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**PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE, CATHARSIS, ORGANIZATIONAL ANOMIE,  
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS AND ETHICAL PROCUREMENT  
BEHAVIOUR IN UGANDA'S PUBLIC SECTOR**

Joseph Mpeera Ntayi, Augustine Ahiauzu and Sarah Eyaa\*

**ABSTRACT.** The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between psychological climate, catharsis, organizational anomie, psychological wellness and ethical procurement behaviour in Uganda's public sector, in order to understand better the conditions that foster or diminish procurement ethics in a developing country. Data for this study were collected from a sample of 1100 respondents out of which 460 usable questionnaires, representing a 42% response rate were received and analyzed. Results reveal that psychological climate, procurement planning and organizational anomie were significant predictors, accounting for 64% of the variance in ethical procurement behaviour. These results have both policy and managerial implications which we present and discuss in this paper.

**INTRODUCTION**

Extant research has suggested that the social climate or atmosphere created in a workplace has significant consequences on employee behaviour. The perceived availability of social support from colleagues and superiors is an important dimension of the

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psychological climate in an organization (Martin, Jones, & Callan, 2005). Psychological climate has been conceptualized as “a set of attributes specific to a particular organization that may be induced from the way the organization deals with its members and its environment. For the individual member within an organization, climate takes the form of a set of attitudes and expectancies which describe the organization in terms of static characteristics ... and behavior-outcome and outcome-outcome contingencies” (Campbell et al., 1970, p. 390). In the workplace, the term refers to the perceptual and experiential components of a reciprocal interaction between the organizational environment and the employee (Michela, Lukaszewski & Allegrante, 1995). A great deal of research has indicated that psychological climate is related to a variety of individual outcomes and behaviour (Carr, Schmidt, Ford, & DeShon, 2003). Results from two meta-analytic studies provide strong support for this relationship (Carr et al., 2003; Parker et al., 2003). The prevailing procurement related deviant behaviours in Uganda’s public sector may be an indicator of the prevailing psychological climate, absence or weak psychological wellness and work anomie. Anomie refers to the reduced social control against deviant behaviour that is due to a disregard of norms, standards and organizational values (Bass, 1990, p.915).

The case of the purchase of “junk choppers” by the government of Uganda in 1996 signaled both organizational and individual anomie and unethical procurement behaviour. Organizationally, the Ministry of Defense failed to meet a minimum set of common workplace norms, yet the enactment of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Act 2003 (PPDA), was an attempt to constrain anomic behaviour in public procurement and promote ethical procurement. The PPDA is the regulatory body for public procurement and disposal in Uganda. It was established through the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act No.1 of 2003, with the primary objective of issuing the various tools and guidelines for conducting public procurement, disposal and compliance with the law. Consistent with the procurement law in Uganda, all public procuring entities are required to ensure economy and efficiency, transparency, competition, accountability, non-discrimination, reservation, fairness, confidentiality, ethics and preference. It is also

a prerequisite that the user departments of the procuring entities work with the procurement and disposal unit to ensure orderly procurement of works and services (PPDA, 2003, Part V, Section 59-61). The “junk choppers” transaction had implications at an individual level in the form of lack of integrity, collusion with suppliers and conflict of interest which may be attributed to weak and /or absence of both psychological wellness and low procurement planning behaviour. Bakunda (2007) revealed that the corporate planning behaviours of managers in Uganda is still low, characterized by lack of discipline, absence of rolling plans, adhocism and emergency in nature. This may partly explain the unethical conduct in both local and central government procurements. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests the existence of an unfavorable work environment that may have discouraged catharsis and instead encouraged feelings of emptiness, isolation, adjustment problems and deviant behaviours in Uganda’s public procurement activities within both local and central government despite the presence of the PPDA Act 2003.

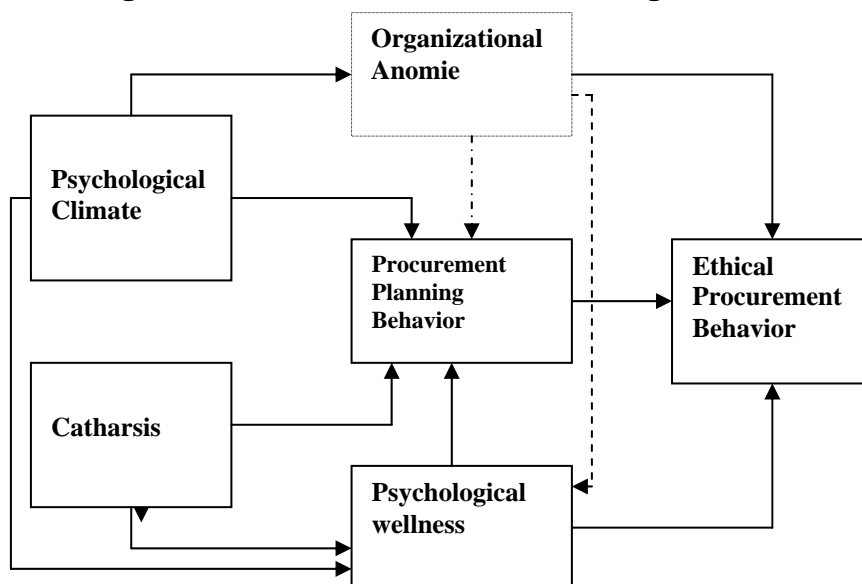
Public procurement, especially at the local and central government level, is believed to be one of the principal areas where unethical behaviour in Uganda takes place (*National Public Procurement Integrity Survey*, 2006). For example the identifiable *direct* losses due to corruption in procurement at both central and local government levels in FY 2004-2005 was estimated to be Ush 117.0 – 148.5 billion (US\$64.28 – 84.88 million) (National Public Procurement Integrity Survey, 2006). Despite Uganda’s commitment to strengthening procurement ethics among the public sector through the PPDA Act 2003, unethical conduct in procurement is still common. The major causes of unethical conduct in Uganda’s public sector may be attributed to anomie, weak procurement planning, absence of psychological wellness, psychological climate, extensive discretionary powers of public officials and social and cultural norms that tend to glorify unethical conduct. Despite this revelation, there is a paucity of literature linking psychological climate and work related anomie behaviour in Uganda’s public procurement. What exists is speculative and at best anecdotal. Further, there is an obvious lack of research examining the individual effects of psychological climate, catharsis, psychological wellness, procurement planning behaviour, organizational anomie at the same time to ascertain their relative impacts on procurement ethical behaviour. The purpose of this study

is to cover the research gap using evidence from a sub-Saharan context.

### BRIEF THEORETICAL REFLECTION AND CONTRIBUTION

The present research is one of the few pioneer empirical studies in public procurement ethics in Uganda. It attempts to use the existing scanty literature on public procurement to develop a conceptual framework (see Figure 1 for details) which then provides a guide to this study. We extend the work of the *National Integrity Survey* (2002), Office of the Inspector General of Government (2003), *National Integrity Survey* (2006) and Bakunda's (2007) exploratory work on corporate planning behaviour in Uganda by examining how psychological climate relates to catharsis, procurement planning behaviour, psychological wellness, organizational anomie and ethical procurement behaviour. The results and discussion of this study provide direction for policy in public procurement.

FIGURE 1  
Conceptual Model Relating Psychological Climate, Catharsis, Organizational Anomie, Procurement Planning Behavior, Psychological Wellness, and Ethical Procurement Behavior



### **Psychological Climate, Psychological Wellness and Procurement Planning Behaviour**

Psychological climate has been conceptualized as the perceptual and experiential components of a reciprocal interaction between the organizational environment and the employee (Michela, Lukaszewski, & Allegrante, 1995). The perceptual and experiential components of psychological climate have implications for procurement related behaviours. Bandura (1973) and Bushman, Baumeister, and Philips (2001) have demonstrated that people's expectancies about the consequences of their behaviour may guide them in their behavioural choices. Ellsworth and Scherer (2003) have shown that "evaluating the social consequences of a particular action is an important step before finalizing the evaluation process and deciding on appropriate behavioural processes" (p. 581). Secondly, behaviour outcome expectancies may represent key features that people use to categorize behavioural alternatives and to structure their behavioural world. There is ample evidence supporting the fact that psychological climate determines work attitudes (Parker et al., 2003). Extant literature has revealed that each of the psychological climate variables has direct effects on employees' appraisals of adjustment indicators of psychological wellness, Job satisfaction and absenteeism (Bandura, 1986; Martin, Jones & Callan, 2005). Bakunda (2007) avers that attitudes and work place uncertainties which are a reflection of the negative psychological climate may prevent managers from planning. Basheka (2008) reveals that procurement planning was significantly positively related to accountability in local governments. He indirectly provides an account of the prevailing local government's procurement environment in Uganda which limits procurement planning. A critical review of literature reveals a public procurement environment which can be classified as political/legal, social/cultural, economic, technological, ethical and psychological as summarized in Table 1.

A critical examination of the procurement environment in Uganda's public sector reveals that lack of adequate needs assessment, poor procurement planning, interference of high-level officials in the decision to procure, informal agreement on contracts, abuse of non-competitive procedures on the basis of legal exceptions through contract splitting, and delays are among the many issues that characterize public procurement. As revealed by Table 1, the

**TABLE 1**  
**Environment of the Public Procurement Sector in Uganda**

<p><b>Political/Legal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geographical differences of local governments (ecological issues)</li> <li>- Political interference in the procurement process</li> <li>- Influence peddling by politicians</li> <li>- Regulatory bodies and processes (PPDA) /local government Act and regulations</li> <li>- Government budgetary process</li> <li>- Funding, grants and initiatives</li> </ul>	<p><b>Economic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Situation of Uganda's economy affecting nature and extent of bidding (Local versus international procurement).</li> <li>- Current trends of Uganda's economy (affects the procurement cycle)</li> <li>- Insufficient funding from central government</li> <li>- Supplier collusion to beat competition</li> <li>- Overseas economies and trends affecting open competitive bidding</li> <li>- General taxation issues</li> <li>- Taxation specific to supplies, works and services</li> <li>- Procurement -related transaction costs</li> <li>- Market and trade cycles</li> <li>- Reduced funding from central government</li> <li>- Poor facilitation to procurement planning officers</li> <li>- Delay of funds from central government</li> <li>- Interest and exchange rates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social/Cultural</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lifestyle trends of suppliers and procurement officers</li> <li>- Extended family systems and dependants</li> <li>- Attitudes of suppliers that procurement officers award contracts to friends and relatives</li> <li>- Media views for what is required of the accounting officers, procurement officers contract committees members</li> <li>- Image of procurement profession in Uganda</li> <li>- Buying patterns of procuring entities</li> <li>- Role models and socially constructed nature of procurement</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technical/Technological</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Absence of enough qualified procurement personnel</li> <li>- Low levels of capacity building initiatives and programmes for members of the contract committees</li> <li>- Lack of skills in user departments to accurately state their procurement requirements</li> <li>- Poor facilitation to procurement planning officers</li> <li>- Lack of capacity to interpret the procurement law</li> <li>- Most procurement related posts are not filled since recent restructuring</li> <li>- Absence of modern procurement methods like e-procurement</li> <li>- Low Capacity of suppliers</li> <li>- Low application and usage of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)</li> </ul>

TABLE 1 (Continued)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ethnic/religious factors</li> <li>- Advertising and publicity</li> <li>- Current procurement law which is subject to abuse of non-competitive procedures on the basis of legal exceptions through contract splitting, abuse of extreme urgency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited Innovation potential</li> <li>- Poor communication among procurement officials</li> <li>- Poor facilitation to procurement planning officers (technological facilities)</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Psychological</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perceptions of people that getting a procurement job is getting rich quickly – thus affecting work practice</li> <li>- The perception that the regulations and procedures within the PPDA Act are bureaucratic</li> <li>- Inadequate consultation during the procurement process</li> <li>- Survivor syndrome resulting from recent restructuring of the public sector</li> <li>- Inaccessible and/or hard to interpret procurement and disposal guidelines.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ethical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social construction of procurement</li> <li>- Abuse of non-competitive procedures on the basis of legal exceptions through contract splitting</li> <li>- Collusion in preparation of bids to inflate price among staff of the district</li> <li>- Corruption in both local and central governments</li> </ul>

public procurement related transactions can easily be affected by the characteristics of the individual's environment that assist in the work performance. This view is shared by Lazarus (2000, p. 665), who described his theoretical approach of psychological climate as centered on the "relational meaning that an individual constructs from the person – environment relationship." He sees this relationship as "a result of appraisals of the confluence of the social and physical environment and personal goals, beliefs about self and world, and resources (p.665)." A public procurement officers cognitive evaluation of how "stressful" they perceive a procurement related situation or event will be (Folkman, 1984), activates judgments and behaviour about the situation. A procurement environment characterized by inadequate financial resources, political interference in the procurement process and influence

peddling by politicians makes procurement officers cognitively appraise their value structure against the organizations values if any and adapt behaviours accordingly. Procurement officers who function in environments in which the procurement entities' values are less obvious are left to rely on their own individual differences. We therefore hypothesize that

H1: Psychological climate, Psychological wellness and procurement planning behaviour are significantly positively correlated.

### **Catharsis and Ethical Procurement Behaviour**

Procurement of goods and services is one of the areas most vulnerable to corruption, particularly bribes, kickbacks, political patronage, and extortion (Bailey, 2000 p. 41). Increased desire for transparency and accountability in public institutions has forced governments in sub-Saharan Africa to regulate the procurement of works and services. Attempts to pre-qualify, evaluate bids, select and award contracts to providers in accordance with the PPDA Act are aimed at maximizing value for money procurement. However, despite the seemingly thorough procurement selection process in the public sector, the performance of public procurement activities remains unsatisfactory. This is reflected by public sector procurement, which has not fully complied with the requirements of the PPDA Act, resulting from the prevailing procurement environment. CPAR (2004) has described the public procurement environment in Uganda as characterized by gross deviations from the procedures prescribed in the regulations. These deviations are classified as misprocurement and neglect of key principles of procurement. Non-compliance with the procurement law may be a reflection of an unhealthy procurement work environment characterized by the presence of aggressive procurement personnel that are rent-seekers, contrary to the objectives establishing the PPDA (2003) Act that advocate for transparency and ethical conduct. Lack of incentives to follow procedures and inappropriate procurement knowledge, skills and capacity have been cited by CPAR (2004) as one of the main causes for weak compliance. It appears procurement personnel in Uganda suffer increased unhealthy emotions of pity and fear. There has been no serious effort by the public service to create a procurement environment that encourages catharsis. By catharsis we literally mean 'cleansing' or 'purification'. In the case of this study,

procurement personnel would be given an opportunity to vent their feelings of pity and fear resulting from panopticism, political interference in the procurement process, poor government funding, grants and initiatives, delays to release funds from central government (see Table 1 for details). Extant literature has documented the value of catharsis. Venting of frustration allows for a release of stress due to feelings of distress and institutional cynicism experienced in Uganda's public procuring process (Stiles, 1987). Psychological literature has long treated catharsis as an individual process because of the emphasis on the individual production and reproduction of identity (Guerin, 2001). Recent literature provides evidence for catharsis being socially enacted in practice, confirming the concept of social construction (Hickman, 2005). Catharsis for procurement officers would involve three specific practices: constructing counter-narratives; sharing protest stories; and expressing solidarity (Joao, Wanda & Orlikowski, 2008). Constructing counter-narratives involves criticizing the public procurement regulations, management decisions and actions. Sharing protest stories may also mean that procurement officers mock top management's rhetoric and style of managing the procurement process. Expressing solidarity between the procurement officers can only be done by forming a strong procurement team with shared interests aimed at promoting the procurement profession. Unfortunately, all the above catharsis processes are considered insubordinate action in Uganda's public procurement and may result in dismissal. In this study we contend that the Aristotelian concept of catharsis makes procurement personnel purge themselves of antisocial impulses by being taken through the depiction of a procurement tragedy within the confines of the profession. Procurement officers are purged of their own pathological tendencies through a pseudo-Aristotelian catharsis. These pathological tendencies are socially constructed. According to Kelly's "Fundamental postulate: a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events" (Kelly, 1955, p. 46). The first corollary introduces Kelly's constructivist position. This is termed the construction corollary. This corollary avers that, a person anticipates events by construing their replications. By construing we mean placing an interpretation. A person places an interpretation upon what is construed. He erects a structure, within the framework of which the substance takes shape or assumes

meaning. The substance which he construes does not produce the structure; the person does (Kelly, 1955, p.50). Little research attention has been paid to the development of knowledge on the psychological experiences of public procurement in the developing world where cases of widespread unethical behavior dominate the press. Such knowledge has important implications for policy makers. We therefore hypothesize that

- H2: Procurement officers who experience catharsis are likely to be associated with an improved psychological climate.
- H3: There is a positive correlation between individuals who experience catharsis and ethical procurement behavior.
- H4: There is a negative correlation between organizational anomie and individuals that experience catharsis.
- H5: Psychological climate, ethical procurement, catharsis, organizational anomie, procurement planning behavior and psychological wellness are significant predictors of ethical procurement behavior.

### **Psychological Climate and Organizational Anomie**

Kelly (1955) saw all men as “personal scientists” in anticipating the world, and attempted to develop techniques where this anticipatory modeling activity was reflexively applied to the self. He saw man as driven by the need to cope with coming events in the world and all other aspects of behavior as deriving from this: “A person’s processes, psychologically speaking, slip into the grooves which are cut out by the mechanisms he adopts for realizing his objectives” (Kelly, 1955, p. 49). These grooves provide templates for construing events which he termed personal constructs. “Man looks at his world through transparent templates which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed” (Kelly, 1955, p. 8-9). Constructs are used for predictions of things to come, and the world keeps on rolling and revealing these predictions to be either correct or misleading. This fact provides the basis for the “revision of constructs and eventually, of whole construct systems” (Kelly, 1955, p. 14). Kelly introduces the notion of a psychological space as a term for a region in which we may place and classify elements of our experience. This space has been used by man to place elements of the hypotheses developed and attempts to test

them by developing anomie behavior. This is consistent with Baiman (1982) who contended that a subordinate acting in self-interest is capable of engaging in dysfunctional behavior. We therefore hypothesize that

H6: Perceptions of negative psychological climate lead to increased organization anomie.

## METHODS

### Sample and Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study were collected from both central and local governments, an area that has been examined in previous National Integrity Surveys (NIS) and Inspector General of Government (IGG) surveys. This is further confirmed by the numerous press reports pointing out unethical conduct. Local and central governments fit the context of this study and the purpose of study as well. First, public procurement, especially at the local and central government levels, is believed to be one of the principal areas where unethical practices blossom (National Integrity Survey, 2002; Office of the Inspector General of Government, 2003; NIS, 2006). Also considerable diversity is found among staff of both the local and central government and evidence suggests that many organizations in Uganda lack procurement plans, that procurement planning is less systematic, characterized by last moment decisions and adhocism (Bakunda, 2007). This study followed the sample size, sampling plan and procedure used by the National Integrity Survey (2002) and the National Integrity Survey (2006).

A questionnaire was developed and used for data collection. The questionnaire was pilot-tested on 50 respondents purposely drawn from a population of local government but not forming part of the main study. During this pilot study, respondents identified and recommended for improvement on clarity some of the item scales that appeared ambiguous. Changes in the instrument were made after a thorough discussion by members of the research team. Results of the pilot test revealed the need to incorporate open-ended questions to tap information that would be otherwise difficult to collect using fixed-response category questions. Results from the open-ended questions were used to support the results of the quantitative data and discussions as presented in this paper. The

final questionnaires were distributed to the sample of procurement personnel who were identified for the study. Each questionnaire was accompanied with a cover letter providing explanations and assurances that all individual responses would be treated confidentially. A number of call backs to the respondents were made to ensure maximum retrieval of the questionnaires.

Questionnaires were distributed to the sampled accounting officers, members of the contract committees, officials working in procurement and disposal units, inspection units, technical evaluation committees and other employees performing procurement functions. At the central government level, ten (10) ministries were selected. Respondents selected to represent this numbered 300. A response rate of 45% (135 respondents) was achieved. A sample of 16 local governments with 4 from each region was selected. The total sample size from local government was 800 of which 325 (41% response rate) usable questionnaires were received and used for analysis.

All respondents were asked to participate in the interviewer-administered survey. Surveys from 460 respondents from both local and central governments were received. Of these, 1% were accounting officers, 4% were members of the inspection unit, 15% were members of the technical evaluation committees, 18% were from staff which perform functions related to procurement, 26% were members of the contract committee while the remaining 36% were officials working in the procurement and disposal units. The gender split was unequal with more males (81%) than females (19%). The average age of the respondents was between 31 and 40 years of age (see Table 2). The category of degree holders accounted for 45.9% of the sample, followed by those with diplomas at 33.3% and post graduate workers with 10.8%. The average professional experience was 5 years and above while their average organizational tenure was 6.5 years. Due to confidentiality concerns, many respondents did not want to be identified by their place of work.

### Measures and Scores

All constructs included in this study were validated with published scales. *Psychological climate* items were based on the scholarly works of Schulte, Ostroff and Kinicki, (2006) and Lopez, Carr, Gregory and Dwyer (2005). Employees responded to all items using a five

point likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). This yielded a cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient of 0.95. Its score was average with a mean (M) of 4.19 and standard deviation (S.D) of .89 as presented in Table 1. *Psychological wellness* was measured by adapting item scales from Adams, Wilson, and Wang (1997), Rosenberg (1979), Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock and Erbaugh (1961), Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo and Schaufeli (2000), Prins and Van Niekerk (2001), and Jutras and Lepage (2006). Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). This measure was reliable with alpha, 0.84; mean of 3.18 and Standard deviation of .58.

### **Catharsis**

Item scales for this construct were developed following guidelines laid down by Bennett (2007). All questions were scored between 0 and 5. Sample questions and responses testing catharsis included the following:

Assuming you do make a procurement-related complaint, do you tend to really blow your top?	
	Become rather angry?
	Feel no emotion one way or the other?
	Feel rather nervous and not want to make a fuss?
	Become very nervous and withdraw?
Which of the following best describes how you tend to feel after you have made a procurement related complaint?	
	Very relieved and much more relaxed and comfortable?
	Quite a lot better?
	No different?
	Rather stressed and uncomfortable?
	Worse than before making the complaint?

The test for consistency revealed a cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.85, M= 3.49 and S.D = .49; The scale used to measure *Organization anomie* was based on the Srole's (1956) five item scale expanded to nine items in 1972. We revised some items. Cronbach  $\alpha$  was 0.87, M= 4.35 and S.D = .43. We used ideas of the World Bank and Bakunda (2007) to develop item scales for *Procurement planning*. Cronbach alpha coefficient was adequate with a coefficient of 0.79, M= 2.83 and S.D = .64; *Procurement Ethics* was measured

by adapting scales developed by Ntayi (2005b). Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.91, M= 2.54 and S.D = .61

### Control Variables

After a review of the literature, we considered four variables, gender, age, marital status and organizational tenure which could covary with our dependent and independent variables and therefore could be included as control variables in our analyses (Cheng & Feast, 1980; Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

**TABLE 2**  
**Descriptive Statistics:**

Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation		Scales	$\alpha$	N
Gender	1.19	.39	Male (Majority)	1-2	-	460
Age Group	2.08	.91	31-40 yrs	1-4	-	460
Marital Status	1.73	.45	Married	1-2	-	460
Procurement Experience	3.76	1.24	4-5 years	1-5	-	460
Psychological Climate	4.19	.89	Average	1-5	0.95	460
Psychological wellness	3.18	.58	Average	1-5	0.84	460
Procurement planning	2.83	.64	Average (Ad hoc)	1-5	0.79	460
Organization anomie	4.35	.43	Agree	1-5	0.87	460
Catharsis	3.49	.49	Average	0-5	0.85	460
Procurement Ethics	2.54	.61	Absent	1-5	0.91	460

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the results of the tests of the research hypotheses. Table 3 shows the correlation between each of the dependent and independent variables used in this study. All bivariate correlations of both the independent and dependent variables are

**TABLE 3**  
**Bi-Variate Correlations for All Study Variables**

Variables	Study variables are numbered from 1 - 10 as defined in the first column of this table									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gender (1)	1.000									
Age Group (2)	-.249 <sup>a</sup>	1.000								
Marital Status (3)	-.163	.614 <sup>a</sup>	1.000							
Organizational tenure (4)	-.158	.443 <sup>a</sup>	.225*	1.000						
Catharsis (5)	-.069	.183	.071	.087	1.000					
Psychological wellness (6)	-.070	.197 <sup>b</sup>	.119	.105	.569 <sup>a</sup>	1.000				
Procurement planning (7)	-.068	.167	.109	.084	.472 <sup>a</sup>	.660 <sup>a</sup>	1.000			
Organization anomie (8)	-.176	.241 <sup>b</sup>	.173	.120	-.389 <sup>a</sup>	-.527 <sup>a</sup>	-.668 <sup>a</sup>	1.000		
Psychological Climate (9)	-.085	-.026	.024	.024	.429 <sup>a</sup>	.457 <sup>a</sup>	.573 <sup>a</sup>	.485 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	
Procurement Ethics (10)	-.162	.180	.080	.103	.409 <sup>a</sup>	.492 <sup>a</sup>	.679 <sup>a</sup>	-.645 <sup>a</sup>	.653 <sup>a</sup>	1.000

Notes: <sup>a</sup>. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

<sup>b</sup>. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

significant. Specifically, psychological climate was significantly positively correlated with catharsis ( $r=.429^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), psychological wellness ( $r=.457^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), procurement planning ( $r=.573^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), procurement ethics ( $r=.653^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) supporting H1, H2 and H3 and significantly negatively correlated with organizational anomie ( $r=-.485^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) consistent with H6. There was a significant negative correlation between catharsis and organizational anomie ( $r =-.389^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) consistent with H4 and a significant positive correlation with procurement planning behaviour ( $r=.472^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), psychological wellness ( $r =.569^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) and ethical procurement behaviour ( $r =.409^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Organizational anomie was also observed to have a significant negative correlation with procurement planning behaviour ( $r=-.668^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), Psychological wellness ( $r = -.527^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) and ethical procurement behaviour ( $r = -.645^{**}$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Psychological wellness had a significant positive

correlation with procurement planning behaviour ( $r = .660^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and ethical procurement behaviour ( $r = .492^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). There was a significant positive correlation between procurement planning behaviour and ethical procurement behaviour ( $r = .679^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). The above results provide support for H1, H2, H3, H4 and H6.

### Prediction and Moderation

In order to test with more rigor for moderation of catharsis, organization anomie, procurement planning behaviour and psychological wellness, six multiple hierarchical regressions were conducted (Cohen & Cohen, 1983) to confirm H5. In Step 1, control variables of gender, age, marital status and period were entered followed by the psychological climate independent variable in Step 2. Catharsis, psychological wellness, procurement planning behaviour, and organization anomie were entered in Step 3, Step 4, Step 5 and Step 6, respectively. The results with the standardized beta coefficients are presented in Table 4: 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.

Results reveal that control variables of gender, age, marital status and length of stay in the organization (period) had no direct effect on procurement ethics. First, gender and marital status insignificantly negatively affected procurement ethics ( $\beta = -.138$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ), ( $\beta = -.030$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ) respectively. Additionally age group and organizational tenure were not significantly related to procurement ethics ( $\beta = .166$ ,  $P > 0.05$  and  $\beta = .006$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ) respectively. Psychological climate entered in Model 2 significantly predicted 50.7% of the variance in procurement ethics ( $\beta = .676$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and the resulting  $\Delta R^2$  was 0.453. However, the introduction of catharsis in the third model, reduced the beta coefficient of psychological climate but remained significant ( $\beta = .636$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). Catharsis was not a significant predictor of procurement ethics ( $\beta = .082$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). The change in  $R^2$  resulting from the introduction of catharsis was negligible ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.005$ ). When psychological wellness was introduced in Model 4, it significantly predicted 2.4% of the variance in procurement ethics ( $\beta = .205$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Procurement planning behaviour and organizational anomie were also observed to contribute 6.1% and 4.5% of the variance in procurement ethics respectively ( $\beta = .390$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) in Model 5 and ( $\beta = .308$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) in Models 5 and 6. The introduction of procurement planning in Model 5, diminished the predictive

potential of psychological wellness ( $\beta = .005$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). Contrary to H5, catharsis did not significantly predict procurement ethics in all the 6 models and psychological climate failed to significantly predict procurement ethics in Models 5 and 6. Finally Model 6 revealed that psychological climate, procurement planning behaviour and organizational anomie significantly predicted 64.2% of the variance in procurement ethics and the overall model was significant at 5%.

**TABLE 4**  
**Hierarchical Regression Analysis with Procurement Ethics as the Dependent Variable**

Variables	Models					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
(Constant)	9.534 <sup>a</sup>	2.076 <sup>b</sup>	1.994 <sup>b</sup>	1.110	1.541	-.186
Gender	-.138	-.083	-.085	-.079	-.089	-.082
Age Group	.166	.235 <sup>b</sup>	.223 <sup>b</sup>	.191	.172	.160
Marital Status	-.030	-.056	-.056	-.058	-.075	-.102
Organizational tenure	.006	-.002	-.004	-.007	-.003	-.035
Psychological climate		.676 <sup>a</sup>	.636 <sup>a</sup>	.591 <sup>a</sup>	.439 <sup>a</sup>	.388 <sup>a</sup>
Catharsis			.082	.018	.001	.000
Psychological wellness				.205 <sup>b</sup>	.005	.058
Procurement planning					.390 <sup>a</sup>	.260 <sup>b</sup>
Organization anomie						-.308 <sup>a</sup>
R	.232	.712	.715	.732	.772	.801
R <sup>2</sup>	.054	.507	.512	.535	.597	.642
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.010	.478	.477	.496	.558	.602
F - statistic	1.24	17.66	14.84	13.82	15.34	16.31
$\Delta R^2$	.054	.453	.005	.024	.061	.045
F change - statistic	1.24	78.91	.864	4.27	12.65	10.29
Sig. F change	.301	.000	.355	.042	.001	.002

Notes: n = 460. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.

a. regression is significant at the 0.01 level;

b. regression is significant at the 0.05 level.

#### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Psychological climate is a significant positive predictor of ethical procurement behaviour. Siu, Spence, Laschinger, Heather and

Finegan (2008) found that a positive professional practice climate leads to ethical behaviour. As established by Martin, Jones and Callan, (2005), when there is an improvement in employees' psychologically meaningful representation of proximal organizational structures, processes and events they become more ethical. Martin, Jones and Callan, (2005) contend that an effective management of the psychological orientation of employees is critical in determining employee behaviour, providing opportunities for learning and growth. Parker et al. (2003) and Thompson, Jahn, Kopelman and Prottas (2004) aver that psychological climate is related to individuals' work attitude, work behaviour and job performance through the reciprocity process. Latham (2001) found that beliefs and values of managers are instrumental in creating a psychological environment which guides and directs employee behaviour. Employees' perceptions of being treated fairly at work determine their engagement in work-related behaviour (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004) and /or ethical conduct. Consistent with Ashford (1998), poor management of the psychological orientation may create feelings of frustration, alienation and job insecurity. Kukundakwe (2006) found that when employees perceive job insecurity they tend to hold onto their jobs and engage in unethical behaviour. She attempted to offer explanations as to why Ugandan public sector employees do not want to retire voluntarily by taking a sample of employees who had suffered survivor syndrome resulting from public sector restructuring.

When the mediating role of organizational anomie was tested, the strong positive prediction between psychological climate and procurement ethics diminished as revealed by the change in the beta coefficients of the psychological climate construct. This finding is corroborated by Caruana and Ewing (2001) who have shown that cognitions toward an organization and supervisor and the level of anger toward the organization were major predictors of dishonesty and unethical conduct. Herrmann and Datta (2005), Guerin (2001), and Hardie (1968) argued that the ethical behaviours of employees is "pulled down" as a result of the unethical conduct of managers and peers. Hendry (2005) and Herrmann and Datta (2005) revealed that subordinates tend to imitate their superiors, when these superiors who are supposed to be agents of ethics place their own interests over shareholders' interests to divert resources towards private consumption. This observation is consistent with our findings in which organization anomie was a significant negative predictor of ethical

procurement behaviour. It is also a significant moderator of work related attitude and unethical workplace behaviour (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Further evidence from open-ended questions which were used in this study, revealed that public procurement offices whose leadership had one time engaged in unethical procurement practice, tended to have a massive employee engagement in unethical procurement practices signaling anomic characteristics. The presence of organizational anomie ( $M=4.35$ ,  $S.D=.43$ ) and its negative effect on ethical procurement point to a social pathology of public procurement officers in Uganda that lack explicit or implicit rules and values, thus eroding the ethical fabric of organizations. To corroborate these findings, National Integrity Survey (2006) has revealed that local government (LG) and central government (CG) officers in charge of procurement have failed to serve the interest of the organization they represent due to conflict of interest arising out of the contingent commission received from suppliers for "steering client business". This in part explains cases of poor contracting, poor services and the failure to follow the PPDA (2003) Act while handling public procurement in Uganda (e.g. leasing Kampala City Council markets and Nakasero markets, purchase of undersize military uniforms from China and sale of public land by the Uganda Land Commission; e.g., Butabika hospital land).

The introduction of organizational anomie in Model 6 resulted in the reduction of the effect of procurement planning behaviour and psychological wellness on procurement ethics. This means that as institutions move into a state of normlessness, procurement planning diminishes and "emergency" procurements become common. This is a significant finding that augments the work of Bakunda (2007). Although Bakunda (2007) revealed low planning behaviours among corporate managers, he did not offer any plausible explanation for its existence. His presentation was merely an exploration of the corporate planning behaviour of managers in Uganda. In this study we reveal that the absence of procurement planning is significantly negatively correlated with organizational anomie. Maclver (1950) has shown that anomie exists as a result of the breakdown of the individual's sense of attachment to the organization. This is common with employees who have lost their values. Ntayi (2005b) found that retail employees in Uganda were engaged in theft, misuse of company property, assaulting company customers, damaging company property and releasing confidential information, sabotage,

spreading rumours about the organization, conspiracy, absenteeism, reduction of effort, doing personal tasks at work, and tardiness. This seems to be the direction being taken by both local and central government procurement officers. However there is need to undertake a further study using data from the public sector to corroborate these findings. As revealed by PPDA (2008) procurement of providers by central government is not in compliance with existing government procurement regulations (e.g., the PPDA 2003 Act), which advocates preparation of procurement plans by Public Procurement and Disposing Entities (PDEs). For example, the Uganda central government did not plan and/or initiate the procurement process for the service providers at the commencement of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) event in 2007. Many service providers undertook work without any contract or agreement with the procuring entities and the whole process of performance was not supervised. This action signals the presence of counterproductive behaviours. Munene, Schwartz, and Kibanja (2003) revealed that in an extreme counter-productive climate, employees develop coping strategies by doing what is the minimum or default whenever they have an opportunity to do so. This study seems to indicate that anomie is slowly becoming institutionalized. When anomie become institutionalized in both local and central government, employees in other departments and the general public sit back and wait for government intervention to protect national resources (Pruden & Longman, 1972). When employees are dissatisfied with the efforts government is taking to address it, they are joined by some concerned members of the society while others generally campaign for a national prayer day as has been advocated by the Uganda parliament. It is generally believed that public procurement officers in Uganda have lost a sense of stewardship. Findings from our open-ended questions reveal that some Ugandans are waiting for a saviour that will redeem local and central government procurements from the anomic condition. There is a general feeling that the "Cobweb-Spiderman" concept has eroded public procurement professionalism in Uganda. The "spider" refers to a key influential person in government who has the power and ability to weave a web of connectivity and/or networks that either manipulates public procurement and/or places some procurement officers in key procurement positions. These, then become the procurement technocrats and stewards of government procurement

function. The Spiderman along with disciples has tended to promote anomie by making their ethical colleagues frustrated, defenseless and normless. This is accompanied by creation of doubts concerning the state of law and order, distrust towards organizational politics and organizational fairness. Those who feel frustrated have tended to complain silently, psychologically withdraw and abscond from their professionalism. In this sense, employees feel increasingly “depowered” as their professional status is permanently undermined by actions and/or behaviours of the spiderman along with his disciples over which they have very little control.

The significant positive correlation between catharsis and procurement ethics is supported by Tsai (2001) who reported that psychological climate was related to positive employee emotions. This means that the more, procurement officers go through catharsis (some kind of purging, purifying/repenting), the more they are helped to reconstruct their diminished sense of identity and the more ethical they become. Public procurement employees are purged from their feelings of anger and loss of face (purgation of pity and fear) associated with previous procurement transactions. Cathartic engagements enable procurement officers to release some tensions. This purgation and/or purification process allows them to continue working even in the midst of deep challenges to their sense of self (Joao & Wanda, 2008). This self-disclosure, results in relieving the repressed event and associated emotions (Pennebaker & Hoover, 1986). Consistent with Pennebaker and Susman, (1988) catharsis removes tension, allows the release of inhibition of injustice and any other procurement-related traumatic event. Institutionalized cathartic process makes public procurement officers find a way to deal with and defuse the threats to their identity, discursively and vicariously.

Procurement planning was a significant predictor of ethical procurement behaviour even after taking care of the moderating effects of organizational anomie and psychological wellness. However, this prediction diminishes as we introduce organizational anomie in the regression model. This points towards the inference that procurement planning may not easily cohabit with institutionalized anomie. Planning the procurement and disposal activities of the procuring and disposing entities is a must as presented by the PPDA Act 2003 S31 (a) and (f). However, despite this requirement, stock-outs, limited quality control, delays regarding requisitions and emergency procurements are common. Also, there is

a tendency for procurement officers to avoid procurement planning and instead break-down and/or segment most of their procurements into amounts less than two million Uganda shillings. This procurement practice is defensible since it can easily be conveniently fitted under the PPDA Act. Under this category of micro-procurements, the PPDA Act accepts a single invoice from a selected supplier. Although this is a legally accepted procurement, procurement officers provide quotations from their own and/or preferred companies thereby disadvantaging the officially pre-qualified companies. This act and/or behaviour have tended to demoralize some suppliers who deliver value for money supplies and services. They are no longer interested in participating in future procurement bidding since they foresee they would not be awarded contracts to supply the required goods. Some disadvantaged companies have in the past forwarded their complaints to the PPDA office requesting intervention. Shapiro Carlson, Astin, and Freedman (2006) assert that the relationship a procurement officer has with the employing organization is critical in understanding the rationale for them to engage in anomic behaviour. Ntayi (2005b) reported the declining work ethic of Uganda's retail staff, presence of work place deviance behaviour, organizational retaliation behaviours and work withdrawal behaviours.

Our study revealed a significant positive relationship between psychological climate and psychological wellness. This means that employees whose perceptions of the organization and environment in which they were working (that is, psychological climate) were more positive and were more likely to exhibit behaviours of psychological wellness (that is, a sense of happiness and coherence). By psychological climate we mean "a set of perceptions that reflect how work environments, including organizational attributes, are cognitively appraised and represented in terms of their meaning to and significance for individuals" (James, Joyce, and Slocum 1988; p. 129). The above finding is consistent with Martin, Jones and Callan (2005), Parker et al. (2003) and Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart, and Holcombe (2000) who have revealed an association between positive climate and higher levels of adjustment like psychological wellness, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Peccei (2004) revealed that psychological well-being at work contributed to the overall sense of happiness which is displayed through attitudes and behaviour. Consistent with Mischel's (1976) theory of situational strength and individual differences in a strong balanced psychological

climate, individuals rely less on their personal judgments and their behaviors are dictated to a greater extent by the organization (Lopez, Carr, Gregory & Dwyer, 2005 p.60). Endler and Magnusson (1976) have suggested that an individual's perception of his or her environment is the most influential factor on the individual's behavior. A person's degree of psychological wellness can be seen on two independent dimensions of a positive affect and a negative affect (Bradburn, 1969). A psychologically well individual can perceive and assess the reality of situations and act on it in order to promote happiness, meaningfulness and spiritual depth.

### **CONCLUSIONS, POLICY, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the above discussion we conclude that first the more local and central governments improve psychological climate, catharsis, psychological wellness and procurement planning, the more they positively affect ethical procurement behaviour. Second, the presence of organizational anomie diminishes ethical procurement. Third, organizational anomie diminishes procurement planning behaviour. Fourth, organizational anomie, procurement planning behaviour and psychological wellness mediate the relationship between psychological climate and ethical procurement behaviour.

These conclusions have implications for both central and local governments' public procurement. This study reveals the need for both central and local governments to nurture a positive psychological climate, introduce an organizationally -oriented cathartic process, encourage psychological wellness and improve procurement planning in order to promote ethical procurement behaviour. Additionally, Uganda's public sector needs to reduce organizational anomie which tends to diminish procurement ethics. This is likely to result in procurement officers who value their procurement profession and perform with ethical values. Reduction of organizational anomie is a self-policing behaviour, which is likely to deter public procurement officers from following the PPDA Act.

Higher scores on psychological climate represent a working climate which nurtures procurement ethics. Psychological climate if properly managed can diminish unethical conduct through self-policing mechanisms. Central and local governments should take deliberate steps to create a psychological environment that promotes

communication of institutional values to the public procurement staff. This can be achieved by holding weekly departmental meetings where such values are presented and discussed. An electronic discussion forum for all public servants can be created with the purpose of allowing public employees to initiate and discuss issues affecting their psychological well-being and procurement ethics. Such a behavioural control mechanism may be advantageous for public procurement officers with little or no supervision. Perceptions of the psychological climate can be influenced by continuous interactions between procurement officers and management. It is important for accounting officers to be aware of the significant role that psychological climate can have for their procurement officer's ethical behavior. The ability that psychological climate has to influence one's behaviour has implications for recruitment. Potentially any procurement officer could be ethical if the organization puts forth the appropriate ethical expectations and the employee perceives those expectations. Integrity and psychometric tests plus reference checks can be vigorously pursued before a new employee is taken on. Accounting officers need to professionalize recruitment by engaging reputable international firms to manage recruitment.

Zahra, Sapienza and Davidson (2006) aver that procurement is a self-motivated capability of a value addition nature which drives central and local government to performance. Since it constitutes over 80% of government activity/expenditure, government is advised to develop this procurement capability. The success of both local and central government will depend on human behaviour governed by norms restrained by culture and not laws. In order to deal with organizational anomie, a state of normlessness, attraction to socially unapproved means for achievement of goals (Allison, 1978) has to be discouraged. Durkheim (1951, pp. 241-58) recognizes the role of greed and the accompanying lack of moral regulation that can lead to anomie. Greed can potentially affect anyone within the society – from the “top to the bottom of the ladder.” This is consistent with Justice Ogoola (as cited by the UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks, April 3, 2006) who averred that the moral fabric of our society has been eroded, affecting key members of our society. From the foregoing, it may be recommended that local and central government should use family ties –Kinship (Eddleston, Kellermanns & Ravi, 2008), as valuable intangible assets to promote procurement ethics. The public sector can promote a strong agency culture with

collectively self-monitoring compliant norms and also hire employees with business ethics training (Kulik, 2005). Family involvement may reduce employee-employer relationship problems (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Fama & Jensen, 1983) and finally leadership of the PDEs should be scrutinized. An officer who has ever been involved in procurement malfeasance should not hold any public office unless he/she has been thoroughly subjected to the cathartic process.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Our study is subject to several shortcomings that limit interpretation of results. First the data presented here are cross sectional and correlational, limiting causal inferences to be made. Secondly, the study adopted scales used by previous studies conducted in countries which have different cultural and economic background compared to that of Uganda where this study was undertaken. Thirdly, in this study, we took a sample based on central and local governments; different results are likely to be obtained if another setting is selected for the study. For example, Schneider and Chung (1996) have shown that different types of climate systems are likely to be relevant for different work environments. The importance of social aspects in producing different systems was characteristic of the service industry where relationships between managers, employees, and customers play a decisive role (Schneider, 1990). In other industries like manufacturing, different prominent aspects might emerge in the climate systems. We recommend future scholars develop culturally sensitive item scales and extend the study to the private sector and also conduct longitudinal studies.

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