

LEGAL PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONALIZING THE PROCUREMENT WORKFORCE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE TO STATE CONTRACTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Karem Sayed Aboelazm ^{*}, Fady Tawakol ^{**},
Emad Ibrahim ^{***}, Hanadi Sharif ^{****}

^{*} Corresponding author; College of Law, United Arab Emirates University, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Contact details: College of Law, United Arab Emirates University, P. O. Box 15551, Abu Dhabi, UAE

^{**} Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, UAE; The Canadian International College (CIC), Cape Breton University (CBU), Cairo, Egypt

^{***} College of Law, Umm Al Quwain University, Umm Al Quwain, UAE

^{****} College of Sharjah and Law, University of Khorfakkan, Sharjah, UAE



Abstract

How to cite this paper: Aboelazm, K. S., Tawakol, F., Ibrahim, E., & Sharif, H. (2025). Legal pathways to professionalizing the procurement workforce for good governance to state contracts: A comparative study. *Corporate Law & Governance Review*, 7(3), 86–95.
<https://doi.org/10.22495/clgrv7i3p8>

Copyright © 2025 The Authors

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

ISSN Online: 2664-1542

ISSN Print: 2707-1111

Received: 12.12.2024

Revised: 03.03.2025; 07.05.2025;
25.07.2025

Accepted: 08.08.2025

JEL Classification: K10, K15, K19, K24

DOI: 10.22495/clgrv7i3p8

This study addressed several concepts in the study's conceptual framework, which were based on profession, professionalization, and professionalism in public procurement. It also discussed the importance of professionalizing public procurement functions and its impact on public procurement performance (Angaw, 2020). The study also aimed to analyze the most prominent global practices in raising the efficiency and capabilities of public procurement workers to reach complete professionalism in public procurement. The paper attempted to investigate the possibility of professionalism in public procurement and its effects on the good governance of state contracts. The paper relied on two basic research approaches, namely the descriptive analytical approach and the comparative approach. The study concluded that there are experiences of several distinguished countries, such as the United States of America and New Zealand, and their successes, which worked on the practical qualification of public procurement workers and their interest in reaching professionalism in this profession and created specialized academic degrees in public procurement. The main finding is that the USA and New Zealand have made great progress in professionalizing public procurement jobs, which may help Egypt as a guideline for reforming these jobs.

Keywords: Professionalization, Professionalism, Capacity, Performance, Public Procurement, State Contracts

Authors' individual contribution: Conceptualization — K.S.A., F.T., E.I., and H.S.; Methodology — K.S.A., F.T., E.I., and H.S.; Writing — Original Draft — K.S.A., F.T., E.I., and H.S.; Writing — Review & Editing — K.S.A.; Supervision — K.S.A.; Project Administration — K.S.A.

Declaration of conflicting interests: The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public procurement is considered one of the most essential tools of governments in all countries (Ades & Di Tella, 1999; Aboelazm, 2024). Governments formulate their general policies for public procurement, relying on public procurement

employees in procurement departments, whether central or decentralized. The volume of government procurement contracts represents more than 30% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in some countries, which prompted governments to move towards electronic systems in public procurement (Aboelazm, 2023) like other sectors such as

electronic litigation (Marzuki & Ali, 2024), electronic voting and others, in addition to the trend towards sustainable procurement policies involving small and medium-sized companies in government contracts requires scientifically and practically qualified human capabilities, to reduce undisciplined practices (Ades & Di Tella, 1999) and reduce waste of government spending (Abdul Qader, 2015).

Reforming, modernizing, and developing government procurement systems to the strength of government procurement management and qualifying its workers on the scientific and practical levels. Some countries have taken this step when reforming these systems to focus on the human element. It has been noted that workers in the field of procurement in most developing countries are not qualified from a scientific standpoint. Some developed countries have established colleges and institutes for government procurement that grant specialized degrees in this field. The same applies to the practical aspect, as it became clear that most developing countries do not have a career path for workers in the field of government procurement, which does research into adding a more professional character to the government procurement function required to achieve the most significant possible benefit from it. The government procurement system is an integrated unit, which has been achieved in some countries such as New Zealand and the USA.

Reforming government procurement systems in any country in the world essentially requires qualifying workers in government procurement departments in various government agencies and agencies on both the scientific and practical levels (Aboelazm & Dganni, 2025), as the ability of government procurement employees to carry out their tasks is fundamentally related to the degree of professionalism or professionalism they enjoy, i.e., the extent of their availability the professional standards required of them.

When taking reform steps in these systems, some countries have focused on the human element, as there are many developing countries in general and countries in the Middle East and North Africa region in particular that suffer from weak capabilities and abilities of their employees working in government procurement. This is due to the weakness of the training programs provided to them, as well as the absence of specialization in the government procurement profession, as there is an old view that still dominates the field of government procurement, and this view is represented in viewing government procurement tasks as office tasks (Freundreis & Vertz, 1988; Kim, 1988; Holzer & Rabin, 1987).

The main challenge facing capacity building for those working in government procurement is that governments do not realize the importance of the government procurement function in achieving the various development programs of their countries. Therefore, the absence of this awareness leads to considering the government procurement function as merely a copy function not included within the specialized professional functions in the civil service. As a result, many government procurement employees in developing countries lack the technical skills and capabilities necessary to perform government procurement work. Sheila White, Head of International Development at the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS), noted that:

As long as government procurement functions are viewed as a copy function only, they will not be able to attract the best cadres and competencies (Suárez, 2011; Kjeldsen & Jacobsen, 2013).

Therefore, the focus on the human element in the field of government procurement takes one of two paths:

1) Building the capabilities of workers in government procurement departments through training and developing skills and knowledge in specialized institutes and centers on an ongoing basis.

2) Professionalizing the government procurement function by making it a technical function instead of a routine administrative function.

The focus may be on the human element by combining the two paths: developing a national plan or strategy to train and qualify government procurement employees and working to professionalize this job by including it as a specialized group in civil service jobs. Some countries have followed this to advance the procurement profession and strengthen the procurement system.

In light of this, and to explain how to professionalize workers in the field of government procurement, the meaning of the profession and the difference between it and the job must be clarified, in addition to also explaining what is meant by both professionalism and apprenticeships and what the procurement job needs to reach what is known as professionalism. Global or international efforts will be presented to strengthen procurement and supply systems by providing technical assistance to human resources through training programs. After that, the distinguished and pioneering international experiences in this field, represented by the experiences of the USA and New Zealand, will be presented. Finally, the current situation of workers in the field of government procurement in Egypt will be given.

The study sought to answer several research questions, which were summarized as follows:

RQ1: What is the difference between profession, professionalization, and professionalism?

RQ2: What are the most critical international practices in the field of professionalization of public procurement workers?

RQ3: To what extent have the USA and New Zealand succeeded in professionalizing public procurement workers?

RQ4: What is the status of the public procurement function in Egypt?

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature discussing the professions, professionalization, and professionalism in public procurement. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Section 4 provides the research results on the importance of professionalizing the government procurement function. Section 5 discusses the international experience in professionalizing the government procurement function (New Zealand and USA) and how Egypt can apply these experiments in its procurement system. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To clarify the modern trend toward recognizing the government procurement function as a specialized technical profession that requires a degree of scientific and practical qualification and not view it as a routine clerical function, it is necessary to

clarify several concepts in this regard, namely knowing what is meant by profession, professionalism, and professionalization, through the following points.

2.1. Profession

Regarding this concept, there is no specific definition of the profession, but some scholars and writers in the field of public administration have presented a definition of it. Some have seen: The concept of the profession is applied to some jobs that reach a certain level of professionalism or professionalism (Shukla, 1994; McDonald & Witayapanyanon, 1986; Turner, 2015).

From this definition, levels of professionalism determine whether a particular job is a profession, meaning that some standards, conditions, or requirements must be met to apply the word "profession" to a specific job.

Others have also defined the profession as: a precisely defined educational framework that provides a professional future for its members, and this educational framework is often higher education with at least a bachelor's degree (Malin, 2020a; Angaw, 2020; Wu & He, 2009).

Here, the proponents of this definition consider a job to be a profession or not if there is an educational path sufficient to qualify its members to practice or become professionals in this job. From their point of view, the profession is essentially linked to the university degree.

Some have added to this concept and developed it somewhat and defined the profession as a job through which services can be provided to the public from all sectors — public, private, civil society, and individuals, provided that its occupants possess theoretical and technical knowledge that ordinary individuals cannot easily acquire. And that there should be an organization that sets entry standards for this profession and conditions for practicing it (Malin, 2020b; Kearney & Sinha, 1988; Sandoval, 2022).

This definition has added another important aspect in recognizing a particular job as a profession, and this aspect is represented by theoretical and technical knowledge. The theoretical aspect here is represented by the educational aspect shown by the previous definition, while the technical aspect is represented by the experiences acquired through training.

Despite this diversity, variation, and instability in a specific definition of the concept of the profession, by reviewing several pieces of literature in the field of public administration, a set of standards, conditions, or characteristics that must be present in any job that can be considered a profession was reached, and these characteristics or conditions can be used to determine whether a job is a profession or not (Golembiewski, 1983, 1984; Bonesrønning, 2013):

1) The average person does not adequately understand the subject of the job and must rely on another person's experience to complete the task correctly.

2) The job subject must require academic study to master the subject's intricacies (Komakech, 2018).

3) There must be a barrier for the unqualified to prevent them from entering the field that is the subject of the job.

4) There must be a code of ethics that requires members of the profession to manage their affairs at

a level that goes beyond the mere requirements of law enforcement.

5) There should be a professional community to monitor the work of its members and enforce the code of job ethics.

According to what has been established in the literature, any profession must meet the five previous elements in its features, characteristics, and conditions for practice. Anything less than that will remain an administrative job, or more precisely, it will not be considered a profession that can be professionalized or practiced.

The professions are generally divided into two main groups: a group called the specialized professions group and another group called the government service professions group, as follows:

1) The specialized profession group: These are the professions used by the government and private sectors: engineering, medicine, accounting, education, law, etc.

2) The group of government services professions: These are those professions only used within the government sector, jobs within government agencies.

Here, according to the different definitions of the profession, the profession can be defined as that job for which a university educational path is required to be filled and whose members are bound by an ethical and behavioral charter, and the organization of this profession is supervised by a specific body whose members consist of members of this profession.

2.2. Professionalism

The idea of professionalism and setting standards of professionalism was not something new in the field of public administration in general. Still, it is unique to other fields, whether different or sub-fields, such as government procurement. This idea goes back to 1915 when Flexner presented the first attempts to set standards. He showed professionalism, which included many intellectual processes and great individual responsibility (Seabrooke & Sending, 2022; Atkinson, 2006; Podger, 2016).

The idea of professionalism subsequently developed when, in 1939, Parsons distinguished professionalism as technical specialization and empirical rigor, specifying that the unique characteristics of professionalism involve specific knowledge and abilities for the job related to one specialty (Gazley, 2014; Rusaw & Fisher, 2017).

Other researchers also expressed professionalism as translating knowledge into action and using that knowledge to help people address problems they cannot solve independently (de Graaf & van der Wal, 2013; Hawkins et al., 2011).

Then, the idea of professionalism became present in many kinds of literature, whether in the field of public administration or those that are related to it in several aspects, which are represented by moral responsibilities, working for the public interest in one job for life, as well as the presence of specialized technical knowledge acquired from formal education programs (Sampson, 1993; Gould-Williams et al., 2015).

This knowledge is divided into two types of knowledge, either specialized technical knowledge or theoretical knowledge, and this can be clarified in the following two points (Ríos, 2023; Chang et al., 2022; Bergsgard & Nødland, 2020):

1) Specialized technical knowledge: It is the knowledge that only professionals possess.

2) Theoretical knowledge: That knowledge involves a general understanding of everything related to the profession.

Professionalism is also a way to solve problems or obtain the correct answer or solution, as the main idea of professionalism in public administration in general lies in linking the scientific field with the practical field, that is, connecting the academic theoretical field with practical knowledge experience (Reddick et al., 2020; Roman, 2015).

Professionalism has also been defined as a description through which the work can be performed well. The term professionalism often refers to the work's quality or performance standards. The work done well can be described as professional or highly professional (McCue et al., 2015; Prier et al., 2010).

Through these various definitions of professionalism, professionalism can be considered a particular degree or level of performance that the person in this profession reaches after practicing it for a certain period, such that this performance is the result of his academic knowledge and practical experience.

2.3. Professionalization

Professionalization or the professionalization of a job is defined as the process through which a specific job can be transformed into a technical profession of a specialized professional nature through the presence of five elements (Snider, 2006; McCue & Gianakis, 2001):

1) Knowledge-based on abstract principles rather than practical procedures and skills is acquired through a formal educational channel.

2) The power professionals have regarding the nature of the services they provide.

3) A license/certificate specifies different degrees of professional specialization so that everyone who works in a profession that does not hold a certificate or license will be punished until they practice it.

4) Commitment to the profession's ethical and behavioral standards and rules.

That the profession should enjoy a balanced culture with a professional orientation that leads it to high personal participation in its work through the leadership of those with one profession (a union) (Lloyd & McCue, 2004).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research method

This study relied on two approaches: the comparative approach to compare the state of the public procurement function in the USA, New Zealand, and Egypt to reach the best international practices in the field of professionalizing workers in the field of public procurement. Before that, the descriptive analytical approach defined several concepts, such as profession, professionalism, and professionalization.

3.2. Data collection

This study draws on multiple qualitative research studies, aiming to understand phenomena rather than measure them, which is the primary focus of

quantitative approaches. Qualitative research emphasizes interpreting collected statements or observed behaviors, focusing on exploring specific situations or a limited number of cases in depth (Pareto, 2013). This study aligns with the qualitative research approach, as it seeks to analyze the dimensions of professionalism and its key criteria at both theoretical and practical levels. Consequently, the study will rely on secondary data analysis from research and literature in public procurement, published in specialized scientific journals and indexed in international databases such as Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and JSTOR. The study will also examine scientific discussions on public procurement professionalism, contributing to resolving theoretical debates in this area and highlighting the potential advantages of achieving professionalism, which the study aims to clarify.

4. RESULTS

4.1. The importance of professionalizing the government procurement function

As previously stated, the purchasing function in most countries remained merely clerical until 2001. Only a few professionals and academics in this field have sought to change the perception of the purchasing function from a mere routine administrative function to a technical (professional) function that must. Those who occupy these positions must meet some of the required professional standards. Still, the role of procurement employees has changed. It has shifted from merely carrying out administrative tasks to participating in the planning and design processes of public policies related to development programs (Williams et al., 2018).

Professionalism in government procurement is not only linked to the levels of education and qualifications of procurement employees. Still, it is also linked to the existence of this job within the framework of a professional organization and a code of conduct and ethics, qualifying them through national bodies and institutes for government procurement (Steinfeld et al., 2015).

The government procurement function has now become very complex. This complexity is constantly increasing, which requires that the government procurement system have the needed dynamism, continuous change, and interaction with developments in the surrounding environment, from modern methods and technologies to innovative procurement methods, which requires a great deal of professional government procurement staff (Lloyd & McCue, 2004).

Hence, the importance of recognizing the government procurement job as a specialized technical profession and not just an administrative, clerical job, as working to professionalize the government procurement job and identifying this job as a profession achieves many advantages, (Janousek, 2014), which can be mentioned as follows:

1) Reducing corruption in government procurement processes: The lack of required professionalism increases the severity of corruption, ultimately preventing the proper application of government procurement rules and laws and negatively affecting government spending.

2) Efficiency and effectiveness of government procurement: The increasing importance of government procurement indicates that it can play

an essential role in achieving public policy objectives and even participating in them in the first place, which naturally suggests that well-trained and qualified employees should be employed to manage the procurement process if government procurement employees do not have a high degree of professionalism, as they lack the required knowledge of all regulations and decisions regulating the government procurement process and its procedures, it will result in these processes being disrupted and taking longer than necessary to implement (Steinfeld, 2016).

Some have emphasized the necessity of working to increase specialization in government procurement by creating a career path that allows them to assume senior positions like other professions. Specialization will be increased by dividing this job into: procurement assistants, procurement officials, procurement analysts, procurement managers, and heads of the procurement department (Sudhipongpracha, 2011). This increase in specialization will not happen unless professionalism in this job is enhanced through various educational programs in institutes, colleges, and accredited training centers (Steinfeld et al., 2015).

4.2. The most prominent international efforts towards professionalizing the government procurement function

Until 2001, the purchasing job remained merely a clerical job in most countries of the world, and there were only a few professionals and academics in this field were seeking to change the perception of the purchasing job from a mere routine administrative job to a technical (professional) job. Those who occupy it must have some of the required professional standards, and from here began the idea of moving towards professionalizing the government procurement function.

Professionalizing the government procurement function stems mainly from its importance, as it can be used to achieve public policy goals and implement programs and plans set by various governments. Professionalizing the occupants of these jobs first requires professionalizing and recognizing this job as a profession.

Although some have identified the elements necessary to professionalize jobs in general and limited this to five elements, in the field of government procurement, some have limited themselves to the third element, the certificate or license element. As the certificate is one of the ways that indicate or indicate that its holder possesses specific skills and knowledge and a high degree of these skills and knowledge, these skills and knowledge must be employed in the correct path, such as the medical, legal, accounting and other professions (McCue et al., 2015; McCue & Gianakis, 2001; Effendi & Ali, 2023; Lloyd & McCue, 2004).

As part of the international efforts exerted towards obtaining these professional certificates to prepare for this job or professionalize it, many international organizations working in the field of training in procurement and contract management have accredited many professional and academic certificates in this field, and among these organizations (the Certified Institute for Purchasing and Supply, International Federation of Consulting Engineers, the National Institute of Government

Procurement, the World Bank), and the efforts of these organizations will be presented through the following points.

4.2.1. Certified Institute for Purchasing and Supplies

The Certified Institute for Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) was established in 1932. It is a non-profit organization headquartered in the United Kingdom, with four regional offices, including one in Dubai. This Institute works to encourage and develop standards, skills, and capabilities and provide tools and methods for best practices and the highest forms of professional thought for those working in the field. Purchasing and supply management. CIPS has achieved many successes at the level of the government procurement function in some countries (Roman, 2015) including the following:

The Republic of Bangladesh, where forty government procurement officers have passed the Institute's membership/professional certification exams, has three study centers in Bangladesh to provide the necessary training to obtain professional qualifications by CIPS standards. Thus, there was no need to rely on international trainers.

In the Kingdom of Bhutan, more than five hundred employees received training from CIPS, and CIPS assisted Bhutan in establishing a study center to provide all its training programs. Bhutan has launched a program to certify conformity and compliance in government procurement, the first national certification in Bhutan.

4.2.2. International Federation of Consulting Engineers

The International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) was established in 1913 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. FIDIC works to promote and implement the strategic objectives of the consulting engineering industry. FIDIC also publishes standardized international contract forms, best practice documents, guidelines, training manuals, and training tools, including Topics on tendering and procurement processes. FIDIC also offers accredited training programs in contract management to build local capacities in the public and private sectors. In 2012, FIDIC established an accredited training center in Amman, Jordan. This center provides various training courses in procurement, contracts, supplies, and tenders (McCue et al., 2015).

4.2.3. National Institute of Government Procurement

The National Institute of Government Procurement (NIGP) Institute was established in 1944 in the USA to develop, support, and encourage the profession of government procurement through pioneering educational and research programs, professional support, and various technical services in government procurement (Sudhipongpracha, 2011). The details of these programs will be presented when examining the international experience of the USA.

4.2.4. The World Bank

The World Bank has provided much assistance in various fields since its establishment in 1944. In the field of government procurement, it provides technical advice to member states, gives many

training and educational programs and various workshops to member states, and provides many programs to everyone interested in government procurement. Various programs through the Internet, through the design of many training courses in many languages, in light of its keen interest in raising the efficiency, skills, and capabilities of government procurement employees for a better future for this job, which the World Bank is vigorously seeking to work to professionalize (Ríos, 2023). These programs were represented in five programs (Roman, 2015; Williams et al., 2018):

The Certificate Program in Public Procurement (CPPP) aims to cover the basics of public procurement. To enable participants to obtain an overview of public procurement and understand the logic behind public procurement decisions, this program is offered in several languages, such as Arabic, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and Hindi.

The Professional Diploma in Public Procurement (PDPP) aims to provide comprehensive knowledge covering theoretical aspects, methods, modern trends, and good practices in public procurement. The PDPP has been adopted as a blended learning program where participants can develop public procurement expertise.

The Certificate Program in Contract Management (CPCM) aims to instill knowledge and an in-depth understanding of the principles and practices of contract management. The modules within this degree program also cover some general examples and best practices in contract management. This program is offered in English only.

The New Procurement Framework (NPF) is offered in English only through four training modules, as follows:

1) Overview of the procurement framework: The module covers an introduction to the procurement framework, general considerations, governance, and fundamental aspects of World Bank procurement regulations for borrowers.

2) Procurement strategy development project: This unit covers the development of a project procurement strategy that will address how procurement activities support the development objectives of a project that achieves the best value for money within the framework of a risk-based approach.

3) Procurement provisions: This unit deals with the general and specific procurement provisions of the World Bank's procurement regulations for borrowers.

4) Approved selection methods: This unit covers the approved selection methods for goods, works, non-consulting services, and consulting services in the World Bank's procurement regulations for borrowers.

The Systematic Tracking of Exchange in Purchases (STEP) is offered in English only through two tracks, as follows (McCue & Gianakis, 2001; Prier et al., 2010; McCue et al., 2015; Steinfeld et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2018):

1) The Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement e-Guide is provided to employees of World Bank borrowing member countries. This e-learning program helps them learn STEP processes, including the workflow involved in creating and modifying a procurement plan and conducting procurement activities for goods, works, and services. Non-consulting and consulting services. The program can also be used as a troubleshooting

tool, allowing one to access a specific step in the process and learn the steps involved. This program outlines the roles of borrower project staff for STEP functions.

2) The e-Guide for Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement is provided to the World Bank staff. This e-learning program helps students learn STEP processes, including the workflow involved in creating and modifying a procurement plan and conducting procurement activities for goods, business, non-consulting services, and advisory services., through case studies. The program can also be used as a troubleshooting tool, allowing one to access a specific step in the process and learn the steps involved. This program outlines the roles of World Bank Task Leaders, Operations Officers, and Procurement Specialists for STEP functions.

After explaining the international efforts to pay attention to the government procurement function by providing technical support, advice, and training to raise the efficiency of those working in the procurement function for a better future for this profession in a way that benefits the government procurement process to achieve effectiveness in procurement, the following point will be presented—the most critical international experiences in this field.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. International experience in professionalizing the government procurement function (New Zealand and the USA)

There are many international experiences in the field of professionalizing the government procurement function, including, as previously mentioned, the efforts of countries such as Kenya and Tanzania through their respective national institutes, but the experience of New Zealand is considered a unique experience given the challenges it faced when implementing programs to reform its government procurement system. The USA is also considered a leader in the field of education and training in government procurement, as it has many institutes that grant specialized certificates in this field, in addition to scientific periodicals also specialized in the field of government procurement, as well as scientific degrees at the masters and doctoral levels. These are the reasons for choosing it as one of the experts. Furthermore, the international experiences in this field will be presented. In light of this, the experience of New Zealand will be presented, then the experience of the USA, as follows:

5.1.1. New Zealand

The experience of the Kingdom of New Zealand has achieved remarkable success in professionalizing its government procurement function, mainly due to the circumstances surrounding it at the time of adopting the program to reform its government procurement system.

In 2008, the New Zealand government began implementing a program to reform government procurement with initial funding of three million US dollars. This was within the framework of the government's efforts to provide financial resources and improve performance after the outbreak of the global financial crisis, and this was also to achieve four main goals:

- 1) Reducing costs by coordinating contracts between various government agencies;
- 2) Building capabilities and competencies working in the field of government procurement;
- 3) Increasing the participation of business institutions in government procurement;
- 4) Improving governance, oversight, and accountability in the government procurement system (Bergsgard & Nødland, 2020).

However, the main problem in implementing this program was that there were only seven qualified individuals specializing in government procurement, and training on government procurement was not available at the national level, so the government was forced to send training missions outside the country at very high costs. To the extent that the government at that time was harshly criticized for these costs in light of the country's financial state, there was no realization at the time of the actual value of the government procurement system. International trainers or specialists in government procurement could not attend to work in procurement departments in government agencies due to the ban on visas to enter New Zealand (McCue et al., 2015).

To address these challenges to continue building the capabilities of workers in this field, and raise the efficiency of the government procurement system, the New Zealand government has adopted several procedures and measures necessary for this (Prier et al., 2010; Snider, 2006; Sudhipongpracha, 2011), which are as follows:

- 1) Government procurement specialists were added to the requirements for obtaining a visa to New Zealand, such as the professions of medicine and nursing, which encouraged many people with experience in government procurement to come to New Zealand.
- 2) An educational program was developed for the Chartered Institute for Government Procurement Professions, and the program was directed to serve government sector employees by providing support to make the cost of joining it possible.
- 3) Carrying out assessments of the capacity and efficiency of the government procurement system by building the capabilities and qualifications of more than two hundred government agencies in the field of government procurement.

In 2012, New Zealand achieved savings in the cost of government procurement amounting to three hundred and fifty-three million dollars, and more than one hundred people are studying in the CIPS program, which has provided more than one thousand five hundred training days. The leading procuring government agencies are investing in reforming the system and obtaining six international awards, and the program is close to reaching the self-financing stage within 12 months.

5.1.2. The USA

The USA has many institutes specializing in granting professional certificates in government procurement. The first government procurement institute to adopt special programs for government procurement was the NIGP in 1944. As previously stated, the Institute's primary goal was to develop and support the government procurement profession through leading educational and research programs, professional support, and various technical services in government procurement (Steinfeld, 2016).

In 1946, the Institute issued the first professional certificate in government procurement (Gazley, 2014), a certification called the Certified Public Procurement Officer (CPPO). The aim of adopting this certificate program was to give the professional character of government procurement employees in the USA at both the federal and state levels. This certificate covers several basic general curricula in the knowledge of government procurement and its procedures and related fields such as public administration and public finance (Roman, 2015).

In 1978, cooperation took place between the NIGP and the National Association of State Procurement Officers (NASPO) (Prier et al., 2010; Roman, 2015) to establish the National Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC) (Suárez, 2011) responsible for many tasks:

- 1) Continuing research efforts related to issuing professional certificates in government procurement.
- 2) Coordination with the NIGP and the NASPO to promote the accreditation of government procurement officers.
- 3) Doing everything necessary to ensure the utmost professionalism in government procurement.

In 1979, the Education and Professional Development Committee of the NIGP issued the Professional Public Purchaser (PPB) certification. The UPPCC changed it in 1991 to become the Certified Professional Public Purchaser (CPPB) (Roman, 2015).

Currently, the National Public Purchase Certification Council (UPPCC) grants two types of certificates through two accredited programs.

CPPO program provides curricula related to public administration and public finance and everything related to procurement management, government procurement methods, administrative procedures, best practices in this field, how to plan the procurement process, and contract management.

CPPB Certified Professional Public Buyer program offers the same curricula as the CPPO program. Still, this program does not focus on the procurement employee's internal administrative procedures or planning government procurement operations. Instead, it provides curricula related to public administration, public finance, and everything related to management. Procurement, government procurement methods, how to prepare the procurement process papers, and how to avoid mistakes that result in bids being excluded.

These certificates reflect the degree of professionalism enjoyed by government procurement employees and the degree of their competencies, skills, and knowledge related to this field. They also reflect the buyer's ability to enter government procurement operations and fully understand all procurement procedures and requirements (Roman, 2015).

Table 1. Policies and procedures to professionalize public procurement jobs

<i>Policies and procedures</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>USA</i>
Technical support "Training"	√	√
Public procurement specialist VISA	√	
Educational programs in public procurement	√	√
Professional certificate in procurement		√
Association or Council for Public Procurement		√

Source: Authors' elaboration.

5.2. Public procurement jobs in Egypt

The previous Tenders and Auctions Law and its canceled executive regulations did not include any provisions regarding specialization in the field of procurement for employees of government procurement departments in various government agencies and bodies. The same applies to academic qualifications. The law did not require a specific educational qualification for those holding it to join this job, such as law, accounting, education, etc. It also did not require a particular level of education; it was not necessary to obtain a university qualification to work in this job.

On the other hand, the law above and its executive regulations neglected the human aspect of the government procurement process, even though it is the main component. The law and its administrative rules were devoid of any indications of the necessity of working to train and qualify workers in the field of government procurement.

Despite this, procurement, warehouse, sales, and car training centers aim to improve workers' efficiency and performance in the General Authority for Government Services (Aboelazm, Dganni, et al., 2024).

This situation remained for the government procurement function in Egypt until the law was issued regulating contracts concluded by public entities, which stipulated the obligation to pass specific training as a condition for filling contracting positions, by what the Minister of Finance determines in this field (Aboelazm, Tawakol, et al., 2024).

5.2.1. Obstacles and challenges to professionalize public procurement jobs in Egypt

The most critical obstacles in the public procurement system in Egypt for more professionalism in this field are several essential points, the most important of which are the following:

1) Organizational culture: Since the public procurement profession is viewed in Egypt as not an attractive job and does not have a career future or a prestigious career path, it is considered, from the point of view of those working in it and those not working in it, nothing more than a routine administrative job.

2) Academic qualification: The lack of specialized academic degrees in public procurement at the bachelor's level leads to several people who hold academic degrees from different specializations, such as law, accounting, business administration, and other specializations that are not closely related to public procurement, working in this job.

3) Vocational training: There is a lack of vision related to qualifying public procurement employees and specialized training programs sufficient to qualify them sustainably. Despite training programs, they lack professionalism and adequate scientific and practical qualifications of trainers to do this work.

4) Organizational structure: The lack of a career path for public procurement employees does not make the job attractive to workers in this field or others who are about to work in the government. Every employee aspires to reach the highest levels of the career ladder in any job, and the lack of a career path for this job makes employees reluctant to join it.

5.2.2. Benefits from international experiences in professionalizing public procurement jobs in Egypt

The benefits from international experiences in professionalizing procurement jobs in Egypt are as follows:

1) Creating new educational programs in public procurement at the bachelor's level, with grants and educational incentives for those enrolled.

2) Restructuring public procurement departments in government agencies will allow for a specialized career path for public procurement workers.

3) Designing high-quality training programs in cooperation with international bodies such as the World Bank and the purchasing departments in the government institutions in the USA and New Zealand.

4) Raising awareness of the importance of the public procurement profession among its workers and other government employees.

5) Establishing a Supreme Council for public procurement that is responsible for developing directives and instructions related to practicing the public procurement function and granting professional certificates in public procurement.

6. CONCLUSION

This study addressed the issue of professionalizing the government procurement function. It explained what profession, professionalism, and professionalization mean and the importance of professionalizing this function to increase efficiency and effectiveness in government procurement processes. In addition, the process of professionalization and increasing the level of professionalism among workers in this field helps significantly in reducing corruption; it was then explained that the process of professionalization takes place by establishing a career path for this profession by increasing specialization in the government procurement function as well as by adopting educational and training programs in this field.

The efforts of international organizations in the field of professionalizing the government procurement function were also reviewed through the multiple educational and training programs they provide in this field, including (CIPS, FIDIC, NIGP, and the World Bank). International experiences in this field were also presented, and these experiences were represented in New Zealand and the USA. New Zealand's experience was developing a strategy to reform its government procurement system. The reform focused on the human element and how to attract human elements specialized in this field by professionalizing this function.

The USA is considered one of the first countries to establish specialized institutes to grant professional and academic certificates in government procurement to increase professionalism in government procurement functions and achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the procurement process.

As for the Egyptian situation regarding the government procurement function, the Egyptian system guarantees a training center affiliated with the General Authority for Government Services that organizes some training programs in procurement, warehouses, and sales. As for the Tenders and

Auctions Law and its executive regulations, they did not address the human aspect of the government procurement system, even if the new law. Some of these aspects have been regulated, which is a good step towards more professionalism in this field, but it was not to the same extent as in many other countries.

Egyptian governments can adopt the model based on the following steps:

- The officers should have specialized knowledge of public procurement.
- The government should design and establish specialized academic degrees in public procurement.

- The public procurement officers should have a professional association.

- Public procurement candidates should obtain an appropriate and sufficient training period.

On the other hand, future research may focus on the role of technology (AI, blockchain, etc.) in enhancing professionalization in public procurement. Studies measure the effects of professionalization on procurement outcomes, and it is recommended that the effects of professionalization on the performance and quality of public procurement be discovered.

REFERENCES

- Abdul Qader, S. E. (2015). *The role of community accountability in combating administrative corruption: A comparative study with application to the Egyptian case* [Ph.D. thesis, Cairo University]. Cairo University.
- Aboelazm, K. S. (2023). The legal framework and policies for sustainable administrative contracts in Egypt: Reality and challenges. *International Journal of Public Law and Policy*, 9(2), 111-129. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPLAP.2023.130011>
- Aboelazm, K. S. (2024). The role of judicial review in the settlement of state contracts disputes. *Corporate Law & Governance Review*, 6(3), 122-134. <https://doi.org/10.22495/clgrv6i3p13>
- Aboelazm, K. S., & Dganni, K. M. (2025). Public procurement contracts futurity: Using of artificial intelligence in a tender process. *Corporate Law & Governance Review*, 7(1), 60-72. <https://doi.org/10.22495/clgrv7i1p6>
- Aboelazm, K. S., Dganni, K. M., Tawakol, F., & Sharif, H. (2024). Robotic judges: A new step towards justice or the exclusion of humans? *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review*, 4(4), Article e02515. <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v4.n04.pe02515>
- Aboelazm, K. S., Tawakol, F., Dganni, K. M., & AlFil, N. Z. (2024). Public-private partnership: A new policy to ameliorate the quality of public utility services to the public. *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review*, 4(4), Article e02509. <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v4.n04.pe02509>
- Ades, A., & Di Tella, R. (1999). Rents, competition, and corruption. *The American Economic Review*, 89(4), 982-993. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.89.4.982>
- Angaw, K. W. (2020). Catch-up trails: Public Administration education and professionalization trajectories in Ethiopia. In B. K. Debela, G. Bouckaert, M. A. Warota, D. T. Gemechu, A. Hondeghe, T. Steen, & S. Troupin (Eds.), *Public administration in Ethiopia: Case studies and lessons for sustainable development* (pp. 591-630). Leuven University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv19m65dr.30>
- Atkinson, W. (2006). Private professionals, public sector — Does it work? *Children's Voice*, 15(2), 34-37. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45395568>
- Bergsgard, N. A., & Nødland, S. I. (2020). Open tenders in public procurement of welfare services: Professionalization, standardization, and innovation among civil sector providers. *Journal of Civil Society*, 16(4), 313-332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2020.1827810>
- Bonesrønning, H. (2013). Public employees and public sector reform implementation. *Public Choice*, 156(1-2), 309-327. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-011-9900-1>
- Chang, M. C.-J., Green, L., & Petrokofsky, C. (Eds.). (2022). Policy and professional skills context. In *Public health spatial planning in practice: Improving health and wellbeing* (pp. 35-49). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2x00vs4.11>
- de Graaf, G., & van der Wal, Z. (2013). Loyalties of public sector professionals. In M. Noordegraaf & B. Steijn (Eds.), *Professionals under pressure: The reconfiguration of professional work in changing public services* (pp. 145-160). Amsterdam University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cg5m6.12>
- Deda, G., Tërstena, A., Krasniqi, S., & Todorova, S. (2024). Evaluation of influence of corruption, lending interest rate and other components on ease of doing business: A policy-making and legal implications. *Corporate Law & Governance Review*, 6(3), 8-16. <https://doi.org/10.22495/clgrv6i3p1>
- Effendi, E., & Ali, M. (2023). Public awareness of public administration governance and legal awareness regarding anti-corruption measures. *Corporate Law & Governance Review*, 5(1), 8-16. <https://doi.org/10.22495/clgrv5i1p1>
- Freundreis, J. P., & Vertz, L. L. (1988). A model of decision making and the public service professional. *Political Behavior*, 10(1), 77-93. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00989381>
- Gazley, B. (2014). Good governance practices in professional associations for public employees: Evidence of a public service ethos? *Public Administration Review*, 74(6), 736-747. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12264>
- Golembiewski, R. T. (1983). Professionalization, performance, and protectionism: A contingency view. *Public Productivity Review*, 7(3), 251-268. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3380328>
- Golembiewski, R. T. (1984). The pace and character of public sector professionalization: Six selected questions. *State & Local Government Review*, 16(2), 63-68. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4354813>
- Gould-Williams, J. S., Mostafa, A. M. S., & Bottomley, P. (2015). Public service motivation and employee outcomes in the Egyptian public sector: Testing the mediating effect of person-organization fit. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 25(2), 597-622. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mut053>
- Hawkins, T. G., Gravier, M. J., & Powley, E. H. (2011). Public versus private sector procurement ethics and strategy: What each sector can learn from the other. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 103(4), 567-586. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0881-2>
- Holzer, M., & Rabin, J. (1987). Public service: Problems, professionalism, and policy recommendations. *Public Productivity Review*, 11(1), 3-13. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3379962>
- Janousek, C. (2014). *Examining differences in local government management among U.S states: A regional analysis of MPA programs and professionalism* [Ph.D. thesis, University of Nebraska]. University of Nebraska.
- Kearney, R. C., & Sinha, C. (1988). Professionalism and bureaucratic responsiveness: Conflict or compatibility? *Public Administration Review*, 48(1), 571-579. <https://doi.org/10.2307/975521>

- Kim, J. T. (1988). Current issues in public personnel administration: The merit pay system, performance appraisal, and professionalization. *Public Productivity Review*, 11(4), 109-114. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3379907>
- Kjeldsen, A. M., & Jacobsen, C. B. (2013). Public service motivation and employment sector: Attraction or socialization? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 23(4), 899-926. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mus039>
- Komakech, R. A. (2018). The science of public procurement and administration. *Advances in Politics and Economic*, 1(2), 80-90. <https://doi.org/10.22158/ape.v1n2p80>
- Lloyd, R. E., & McCue, C. P. (2004). What is public procurement? Definition problems and implications. *International Public Procurement Conference Proceedings*, 3. Academics Press. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237538383_WHAT_IS_PUBLIC PROCUREMENT_DEFINITIONAL_PROBLEMS_AND_IMPLICATIONS
- Malin, N. (Ed.). (2020a). De-professionalism: An analytical framework. In *De-professionalism and austerity: Challenges for the public sector* (pp. 87-100). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvw1d50s.11>
- Malin, N. (Ed.). (2020b). De-professionalism as defined by services deemed unconventional, under-performing or ineffectual. In *De-professionalism and austerity: Challenges for the public sector* (pp. 121-142). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvw1d50s.13>
- Marzuki, S., & Ali, M. (2024). Judicial ethics violations: Legal aspect and the role of judicial supervision. *Corporate Law & Governance Review*, 6(3), 17-26. <https://doi.org/10.22495/clgrv6i3p2>
- McCue, C. P., & Gianakis, G. A. (2001). Public purchasing: Who's minding the store? *Journal of Public Procurement*, 1(1), 71-95. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOPP-01-01-2001-B002>
- McCue, C. P., Prier, E., & Swanson, D. (2015). Five dilemmas in public procurement. *Journal of Public Procurement*, 15(2), 177-207. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOPP-15-02-2015-B003>
- McDonald, J. S., & Witayapanyanon, T. (1986). Public sector professionalism in Thailand. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 14(2), 16-28. <https://doi.org/10.1163/080382486X00119>
- Pareto, W. (2013). *The rise of professionalism: Monopolies of competence and sheltered markets*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315134635>
- Podger, A. (2016). Public sector executive development in the Asia-Pacific: Different contexts but similar challenges. In A. Podger & J. Wanna (Eds.), *Sharpening the sword of state: Building executive capacities in the public services of the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 1-18). ANU Press. <https://doi.org/10.22459/SSS.11.2016.01>
- Prier, E., McCue, C., & Behara, R. (2010). The value of certification in public procurement: The birth of a profession? *Journal of Public Procurement*, 10(4), 512-540. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOPP-10-04-2010-B002>
- Reddick, C. G., Demir, T., & Streib, G. (2020). The professional mind-set of city managers: Implications for public administration. *Administration & Society*, 52(2), 207-232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399718760592>
- Ríos, M. C. (2023). Policy analysis in the bureaucracy: The production of knowledge for professional public management training. In N. Cardozo & P. Bulcourf (Eds.), *Policy analysis in Argentina* (pp. 105-118). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.4953554.12>
- Roman, A. V. (2015). Public procurement specialists: They are not who we thought they were. *Journal of Public Procurement*, 15(1), 38-65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOPP-15-01-2015-B002>
- Rusaw, A. C., & Fisher, V. D. (2017). Promoting training and professional development in government: The origins and early contributions of SPOD. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 41(2), 216-232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/073491491704100202>
- Sampson, C. L. (1993). Professional roles and perceptions of the public personnel function. *Public Administration Review*, 53(2), 154-160. <https://doi.org/10.2307/976708>
- Sandoval, C. (2022). The politicization of professionalization: The attempt to reform the public sector in Ecuador, 2007-2017. In F. E. Panizza, B. G. Peters, & C. R. Larraburu (Eds.), *The politics of patronage appointments in Latin American central administrations* (pp. 111-140). University of Pittsburgh Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv35bfdwc.9>
- Seabrooke, L., & Sending, O. J. (2022). Consultancies in public administration. *Public Administration*, 100(3), 457-471. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12844>
- Shukla, A. (1994). Public and private sector professionals: Emerging trends. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 30(2), 203-214. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27767354>
- Snider, K. F. (2006). Procurement leadership: From means to ends. *Journal of Public Procurement*, 6(3), 274-294. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOPP-06-03-2006-B004>
- Steinfeld, J. M. (2016). *Task specialization in public administration profession: A job analysis of public procurement practitioners* [Ph.D. thesis, Florida Atlantic University]. Florida Atlantic University.
- Steinfeld, J. M., Prier, E., & McCue, C. (2015). Public procurement and the BLS: operationalizing occupational duties. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 28(7), 510-527. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPSM-12-2014-0150>
- Suárez, D. F. (2011). Collaboration and professionalization: The contours of public sector funding for nonprofit organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 21(2), 307-326. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpart/muq049>
- Sudhipongpracha, T. (2011). *Comparative public professionalism in Thai and Illinois municipalities* [Ph.D. thesis, Northern Illinois University]. Northern Illinois University. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/db1a9ee9e9d0a19fd92fc1ef06caa742/1?cbl=18750&pq-origsite=gscholar>
- Turner, A. H. (2015). Instilling public service values and professionalism through information literacy. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 21(1), 41-54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2015.12001815>
- Williams, A. M., Lau, F., & McCue, C. P. (2018). Acknowledging knowledge: The perception of knowledge requirements for public procurement officials and their professional development. *Journal of Public Procurement*, 18(1), 50-67. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOPP-03-2018-004>
- Wu, X., & He, J. (2009). Paradigm shift in public administration: Implications for teaching in professional training programs. *Public Administration Review*, 69(1), 21-28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2009.02085.x>