

NETWORKING FOR KNOWLEDGE CAPACITY BUILDING OF PROCUREMENT PROFESSIONALS IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The role of public procurement professionals in achieving value for money in public procurement activities is widely acknowledged around the globe. This has inspired the organisation of training programmes and workshops for procurement professionals, particularly those in developing countries in order to hone their knowledge and skills for proper management of government projects. This paper sought to explore the opportunities in networking for knowledge in capacity building of procurement professionals in Ghana. The study adopted mixed research methods for both data collection and analysis. The paper revealed that professional networking can offer procurement professionals the opportunity to acquire new knowledge from external professionals, knowing global trends about procurement practice and glean new information from other institutions about procurement. It is recommended that a platform that can support a network of procurement professionals in Ghana should be developed in order to ensure effective interaction and communication among procurement professionals for their capacity building.

KEYWORDS: Capacity Building, Ghana, Knowledge, Networking, Procurement Professionals.

INTRODUCTION

In providing for the infrastructural needs of Ghana, government commits huge state capital, hence, requiring conscious efforts to make the procurement activities more effective and efficient in order to achieve value for money (Anvuur, Kumaraswamy & Male, 2006). This action will in turn reduce budget constraints as it ensures the achievement of the same results at lower levels of spending or even better outcomes at the same level of spending (Mandl, Dierx & Ilzkovitz, 2008). Owing to the sensitive nature of public procurement, the need for a high level of expertise to manage it cannot be overemphasised (Schapper, Malta & Gilbert, 2006). This level of expertise is required in areas such as contract specification, risk management, ongoing relationship, and performance management of procurement (Schapper *et al.*, 2006).

In Ghana, some of the issues confronting the various procurement activities such as lack of compliance with the Public Procurement Act by several Public Procurement Entities (PPEs) are attributable to inadequate qualified personnel to handle the procurement processes (Osei-Tutu *et al.* 2011). Indeed, it must be noted that without competent professionals to handle the procurement activities of the various PPEs, the quest of achieving efficiency and value for money in public sector procurement will be stifled (Anvuur *et al.*, 2006; PPAA- Bulletin, 2011). In this regard, the Public Procurement Authority (PPA) of Ghana has undertaken several

capacity building programmes that are aimed at producing the relevant skills for the management of procurement activities in the country (PPAE-Bulletin, 2011). These programmes include the development of short to long term training modules for the training of public procurement personnel and introduction of procurement courses in the nation's tertiary institutions (i.e. polytechnics, and universities). These undertakings will in effect enable the nation to get personnel to man public procurement activities (PPAE-Bulletin, 2011). However, to hone the skills and knowledge needed in procurement, just like other professions, requires more than attaining a diploma or a university degree and as such, the period during which novice professionals develop their proficiency in the general professional role continues well beyond their initial qualification (Eraut, 1994). Therefore, there is the need to find innovative ways to sharpen the skills and knowledge of procurement professionals in Ghana.

One of the concepts that has gained much attention in the research community in terms of knowledge and skills development of organisations is networking (Tillquist, 2002; Tepic, Trienekens, Hoste & Omta, 2012; and Ozkan-Canbolat, 2014). The concept of networking has been employed to explain several organisational phenomena such as organisational identity, organisational development, and organisational knowledge cycle (Bouzdine & Bourakova-Lorgnier, 2004). Networking seeks to gauge the level at which the relationships between actors (for example, individuals and organisations) in a network process and their implications for generating novel ideas and exercising social influence (Battilana & Casciaro 2012; Bouzdine & Bourakova-Lorgnier, 2004; Ruan, Ochieng, Price & Egbu, 2013). At the individual level, research suggests that an individual with a widespread network of connections over several collections of knowledge and expertise bridges holes between people and is exposed to more diverse knowledge (Tepic *et al.*, 2012).

This paper therefore seeks to explore the opportunities in networking that can be harnessed to build the knowledge capacity of public procurement professionals for efficient and effective management of public procurement activities in Ghana.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING

Public Procurement

Public procurement is a very important aspect of development in both developed and developing countries (Schapper *et al.*, 2006; Govender & Watermeyer, 2000; Noble, 2009; Edler & Georghiou, 2007; Snider & Rendon, 2008). Indeed, it is seen as the nexus of public financial system, and social and economic outcomes and as such, politically sensitive (Schapper & Malta, 2011; Schapper *et al.*, 2006). The importance of public procurement has been acknowledged by viewing it in several facets which include, but not limited to the contracting out of public functions and its implications; social equity and minority contracting; and the unique challenges of contracting for public services (Snider and Rendon 2012). In most instances, the significance of procurement, both private and public have been expressed as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and budgetary allocation of an organisation, or a country. For example, the World Bank estimates that procurement represents about 25% of a country's GDP (Noble 2009). In 2005, procurement stood at 20 percent of the European Union's GDP, while representing 10 percent of the GDPs across Africa (Mandl *et al.*, 2008; Dza, Fisher & Gapp, 2013).

In Ghana, public procurement represents about 50% to 70% of the annual national budget, after personal emoluments, and as such, 90% of all development partners' inflows go into procurement related activities in the country (Osei-Tutu, Mensah & Ameyaw, 2011; Dza *et al.*, 2013). Owing to the significance of public procurement, it is seen as a major tool that can be used to achieve a raft of socio-economic objectives (Edler & Georghiou, 2007; Watermeyer, 2004; McCrudden, 2004; Offei *et al.*, 2016). These policy objectives include supporting domestic suppliers or local economic development; remedies for historically disadvantaged groups; and green procurement (Snider and Rendon 2012). Snider and Rendon (2012) however asserted that the success of these procurement objectives is predicated on how effective the procurement function will be. Noble (2009) corroborates this assertion by pointing out that ineffective procurement practices can lead to gaps in actual GDP and stresses the need to ensure effectiveness in procurement to make some savings to address other national priorities.

Concept of Capacity Building

In this section, the concept of capacity building is elucidated and put into the perspective of this paper. This comprises the definition of the terms capacity and capacity building. These are respectively presented under the following sub-headings.

Capacity Defined

The term capacity has different meanings, depending on its contextual usage as there is no standard definition (Morgan, 2006). For instance, Morgan (2006) in a framework referred to capacity as the overall ability of a system to create value. This definition is simply put but carries a broader perspective, in that a system as used in this context, can be an individual, or an organisation (Kululanga, 2012). In this regard, it can be asserted that capacity refers to the ability of individuals or organisations to create value. Indeed, when it is used at individual's level, capacity is generally referred to as an individual's ability to solve problems and achieve objectives (Mamman, 2014). This definition emphasises the individual's ability to solve problems. It is acknowledged that efficiency and effectiveness in organisational functions, including procurement is greatly dependent on the skills and knowledge base of the professionals involved in its processes (Barsemoi, Mwangagi & Asienyo, 2014). Thus, it can be asserted that the knowledge and skills of procurement professionals predicate their ability to manage procurement processes in their respective entities. Hence, this paper adapts Mamman's definition for capacity as follows: *The requisite knowledge and skills of procurement professionals for the management of procurement activities in their respective organisations.*

Capacity Building (CB)

Using the understanding of the definition of capacity, the capacity building is expounded. The term capacity building (CB) is used by several organisations and countries including the United Nations and the World Bank (Abaza *et al.*, 2002; Lusthaus, Adrien & Perstinger, 1999). For some institutions, capacity building refers to any support that strengthens an institution's ability to effectively and efficiently design, implement and evaluate development activities according to its mission (Lusthaus *et al.*, 1999). In this definition, the focus is on support that is provided to an institution as the unit of emphasis. However, capacity building covers a much broader spectrum, for instance a country's human, scientific, technological, organisational and resource capabilities (Abaza et al. 2002). Capacity building is also considered as an intentional and coordinated effort to strengthen individuals' ability to solve problems and achieve objectives

through the provision of knowledge and skills (Mamman, 2014). In this definition of capacity building, the focus is on the individual and his or her knowledge and skills requirement to attain a given objective. In as much as the above definition is limited to the individual, it falls within the scope of this paper, which focuses on the individual professionals who manage procurement activities in various PPEs. It must be noted that in all these definitions, capacity building is borne out of conscious efforts and is not an ad hoc venture. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, the following definition for capacity building is used: *an intentional and coordinated effort aimed at improving the knowledge and skills base of professionals in order to effectively and efficiently manage public procurement activities in their various entities.*

The Concept of Networking

There is growing amount of literature on networking from various perspectives around the world (Hermanrud, 2009). These have been captured under several themes including leadership networks (Hoppe & Reinelt 2010); professional networks (Hitchcock, Bland, Hekelman & Bluementhal, 1995); strategic networks (Gulati, Nohria & Zaheer, 2000); and social networks (Hoppe & Reinelt 2010). They have sought to gauge among other things, the effect that the relationships and interactions between nodes (such as peoples, groups, and organisations) have on their development and their survival. Indeed, the function a system performs is contingent on the shape of the network and the relationship between nodes (Baggio & Cooper, 2010).

Network theories describe the relations constructed by independent nodes system, analyses inter-personal relations, and even the characteristics of these relations (Ozkan-Canbolat, 2014; Gulati *et al.*, 2002). The various nodes of a network such as persons, and organisations interrelate through a set of social relationships such as friendship, transfer of funds and overlapping of memberships (Gulati *et al.*, 2002). The relationships evolving between the various nodes can be categorised based on the content, form, and intensity (Ruan *et al.*, 2013). Networking can take different forms, be it formal or informal (Ebers, 1997; Golubović, 2009). As a business network is an instance of a social network (Bouzdine & Bourakova-Lorgnier, 2004), professional network can also be considered as a form of social network, in that it constitutes the inter-relationships of professionals with relevant professionals and entities (Bouzdine & Bourakova-Lorgnier 2004; Rajagopal, Brinke, van Bruggen & Sloep, 2012). Professional networking is referred to as the act of making connections with other professionals, with or without the intention of making long-term ties with them (Rajagopal *et al.*, 2012). However, the focus of this paper is on professional networking of procurement professionals in Ghana. This aims at finding potential opportunities that exist in networking for knowledge capacity building of the various procurement professionals.

Network, Knowledge Sharing and Transfer

Networking, knowledge sharing and transfer are concepts that pervade loads of organisational learning research works. This is evidenced in the fact that networking is seen as being pivotal to gaining access to new knowledge (Tsai, 2001). Again, networks are considered to be important when it comes to knowledge creation and sharing (Schlögl, 2005). However, the degree of structural closure in a network, i.e. the extent to which actors in a network are connected to each other has some important implications for generating new ideas, and exercising influence (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), one of the four modes of knowledge creation is socialisation, where knowledge can be shared with another person through dialogue, observation, imitation, or guidance. Hence, indicating

that socialisation boosts the creation of knowledge through combined perspectives (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). It has been revealed that knowledge sharing particularly, tacit knowledge sharing can be enhanced by providing live conversations, relationship networking, and collaboration among individuals (Panahi, Watson & Partridge, 2012). However, research with regards to knowledge sharing, suggests that people contribute knowledge when they perceive reputation enhancement, when they have experiences to share, and when they are structurally embedded in the network (Hung, Lai & Chou, 2010). It must be noted that knowledge sharing is realized at two levels, with each level serving as an effective mechanism to share knowledge of a certain type, be it tacit or explicit (Bouzdine & Bourakova-Lorgnier, 2004). In order to build an effective knowledge sharing network, leaders use formal and informal social gatherings, off-site retreats, collocation, open office designs, and incentive systems that reward participation and collaboration (Bouzdine & Bourakova-Lorgnier, 2004). These techniques aim to develop effective communication between sub-networks based on emotive and/or reactive mechanisms (ibid) (Bouzdine & Bourakova-Lorgnier, 2004). In Figure 1, Ghazali *et al.* (2012) illustrate how knowledge is shared among engineering firms, consulting firms, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and site owners through a collaboration at the procurement level of a given project. Through a collaboration of the various actors in the procurement of a given project, relevant knowledge could be shared or transferred from one actor to another. This study focuses on the interaction and relationships among public procurement professionals and a possible sharing and transferring of relevant knowledge in order to improve their professionals' knowledge base and skills. Knowledge transfer is referred to as the process of systematically organised exchange of information and skills between units (Jiménez-Jiménez, Martínez-Costa & Sanz-Valle, 2014). This becomes evident when experience acquired in one unit affects another, which can lead to the creation of new knowledge (Argote, McEvily & Reagans, 2003).

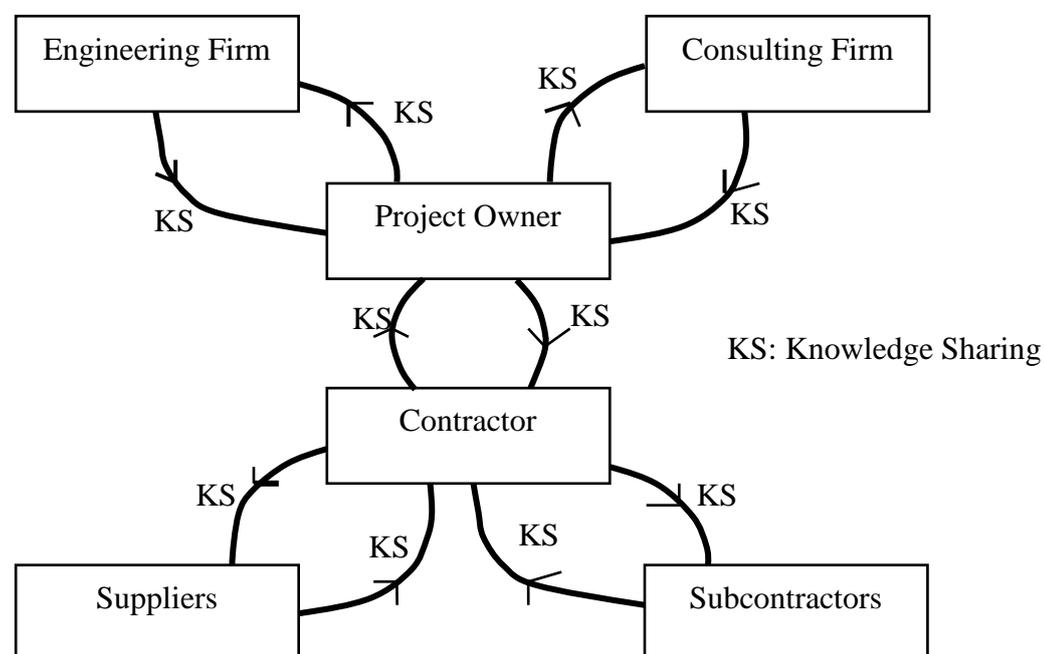


Figure 1: Collaboration and knowledge sharing in the procurement activity. Source: Ghazali *et al.*, (2012)

Opportunities for Capacity Building through Networking

There are several postulated opportunities in forming networks, be it organisational, social, or professional. This has been captured mostly under the opportunities available for organisations to improve their capacities, and those that are available for individuals. In the following subsections, literature would be reviewed on the opportunities that networking offer individuals and organisations.

Individuals in a Network

In a related study, it is asserted that the frequency of consultations with other colleagues engenders a successful higher education faculty (Hitchcock *et al.*, 1995). According to Hitchcock *et al.*, (1995), this is evidenced in the quantum of research works they produce. In this regard, it can be asserted that skills and knowledge base of an individual or a procurement professional can be greatly enhanced to carry out their various activities. Lin (1999) asserts that networking offers an individual the opportunity to access information from sources which otherwise will not exist. Networks help individuals to attain what they could not have accomplished on their own (Little, 2005). This is because, networks expand the pool of ideas, materials, and assistance on which individuals can draw; engage participants in mutual problem-solving; and inspire and recognize accomplishment (Little, 2005). Again, it is asserted that the units within a network can gain competencies in new areas of their operations (Tsai, 2001). With individuals interacting in a social context, the ones that are provided by networking, their ability to innovate can improve greatly (Conley & Udry, 2010). This assertion is supported in literature as it is argued that innovations rarely occur as creative acts of individual geniuses, but more often as a result of interactive processes (Svetina & Prodan, 2008). Furthermore, research suggests that the interaction of individuals in their fields of endeavour fosters growth and technology diffusion (Conley & Udry, 2010).

Organisations in a Network

Research has revealed that networks provide organisations with access to vital resources such as information, raw materials, specialised skills, and knowledge (Tillquist, 2002). Gulati *et al.*, (2000) also stated that networks provide a firm with access to information, resources, markets, and technologies. Organisational networks engender innovative practices in various organisations in a given network. Indeed, a lot of technological innovations for instance have been attributed to mainly a complex and wide range of inter-firm networks in the telecommunication industry (Ferreira, 2008). This shows that networks help organisations to improve their innovative capacity. However, Cohen and Levinthal (1990) argue that the ability of a firm to utilize an external knowledge to foster innovation is largely predicated on their prior related knowledge, which includes basic skills and knowledge of the most recent scientific or technological developments in a given field. Again, research suggests that networks facilitate the creation of new knowledge (Tsai, 2001). Thus, the interaction of the members in a given network helps the generation of new knowledge faster than otherwise. In other instances, especially where knowledge is developing rapidly, organisations form connections to other parties to access relevant expertise which is otherwise widely dispersed (Smith-Doerr & Powell, 2005). As research has revealed, through networks, organisations are able to connect with other organisations that operate in the same locality or the same country with them and even those organisations who are outside their country (Pugh & Prusak, 2013; Scott & Thomas, 2013). This makes it possible to access relevant expertise which may be

dispersed. Furthermore, research postulates that networks provide an opportunity to reduce informational asymmetries in firms whose networks are able to gather superior information from others (Ruan *et al.*, 2013). The summary of the various opportunities in networking for capacity building as obtained from literature have been presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Opportunities in Networking for Knowledge CB

Category	S/No	Opportunities in Networking	Source
Individuals	1	Easy access to information	Lin (1999)
	2	Expand pool of ideas, materials and assistance	Little (2005)
	3	Engage participants in mutual problem-solving	Little (2005)
	4	Inspire and recognize accomplishment	Little (2005)
	5	Gain competencies in new areas	Tsai (2001)
	6	Improves individual's ability to innovate	Svetina & Prodan (2008)
Organisations	1	Access to specialized skills	Gulati <i>et al.</i> (2000); Tillquist, (2002)
	2	Fostering technological innovation	Ferreira (2008)
	3	Enables access to new markets	Gulati <i>et al.</i> , (2000)
	4	Access to raw materials	Tilquist, 2002)
	5	Facilitates creation of new knowledge	Tsai (2001)
	6	Access new expertise	Smith-Doerr & Powell 2005)
	7	Access to superior information	Ruan <i>et al.</i> , (2013)

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following methodology was adopted. First extant literature on the subject under study was reviewed to gain an understanding of the main issues concerning public procurement, capacity building of procurement professionals, networking in general, and social networking. On this basis relevant constructs emerged, which were then used to develop semi-structured interview questionnaire involving major stakeholders with regards to public procurement in order to obtain an in-depth understanding regarding the subject matter. These included professionals from the Public Procurement Authority (PPA), Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA), Takoradi Polytechnic, Architectural and Engineering Services Limited (AESL), and Ghana Health Service (GHS). From the survey seven (7) opportunities in networking for capacity building were identified. These included: awareness of new technology; sharing professional information among members; experiences and ideas can be put together; career opportunities can be created; obtain information about procurement from other institutions; continuous professional development; and knowing global trends in procurement.

Following this, the variables were compared to those that were obtained in literature and later developed into close-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale (1 = not important to 5 = most important). This questionnaire was pre-tested and administered to 96 professionals of related procurement background (quantity surveyors, project managers and procurement managers). Of the 96 questionnaires, 69 useable questionnaires were received, representing a response rate of 72 percent. Data generated from the survey was further analysed using mean score ranking to determine the relative importance of the identified variables.

All the study participants had good working experience in the field of procurement. For instance, 44 percent had 5 to 11 years, 31 percent had over 16 years, 25 percent had between 12 to 16 years. This was also supported by their level of education as majority of them have their first and second degrees, with each representing 43 percent respectively while the remaining 14 percent were diploma certificate holders.

Data Analysis

Data was basically analysed using the mean score ranking criterion. For instance, where two or more variables recorded the same mean values, their standard deviation values were used as the separating criterion. For instance, both 'acquire new knowledge from external professionals' (mean = 3.93, Std. Deviation = 0.863), and 'knowing global trends about the procurement profession' (mean = 3.93, Std. Deviation = 0.896) obtained equal mean values, however, they had unequal standard deviation values. In such instances, the variable with the smaller standard deviation is ranked first. Thus, ranking the 'opportunity to acquire new knowledge from external professionals' first (1st). The same approach was adopted when the 'opportunity to acquire new knowledge from internal professionals', 'builds the confidence of the individual procurement professionals', and 'share innovative ideas in the field of procurement' were ranked (refer to Table 2 for their respective means and standard deviations).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Showing Opportunities in Networking for CB

Variables	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Rank
Acquire new knowledge from external professionals	3.93	0.104	0.863	1 st
Knowing global trends about the procurement profession	3.93	0.108	0.896	2 nd
Obtain new information from other procurement professionals	3.91	0.087	0.722	3 rd
Obtain information about procurement from other institutions	3.77	0.083	0.689	4 th
Acquire new knowledge from internal professionals	3.75	0.108	0.898	7 th
Builds the confidence of the individual procurement professionals	3.75	0.102	0.847	6 th
Share innovative ideas in the field of procurement	3.75	0.091	0.755	5 th
Achieve good working relationships between procurement professionals	3.70	0.104	0.863	8 th
Share experiences in the field of procurement	3.65	0.094	0.783	9 th
Obtain referrals from other procurement professionals	3.38	0.109	0.909	10 th

The variable which obtained the least of the rankings is the 'opportunity to obtain referrals from other procurement professionals' with a mean value of 3.38, hence placed 10th position. From the results of the study, it is plausible to assert that the respondents believe that when they network among their fellow professionals, they will be able to acquire new knowledge relevant to their line of duty. Secondly, through networking, procurement professionals get to know global trends about the procurement profession, as well as obtaining new information from other procurement professionals. It was also revealed that procurement information can be obtained from external institutions through networking. The ties that procurement professionals or agencies have with institutions like polytechnics and universities can help

them acquire information and knowledge which otherwise could have been difficult to obtain. The respondents believe that forming a network with colleague procurement professionals will enable them share innovative ideas in the field of procurement, hence ranking fifth (5th) among the various opportunities in networking.

DISCUSSION

The top five variables represent the key findings of the current study. These are discussed in more detail vis-à-vis literature that is relevant to the subject under consideration.

Acquiring New Knowledge from External Professionals

The acquisition of knowledge often leads to improvement and create competitive advantage among firms. A procurement professional can build his/her knowledge in terms of current trend and other innovation needs. In supporting this, Argote and Ingram (2000) argued that knowledge sharing contributes to the development of new and unique service, having the propensity to increase the efficiency of procurement professionals. Although, there is opposing knowledge on the internal and external acquisition of procurement knowledge. However, it must be noted new knowledge for further capacity building can possibly be acquired through external learning activities that span beyond the boundary of the professional organisations (Falkenberg *et al.* 2003). Accordingly, external source of knowledge remains a primary concern for all organisations of which procurement activities are no exception. The growing need for capacity in professional practices is hinged on the extent of acquisition of external knowledge. Thus, its acquisition and dissemination can effectively improve one's status internally, ensuring capacity building (Purcell & McGrath 2013). In buttressing this, Menon and Pfeffer (2003) argued that external knowledge appears to be more special and unique and it's considered more valuable in capacity building among professional. There is little doubt that from the results of the study, respondents believe that when they network among their fellow professionals, they will be able to acquire new knowledge relevant to their line of duty. This can be done through conferences, continuous professional training, and personal contact through internet, person to person, among others. Construction experience transfer involves using knowledge gained during the completion of previous projects to maximise the achievement of current project objectives which is similar to procurement professionals (Reuss and Tatum 1993).

Knowing Global Trends about the Procurement Profession

Generally, globalisation has the ability to influence every organisation, having direct consequences on the professionals in the discharge of their duties. Through a network of procurement professionals with their international counterparts, they will be able to update themselves with new trends with regards to procurement. Professionals in their bid to know global trends tend to elicit information from their contacts (i.e. particularly, their associates in the profession abroad), thereby making professional networking a catalyst for their knowledge in capacity building. Drawing from the result, it recorded the second highest variable, as the respondents believe that it is easier to get information on global trends on procurement through effective and efficient networking among procurement professionals. In getting to know the general outlook of the procurement activities, capacities are built.

Sharing Experiences in the Field of Procurement

Sharing of experiences in the field of procurement practices enables professional members to build their capacity through networking opportunity. Bergmann (2002) argued that such experiences that we share are valuable knowledge stored on specific activity acquired through previous problem-solving situation. It is therefore worth noting that some activities of procurement are repetitive which can probably be shared among professionals through networking, thereby building their capacity. In support of this argument, Krogh (2002) and Kasimu *et al.* (2013) indicated that project performance can be improved when employee communicate by sharing experience through the utilisation of best practice learnt and creating new knowledge. Although, in the current studies it was ranked as last but one factor used in building capacity through network, it must be noted it is an important means by which professionals relied on to acquire the needed experiences. Furthermore, Tseng and Lin (2004) posited that sharing experiences minimises the need to consult past projects, improves the quality of solutions, and reduce the time and cost of solving problems. Effective experience sharing definitely has the propensity to build the capacity of members within a given network, which improves efficiency, reduce training cost and reduce risk due to uncertainty among procurement professionals (Song *et al.*, 2001). Conceivably, networking thus links professionals together, enabling them to collaborate and share experience through professional training programmes, conferences, among others.

Building the Confidence of Individual Procurement Professionals

Knowledge acquired through professional networking helps in building the confidence of procurement professionals in the conduct of their duties. This becomes possible as individual's knowledge and professional experiences that are shared through discussions within the network are peer reviewed. This bolsters the confidence of the professionals involved in the network to apply this knowledge and experiences to their line of work when the need be. Thus, it is plausible that this variable has been identified as one of the opportunities that can be gained through professional networking to help build the capacity of procurement professionals in Ghana.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that a network of procurement professionals can yield a lot of opportunities for their knowledge capacity building. Most importantly, networking offers opportunities for procurement professionals in Ghana to acquire new knowledge from external professionals, know global trends about the procurement profession, obtain new information from other procurement professionals, and to obtain information about procurement from other institutions. This means that a network of procurement professionals in Ghana can immensely impact on their knowledge capacity building. It is therefore recommended that a professional network platform, which can be internet-based like LinkedIn and other social media platforms should be formed in order to stimulate interactions among the various professionals. More so, a professional body that can bring procurement professionals in the country under one umbrella is required, not only to regulate the activities of its members, but to create the opportunity for members to interact to share relevant ideas that help in their operations.

The current study focused on identifying opportunities for capacity building through networking. However, the scope was limited to few professionals within the procurement sector. It is therefore recommended that in further studies the scope should be widened to other procurement professionals who are with the private sector. Furthermore, the study was situated within one of the metropolis in Ghana, however, useful lessons can be drawn from by the country as a whole; other developing countries; and professional groups in building their knowledge capacity. Lastly, it must be noted that the study has demonstrated how networking can be used to build the capacity of procurement professionals apart from using the conventional means such as workshops.

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