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COMPETENCIES ON PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM (PHILGEPS): BASIS FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the competencies of procurement personnel at Tarlac State University in utilizing the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) as a basis for capacity development. In the context of public university procurement challenges—including managing extensive documentation, ensuring legal compliance, and addressing delays—the research evaluates the proficiency levels of Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Members, Technical Working Groups (TWGs), Procurement Staff, BAC Secretariat, and End Users in using PhilGEPS. The study also explores the relationship between years of procurement experience and competency levels, as well as compliance with legal standards under Republic Act No. 9184. Findings reveal that most personnel are at an "Advanced Beginner" to "Competent" level in using PhilGEPS, with BAC Secretariat staff showing relatively higher proficiency compared to end users and BAC Members. Competency in fundamental features such as document management, monitoring procurement status, and troubleshooting common issues are generally moderate, whereas the use of advanced modules like eBidding and analytics remains limited. The study identifies significant gaps in training, user-friendliness of the system, and technical support, which hinder full utilization of PhilGEPS. Furthermore, a positive but weak correlation exists between years of experience and competency in procurement processes and legal compliance, emphasizing that experience alone is insufficient without continuous education and structured capacity development.

Challenges encountered include system accessibility problems, interface complexity, insufficient training, and limited supplier registration on PhilGEPS. Respondents recommend role-based training, mentorship programs, improved technical infrastructure, and enhancements to the system's interface to boost user adoption and efficiency. The modernization and expanded use of PhilGEPS are seen as vital for promoting transparency, streamlining procurement workflows, enhancing public accountability, and fostering fair competition in government procurement.

In conclusion, the study underscores the need for ongoing capacity building and systematic support alongside technological improvements to maximize the benefits of PhilGEPS for public university procurement governance, ultimately contributing to transparency, efficiency, and good governance in the Philippine public sector.

INTRODUCTION

Government procurement was an important part of the process of the effective use of public funds in providing public services, especially in the field of education. It was important in ensuring that educational institutions received the necessary resources, infrastructure, and materials to provide quality education. Global government procurement stood established as a leading tool to enhance operational efficiency while fostering innovation because it aided global development aims. Government procurement remained limited by transparency issues while being restricted by challenges that included inefficiency and corruption.

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 9184, also known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, served for two decades as the primary legal framework governing public procurement, setting the standards for transparency, accountability, and competitiveness in government transactions. However, over the years, gaps and challenges emerged—such as evolving technological demands, complex procurement procedures, and persistent issues of inefficiency and corruption—which hindered the law's ability to fully address modern procurement realities. To respond to these concerns and to strengthen institutional integrity, RA No. 9184 was revised, and Republic Act No. 12009, or the New Government Procurement Act, was enacted. This updated law introduced streamlined procedures, enhanced digital integration, and stricter compliance mechanisms aimed at aligning procurement processes with global best practices. In support of these reforms, the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) was expanded and modernized as a centralized digital platform to standardize procurement, minimize opportunities for corruption, and reduce excessive human intervention. Despite these advancements, universities in Tarlac—like many other institutions nationwide—continue to face challenges in fully implementing PhilGEPS due to administrative inefficiencies, technical barriers, and compliance issues.

The introduction of PhilGEPS is an important step forward in the direction of transparency and accountability in procurement. It offers a one-stop shop for bid management and supplier enrollment, which can cut down corruption and improve efficiency (Salapa, 2024). However, despite its promising aspects, actual implementation at the institutional level varies significantly, with some universities struggling to optimize the system. Another major obstacle in the introduction of digital procurement systems in

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developing countries is the lack of total compliance. According to Adeniyi et al. (2020), government agencies and institutions usually face difficulty with procurement reforms because of a lack of adequate training programs, reluctance to adopt new technologies, and excessive bureaucratic procedures that slow the processes of procurement. This raises the issues of targeting interventions in the form of capacity building programs, policy adjustments, and infrastructure investments that support the adoption of PhilGEPS in academic institutions. There are limitations to the system's usefulness where some issues, such as lack of training, outdated infrastructure, and a resistance to change, particularly in rural areas such as Tarlac, hinder its full adoption and effectiveness.

Universities have distinct procurement challenges due to the nature of their needs and operations. These challenges are managing extensive documentation, maintaining compliance with legal standards, and disqualifying experienced bidders. Unlike other government institutions, universities procure a wide range of goods and services, from research materials to construction projects and academic subscriptions, which require procurement strategies. Research indicates delays in planning the procurement process and insufficient personnel strength are regular problems faced in public educational establishments (Rey, n.d.). The Philippine public procurement system is very transparent and, at the same time, accountable. Still, Querijero et al. (2022) asserted that dominant campus regulations are not necessarily appropriate for each and every one of the distinct characteristics and changing requirements of academic institutions. Universities buy diverse products and services from different procurement parameters, e.g., research materials or laboratory equipment, construction projects or IT solutions, with various procurement timelines. Procurement policies are often standardized to the extent that they create delays that adversely affect institutional operations affects their operations.

According to Gabriel and Castillo (2020), when projects are slow, over budget, or have quality issues, delays, cost overruns, and a lack of transparency in procurement activity, they frequently generate public skepticism. This issue becomes a greater problem in academia, affecting faculty and students as it creates issues of shortages of learning materials, incomplete infrastructure projects, and non-functional equipment. To address these concerns, digital procurement platforms, like PhilGEPS, are implemented to help with real-time tracking, standard procedures, and supervision. Although the system has been set up, it should still be closely monitored and properly optimized so that it will be free from loopholes that can still allow fraudulent practices or inefficiency. Frequency of audits, capacity building initiatives, and enforcement of strict compliance regulations can strengthen digital procurement platforms to increase public confidence in the procurement process and make the procurement process more institutionally efficient.

This line of research is of direct interest to public administration and to procurement management, in which the focal points lie in the effective and proper utilization of government resources. Studies have shown that procurement challenges such as delays in the bidding process, lack of technical expertise, and inadequate compliance impact the timeliness and quality of public services, including education (Gabiana, Polinar, Baquero, 2023). Studies have been conducted on the adoption of e-government procurement systems to examine their potential to improve cost efficiency and operational effectiveness. Also, Bosio, Hayman, and Dubosse (2023) performed a cost-benefit analysis and found that good digital procurement systems reduce procurement cycle time, administrative costs, and improve utilization of budget. Streamlining procurement by means of PhilGEPS can also result in similar benefits in the Philippine universities, by optimizing PhilGEPS: reducing paperwork, following financial regulations, and transparency. When e-procurement systems are used effectively by universities, such resources are then properly allocated through efficiency, funds will be used on priority projects, and not just tied up in slow-moving bureaucratic processes. But for PhilGEPS to become fully effective, the technical barriers have to be dealt with, adequate training for procurement officers is made available, and strategies aimed at persuading them to consistently use the platform are implemented. These problems, in addition to impeding the realization of educational objectives, also challenge confidence in publicly provided services. When procurement inefficiency persists, universities struggle to allocate resources, affecting the performance of the faculties, student learning experiences, and institutional development. Developing solutions to these challenges is thus paramount to improving governance and operational effectiveness of universities.

This study aims to fill the competency gap by investigating the procurement challenges encountered by a university in Tarlac and examining PhilGEPS' contribution to the solution. It aims to generate actionable knowledge in order to improve the field of procurement and procurement governance in public universities, and to be a blueprint for similar institutions in the Philippines. This study seeks to inform policy recommendations, institutional improvements and enhance the quality of public service in the education sector.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to evaluate the level of competency of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Members, Technical Working Groups, Procurement Staff/ BAC Secretariat and End Users in Tarlac State University and its relationship with the effective use of PhilGEPS. This research will answer the following questions:

1. How is the demographic profile of the respondents in Tarlac State University described in terms of:
1.1 Years of Experience in Procurement
1.2 Training and Certifications
2. How is the level of competency of the respondents on the use of PhilGEPS in Tarlac State University be evaluated in terms of:

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2.1 System Utilization
2.2 Procurement Process
2.3 Compliance with legal requirements
3. Is there a relationship between the years of experience in procurement along areas of:
3.1 Procurement Process
3.2 Compliance with legal requirements on the use of PhilGEPS in Tarlac State University?
4. What are the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of PhilGEPS?
5. What are the capacity development programs that can be recommended to enhance the implementation and competency of the respondents on the use PhilGEPS in Tarlac State University?
6. What are the implications of this study to public administration, particularly in the field of procurement governance?

MATERIALS AND METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive correlational research design by using a method of systematic collection and analysis of numerical data. With this methodology, the patterns and relationships between the variables were identified, as well as the evaluation of the procurement practice in Tarlac State University. This study used a descriptive research design to gauge/installation of PhilGEPS in terms of the utilization of the system, efficiency of the procurement process, and compliance with legal requirements; and the procurement process knowledge and skills in procurement. The respondents were the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Members, Technical Working Groups, Procurement Staff/ BAC Secretariat, and End Users from Tarlac State University, consisting of a total of 122. The number of respondents in the study was based on the actual count. The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Members for Goods and Services, and Infrastructure, a total of 12 respondents were recorded and its Technical Working Groups (TWGs) had 16 respondents, representing their actual participation in procurement activities. The permanent employees from Procurement Staff and BAC Secretariat consisted of 7 respondents. End users, which comprised various offices and colleges within the university that submitted their Project Procurement Management Plans (PPMPs), accounted for 87 respondents. Overall, the total number of respondents reached 122, reflecting the real figures from the institution's procurement structure. A pilot test with a smaller group of respondents was carried out for reliability testing. Cronbach's Alpha was used to analyze the responses, measuring the internal consistency of the survey items. The questionnaire was finalized upon a reliability index being within an acceptable range of 0.70 and higher. The value of cronbach's alpha based on pilot testing was 0.979 indicated that it was reliable.

Moreover, the research instrument used for this study was the survey questionnaire. The data collected through the questionnaire included Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Members, Technical Working Groups, Procurement Staff/ BAC Secretariat, and End Users' competency, PhilGEPS system evaluation, and challenges for implementation of the system. The questionnaire was reviewed and validated by five experts in procurement and public administration in order to obtain content validity. They helped fine-tune the questions so that they were pertinent and matched the study's objectives.

To further enrich the study, documentary analysis was employed to review relevant records and reports in providing a deeper context and to support evidence for the study. Additionally, interviews were conducted to gain firsthand insights and perspectives.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Table 1
Years of Experience in Procurement

Profile	Category	End Users	BAC Sec/Proc Staff	BAC Members and TWGs	*f*	%
Years of Experience in Procurement	Less than 3	47	2	19	68	55.74
	4 to 6	19	2	4	25	20.49
	7 to 10	14	1	1	16	13.11
	Above 10	10	2	1	13	10.66
	Total	**90**	**7**	**25**	**122**	**100.00**

Table 1 shows that the respondents who were involved in procurement had predominantly been so for 0 to 3 years (55.74% of respondents). The result revealed that the staff at TSU were either young or newly appointed due to recent recruitment, job rotations, or organizational growth. The most experienced personnel—those who had worked in procurement for over ten years—made up only 10.66% of the respondents. This relatively small proportion likely performed key leadership or advisory roles due to their in-

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depth knowledge of procurement rules and best practices. Overall, the findings indicated a procurement workforce that were less experienced, highlighting the importance of structured training, mentoring, and knowledge retention.

Table 2
Training and Certifications

Topic	*f*	%
RA 9184 and RA 12009	86	70.49%
PPMP	3	2.46%
Skills Enhancement of SUCs	1	0.82%
Level 1 Certification	1	0.82%
Training for Procurement Professionals	1	0.82%
None	30	24.59%

The data presented in Table 2 demonstrated a significant emphasis on legal and regulatory orientation among procurement personnel, where 70.49% of the respondents underwent training or certification in RA 9184 and RA 12009. Only 2.46% reported having received training on the preparation of the PPMP, which is crucial for effective planning and execution in procurement. Other specialized certifications, such as Skills Enhancement for SUCs, Level 1 Certification, BP 344, and Training for Procurement Professionals, each registered only 0.82% of respondents. Altogether, the survey results suggested that procurement professionals were predominantly trained in legal and regulatory matters rather than technical planning or general professional development.

Table 3
Level of Competency of the End Users in PhilGEPS' System Utilization

Competency	Mean	Verbal Description
I am confident in monitoring my project's procurement status on PhilGEPS.	1.68	Advanced Beginner
I am familiar with PhilGEPS and its relevance to my procurement needs.	2.56	Competent
I am comfortable in coordinating with BAC to ensure proper uploading of procurement details.	1.90	Advanced Beginner
I rely on PhilGEPS for transparency and procurement monitoring.	1.92	Advanced Beginner
I integrate PhilGEPS usage into my daily procurement tasks.	1.83	Advanced Beginner
Grand Mean	**1.98**	**Advanced Beginner**

Table 3 shows that the average score of 1.68 suggested that end users themselves believed they belonged to the "Advanced Beginner" stage in terms of monitoring their project procurement status in the PhilGEPS. End users rated themselves an average of 2.56, classifying themselves as "Competent" in using PhilGEPS and in understanding its relevance to their procurement requirements. With an average score of 1.90, end users were at the "Advanced Beginner" level in coordinating with the BAC for the posting of procurement details an average of 1.92 meant that end users also fell under the "Advanced Beginner" category in using PhilGEPS for transparency and procurement monitoring. mean score of 1.83 also placed end users in the "Advanced Beginner" stage in embedding PhilGEPS into their regular procurement activities. The overall average competency level of 1.98 also qualified end users as "Advanced Beginners" in using the PhilGEPS system. This indicated that most users were between novice and competent possessing a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical experience, but still lacking advanced proficiency, full integration, and regular dependence on the system.

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Table 4
Level of Competency of the BAC Secretariat and Procurement Staff in PhilGEPS' System Utilization

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
I understand the main features of the PhilGEPS platform.	3.14	Competent
I am confident in monitoring my project's procurement status on PhilGEPS.	2.86	Competent
I can effectively use PhilGEPS to post procurement notices.	2.86	Competent
I am familiar with uploading and managing documents within PhilGEPS.	3.00	Competent
I can efficiently search for suppliers or bids using PhilGEPS.	3.29	Competent
I utilize the reporting and analytics features of PhilGEPS well.	3.00	Competent
I am confident in troubleshooting common issues encountered in PhilGEPS.	2.86	Competent
I maximize all available modules (e.g., eBidding, eMarketplace) in PhilGEPS.	2.86	Competent
I integrate PhilGEPS usage into my daily procurement tasks.	2.86	Competent
I am capable of training others on the use of PhilGEPS.	2.86	Competent
Grand Mean	**2.96**	**Competent**

The results in Table 4, average score of 3.14 suggests that the respondents simply think that they are "Competent" in comprehending the basic features of the PhilGEPS site. At "Competent," the mean of the respondents is 2.86 in tracking their project's procurement status in PhilGEPS. Users feel "Competent" in posting procurement notices via PhilGEPS. Users rate a mean score of 2.86 for this statement. An average of 3.00 denotes that users are "Competent" in posting and managing documents in the PhilGEPS system. The average score of 3.29 suggests that there is a strong belief in self-efficacy in how to look for a supplier or bid in PhilGEPS. With a mean of 3.00, which is "Competent" in using the reporting and analytics in PhilGEPS, this indicates that they can create, read, and use reports to track the outcome and outcomes of procurement. With an average of 2.86, participant users are considered ''Competent" in employing all the PhilGEPS module features, including eBidding and eMarketplace. It means that users are engaging with the platform's many parts often and availing themselves of its full range of tools. The mean value of 2.86 indicates that the "Competent" operational level was achieved in integrating PhilGEPS into the day-to-day procurement activities. An average of 2.86 shows that the users are "Competent" in training others in the PhilGEPS. This shows that many of the users are technically competent but also comfortable disseminating their knowledge to their peers. The general mean of 2.96 locates users squarely in the "Competent" usage classification in tracking the PhilGEPS system, even skilled user population, and a confident overall utilization of the platform for diverse procurement purposes. The results in Table 4 , with an overall mean of 2.96 and "Competent" self-assessment in using PhilGEPS, are markedly comparable to literatures that emphasize procurement personnel's increasing technical competence because of a huge system implementation initiative.

Table 5
Level of Competency of the BAC Members and TWGs in PhilGEPS' Utilization

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
I understand the main features of the PhilGEPS platform.	1.50	Advanced Beginner
I have expertise in posting opportunities and awards using the PhilGEPS system.	1.32	Beginner
I am proficient in updating bid documents and procurement notices on PhilGEPS.	1.29	Beginner
I maximize all features of PhilGEPS in the bidding process.	1.50	Advanced Beginner
I can effectively use PhilGEPS to post procurement opportunities.	1.36	Beginner
Grand Mean	**1.39**	**Beginner**

A mean score of 1.50 suggests that BAC Members and TWGs consider themselves as "Advanced Beginners" in grasping the fundamental attributes of the PhilGEPS system. Respondents have an average of 1.32, which means they rate themselves as "Beginner" in posting opportunities and awards in PhilGEPS. With an average score of 1.29, participants are a solid "Beginner" when it comes to updating bid documents and procurement notices. The mean of 1.50 shows that BAC Members and TWGs are at the level of "Advanced Beginners" in maximizing all the features while the procurement entities are conducting bidding utilizing

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PhilGEPS. The weighted mean of 1.36 indicates that BAC Members and TWGs perceived themselves as "Beginners" in efficient utilization of PhilGEPS for the publication of procurement opportunities. The average mean score (1.39), which was less than 2.0 for both the BAC Members and TWGs, is considered "Beginners" in the use of the PhilGEPS system. Table 5 shows that the BAC Members and TWGs generally rate themselves as ranging from "Beginner" to "Advanced Beginner" in terms of utilizing PhilGEPS (average mean score of 1.39), depicting a remarkable skills deficiency among the top decision-makers of the procurement process.

Table 6
Level of Competency of the Respondents in PhilGEPS' Procurement Process

Statement	End User	BAC Sec/ Proc Staff	BAC Members & TWGs	Mean	Verbal Descriptio
I plan effectively all the procurement activities using PhilGEPS tools	1.85	2.86	1.96	2.22	Advanced Beginner
I can efficiently process procurement requests from initiation to award using PhilGEPS	1.82	2.86	1.89	2.19	Advanced Beginner
I can effectively manage procurement timelines through the system?	1.80	2.86	1.75	2.14	Advanced Beginner
I am confident in handling multiple procurement transactions simultaneously in PhilGEPS	1.63	2.86	1.68	2.06	Advanced Beginner
I coordinate effectively with colleagues and suppliers through PhilGEPS	1.77	2.86	1.75	2.13	Advanced Beginner
I can effectively resolve procurement-related issues using the platform	1.64	2.71	1.68	2.01	Advanced Beginner
I consistently track procurement progress and milestones in PhilGEPS	1.63	2.86	1.57	2.02	Advanced Beginner
I can quickly generate required procurement reports from the system	1.60	2.86	1.57	2.01	Advanced Beginner
I can effectively use PhilGEPS to ensure transparency and minimize delays	1.70	2.86	1.61	2.06	Advanced Beginner
I can quickly adapt to new features or updates in the PhilGEPS system	1.66	2.71	1.54	1.97	Advanced Beginner
Grand Mean	**1.71**	**2.83**	**1.70**	**2.08**	**Advanced Beginner**

The procurement process is the structured procedure by which government entities acquire goods, services, and infrastructure in compliance with Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. It begins with the preparation of the Annual Procurement Plan and Project Procurement Management Plans, followed by posting bid opportunities, conducting eligibility screening, bid evaluation, post-qualification, and awarding of contracts. This process ensures transparency, competitiveness, and accountability in the use of public funds. Table 7 presents the Level of Competency of each respondent in PhilGEPS' Procurement Process Efficiency.

The respondents' years of experience in procurement vary across BAC Members, TWGs, End Users, and the Procurement Staff/BAC Secretariat, reflecting different levels of exposure to procurement processes. Those with less than three years of experience entered the service under the implementation of Republic Act No. 12009, the New Government Procurement Act (NGPA). This means their orientation, training, and practical application of procurement procedures are based on the updated provisions of the new law. In contrast, respondents with longer experience have been exposed to both the old framework under RA 9184 and the recent changes brought by RA 12009. This distinction highlights the influence of legislative transitions on the competency and procedural familiarity of procurement personnel.

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Volume: 10 | Issue: 8 | August 2025 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Table 7
Adjectival Description of Level of Competency of the Respondents in PhilGEPS' Procurement Process

Statement	End Users	Adjectival Description	BAC Sec/ Proc Staff	Adjectival Description	BAC Members & TWGs	Adjectival Description
I plan effectively all the procurement activities using PhilGEPS tools	1.85	Fairly Valid	2.86	Moderately Valid	1.96	Fairly Valid
I can efficiently process procurement requests from initiation to award using PhilGEPS	1.82	Fairly Valid	2.86	Moderately Valid	1.89	Fairly Valid
I can effectively manage procurement timelines through the system?	1.80	Fairly Valid	2.86	Moderately Valid	1.75	Fairly Valid
I am confident in handling multiple procurement transactions simultaneously in PhilGEPS	1.63	Fairly Valid	2.86	Moderately Valid	1.68	Fairly Valid
I coordinate effectively with colleagues and suppliers through PhilGEPS	1.77	Fairly Valid	2.86	Moderately Valid	1.75	Fairly Valid
I can effectively resolve procurement-related issues using the platform	1.64	Fairly Valid	2.71	Moderately Valid	1.68	Fairly Valid
I consistently track procurement progress and	1.63	Fairly Valid	2.86	Moderately Valid	1.57	Fairly Valid

The results from Table 7, where the mean score of 2.08 places respondents in the "Advanced Beginner" level in use of PhilGEPS in the major procurement functions reaffirm literature assertions that support the variant levels of digital procurement competencies among employee roles in government entities. BAC Secretariat personnel, however, have tended to rate themselves more positively (mean scores about 2.86) regardless of the withering self-assessments by both end users and BAC Members, indicating that there is a major deficit in the requisite skills that can have a profound impact across the whole procurement spectrum. This is consistent with findings presented by Gabiana et al. (2023) and Dagohoy et al. (2023), who debate that despite progress on institutionalizing procurement reforms and digital platforms like PhilGEPS at the structural level, readiness of users, particularly at the decentralized or end-user level, is low. A lower confidence level amongst the BAC Members/support staff and end users about the timeline management, reporting and troubleshooting demonstrates the fact that system utility is well defined by the weakest user section. These findings also support more general concerns in the literature concerning poor utilization of digital platforms in regular procurement processes. It is believed that knowledge and skills to be gained by non-administrative cadres through exposure to the system followed by intense focused training in their different areas like procurement planning and decision making are not yet expected to be obtained and level of proficiency attained may not be on the same pedestal as in the case of core system administrative personnel who may have a more frequent exposure to the system and targeted training. The "Advanced Beginner" level of proficiency for reporting, communicating, and adapting to system changes with PhilGEPS implies a reactive, rather than a proactive, usage of the application by users. Literature supports a more holistic and continual approach to user development, one that focuses on continuous, role-specific training, peer mentoring, and scenario-based rehearsal. The bridging of these gaps are essential to both day-to-day operations of PhilGEPS and further achieve its purpose as that of a mechanism for transparency, efficiency and legality in public procurement.

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Table 8
Level of Competency of the Respondents in PhilGEPS' Compliance with Legal Requirements

Statement	End Users	BAC Sec/Proc Staff	BAC Members & TWGs	Mean	Verbal Description
I am aware of my role in ensuring PhilGEPS compliance in procurement	2.94	3.00	3.36	3.10	Competent
I am familiar with the legal requirements for government procurement in the Philippines	2.90	3.43	3.43	3.25	Competent
I can effectively ensure that all procurement activities in PhilGEPS comply with relevant laws	2.54	3.29	3.21	3.01	Competent
I am confident in applying procurement rules and regulations in your transactions	3.02	3.43	3.36	3.27	Competent
I would reate myself in understanding of legal procedures related to PhilGEPS usage	2.38	3.14	3.04	2.85	Competent
I can effectively use PhilGEPS to maintain records required by law	2.41	3.00	2.54	2.65	Competent

The mean of 3.25 indicates that 'Competent' responses can be assigned to respondents' knowledge of the government procurement legal prescriptions. The average rating of 3.01 indicates that respondent practice moderation of a Competent scale in complying with legal references in procurement transactions made in PhilGEPS. The data indicates that the respondents are very confident with an average of 3.27 to apply procurement rules and regulations in their transactions. The mean value of 2.85 indicates that the respondents are in the "Competent" level in terms of familiarity with legal proceedings Relative to PhilGEPS. With an average of 2.65, it means that the respondents are competitive in doing their capacity in how to use PhilGEPS for the keeping of records that are required by law. BAC Secretariat staff considers themself the most positive perhaps because they are staff that have the most administrative work. An average mean score of 3.22 implies that the respondents are "Competent" in interpreting and applying the rules of transparency and accountability. Respondents consider themselves as "Competent" at an average of 2.65 on detecting and responding to non-compliance within PhilGEPS. For updating procurement procedures to comply with new legal mandates, the average of 2.88 is considered "Competent".

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Table 9
Correlation between Years of Experience and Level of Competency

Competency	Pearson *r*	*p*-value	Decision	Result
Procurement Process	0.266	0.003	Reject H_o	Significant
Compliance with Legal Requirements	0.213	0.018	Reject Ho	Significant

The findings in Table 9 express the correlation between years of experience and the extent of competence in two major dimensions, namely the procurement process and adherence to laws. Procurement process r = 0.266, compliance with legal requirement (r = 0.213). Both coefficients are positive, showing that tenure is positively and statistically significantly related to competency for both factors. As per conventions, Pearson R-value of 0-0.3 is considered a poor positive correlation. The p-values of both the correlations are less than what is commonly used, 0.05 (0.003 and 0.018, respectively) indicating that the relationships are statistically significant and probably not due to chance. As a result, the null hypothesis (Ho) of no correlation is rejected in both regions.

To conclude, Table 9 provides evidence that years of experience indeed have a positive and highly significant relationship with ultimate competency in procurement process and legal compliance; though a weak one. The positive associations point to the importance of experience, but its effect is weak and should be reinforced by sufficient opportunities for capacity building. The refusal of the null hypothesis in these two domains confirms the significance of experience as a determinant of competency. They should use this knowledge to structure integrated development programs that integrate experiential learning with formal education and training. In doing so, they will help to raise the quality and compliance of their procurement teams across the board, thereby helping to flatten the playing field for well-intentioned suppliers and improving the transparency of public sector procurement.

Challenges Encountered by the Respondents in the Implementation of PHILGEPS
When using PhilGEPS, with the most prominent being a lack of familiarity and training. The answers of the respondents were based from their own answers. Several respondents were unsure or unfamiliar with how the system worked, and requested training or an orientation to be able to feel more confident and involved. One of the major problems faced by user is its non-user-friendly interface and navigation problems, the hurdle faced by the user where people face the small text size, unclear layout and confusing instructions. Even technical issues such as system errors, delays in loading documents and documents that fail to upload are also commonly experienced, causing frustration and inefficiency. To address these, most users learn by doing, by asking a colleague, or for better documentation.

A major issue is also being denied access or finding it unclear to access, and the feeling that not everyone in their office can use PhilGEPS or that their roles are limited according to some of the respondents. This problem is further compounded by a lack of clear instructions and detailed manuals, leaving even users with few knowledge on their duties or the system's true potential. Factors also affect the conduct of procurement such as having no PhilGEPS-registered suppliers or limited suppliers in general. Some problems have a one-off nature, for example problems posed for verification of the authenticity of documents or searching of a particular item and for which additional efforts are to be made or coordination with relevant offices is necessary. Overall, these issues indicate larger systemic problems in training, system design, and support structure.

Inadequate training and lack of user experience is also a common issue, especially for new users, who might commit mistakes or misuse the system without proper training.

Capacity Development Programs recommended to enhance the implementation and competency of the respondents on the use of PhilGEPS

1. Title: **Basic and Advanced PhilGEPS Utilization Training**
Duration: 1 Day (8 hours)
Target Participants: Basic: BAC, TWGs, and End Users Advanced: Procurement Staff/BAC Secretariat
Objectives: To equip participants with foundational and advanced skills in navigating and maximizing the PhilGEPS platform. To improve confidence in posting procurement opportunities, managing procurement documents, and using advanced PhilGEPS modules such as eBidding and eMarketplace. To integrate PhilGEPS efficiently into daily procurement tasks for increased transparency and operational efficiency.
Estimated Expenses (In-House):

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Volume: 10 | Issue: 8 | August 2025 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Venue: 10,000.00 Trainer's fee (as per latest DBM circular): Php 20,000 Meals and Snacks: Php 30,000 Total Estimated Cost: Php 60,000
Expected Outputs: A workforce proficient in the use of basic and advanced PhilGEPS features. Increased system utilization and reduced errors in procurement posting and document management. Training manual and troubleshooting guide developed for future reference.

2. Title: **Training on R.A No. 12009 and Its Implementing Rules and Regulations, with Jurisprudence**
Duration: 2-Day (16 hours)
Target Participants: BAC, TWGs, End Users, and Procurement Staff/BAC Secretariat
Objectives: To deepen understanding of RA 12009, and other procurement laws and regulations for effective compliance. To build capacity in managing procurement processes in line with legal requirements using PhilGEPS. To develop skills in identifying and addressing non-compliance issues.
Estimated Expenses (In-House): Venue: 10,000.00 Trainer's fee (as per latest DBM circular no. 2023-01): Php 40,000 Meals and Snacks: Php 60,000 Total Estimated Cost: Php 110,000.00
Expected Outputs: Participants are knowledgeable and confident in adhering to legal procurement frameworks. Compliance monitoring checklist and legal reference materials for ongoing use. Strengthened accountability and transparency in procurement actions.

3. Title: **Annual Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) Orientation**
Duration: 1 Day (8 hours)
Target Participants: BAC, TWGs, and End Users
Objectives: The Procurement Unit will establish a structured mentorship pairing experienced with junior or less experienced personnel. To encourage knowledge sharing, experiential learning, and skills transfer related to procurement governance. To foster a collaborative learning environment promoting continuous improvement in procurement competency.
Estimated Expenses (In-House): Meals and Snacks: Php 30,000 Total Estimated Cost: Php 30,000.00
Expected Outputs: Formal mentoring pairs are actively engaged in knowledge exchange. Enhanced collaboration and organizational memory within procurement teams.

Implications of the study to Public Administration

Accountability and oversight are further promoted by incorporating a citizens' and watchdogs' access to observe public spending which encourages budget accountability and minimizes political influence. The system promotes bidder and official responsibility and helps to ensure integrity and public trust in purchasing and contracting. (5) The principles of the Crown's (responsibility and accountability) are also supported by guidelines of opening access to all qualified suppliers and ensuring that procurement is carried out in a transparent and fair manner. Capacity development and training are seen to be very important, and respondents also see the role of seminars, workshops and system improvements as having a positive effect on previous problems and the use of systems.

The findings underscore that procurement efficiency and legal compliance are positively influenced by the years of experience and the quality of training received by staff, which suggests that structured mentoring and education programs are essential to foster

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proficient procurement practices. Moreover, the study points to the necessity of developing role-specific training and support systems that engage all levels of procurement stakeholders—from end users to Bids and Awards Committee members—thereby promoting a culture of transparency, accountability, and professionalism in procurement operations.

Additionally, the study's insights call for institutional reforms in procurement governance that emphasize the adoption and optimization of digital procurement platforms like PhilGEPS to reinforce transparency and minimize corruption risks. Public administration frameworks must incorporate mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation of procurement staff performance and system utilization to enhance operational efficiency and compliance with existing laws such as Republic Act No. 9184 and its amendment RA No. 12009. Furthermore, the need for improving system user-friendliness, technical support, and supplier registration processes suggests that public administration should prioritize technological infrastructure upgrades and continuous system enhancements. Ultimately, these recommendations can lead to more effective resource allocation, improved public trust, and better governance outcomes in public procurement, serving as a model for similar institutions nationwide.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study:

1. Over half of the purchasers (55.74 per cent) have not had more than 3 years' procurement experience, meaning that this is a relatively young or recently recruited workforce. This demographic shift underscores the necessity for continued education and mentor guidance that will help separates learned knowledge from its practical use. Most of the respondents have been trained on legal and regulatory base most especially in RA 9184 and RA 12009 but only a few are trained with specialization or technical base. This reflects a focus on compliance but demonstrates weaknesses in broader competencies and technical capabilities.
2. The respondents generally self-report themselves as "Advanced Beginners" regarding system usage that they are slightly skilled with some basic tasks but lack face in depth details, and integrating system use in their daily lives. This indicates a basic knowledge on PhilGEPS systems, but there are low levels of providing and reliance and low levels of system utilization. Overall, the ability to get to "Efficient processing by end users and BAC Members is at a Level "Advanced Beginner" with the BAC Secretariat staff having more Ability as compared to the "End Users and BAC Members. Most inspectors can do basic procurement tasks, but few know how to perform multitasking, complex operations, and reporting tasks efficiently. Respondents grade themselves as being "Competent" in fulfillment of legal standards, specifically where their job roles are concerned, legal structures and how procurement laws are applied. Nonetheless, end users have slightly lower confidence compared to both BAC Secretariat and BAC Members suggesting that specific legal training is needed among non-specialist personnel.
3. Procurement Years of experience has a statistically significant positive weak correlation to procurement processes and legal compliance. This implies that experience leads to increased competency but must be combined with facilitated training and professional development to gain full benefit.
4. Participants have reported various problems with this reporting interface: non-intuitive and user-unfriendly design, a lack of onboard training and guidance, and frequent system outages and technical problems such as failed file uploads. In addition, challenges such as restricted supplier registration, tardy update and inadequate technical support for new users contribute to slow-motion and non-transparent procurement.
5. Suggested programs would encompass general and role-based orientations in basic and advanced uses of PhilGEPS, periodic legal and technical updates, and mentoring where seasoned staff get paired up with new learners. Broadening the focus of training to include practical skills, problem solving, and supplier engagement will go even further toward increasing uptake and effectiveness of the system.
6. The results emphasize the importance of continuing to invest in capacity building, user-centered system design, and strong support mechanisms to support effective procurement governance. Again, enhancing these areas will enhance transparency and effectiveness, and accountability of public contracting, which will contribute to good governance and public confidence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the provided summary of findings, the following conclusions were derived.

1. Most (55.74%) of them don't have more than 0-3 years of procurement experience, which means that this is a young or a new group. It emphasizes that continued training and mentorship are necessary to narrow the theory-practice divide. Most of the respondents were trained in laws, rules and regulations; specifically on RA 9184 and RA 12009 in contrast very less have undergone training on specialization or technical training. This indicates a high focus on compliance coupled with some shortcomings in overall technical proficiency and wider skill accumulation.
2. System use in general is self-reported as novice to intermediate in use of the system at basic levels, and less than advanced in confidence with more advanced features and the fit of the product into routine use. This implies a basic grasp of PhilGEPS; however, with substantial deficiencies in higher-order usage and system dependence. The general level of

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competence in procurement process productivity is that of the "Advanced Beginner,' and the BAC Secretariat staff show higher competence levels than end users and BAC Members. Many users can carry out simple purchasing activities, but they need more knowledge of how to conduct more complex transactions, multitasking and reporting effectively. At the individual level, there is a relatively good self-rating of respondents as "Competent" in respect of compliance with legislation, knowing their roles, laws and rules of procurement. Nevertheless, the users of the contracts still display significantly less confidence when compared with BAC Secretariat and BAC Members, suggesting that targeted legal training is required for non-specialist staff.

3. Years in procurement experience is in statistically significant positive but low correlation with procurement process and legal compliance. Although experience matters when it comes to level of mastery, it must be supported by a systematic training along with continuing professional development for better outcomes.
4. Other challenges include inadequate registration of suppliers; delayed updating and poor support for new users, all of which discourage efficient and transparent procurement.
5. Suggested programs are extensive role-based training for basic and advanced PhilGEPS operation, periodic legal and technical refresher courses, mentoring of elderly by the young employees pursuant to PA 9970 law. Widening the scope of education to include hands-on workshops, troubleshooting and supplier involvement will continue to improve system utilization and proficiency.
6. The results point out the importance of continued efforts of capacity building, user-oriented design of systems and strong support structure to govern well-functioning procurement. Improved performance in these areas will enhance transparency, effectiveness and accountability in public procurement which is highly instrumental to good governance and trust of the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of potential recommendations based on the research's findings, and conclusions.

1. It is recommended to have regular training to be conducted for the basic and advanced role of PhilGEPS. These programs should be tailored to match the specific requirements of end users, BAC Secretariat's staff and BAC Members/TWGs to ensure that all beneficiaries acquire field knowledge and confidence. Ongoing training will aid in the closure of competency gaps and facilitate better, more compliant procurement practices.
2. Create a formal mentoring program which matches seasoned procurement professionals with the more junior, less seasoned staff and promotes the transfer of knowledge and knowledge through experiential learning. It is possible to create peer support groups for cooperative troubleshooting and sharing best practices. This will speed up the pace of skill development and create a culture of learning in the procurement staff.
3. Push for user friendly PhilGEPS interface for easy usage by everybody regardless of being born digital. Also, make sure you have responsive tech support because you will get hit with system downtime, file not uploading etc. and all the tech support is affordable and in the country. Such boosts can help in lessening user irritation and promoting penetration of the entire system.
4. Develop and implement a mechanism to periodically monitor the performance of procurement staff, their training requirements and the use of the system. The findings could be used to guide focused interventions, modify training material, and enhance capacity-building initiatives. The ongoing assessment will help keep the skill building up to date with ongoing procurement policies and technological trends.