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TEACHING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AS A TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCE IN PERUVIAN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: PROPOSAL FOR TRAINING EFFICIENT PUBLIC MANAGERS

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Abstract: Public procurement is a fundamental mechanism for the efficiency of the Peruvian State, requiring highly trained professionals for its optimal management. This study proposes the incorporation of public procurement teaching as a cross-cutting skill in Peruvian university education, through the analysis of current curricula and the identification of training gaps. A mixed approach was used, with a documentary analysis of 120 curricula from public and private universities, complemented by semi-structured interviews with 45 teachers and 60 graduates from courses related to public management. The results reveal that only 23% of academic programs include specific content on government procurement, while 89% of professionals consider this competency essential for job performance in the public sector. The proposed curriculum integrates legal, economic, and technological knowledge, structured in four progressive modules ranging from regulatory fundamentals to advanced process management. The implementation of this cross-cutting competency would strengthen the comprehensive training of future public managers, contributing significantly to the modernization of the state and the optimization of public resources. The gradual adoption of this proposal in administration, economics, accounting, law, and engineering programs is recommended, establishing strategic alliances with state entities for specialized pre-professional internships.

Keywords: public procurement, cross-cutting skills, university education, public management, vocational training

INTRODUCTION

Context and Justification

Public procurement is a fundamental strategic tool for the efficient functioning of the Peruvian State, representing approximately 12% of the national Gross Domestic Product according to data from the Supervisory Agency for State Procurement (OSCE, 2024). This activity goes beyond the simple acquisition of goods and services, constituting a public policy mechanism that directly influences economic development, business competitiveness, and the satisfaction of citizens' needs.

The current situation reveals significant deficiencies in the management of state procurement processes, manifested in delays, cost overruns, questions of transparency, and low quality in public procurement. These problems are largely attributed to the limited specialized training of the professionals responsible for these functions, who often acquire knowledge empirically or through fragmented training after joining the workforce.

The importance of addressing this issue in university education stems from the urgent need to train professionals who are fully prepared to face the contemporary challenges of public administration. The growing complexity of regulatory frameworks, the digitization of processes, the incorporation of sustainability criteria, and the demands for transparency require specialized skills that must be systematically developed during academic training.

Research on professional training in public procurement shows mixed results internationally. European studies such as those by García-Sánchez et al. (2022) show

Article 7

that countries such as Spain and France have achieved substantial improvements in the efficiency of their public procurement systems by implementing specialized training programs in their universities. Similarly, research conducted by Thompson and Williams (2023) in the Anglo-Saxon context shows positive correlations between structured academic training in public procurement and a reduction in administrative irregularities.

In Latin America, the work of Silva-Rodriguez (2023) in Chile and López-Martínez (2022) in Colombia identifies successful experiences of incorporating content on government procurement into curricula, particularly in public administration and administrative law programs. These studies agree that early training in these skills produces professionals who are better equipped to navigate the regulatory and procedural complexity characteristic of the regional public sector.

At the national level, research by Paredes-Córdova (2023) and Huamán-Torres (2022) has documented the training deficiencies that exist in Peruvian universities with regard to specialized public management content. Their findings reveal that less than 30% of related academic programs incorporate specific modules on government contracting, creating a significant gap between the skills required by the public labor market and those developed during university education.

Research Problem

The central problem is defined as the disconnect between traditional university education and the specific skills required for efficient public procurement management in Peru. This disconnect results in professionals entering the public sector with limited abilities to understand, apply, and optimize government procurement processes, perpetuating systemic inefficiencies that affect the quality of public spending and the provision of citizen services.

Indicators that highlight this problem include: high rates of processes declared void, recurring observations by control bodies, limited participation of suppliers in public tenders, and prolonged execution times for selection processes. These phenomena are directly correlated with the insufficient preparation of the technical teams responsible for planning, executing, and supervising public procurement.

Research Objectives and Questions

General Objective

- To design a proposal for incorporating public procurement teaching as a cross-cutting skill in Peruvian university education, aimed at training efficient public managers.

Specific Objectives

- Analyze the current status of the incorporation of public procurement content into Peruvian university curricula.

- Identify the specific competencies required by public sector professionals in the area of government procurement.

Teaching Public Procurement as a Transversal Competence in Peruvian University Education: proposal for training efficient public managers

Article 7

- Determine international best practices in university training on public procurement.

- Develop a modular curriculum proposal that integrates legal, economic, and technological knowledge on public procurement.

- Establish guidelines for the progressive implementation of this cross-cutting competency in selected university programs.

Research Questions

- What is the current level of incorporation of public procurement content in Peruvian university curricula?

- What specific skills in public procurement does the Peruvian public sector labor market demand?

- What are some successful international experiences in university education on public procurement that could be adapted to the Peruvian context?

- How should a curriculum proposal be structured to effectively integrate public procurement teaching as a cross-cutting skill?

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This research adopts a mixed convergent approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative elements to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The methodological combination allows, on the one hand, to quantify the current status of the incorporation of public procurement content into the curriculum and, on the other hand, to delve deeper into the perceptions, experiences, and needs of the actors involved in training and professional practice in this field.

Study Design

An exploratory-descriptive design with a propositional scope was used. The exploratory phase allowed the relevant dimensions of the research problem to be identified, while the descriptive phase characterized in detail the current state of training in public procurement. The propositional scope was specified in the design of an empirically based curriculum proposal.

Participants

Participants were selected using stratified purposive sampling, considering three population groups:

Group 1 - Document Analysis: 120 curricula corresponding to academic programs at Peruvian public (60%) and private (40%) universities, specifically in the fields of Administration (35%), Law (25%), Economics (20%), Industrial Engineering (12%), and Accounting (8%).

Group 2 - Teachers: 45 university teachers with experience in training related to public management, selected by convenience sampling from 15 national universities. Inclusion criteria: minimum 5 years of teaching experience, postgraduate training in related areas, and participation in consulting or research projects on the public sector.

Group 3 - Graduates: 60 professionals who graduated from Peruvian universities and currently work in public entities with

functions related to government procurement. Inclusion criteria: university degree, minimum of 3 years of work experience in the public sector, direct or indirect participation in public procurement processes.

Data Collection Instruments

Document Analysis Matrix: Structured instrument for systematizing curriculum information, organizing content into categories: presence/absence of content on public procurement, level of depth, mode of incorporation (specific subject, module, cross-cutting themes), and assigned course load.

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers: Instrument that explored perceptions of the relevance of training in public procurement, identification of priority skills, previous experience in teaching these topics, and assessment of proposals for curriculum incorporation.

Structured Questionnaire for Graduates: A 35-item instrument that assessed perceptions of university preparation received, competencies required in current professional performance, identification of training gaps, and assessment of proposals for curriculum improvement.

Procedure

Data collection was carried out in three sequential phases during the period January-April 2025. The first phase consisted of a documentary analysis of curricula, officially requested from the participating universities. The second phase involved interviews with teachers, conducted virtually with an average duration of 45 minutes each. The third phase applied the questionnaires to graduates via a digital platform, with personalized follow-up to ensure response rates above 85%.

Data Analysis

The quantitative analysis used descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 28.0, calculating frequencies, measures of central tendency, and correlations between variables. Qualitative analysis used the thematic analysis technique according to Braun and Clarke (2019), identifying recurring patterns in participants' perceptions through inductive and deductive coding. Methodological triangulation integrated both types of findings to construct comprehensive interpretations of the phenomenon studied.

DEVELOPMENT

Theories and Models

The theoretical basis of this research is based on three main approaches.

The Theory of Professional Competencies developed by Perrenoud (2004) and updated by Tardif (2017), which conceptualizes competencies as complex combinations of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable effective performance in specific professional situations. In the context of public procurement, these competencies integrate technical-legal, economic-financial, and ethical-social dimensions.

The Transversal University Education Model proposed by González and Wagenaar (2019) in the Tuning project establishes that certain skills must be developed independently of specific academic specializations, constituting common educational elements that enrich the overall professional profile.

Article 7

Public procurement is classified as a transversal skill given its impact on multiple professional areas in the public sector.

The Strategic Procurement Theory developed by Van Weele (2018) and complemented by Lysons and Farrington (2020) reconceptualizes public procurement from a strategic perspective that transcends the purely administrative function, incorporating considerations of public value creation, innovation, sustainability, and territorial economic development.

Key Concepts Public

Procurement

A set of administrative procedures through which state entities acquire the goods, services, or works necessary for the fulfillment of their functions, subject to the principles of transparency, competition, efficiency, and social responsibility.

Transversal Competence

Professional capacity that transcends specific disciplinary boundaries, being relevant and applicable in multiple professional contexts, characterized by its transferability and adaptability to various work scenarios.

Efficient Public Management

An administrative paradigm that emphasizes the optimization of public resources, results orientation, transparency in processes, and the satisfaction of citizen needs through the implementation of best management practices adapted to the public context.

Comprehensive Professional Training

An educational process that simultaneously develops technical, methodological, social, and participatory competencies, preparing professionals capable of adapting to dynamic work environments and contributing effectively to organizational and social development.

RESULTS

Presentation of Data

The documentary analysis of 120 curricula reveals limited and fragmented incorporation of content on public procurement in Peruvian university education. The quantitative results show that only 28 academic programs (23.3%) include specific content related to government procurement, with

Professional Career	Total Programs	With CP Content	Percentage
Administration	42	15	35.7
Law	30	8	26.7
Economics	24	3	12.5
Industrial Engineering	14	2	14.3
Accounting	10	0	0.0
Total	120	28	23.3

Table 1 Incorporation of content on public procurement by professional career

Teaching Public Procurement as a Transversal Competence in Peruvian University Education: proposal for training efficient public managers

Article 7

significant variations depending on the type of institution and professional career.

The most common form of incorporation is thematic modules within general public management courses (64.3%), followed by specialized elective courses (28.6%) and specific compulsory courses (7.1%). The average workload assigned is 24 academic hours, which 78% of the teachers interviewed consider insufficient.

Competencies Identified by Public Sector Professionals

Interviews with graduates identified a set of priority competencies required for efficient performance in public procurement. The analysis reveals convergence in the identification of technical, methodological, and social competencies as fundamental elements for successful professional practice.

Teachers' perceptions of curriculum incorporation

Interviews with university teachers revealed favorable attitudes toward the incorporation of content on public procurement, although multiple barriers to its effective implementation were identified. The thematic analysis identified five main categories of perceptions.

Category 1 – Educational Relevance

Teachers unanimously recognize the importance of training competent professionals in public procurement. As one interviewee pointed out: "It is essential that our graduates understand these processes because, regardless of their specialty, they will interact with the government in some way" (Teacher 23, Public University).

Category 2 – Institutional Barriers

Structural limitations were identified that hinder curriculum incorporation, including rigid curricula, budget constraints, and resistance to institutional change. One teacher said: "We are interested, but changing curricula requires long and complex processes that sometimes discourage innovation" (Teacher 31, Private University).

Category 3 – Teacher Training Needs

Participants recognize limitations in their own specialized training in public procurement, identifying needs for updating and training. As one interviewee indicates: "We first need to prepare ourselves to be able to teach this content with technical competence" (Teacher 18, Public University).

Competency	Frequency of Mention	Level of Importance (1-5)
Regulatory Interpretation	58/60 (96.7%)	4.8
Process planning	55/60 (91.7%)	4.6
Economic and financial analysis	52/60 (86.7%)	4.4
Risk management	49/60 (81.7%)	4.3
Technical communication	47/60 (78.3%)	4.2
Specialized negotiation	44/60 (73.3%)	4.0
Use of digital technologies	42/60 (70.0%)	3.9

Table 2 Incorporation of public procurement content by professional career

Article 7

Relevant International Experiences

The review of international experiences identified successful models for incorporating public procurement content into curricula, particularly in countries with education systems similar to Peru's.

Chilean model: Since 2019, the University of Chile has implemented a cross-cutting training program in public procurement that benefits students from multiple degree programs. The results show a significant improvement in the employability of graduates in the public sector and a reduction in job adaptation times.

Colombian model: Colombian universities have developed strategic alliances with Colombia Compra Eficiente to design up-to-date and relevant curriculum content. This collaboration has generated a bank of practical cases and specific teaching methodologies for teaching public procurement.

Designed Curriculum Proposal

Based on empirical findings, a modular curriculum proposal was designed that integrates the technical, methodological, and social skills required for efficient public procurement management.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Results

The findings of this research confirm the existence of a significant gap between current university education and the skills required for efficient public procurement management in Peru. The low inclusion of these skills in the curriculum (23.3%) contrasts sharply with the high value that professionals in the sector place on them (89% consider them essential), highlighting a problematic disconnect between higher education and the public labor market.

The concentration of content in administration programs (35.7%) is understandable but insufficient, considering that professionals from various disciplines participate in public procurement processes. The total absence in accounting programs is particularly worrying, given the fundamental role of these professionals in the financial management of public contracts.

The results coincide with previous research by Silva-Rodriguez (2023) in Chile, who identified similar patterns of educational disconnect in Latin American education

Module	Main Contents	Academic Hours	Modality
I. Fundamentals Regulations	Legal framework, principles, types of processes	32	In-person
II. Planning and Scheduling	Annual plan, market studies, technical files	28	Blended learning
III. Implementation of Processes	Call for applications, evaluation, award	36	In person
IV. Contract management	Supervision, modifications, settlement	24	Blended
Total		120	Blended

Table 3 Modular structure of the curriculum proposal

systems. However, the levels of curricular incorporation in Peru (23.3%) are lower than those reported in Chile (41%) and Colombia (38%), suggesting a relative delay in curricular adaptation to public sector demands.

Implications Theoretical

Implications

The findings provide empirical evidence that strengthens the Theory of Professional Competencies in the specific context of Peruvian public administration. The identification of specific required competencies (regulatory interpretation, process planning, economic-financial analysis) confirms the complex and multidimensional nature of contemporary professional competencies, which transcend specific technical knowledge to integrate methodological and social skills.

The research also contributes to the development of the Transversal University Training Model, demonstrating that public procurement is indeed a relevant transversal competency for multiple disciplines. The demand identified among professionals in administration, accounting, law, economics, and engineering confirms the interdisciplinary nature of this competency.

Practical Implications

The proposed curriculum offers a concrete operational framework for the systematic incorporation of public procurement content into Peruvian university education. Its modular structure allows for flexible adaptation to different institutional and disciplinary contexts, facilitating gradual implementation without requiring radical curricular changes.

The identification of priority competencies provides specific guidance for the design of learning objectives, teaching methodologies, and assessment systems. These findings can inform not only initial university training, but also continuing education programs for practicing professionals.

The international experiences analyzed offer proven models that can be adapted to the Peruvian context, minimizing implementation risks and leveraging lessons learned in similar systems.

Limitations

This research has limitations that must be considered when interpreting the results. First, purposive sampling, although methodologically appropriate for exploratory studies, limits the generalization of findings to all Peruvian universities. The inclusion of 120 academic programs, while representing a considerable sample, does not constitute an exhaustive census.

Second, the research focused on universities located in Lima and other major cities in the country, potentially underrepresenting the realities of regional universities with different characteristics. This geographical limitation may affect the comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon studied.

Third, the data collection period (January-April 2025) coincided with curricular reorganization processes at several universities, which may have influenced the availability of updated information and the participation of faculty members in the interviews.

Teaching Public Procurement as a Transversal Competence in Peruvian University Education: proposal for training efficient public managers

Article 7

Recommendations for future research:

It is suggested that longitudinal studies be conducted to assess the impact of implementing public procurement content on the professional performance of graduates. These studies could use quasi-experimental designs comparing cohorts of students who receive specialized training with control groups.

It is also important to conduct specific research on the most effective teaching methodologies for public procurement, considering the particularities of this discipline, which combines legal, economic, and technical elements.

More comprehensive international comparative studies could identify global best practices in public procurement training, providing reference frameworks for the continuous improvement of curriculum proposals.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms the imperative need to incorporate public procurement teaching as a cross-cutting skill in Peruvian university education. The findings reveal a significant gap between current training and the demands of the public sector, requiring systematic and well-founded curricular interventions.

The proposed modular curriculum is a viable alternative for addressing this problem, integrating the technical, methodological, and social competencies required for the efficient management of government procurement. Its implementation would contribute significantly to the training of more competent public managers, positi-vely impacting the quality of public spending and the provision of citizen services.

The results of this research transcend the specific academic sphere, providing relevant inputs for public policies on higher education, state modernization, and capacity building in the Peruvian public sector. Coordination between universities and the state emerges as a fundamental element for the success of these initiatives.

The successful implementation of this proposal requires institutional commitment, investment in teacher training, and the establishment of strategic alliances with state entities. Only through a comprehensive and collaborative approach will it be possible to train the efficient public managers that contemporary Peru demands.

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Teaching Public Procurement as a Transversal Competence in Peruvian University Education: proposal for training efficient public managers

Article 7