor scores representing values of the underlying moral

schema constructs for use in the regression model. The optimal number of factors were obtained using Kaiser criterion in which the number of factors were equal to the number of Eigen values of the correlation matrix that were greater than one (unity). A principal component analysis was used to extract the initial set of factors. These factors were rotated to a final solution using Varimax, which produces uncorrelated factors. The output of these components is displayed in Table 3 in the Appendix.

Consistent with the overall research question, this study finds that the five components of moral schemas: ethical egoistic, social identity, legislative, religious, and amoral, exist among staff handling public procurement in Ugandan PDEs. These components accounted for 78.51% of the variance in moral schemas. Generally, these factors were interpreted and named by looking at the list of items and trying to work out what each question has in common, while bearing in mind items with the highest correlation coefficients under each factor. Additionally, sometimes it took several discussions with colleagues before the nature of the factors were clear, especially for social identity and amoral schemas. The classification of ethical egoistic and legislative moral schemas was based on the research work of Leung et al. (2008). Table 3 in the Appendix presents these components while the descriptive statistics and discussion of these moral schemas are presented in Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of the Moral Schemas

Social Identity Moral Schema

This study reveals the presence of the social identity moral schema (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.615) accounting for 20.8% of the variance. The surveyed staffs see themselves as situated in relationships of organizational socio-ethnic groups and networks, which have defined and shaped the procurement officers' job role, meaning, behavior, expectations, competence, and performance. The behavioral choices of these staff in procurement were found to be in

accord with the attachment and commitment to the social role relationship. For example, respondents revealed that they were well adapted to the organization style of procurement practice and living (0.818).

Respondents who were members of an organizational socio-ethnic group developed a perception of "oneness" with others and therefore felt at home, while working with these PDEs (0.738). The study further revealed that members within PDEs who belonged to certain ethnic groups tended to identify and belong to similar social groups and seemed to be well connected to the center of the major procurement decision making organ of the PDEs. Consistent with Manyak and Katono (2010), this study found social tensions in PDEs arising from nepotism, thereby compromising procurement professionalism. There is a visible sharp division between public procurement officers originating from western Uganda (locally referred to as the "Twaliire!" translated to mean "We have eaten!") and those from the other parts of the country. This has tended to create a breed of prejudiced public procurement staffs who judge other staffs as either part of them or against them.

Respondents revealed the presence of work-related ethnic discrimination among procurement officers and service providers. Horn and Dautrich (2002) revealed widespread workplace discrimination, which is responsible for social exclusion. According to Horn and Dautrich (2002), workplace discrimination leads to self-doubt and lack of confidence. Discriminated staffs withdraw and are detached from the job, which leads to internal bitterness and anger. Those service providers (suppliers) who are considered non-members of the favored socio-ethnic groups do not benefit much from the bidding, evaluation and contract awards. Identifying with the favored socio-ethnic group provides a sense of pride, comfort, and security to members in the procurement network (0.806).

Networked procurement personnel felt like they were part of the PDE (0.583) as opposed to non-members who felt subjugated and alienated. They also strongly believed that gaining an understanding of the practice of the

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Amoral moral schema (1)	3.77	0.854	1						
Ethical egoistic moral schema (2)	3.73	0.786	0.246**	1					
Social identity moral schema (3)	3.93	0.615	0.136*	0.383**	1				
The legislative moral schema (4)	4.79	1.03	0.183**	0.110*	0.149*	1			
Religious moral schema (5)	3.48	0.749	0.156**	0.263**	0.358**	0.136*	1		
Moral schemas (6)	3.92	0.325	0.286**	0.494**	0.539**	0.242**	0.516**	1	
Procurement-related corruption (7)	3.73	0.860	0.153**	0.268**	0.376**	0.148**	0.336**	0.423**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; * correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; $n = 474$

procurement law could prevent them from being caught in procurement-related fraud (0.677). Respondents did not rule out the fact that they have ever been involved in taking “gifts” from bidders and suppliers or providing bid information selectively. This means that learning the ropes of the procurement game is essential and would increase cohesiveness of the procurement officers. This would eventually make the procurement staff continue working in the PDE (0.793).

Ethical Egoistic Moral Schema

This study finds ethical egoistic moral schema as one of the schemas guiding staff in executing their roles and functions of public procurement. This schema accounted for 18.44% of the variance in moral schema. The results of this study suggest that ethical behaviors of public procurement officers are actuated by human selfish motives as shown in Table 1 (Mean = 3.73, SD = 0.786). Their moral actions are guided by individual selfish gain seeking. This finding is surprising since Ugandan culture requires its members to be collective-oriented rather than individualistic (Karyeija 2009). Ugandans are known to be culturally integrated into strong cohesive groups of unquestioning loyalty. This study seems to reveal a battle for professional individualistic independence from a collectivistic programming of the mind.

Some respondents complained that the current public procurement-related activities are bent on following what is contained in the PPDA Act instead of relying on professional practice of the staff in public procurement. They claimed that this is counterproductive to the PDEs and the wider society (tax payers) since the PPDA Act has failed to achieve competitiveness and value-for-money procurement. This study further reveals that procurement officers do not want to be governed by the laws and regulations enshrined in the PPDA Act for fear of being caught on the wrong side of the law. This finding supports earlier studies by Ntayi et al. (2010) which revealed that Ugandan procurement officers have developed a culture of getting wealthy at all costs, to the extent that those officers who appear not to have prospered from occupying public positions do not command respect from their peers. Staff involved in public procurement averred that the PPDA rules and regulations are cumbersome, time consuming, and restrictive in terms of generating optimal procurement decisions.

There is a general consensus that, what is in the procurement officers self-interest is good for the PDEs and society (Mean = 3.75, SD = 1.44). Self-interest of the public procurement officers was considered to be of critical importance in guiding procurement decisions of the PDEs (Mean = 3.94, SD = 1.46). It is believed that this

would empower the public procurement officers and facilitate value-for-money procurement instead of leaving it to the PPDA Act, which may even be incomplete to guide all the procurement transactions. Additional items that loaded significantly on this ethical egoism factor included: “what is in my self-interest is good for society” (0.822), “natural morality is not for the good of others; self-interest must guide us” (0.706), and “suffering and social dislocation are the price of progress (egoism)” (0.590).

Religious Moral Schema

The religious moral schema accounted for 10.84% of the variance in moral schema of staff involved in public procurement. Table 3 reveals that public procurement officers with a mental representation containing organized religious moral schemas were observed to force a religious interpretation on procurement-related functions (Mean = 3.48, SD = 0.749). This means that there is material religious interpretation associated with procurement-related transactions. This finding is surprising and deviates from the known ethical behavior of religious people in a setting that is presumed to be highly religious. The fact that Christians and Muslims account for about 98% of Uganda’s population with 2% constituting animists/traditionalists does not prevent many people from being spiritualists. Spiritualism and witchcraft are strongly rooted in most Ugandan cultures.

The present finding suggests that religious obligations and practices of the Ugandan procurement personnel are about the everyday, real, material world and its in-built forces, but not necessarily about the invisible God. There is an apparent struggle to create a balance between divinity and the material world that constitutes one’s life. It is these material and financial forces that regulate the ways in which Ugandan public procurement personnel navigate through sceneries which are available for survival. Religion, seen this way, is not dogmatic. It simply opens up an opportunity to cognitively negotiate the relations between survival and the procurement law on one hand, and life-after-death on the other.

As Krans et al. (2009) has noted, religion is lived in socially, politically, and culturally specific contexts. These observations are consistent with the procurement officers’ quest for happiness, which:

reaches a superlative form when man’s highest nature is realized. Man’s highest nature is to be found in the realm of the mind, in the mental aspects of life which are distinctively human; it is the fullest expression of thought that produces the greatest happiness (Sahakian and Sahakian 1966, p. 35).

These religious schemas influence the way public procurement staff perceive and perform their functions spanning a life cycle from identification of the need, through the selection of suppliers, to post-contract award management and disposal. Religious beliefs were important in directing procurement officers' cognitive processes and moral judgment in the procurement process. In this study, beliefs are shown to affect procurement-related decisions. Self is perceived as a 'God' and the procurement personnel define what is good and moral. Religious beliefs act as a filter for new procurement experiences.

The staffs who participate in the public procurement activities revealed that they have to gauge the mind of the accounting officers before finalizing any procurement transaction. The procurement staffs portray respect and fear for the accounting officer. Some accounting officers use religious beliefs to execute and manage procurement. It is important to note that the exercise of power by the accounting officer explained in religious terms can be offensive in a pluralistic society.

Amoral Moral Schema

Public discontent with public procurement in Uganda and the increased dissatisfaction among suppliers points to a paradox that public procurement officers tend to run into when trying to execute their responsibilities. This study revealed that amoral schema accounted for 12.41% of the moral schema of staff in public procurement as shown in Table 3. This amoral schema stems from the moral reflection and moral accountability to which individual staff involved in public procurement hold themselves (Mean = 3.77, SD = 0.854). Some public procurement officers were found to be amoral, disdaining the PPDA procurement regulations. Their thinking is that, the rules used in the procurement of PDE products and services are too many, tedious and complex to follow. Therefore, breaking these rules is a necessary evil; after all rules were made to be broken.

Consistent with Kagan and Scholz (1984), Ugandan procurement personnel can be described as amoral calculators and narcissistic-maximizing actors who decide whether to comply with the procurement law, based on a calculation of the costs and benefits of doing so. They are self-interested, utility-maximizing individuals pre-occupied with a mental schema of "man eateth where he worketh; we are not snakes to eat dust", as one of the respondents retorted. Most respondents were of the view that, if all public servants in Uganda were morally principled, then none of them would be in office working, because they would not be able to survive. Another respondent stated that "All procurement personnel live both public and private lives and they only become

unethical when caught and the information spills to the public domain". In this kind of a public procurement environment, procurement personnel acquiescence to go along with unethical behavior. This has put the public procurement profession in a crisis of confidence.

The Global Fund and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Auditor General 2008) scandals sparked criticism and widespread public outcry in Uganda. While this sparked off a decision by the government to review the PPDA Act, it did not quell the growing discontent among the members of the public. In this amoral schema, procurement-related transactions are considered as a private good or benefit and, in some cases, as both an individual and public vice. This has tended to create a mental model of deception and manipulation in predicting future procurement-related encounters or events.

Respondents further revealed that the competitive nature of the job market and the quest for survival are responsible for the observed "deception and manipulation to enhance profitability and survival" (0.718). This implies that public procurement officers are involved in moral action if there is sufficient individual reason to do it or if it is morally or culturally relevant to individual circumstances.

Public procurement officers tend to base future behavioral patterns on the previously developed schema which they consider to have been successful. In other words, respondents revealed that there are many public procurement officers who have told lies in the past with no negative consequences and this has acted as impetus for others to acquire and accumulate deceptive attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, if nothing is done to change the situation, deception and lies will continue and possibly grow in frequency and seriousness.

The Legislative Moral Schema

The legislative moral schema accounted for 15.96% of the variance in the moral schema of staff in public procurement. This study reveals that the Ugandan PPDA Act remains ineffective in preventing abuse of public office and resources (Mean = 4.79, SD = 1.03) as shown in Table 3. Specifically, respondents said that "The actions of the government of Uganda to deal with indecent or immoral acts in procurement are inadequate" (0.779). They further revealed that Uganda does not have capacity to prevent immoral acts through mechanism for enforcing laws and regulations and yet "effective law enforcement is absolutely necessary to maintain the credibility of ethics" (0.533). "Enforcement through transparency and accountability can diminish opportunities for immoral acts, if the legislative organs of the state became serious" (0.846). This finding is supported by the Global Integrity Report (2006) that scored Uganda with a weak implementation record of 45%.

Conflict of interest in public procurement was observed to be a common phenomenon despite its being regulated in the PPDA Act. In situations of weak enforcement of laws, respondents believe that corruption is condoned due to sympathy for poor pay. There was a general feeling that the legislative environment should be strengthened by “developing business and industry associations to help foster self-discipline” (0.560). Other items that loaded on this factor were: “Social progress is the unintended side effect of the pursuit of economic self-interest” (0.806) and “Enhancing the credibility of the government is a means of raising the level of awareness of business ethics” (0.542).

Multivariate Data Analysis

Consistent with the principles of multivariate data analysis, we conducted a bi-variate correlation between the components of moral schema of the public procurement personnel which were derived from the factor analysis and the dependent variable of corruption. The results of the correlation analysis provide support for the hypothesized relationships. As presented in Table 1, amoral moral schema ($r = 0.153$, $p < 0.01$), ethical egoistic moral schema ($r = 0.268$, $p < 0.01$), social identity moral schema ($r = 0.376$, $p < 0.01$), the legislative moral schema ($r = 0.148$, $p < 0.01$), and religious moral schema ($r = 0.336$, $p < 0.01$) were all significantly and positively correlated to procurement-related corruption. The composite index of moral schema was also significantly and positively correlated with procurement-related corruption ($r = 0.423$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, none of the variables were highly inter-correlated, diminishing the possibility of the multicollinearity problem.

In order to test with more rigor for the importance and effect of each of the components of moral schema on procurement-related corruption, four models of multiple hierarchical regressions were conducted (Cohen and Cohen 1983) to confirm H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5. Procurement-related corruption was entered as a dependent variable in all the four models run. In Step 1 (model 1), control variables of age, gender, and tenure were entered to try and predict procurement-related corruption. This was followed by the social identity moral schema and the ethical egoistic-amoral schema entered in Step 2 (model 2) and Step 3 (model 3), respectively.

The religious moral schema and the legislative moral schema were entered in Step 4 (model 4). The results with the standardized beta coefficients are presented in Table 2. The R^2 at each step of the regression as well as the significance of the beta weights for the individual predictor variables in the final step are displayed in the same table. However, before running this model, two factors of amoral moral schema and ethical egoistic moral schema that

seemed to be close were combined to form the ethical egoistic-amoral moral schema. Model 1 presents values of the multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.055$) between control variables and procurement-related corruption of 0.055. Additionally, the percentage of variance explained in procurement-related corruption was negligible ($R^2 = 0.003$). Social identity schema was entered in model 2, producing a multiple correlation coefficient of 0.695 between the predictors and procurement-related corruption.

The social identity schema accounted for 48% of the variance in procurement-related corruption supporting H2 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.480$; $R^2 = 0.483$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.476$). Model 3 reveals that ethical egoistic-amoral moral schema accounted for 10.4% of the variance in procurement-related corruption in public procurement supporting H1 and H5 ($R^2 = 0.587$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.104$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.580$). The corresponding correlation coefficient of the predictor variables (age, gender, tenure, social identity moral schema, and ethical egoistic-amoral moral schema) with corruption of staff involved in public procurement was 0.766. Finally, both the religious moral schema and the legislative moral schema constructs were significant predictors of corruption of staff involved in public procurement accounting for 14.6% of the variance ($R = 0.856$, $R^2 = 0.733$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.726$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.146$), thus supporting H3 and H4.

The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.871 is closer to 2 implying that the assumption of independent errors is tenable. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results was used to test whether the generated models were significantly better at predicting corruption of staff involved in public procurement than using the means as a best guess. Since the F statistics for Model 2, Model 3, and Model 4 were greater than 1, then, the improvement due to fitting the regression model is much greater than the inaccuracy within the model. The F ratio for Model 1 was 0.480 which is very likely to have happened by chance ($p > 0.05$). The corresponding F ratios for model 2 ($F = 72.6$, $p < 0.01$), Model 3 ($F = 82.51$, $p < 0.01$), and Model 4 ($F = 115.20$, $p < 0.01$) which are highly significant show that these models significantly improve our ability to predict corruption in public procurement in Uganda.

Discussion and Implications

This study finds ethical egoistic moral schema as one of the drivers of corruption in public procurement in Uganda. This moral schema corresponds to the Kohlberg's pre-conventional level of cognitive moral development. Staffs handling public procurement in Uganda undertake procurement-related transactions that they perceive to be in their self-interest. This finding is further supported by the

Table 2 Hierarchical regression analysis with corruption of staff involved in public procurement as the dependent variable in all the four models presented below

Models	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Collinearity statistics	
	Std. error	Beta	Std. error	Beta	Std. error	Beta	Std. error	Beta	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.074	3.14**	0.084	1.85**	0.089	1.36*	0.081	0.845**	na	na
Age	0.020	0.030	0.015	0.089*	0.013	0.054	0.011	0.059*	0.72	1.38
Gender	0.032	0.021	0.023	-0.041	0.021	-0.016	0.017	-0.015	0.94	1.06
Tenure	0.021	0.034	0.016	-0.016	0.014	0.004	0.011	-0.010	0.74	1.35
Social identity moral schema			0.014	0.398**	0.013	0.274**	0.011	0.229**	0.70	1.44
Ethical egoistic-amoral moral schema					0.014	0.262**	0.012	0.260**	0.72	1.39
Religious moral schema							0.008	0.276**	0.92	1.09
The legislative moral schema							0.011	0.192**	0.72	1.39
<i>R</i>		0.055		0.695		0.766		0.856	na	na
<i>R</i> ²		0.003		0.483		0.587		0.733	na	na
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²		-0.003		0.476		0.580		0.726	na	na
<i>F</i> -statistics		0.480		72.60		82.51		115.20	na	na
Regression model Sig.		0.696		0.000		0.000		0.000	na	na
<i>R</i> ² change		0.003		0.480		0.104		0.146	na	na
<i>F</i> change-statistics		0.480		144.27		58.56		84.23	na	na

Note: Standardized regression coefficients are reported, $n = 474$, ns = not significant; ** regression is significant at the 0.01 level and * regression is significant at the 0.05 level

Dependent Variable: Corruption of Public Procurement Officers; Durbin-Watson = 1.871

theory of moral sentiments which states that “The main cause of corruption of moral sentiments is the tendency to admire the rich and despise the poor (Smith 1994, TMS IV. 1.10), which creates a belief that the low people are considered to be exceedingly stupid” (LJB 329). This observation is further supported by Ntayi et al. (2010) who have revealed that deteriorating moral conduct is a result of silently admiring and praising individuals who acquire wealth through immoral conduct, while ridiculing and branding as stupid those who uphold principles of integrity and morality.

According to Darwin (1859), competitive behavior manifests when we are threatened or our survival is at stake, and even when there is an illusory perception of a threat. This is especially true in Uganda, where survival, health, retirement, and job security are not assured to staff in charge of public procurement. This is further supported by the Second Public Procurement Integrity Survey (2008) which reveals that low salaries of the public servants, coupled with higher costs of living are responsible for their aggressive and competitive self-interest. Given this fact, it would be difficult to expect staff handling public procurement to resist moral temptations when their current basic needs and social welfare cannot be met. It is therefore imperative that individuals in the public procurement function, possessing competitive

and aggressive traits, would increase their chances of survival and, through social propagation of such behavioral traits, pass them on to the next generation. This is consistent with Darley’s (2005, p. 1181) claim that corrupt behavior often “... set[s] in motion a cascade of further corrupt actions [like a] tornado of corruption”; that gathers force and pulls in more of the organization’s members (Rabl and Kuhlmann 2009, p. 268”).

Additionally, Ugandan public procurement is a highly regulated profession that requires public procurement officers to strictly follow the procurement laws and regulations (Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Act of 2003). This has conditioned them to develop amoral, calculative behaviors. Hamill (2007, p. 58) posits that behaviors that are neither good nor evil are amoral. This implies that staff executing procurement functions make judgments based on constructs acquired over time from cultural logic and socialization that determine whether they comply with the law or not. Their judgment is based on how they construct their world of work leading to calculation of the costs and benefits of executing any procurement-related action. Consistent with Kelly (1955), the calculative behavior is largely dependent on how staffs anticipate events using past experience to guide future predictions.

It is the socially constructed past experiences that procurement officers use to determine what is important to attend to and what can be ignored. This behavior is consistent with the findings of Friedman (1953) who revealed that all regulated parties, whether individuals or organizations, make rational calculative choices. The prevailing amoral behavior of staff in public procurement like lying, lowballing, front companies, is a reflection of a self-interested actor structuring decisions in order to maximize selfish interests. The above amoral conduct defines the morally irresponsible public procurement officer who divorces himself from moral reflection regarding the means or ends to which his technical proficiency is put.

The study reveals that social moral identity schema is a significant predictor of corruption of staff involved in public procurement in Uganda.

Corruption as a social act is perceived by the individual agent who is closely networked in a social system. Public procurement staffs feel a sense of belonging to the procurement unit in the organization because of the information shared from time to time. The personal construct responsible for public procurement corruption is embedded within a social degraded system consisting of multiple agents and social relations that mediate the exchanges. This means that the procurement persons' construction is largely shaped by the rewards and punishments he/she anticipates within its social systems. This finding is supported by Varese and Yaish (2000) who have conceptualized corruption as a particular form of social exchange. Involving the corrupter and an official or vice versa. This view can further be traced in the Tooby and Cosmides (1997) concept of 'reciprocal altruism' social exchange as demanded by adaptive processes.

Staffs in public procurement end up developing an attitude of conformity to social system, supporting, justifying and identifying with the actions of the members of the social group. Consistent with Ashforth and Mael (1989) and Tajfel and Turner (1985) members of the social group develop a perception of "oneness" with others. These perceptions of the social self are relational and comparative. Members of the procurement group socially construct their professions through repertoires of their colleagues and suppliers. Social identity increases participation.

Brewer (1991) holds that social identifications are guided by the need to be unique and to belong. Having a procurement social identity satisfies individuals' simultaneous needs for inclusion and differentiation. These social groups force individuals to sacrifice their own material well-being in favor of group interests. The procurement staffs try to maintain a positive self-identity derived in large part from formal membership with, or psychological

attachment to, social groupings. Individuals gain utility from affiliating with social groups.

Surprisingly, the study finds the legislative schema as a significant predictor of procurement-related corruption. The results of this study contradict the findings of Leung et al. (2008) who found legislative schema to predict ethical behavior. Their study covered marketers who favored a business environment that offered a high degree of formalization of rules and procedures. Such a practice is contrary to what we observe in Ugandan staff handling the public procurement function. Ugandan public procurement professionals believe that although rules and regulations governing public procurement exist, there is weak enforcement of these laws, thus promoting corruption. The procurement profession has tended to promote the creation of a procurement cadre who follow rules and regulations as the catalog of roles and duties emphasizing professional norms and expectations, instead of encouraging them to develop a professional ethic of "continuous self-reflection in terms of one's own personal values". This limits innovation and professional judgment of public procurement officers who end up developing an attitude of conformity and loyalty to the PPDA Act.

The study further reveals that an improvement in religious moral schema increases procurement-related corruption. These results are surprising and contrary to popular belief and research findings. These findings challenge the conceptualization of the schema theory which has long held that ambiguous events force individuals with religious schemas to impose religious interpretation to the event. By implication, one would expect that public procurement-related problems and/or challenges with cues that activate religious schema would drive committed religionists to use religious schemas to solve them. Our study, however, reveals that invoking a particular schema in situations of moral dilemmas depends on the unique perspective and configuration of all past epistemological knowledge and experiences acquired over time.

Suffice to note that staff involved in public procurement who score high on religious moral schemas are constantly experimenting with the world, generating hypothesis about what will happen, acting, and testing the resulting outcome against their predictions (Kelly 1955). This makes their behaviors dynamic, meaning that staffs handling public procurement are not forever condemned to hold similar religious moral schemas, all the time making similar mistakes. This partially explains why our findings parallel the findings of McIntosh (1995) who found that people continue "to believe theories learned in a church or temple class even when later they are faced with various types of contradictory or inconsistent information" (page 3). Our study further reveals that staffs involved in public

procurement who continue to display characteristics of regularly attending religious activities, believing in spirits and practicing idol worship were likely to be involved in procurement-related corruption.

Staff involved in public procurement attempt to grapple more intensely with issues such as lying, cheating, embezzlement and front companies and the relationship of these constructs to their religious moral schemas in an unemployment- and underemployment-riddled society with strong kinship and social networks. When, for example, an honest procurement officer who has been brought up in a white-collar-crime-riddled society is transferred to a similar environment where fellow employees pay allegiance to the accounting officer who has unequivocal powers to appoint and disapprove members of the contracts committee, evaluation committee, and staff disciplinary committee and is also aware of the high unemployment rate, would have to think twice before refusing to execute a corruption request originating from the appointing officer.

In a patriarchy-based community, all authority has to be respected and obeyed by all employees irrespective of how strong their religious moral schemas may be; or else one is accused of insubordination. Failure to respond 'appropriately' to corrupt requests of the superiors is expected to result into coercion. Results from open-ended questions revealed that in the Ugandan procurement environment, staffs' perception of their chances of being fired relates directly to procurement-related corruption. The collection of such experience's and actions in one's world of work forms the basis of his/her mental map. No staff involved in public procurement wants to think of the trauma, nervousness, hopelessness, loss of confidence, reduction in self-esteem, and behavioral problems associated with unemployment (Goldsmith et al. 1997; Murphy and Athanasou 1999). Such a work environment perpetuates coercive work practices in which employees succumb to corrupt requests of the most powerful and strategically positioned individuals. Additionally, when, one's life is transformed by corrupt tendencies, abandoning it may be harder even in situations where they have undergone cathartic process (Ntayi et al. 2010). This tends to create a religion-corruption paradox. The simultaneous presence of these two apparently opposing practices of religious moral schema and corruption tendencies is solved through rationalization.

When the legislative schema is introduced in the model, age significantly predicts corruption of public procurement officers in Uganda. This means that the older the procurement officers are, in a highly regulated profession, the more likely they are to get involved in procurement-related corruption. The findings from these data suggest that corrupt tendencies increase with age. This could be explained by the: government's failure to pay a living

wage that guarantees meaningful savings; and underfunding of occupational pensions and insurance schemes. These notwithstanding a few members of the privileged political elite enjoy an economic life above every other public servant. Such a practice creates a society with members of a political middle class that expect retirement life with prestigious, celebrated social contacts and economic social networks. The rest of Ugandan public servants are left with no option but to accumulate property in preparation for their post-retirement life (Ntayi et al. 2011).

The finding on the effect of age on corruption may also suggest a generation effect on corruption, which is beyond the subject of this study. This means that older people are more likely to ask or be asked for a bribe compared to the younger ones. This is consistent with Hirschi and Gottfredson (2000) who have revealed that crimes related with theft increase with age, up to the age of 60, beyond which age the distribution becomes bi-modal. However, there is need to unpack this variable and study its effects on corruption.

Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

Past research in Uganda has attributed procurement-related corruption to macroeconomic, cultural, institutional, economic, and political constructs. This study finds that, the moral transgression staff involved in public procurement encounter in the execution of their daily work is constructed from their past experience. We conclude that moral schemas of social identity, ethical egoism, legislation, amoral, and religiosity play a significant role in promoting procurement-related corruption. We note that corruption of staff involved in public procurement can be viewed as a form of innate selfishness brought about by evolutionary selfish motives (Dawkins 1976).

This study has implications to PDEs. First and foremost, we surmise that as accounting officers relate with their subordinates and work to execute a procurement-related activity, they are indirectly creating and influencing moral schemas which will determine how procurement officers will relate to other employees within the organizations. This is consistent with Kelly's (1955) argument that our past experiences help us to develop constructs and expectancies for the future. Kelly explains that without expectancies we would be overwhelmed with information which would leave us confused and unable to predict anything. We therefore recommend that PDEs, schools, churches, social workers, and other community members should take up an active role in positively influencing moral schemas of individuals by instilling moral agency in all Ugandans, especially older procurement officers.

Another implication of this study is that it is difficult to implement corruption-related laws in an environment characterized by political patronage and economic uncertainty. If such an environment continues to characterize Ugandan public service, it will be hard to draw a line between acting lawfully and engaging in corrupt tendencies. This may partially explain the religion-corruption paradox. Whereas religion molds the moral character of staff involved in procurement-related transactions, the accounting officers and other powerful staff in organizations in turn remold the religious moral schemas of staff. The command to obey and respect the authority is schematic.

There is need to encourage public procurement officers to develop favorable moral schema through socialization and training. Educators and trainers should assist in making professionals aware that sometimes job demands are in conflict with personal/inner, outer/social, religious morals/reason. They also need to be prepared for sacrifice or sublimation of personal gratification for greater good (moral motivation).

Theoretically, the current literature on corruption is dominated by political scientists and economists. A few studies use corruption as the dependent variable. In these studies, macro-economic factors have emerged as important correlates of corruption (YanZhang et al. 2009). Our research provides an alternative set of variables that can be tested from numerous perspectives thus enabling increased prediction and explanation.

However, this study has some limitations that may affect the interpretation of results. First, data are cross-sectional and self-reported, which limits inferring causation and surfaces interpretation bias. Secondly, measurement items for moral schemas were developed and tested in the Ugandan environment for the first time, limiting conclusions on the test–retest validity. Based on the overall study results, and given these limitations, the geographical scope could be expanded to include local governments, hospitals, universities, etc. Finally, we could examine the public versus private sector procurement professionals.

Appendix

Sample Case Scenarios Used in the study

Procurement-DIT Scenario One: Bidding Process

Mrs. Anne Sansa is a procurement officer working with the Electoral Commission (EC). Her most recent assignment involves finalizing procurement of all the equipment and other electronic accessories required for the next national presidential and parliamentary elections. She is

working on a bid document to supply the Electoral Commission with computers plus other electronic gadgets that will be used in next years elections. Her Uncle, Mr. Hamza Gitau who brought her up, after the death of her parents when she was 3 years, owns a computer firm that supplies assorted information technology accessories. Currently, her uncle's business is in financial distress and is threatening to close soon, despite profitable trading, over the years. Her uncle's business has suffered severe cash flow problems as a result of the recent adverse global economic conditions (credit crunch). Sansa knows that her uncle's business has been on the EC's list of pre-qualified providers for the last 5 years. However, Sansa has noticed over the years that the EC has had difficulties managing the list of providers which has been found wanting in respect of lack of rotation and the non-transparent updating of the list of providers. In some instances the annual pre-qualification exercise which is also referred to as registration has been misused by the EC and Contracts Committees to award contracts directly to providers. Sansa is also privileged to have useful information relating to this procurement which would give a competitive advantage to a serious bidder over other bidders. Unfortunately, this information cannot be availed to bidders in the bidding document which will be sent to all interested bidders. As has been the practice in the past, to be able to win this bid, bidders must see one of the PDU or contracts committee members in person during the preparation of bids. Without this additional information, all bidding firms become disadvantaged and chances of winning the contract remain dim (Table 3).

Anne Sansa's meditation about her youthful days has created a state of desperation and is contemplating assisting her uncle, Mr. Gitau to win this contract. Failure to win this bid, it is unlikely that her uncles company will survive. This will result in 5,000 employees losing their jobs. This will not go down well and is likely to dent her uncle image since he intends to stand for MP in the next parliamentary elections. Sansa has informally asked her subordinate for documentary evidence on the rules governing bidding, contract evaluation and award. Her subordinate sends her a copy of the minutes of the latest directors' board meeting in which procurement issues were discussed. The last item on the board minutes notes that "all subsequent procurements must adhere to the principles of value for money, competitiveness, transparency and ethics." However, Sansa thinks that his uncle's business would offer the best deal to the EC, although the company needs a push to win this contract. She is pretty aware how valuable her uncle has been in her life, without him she would not have been what she is and where she is. However, she also knows that her uncle's company will not survive if this contract is not won. Should Sansa favor her uncle's firm?

Table 3 Rotated component matrix^{a,b}

	Component					Communalities
	Social identity schema	Ethical egoistic schema	Legislative schema	Amoral schema	Religious schema	
I am well adapted to the organization style of living	0.818					0.740
I have a sense of pride when this organization receives recognition	0.806					0.738
I am willing to continue working in organization	0.793					0.844
I feel at home in this organization	0.738					0.837
Gaining an understanding of the practice of the law could prevent fraud	0.677					0.731
I feel just like a organization person	0.583					0.777
Most of my friends are from this organization and I feel comfortable with them	835					0.808
What is in my self-interest is good for society		0.822				0.747
Natural morality is not for the good of others; self-interest must guide us (egoism)		0.706				0.569
Suffering and social dislocation are the price of progress		0.590				0.572
Because of severe market competition, it is necessary to compromise one's ethics		0.813				0.825
Social progress is the unintended side effect of the pursuit of economic self-interest, not the result of social-activist corporations		0.806				0.729
Enhancing the credibility of the government is a means of raising the level of awareness of business ethics			0.542			0.619
Effective law enforcement is absolutely necessary to maintain the credibility of ethics			0.533			0.785
The actions of our government to deal with indecent or immoral acts are inadequate			0.779			0.639
The development of business and industry associations helps to foster self-discipline			0.560			0.620
If you comply with the law you cannot make money						0.603
We live in an unfair society				0.874		0.831
An incomplete legal framework induces companies to engage in deceptive and misleading practices				0.643		0.844
Publicizing bad behavior and role models are good ways to promote good ways				0.579		0.814
Deception and manipulation enhance profitability				0.718		
My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to procurement life					0.802	0.718
Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of public procurement life					0.716	0.578
Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in my procurement life					0.570	0.675
The primary purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection related to my life including procurement life					0.845	0.795
What religion offers me most is comfort when sorrows and misfortune strike					0.836	0.819
Occasionally I find it necessary to compromise my religious beliefs in order to protect my social and economic well-being					0.764	0.785

Table 3 continued

	Component					Communalities
	Social identity schema	Ethical egoistic schema	Legislative schema	Amoral schema	Religious schema	
I am constantly questioning my religious beliefs					0.640	0.546
I have been driven to ask religious questions out of a growing awareness of the tensions in my world and in my relation to my world					0.773	0.566
My life experiences have led me to rethink my religious convictions					0.786	0.873
Questions are far more central to my religious experience than are answers					0.815	0.742
I believe in spirits					0.856	0.798
I always attend religious activities					0.650	0.694
I practice idol worship					0.812	0.768
% of Variance	20.86	18.44	15.96	12.41	10.84	
Cumulative %	20.86	39.30	55.26	67.67	78.51	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

^a Rotation converged in 13 iterations

^b Only cases for which What type is your Organization = central government PDE are used in the analysis phase

She should	can't decide	she shouldn't
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Review each of the considerations given below (left out due to space constraints).

Bribery

Mr. Muthaiga Githongo, a manager at Steelcorp, considers whether to order an employee to offer a payoff to a purchasing agent who has requested a cash payment in exchange for future purchasing agreements. Such an act is common in the industry. Muthaiga thinks that the law governing this act is unreasonably applied to companies like Steelcorp. Steelcorp is currently experiencing growing sales and revenues in an industry that is economically healthy. If successful, the act may result in a positive impression of Muthaiga by top management. Muthaiga also believes that the act will modestly increase Organization revenues. The Organization has internally implemented audits and inspections at random intervals but no action was taken against an employee who was discovered by the Organization engaging in a similar act. Muthaiga decides to order an employee to offer the payoff to the customer. You are requested to use the information in the case above to evaluate the following questions. *What are the Outcome expectancies* (details left out due to space constraints)

Friends in the Government

In this ministry of X, like in many other PDEs, private businesses are contracted to provide goods and services, through the procurement process specified in the Procurement Act. John Njoroge, Managing Director of PR procurement consultants, deals directly with these members of the PDEs and has become good friends with the chairman of the contracts committee, Isaac Kabwa. Their wives have become friends as well and their families enjoy one another. Isaac Kabwa occasionally joins John Njoroge for lunch, and John Njoroge's company pays for it. This is similar to what members of either the contracts committee or PDEs do countrywide. However, a dilemma arose recently when John Njoroge invited Isaac Kabwa and his family to join them in a cruise around Europe, which has been organized by his private company. Isaac Kabwa knew it would be a great trip and his wife really wanted to go. He also knew that it could be seen by the public as a favor for a large contract that the ministry had just awarded to John Njoroge's company. Should Kabwa go on the trip to Europe?

Should go	Can't decide	Should not go
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Review each of the considerations given below (left out due to space constraints).

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