

PROCUREMENT PRACTICES, CHALLENGES, AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMPLIANCE AMONG SCHOOL-BASED ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS IN THE SCHOOLS DIVISION OF CATANDUANES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the procurement practices, challenges, and level of organizational compliance among school-based administrative officers in the Schools Division Office of Catanduanes, with the aim of developing a strategic management framework to improve procurement efficiency and adherence to policies. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, allowing the study to describe the extent of procurement practices, challenges, and compliance while examining the relationships among these variables. The descriptive component identified the implementation level of procurement planning, bidding procedures, records management, and contract monitoring, the challenges encountered, and the level of organizational compliance. The correlational component assessed the relationships between procurement practices, challenges, and compliance, providing insights for framework development. Findings revealed that records management was the most highly implemented procurement practice (WM = 3.84), followed by contract monitoring (WM = 3.67) and procurement planning (WM = 3.59), while bidding procedures were moderately implemented (WM = 3.18). Overall, procurement practices were highly implemented (WM = 3.57). Among challenges, resource constraints (WM = 3.74) and skills gaps (WM = 3.71) were most frequently encountered, followed by policy complexity (WM = 3.50) and supplier issues (WM = 3.45), resulting in an overall frequent challenge level (WM = 3.60). Organizational compliance was high, with process timeliness (WM = 3.81), document accuracy (WM = 3.79), ethical standards (WM = 3.75), and report submission (WM = 3.71), leading to an overall compliance rating of WM = 3.77. Correlation analysis indicated significant relationships between procurement practices and challenges ($r = 0.767$), and between procurement practices and compliance ($r = 0.493$), both exceeding the critical value of 0.271. A very strong relationship existed between challenges and compliance ($r = 0.935$), suggesting that operational difficulties substantially influenced adherence to policies. In conclusion, the procurement practices are generally well-implemented, though bidding procedures require more attention. Administrative officers frequently face operational challenges, particularly resource shortages, skills gaps, and policy complexities, which significantly affect compliance levels. Strong procurement practices mitigate these challenges and enhance adherence to policies. Consequently, a strategic management framework was developed to address identified constraints through initiatives such as resource mapping, continuous capacity-building, simplified policy handbooks, and enhanced supplier engagement. The framework is expected to improve procurement efficiency, strengthen personnel capability, and ensure consistent compliance across the Schools Division Office of Catanduanes.

Keywords: Procurement Practices, Organizational Compliance, Administrative Officers, Operational Challenges, Strategic Management Framework

INTRODUCTION

Globally, sustainable public procurement has emerged as a strategic tool to promote transparency, efficiency, and accountability in government operations (Thiruchelvam & Ishak, 2022). Procurement now plays a significant role in national economies, contributing between 12%–20% of GDP, and is increasingly linked to social and environmental objectives (Erizaputri & Bechauf, 2025; McBride et al., 2024). In line with these global trends, the study aimed to examine procurement practices in the Schools Division of Catanduanes, focusing on the variables of operational practices, compliance, and administrative efficiency among school procurement officers (Andaya et al., 2025). By investigating how officers navigate regulations, manage resources, and apply procurement principles in a real-world context, the study sought to generate insights on both the effectiveness and adaptability of school-level procurement.

The legal framework guiding the study is anchored in Republic Act No. 9184, or the Government Procurement Reform Act, which institutionalizes transparency, competitiveness, and accountability in public procurement. Complementing this, DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2022 provides school-level operational guidelines for procurement under school-based management. Within this framework, administrative officers and Bids and Awards Committees (BAC) are tasked with planning, documenting, and supervising procurement transactions to ensure resources support educational outcomes (Bohari et al., 2023). These laws and guidelines collectively form the institutional basis for assessing compliance, ethical practice, and the operational effectiveness of procurement processes in the division.

Despite clear legal structures, gaps exist between policy and practice, particularly in geographically isolated or resource-constrained areas like Catanduanes (Teing et al., 2024). Complex documentation, frequent policy revisions, limited human resource capabilities, logistical disruptions, and the scarcity of suppliers often hinder timely and compliant procurement (Rohayati & Sulistyaningtyas, 2025). Moreover, environmental challenges such as seasonal weather disruptions further strain operational efficiency (Owczarczyk, 2025). These gaps highlight the need for adaptive, context-sensitive procurement strategies, capacity-building for administrative officers, and localized research to strengthen the alignment between policy intent and actual practice (Ludin et al., 2023).

The significance of this study lies in its potential to improve school-level procurement governance, transparency, and service delivery in Catanduanes. By documenting the experiences of administrative officers, identifying operational challenges, and assessing compliance and resource management practices, the study provides practical guidance for improving procurement processes. Its findings can inform targeted training, digital capacity-building, and context-appropriate strategies to enhance efficiency and accountability. Ultimately, this research supports the Department of Education in promoting equitable access to educational resources, ensuring sustainable use of public funds, and bridging the gap between national legal mandates

and frontline implementation, while serving as a reference for future studies in similar island provinces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective procurement in schools relies heavily on the competence and ethical conduct of administrative personnel. Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) emphasized that staff who are properly trained and equipped with the necessary skills are vital for achieving transparency, efficiency, and accountability in public administration. Similarly, Varriale, Briganti, and Volpe (2023) highlighted that strong governance and ethical financial management contribute to the long-term sustainability of institutions. These insights align with the findings of the present study, confirming that well-prepared and empowered administrative officers play a central role in sustaining effective procurement systems in the Schools Division of Catanduanes.

Challenges in procurement often arise from poor coordination, limited resources, and operational inefficiencies. Ishak and Thiruchelvam (2022) noted that institutional fragmentation and weak enforcement mechanisms hinder proper policy implementation, while Zuma (2022) reported that delays from suppliers and planning shortcomings disrupt the timely delivery of services. These studies support the current research, reinforcing that bridging gaps in resources, skills, and coordination is essential for ensuring transparent, efficient, and reliable procurement practices at the school level.

The importance of a performance-oriented culture and systematic oversight is also emphasized in existing literature. Harun, Salema, and Matto (2025) explained that regular evaluations and clear accountability measures improve adherence to policies, while Gilbert and Celestin (2025) stressed that proactive risk management and continuous institutional training are critical for maintaining compliance. In line with these studies, the research findings indicate that following established procedures, ethical standards, and proper reporting protocols strengthens transparency and enhances the effectiveness of procurement operations in Catanduanes schools.

Sustainable and structured procurement practices are critical for achieving institutional trust and social impact. Thiruchelvam and Ishak (2022) argued that sustainable public procurement promotes transparency, efficiency, and accountability, while Erizaputri and Bechauf (2025) and McBride et al. (2024) noted that effective procurement practices foster public confidence and positive social outcomes. In the Philippine context, adherence to Republic Act No. 9184 ensures fairness, competitiveness, and proper use of resources. These studies support the present research by highlighting that strong procurement systems can mitigate operational challenges and promote equitable and efficient service delivery in schools.

Resource limitations and operational challenges further influence compliance and procurement efficiency. Rohayati and Sulistyningtyas (2025) and Owczarczyk (2025) pointed out that gaps in human resources, administrative capacity, and external conditions often impede proper implementation of procurement policies. Additionally, Thiruchelvam and Ishak (2022), and Erizaputri and Bechauf (2025) emphasized that administrative officers are pivotal in maintaining organizational efficiency and transparency, and that strengthening their competencies through training, digital systems, and structured procedures is necessary for effective compliance

(Ichtiano et al., 2025). Finally, the geographical and logistical context of Catanduanes further complicates procurement operations. Ludin et al. (2023) highlighted how remote locations, transportation costs, limited suppliers, and environmental disruptions challenge operational efficiency and compliance. In line with these findings, Andaya et al. (2025) affirmed that adaptive, localized planning and capacity-building are essential to maintain both operational effectiveness and organizational compliance in resource-constrained or isolated areas such as Catanduanes.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design to examine procurement practices, challenges, and organizational compliance among school-based administrative officers in the Schools Division of Catanduanes. It collected information on the implementation of procurement processes, perceived challenges, and levels of compliance in areas such as planning, bidding, records management, and contract monitoring. This approach helped identify patterns in procurement practices and challenges and provided insights for developing a strategic framework to enhance procurement effectiveness and policy compliance within the Schools Division.

Respondents of the Study

The study focused on 53 school-based Administrative Officer II personnel in the Schools Division of Catanduanes during the academic year 2025–2026. Using complete enumeration due to the small and accessible population, all 53 officers were included as respondents to represent their experiences with procurement practices, challenges, and organizational compliance.

Instrumentation

A self-made structured questionnaire was used to collect data on the procurement practices, challenges, and perceived level of organizational compliance of school-based Administrative Officer II in the Schools Division of Catanduanes. It had three parts: Part 1 measured procurement practices, including procurement planning, bidding procedures, records management, and contract monitoring; Part 2 identified challenges such as skills gaps, resource constraints, policy complexity, and supplier-related issues; Part 3 assessed the level of organizational compliance, focusing on process timeliness, document accuracy, ethical standards, and report submission. To ensure reliability and validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by four experts in procurement, public financial management, and educational administration for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. A pilot test was conducted with Administrative Support Staff from selected schools, and analysis using the Split-Half method yielded a high reliability coefficient of 0.878, confirming the instrument's consistency and accuracy.

RESULTS

Table 1
Composite Table on Procurement Practices Employed

Variable	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Procurement Planning	3.59	Strongly Agree/Highly Implemented	3
Bidding Procedures	3.18	Agree/Implemented	4
Records Management	3.84	Strongly Agree/Highly Implemented	1
Contract Monitoring	3.67	Strongly Agree/Highly Implemented	2
Overall weighted mean	3.57	Strongly Agree/Highly Implemented	

Findings revealed that the overall weighted mean of 3.57 indicates that the procurement practices employed are generally highly implemented. Among the specific practices, records management ranked highest (3.84), followed by contract monitoring (3.67), procurement planning (3.59), and bidding procedures (3.18), showing that DPWH's procurement processes are consistently applied, with particular strength in documentation and monitoring.

These results align with literature emphasizing the importance of competent personnel and sound governance in procurement. Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) noted that adequately trained staff are essential for transparency and administrative efficiency, while Varriale, Briganti, and Volpe (2023) highlighted that ethical financial management and governance enhance institutional sustainability. Together, these studies support the findings that skilled and empowered personnel are crucial in maintaining effective and accountable procurement systems.

Table 2
Composite Table on Challenges Encountered

Variable	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Skills Gaps	3.71	Strongly Agree Frequently Encountered	2
Resource Constraints	3.74	Strongly Agree Frequently Encountered	1
Policy Complexity	3.50	Strongly Agree Frequently Encountered	3
Supplier Issues	3.45	Strongly Agree Frequently Encountered	4
Overall weighted mean	3.60	Strongly Agree Frequently Encountered	

Findings revealed that the overall weighted mean of 3.60 indicates that the challenges encountered in procurement are frequently experienced. Among the specific challenges, resource constraints ranked highest (3.74), followed by skills gaps (3.71), policy complexity (3.50), and supplier issues (3.45), showing that limited resources and personnel capacity are the most pressing obstacles in procurement processes. These results are supported by literature highlighting how weak coordination and insufficient resources hinder effective procurement. Ishak and Thiruchelvam (2022) noted that institutional fragmentation and poor enforcement

obstruct policy implementation, while Zuma (2022) emphasized that supplier delays and planning inefficiencies disrupt services. Together, these studies confirm that addressing resource, skills, and coordination gaps is crucial for ensuring transparent and efficient procurement in public institutions.

Table 3
Composite Table on Level of Organizational Compliance

Variable	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Process Timeliness	3.81	Strongly Agree/Highly Compliant	1
Document Accuracy	3.79	Strongly Agree/Highly Compliant	2
Ethical Standards	3.75	Strongly Agree/Highly Compliant	3
Report Submission	3.71	Strongly Agree/Highly Compliant	4
Overall weighted mean	3.77	Strongly Agree/Highly Compliant	

Findings revealed that the overall weighted mean of 3.77 indicates that the level of organizational compliance is highly compliant. Among the specific indicators, process timeliness ranked highest (3.81), followed by document accuracy (3.79), ethical standards (3.75), and report submission (3.71), showing that the organization consistently adheres to established procedures and standards.

These findings are supported by literature emphasizing the role of performance-oriented culture and systematic oversight in promoting compliance. Harun, Salema, and Matto (2025) noted that accountability and regular evaluation enhance adherence to policies, while Gilbert and Celestin (2025) highlighted that proactive risk management and institutional training are crucial for maintaining compliance. Together, these studies affirm that following procedures, ethical standards, and reporting protocols strengthens transparency and the effectiveness of procurement operations in schools.

Table 4
Significant Relationship between Procurement Practices and the Challenges Encountered by School-Based Administrative Officers

Variables	Statistic al Test	Comput ed Value	Critical Value @ .05	Decision	Interpretation
Procurement Practices VS the Challenges Encountered by School-	Pearson r	.767	0.271	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship

Based Administrative Officers					
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Findings revealed that the computed Pearson r value of 0.767 is higher than the critical value of 0.271 at the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant relationship between procurement practices and the challenges encountered by school-based administrative officers, suggesting that effective procurement practices are closely linked to the reduction of operational challenges.

These findings are supported by literature highlighting the importance of structured and sustainable procurement systems. Thiruchelvam and Ishak (2022) emphasized that sustainable public procurement enhances transparency, efficiency, and accountability, while Erizaputri and Bechauf (2025) and McBride et al. (2024) noted that effective procurement improves institutional trust and social outcomes. In the Philippine context, compliance with Republic Act No. 9184 ensures fairness, competitiveness, and efficient resource use (Gonzales & Villanueva, 2022; Villanueva & Bautista, 2024), reinforcing that strong procurement practices help mitigate challenges and promote equitable service delivery in schools.

Table 5
Significant Relationship between Procurement Practices and the Level of Organizational Compliance

Variables	Statistic al Test	Comput ed Value	Critical Value @ .05	Decision	Interpretation
Procurement Practices VS the Level of Organizational Compliance	Pearson r	.493	0.271	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship

Findings revealed that the computed Pearson r value of 0.493 is higher than the critical value of 0.271 at the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant relationship between procurement practices and the level of organizational compliance, suggesting that effective procurement directly supports adherence to policies, procedures, and ethical standards within the organization. These results are supported by literature showing that gaps in procurement practices, human resource limitations, and external factors can affect compliance (Teing et al., 2024; Ichtiano et al., 2025; Rohayati & Sulistyningtyas, 2025; Owczarczyk, 2025). Studies also highlight that administrative officers play a key role in sustaining institutional efficiency and transparency (Bohari et al., 2023; Thiruchelvam & Ishak, 2022; Erizaputri & Bechauf, 2025), and that strengthening their skills through training, digital tools, and systematic procedures is essential for maintaining high levels of organizational compliance in the educational sector (Ludin et al., 2023; Ichtiano et al., 2025).

Table 6
Significant Relationship between the Challenges Encountered and the Level of Organizational Compliance

Variables	Statistic al Test	Comput ed Value	Critical Value @ .05	Decision	Interpretation
Challenges Encountered VS the Level of Organizational Compliance	Pearson r	.935	. 0.271	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship

Findings revealed that the computed Pearson r value of 0.935 is higher than the critical value of 0.271 at the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant relationship between the challenges encountered and the level of organizational compliance, suggesting that the nature and extent of challenges directly influence how well the organization adheres to policies, procedures, and standards.

These results are supported by literature highlighting that resource limitations, logistical difficulties, and environmental factors can strongly affect compliance, especially in geographically isolated or resource-constrained regions (Van Thao et al., 2025; Razik et al., 2025; Owczarczyk, 2025; Teing et al., 2024; Ludin et al., 2023). In Catanduanes, high transportation costs, limited supplier options, and seasonal disruptions necessitate flexible, context-sensitive strategies. These studies affirm that localized planning, capacity-building, and adaptive procurement practices are crucial for maintaining both operational efficiency and organizational compliance (Andaya et al., 2025; Thiruchelvam & Ishak, 2022; Ichtiano et al., 2025).

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Constraint	Strategic Objective	Activities / Strategies	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Resources Needed	Expected Outcomes
1. Resource Constraints	Optimize resource utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct resource mapping and allocation for procurement tasks. - Develop a priority-based procurement plan aligned with available resources. - Secure additional 	SDS, Budget Office, HR Unit, BAC	Q1–Q4 2026	Budget allocation, procurement planning tools	Improved efficiency in procurement execution and reduced delays due to limited resources.

		budget or support for critical procurement activities.				
2. Skills Gaps	Build procurement capacity and competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct continuous training and workshops on procurement rules, bidding, and documentation. - Establish a mentoring program for new administrative officers. - Provide access to online procurement courses and certifications. 	HR Unit, BAC, SDS	Q2 2026– Q2 2027	Training modules, e-learning platforms, mentors	Enhanced competence, fewer errors, and improved compliance with procurement policies.
3. Policy Complexity	Ensure streamlined policy compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a simplified Procurement Policy Handbook consolidating RA 9184 guidelines and DepEd orders. - Conduct quarterly orientations on updates in procurement regulations. - Establish a Policy Advisory Desk to clarify 	HR Unit, Legal Officer, SDS, BAC	Q2–Q4 2026	Policy manuals, orientation materials	Reduced confusion, timely compliance, and fewer procedural delays.

		interpretations				
4. Supplier Issues	Strengthen supplier engagement and reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain an updated database of qualified suppliers. - Conduct supplier performance assessments and feedback sessions. - Organize pre-bid conferences and supplier orientation on compliance standards. 	BAC, SDS, ICT Team	Q3 2026–Q1 2027	Supplier database, communication channels, evaluation tools	Improved supplier participation, quality, and reliability of goods/services.

The proposed Strategic Management Framework aims to address the persistent challenges faced by the Schools Division Office of Catanduanes in managing procurement activities, particularly resource limitations, skills gaps among administrative officers, policy complexity, and supplier-related issues. Limited budgets, personnel, and logistical support often result in delays, procedural inefficiencies, and increased workloads, while gaps in knowledge and competence contribute to errors and inconsistent application of procurement regulations. Combined with overlapping DepEd orders and RA 9184 guidelines, these challenges hinder timely and transparent delivery of goods and services, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to optimize resources, strengthen personnel capacity, clarify policies, and enhance supplier reliability.

The Framework proposes integrated strategies such as resource mapping, priority-based procurement planning, continuous training and mentoring, simplified policy handbooks, advisory support for clarifications, and systematic supplier performance monitoring. By clearly defining roles, timelines, and resources, these interventions aim to improve efficiency, compliance, and transparency in procurement processes. Ultimately, the Framework seeks to create a coordinated, competent, and accountable procurement system that maximizes resource utilization, ensures regulatory compliance, fosters reliable supplier partnerships, and supports the educational objectives of schools in the division effectively and sustainably.

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