



# Public participation in the government purchase of public services research

Feiyang Li<sup>1\*</sup>, Li Ma<sup>2</sup>

Harbin University of Commerce, Harbin, China

\*li46feiyang@qq.com

**Abstract.** In the process of government purchase of public services, the public, as the main participant, is playing an increasingly important role. At present, the government is faced with the dilemma of low public participation willingness, the government service concept has not been completely changed, the public lacks the right to know and the lack of public supervision. In order to enable the public to better participate in the government purchase of public services, it is necessary to improve the awareness and ability of public participation, actively transform to a service-oriented government, fully give the public the right to know and choice, improve the supervision mechanism of government purchase service and improve the evaluation system of public service quality.

**Keywords:** public participation; government purchase of public services; service-oriented government

## 1 Introduction

In the late 1970s, due to the disadvantages of Keynesianism, European and American countries led to the continuous expansion of government functions, the lack of dynamism of the market, the rigidity of bureaucracy and other problems, which made the western governments face a serious financial crisis and provide inefficient public services. In search of change, a new public administration movement began, from which the government purchased public services. "Government procurement" is to entrust the public affairs directly supplied by the government and the affairs of performing their duties to qualified institutions in a market-oriented manner and procedure, and to be borne by them in accordance with the contract. The management of government procurement is government procurement, contract management, performance evaluation, information disclosure. In promoting the construction of service-oriented government and improving China's public financial system, government procurement will be an effective public service supply model. China's government procurement system began in Shanghai in the 1990s and developed rapidly. On July 31, 2013, the State Council specially organized a symposium on government procurement, which shows that our country has formally incorporated the work of government procurement into a global scope. Especially after the 18th National Congress, with the reform and opening

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up, the system and platform of local government procurement at all levels have gradually formed, and the corresponding system has been continuously improved. The government's purchase of public services reduces the government's financial investment and risk, which is conducive to promoting the efficiency of non-profit organizations<sup>[1]</sup>. The public is the main object and participant of government procurement and the provision of public services. The basic goal of government procurement of public goods is to satisfy the public and improve the quality of public services. Therefore, the government must have the participation of citizens to purchase public services, so as to improve the government's public service ability.

## **2 Dildilemma in public participation in government purchases of public services**

### **2.1 Low willingness of the public to participate in the government to purchase public services**

There are three reasons for the low willingness of public participation in government purchase of public services. In the first aspect, public participation in government purchase of public services is mainly concentrated in the two stages of public service supply and evaluation. There is little participation in the purchase stage of public services. It is difficult to respond to the needs of the public. The supply of public services is also difficult to meet the public 's requirements, disappointing the public, resulting in poor quality of public services provided and reduced willingness of public participation. Second, due to the different needs of the public, it is difficult to reach an agreement on the choice of public services, which will cause some of the public 's needs not to be met, thus losing confidence in the government 's purchase of public services and reluctant to participate. Third, the public will be affected by their own factors, such as education, cognition, economy and other factors. The public 's awareness and ability to participate in the government 's purchase of public services are insufficient, and they are accustomed to passively accepting public services provided by the government, lacking enthusiasm and initiative.

### **2.2 The concept of service-oriented government has not been completely changed**

Due to the influence of the government functions in the planned economy period, the government is used to the one-way administrative supply. The government will purchase public services due to the departmental preference and administrative preference, and lack the effective organization of the citizen's participation. There is little public participation in the purchase process, so it is difficult to transform the service demand into policy requirements. In the stage of public service purchase, the government does not pay much attention to the public's participation in government purchase of public services, and the degree of soliciting public demand for public services is low, which

ultimately leads to the lack of the public's demand for service in the process of policy making, which affects the quality and efficiency of public service supply.

### **2.3 The public lacks the right to know at the stage of government purchase of public services**

In the process of purchasing public services, the government only discloses the contents and results of the purchase of public services, but is insufficient in the link of information disclosure of public service selection and procurement. The information on the use of funds, service content and supply enterprises related to government purchase cannot be open and transparent, and the public service information obtained by the public is relatively limited, which limits the public's right to know to participate. Due to the low political literacy of citizens and the insufficient ability to negotiate with the government, they have little policy information and cannot obtain timely and complete public service supply information.

### **2.4 Lack of public supervision in the supply stage of public services**

Due to the introduction of market competition mechanism in the supply of public services, the market mechanism emphasizes the pursuit of benefits, while the market competition aims at pursuing profits and lacks public welfare. The government chooses public service supply enterprises through public bidding. Enterprises participating in bidding competition include both state-owned enterprises and private enterprises. After successful bidding, private enterprises have become public service supply enterprises purchased by the government. There is an information asymmetry between the government and the service provider, and when it is difficult to define the quality in advance and observe it after the fact, the contractor will pass the buck or reduce the quality to maintain its own costs<sup>[2]</sup>. Private enterprises have become public service supply enterprises, so that these private enterprises have a certain degree of public welfare, but enterprises are not non-profit organizations, for the purpose of profit. In the process of public service production and supply, enterprises will reduce costs in the absence of the supervision of the government and the public, which leads to lower the quality of public services and cause public distrust. At present, the lack of public participation in the government purchase of public services makes the lack of public supervision in the purchase of public services, which affects the optimization of public service purchase policy. In the stage of public service supply, the government is mainly responsible for the supervision, and the public supervision and feedback are insufficient, which affects the supply quality of public service supply and the later adjustment.

### **3 Countermeasures for public participation in government purchase of public services**

#### **3.1 Raise the awareness and ability of public participation**

First of all, we should enhance the awareness of public participation and awaken the action consciousness of public participation in the purchase of public services. By enhancing the depth, initiative and organization of participation, we can improve the influence and attention of public participation, promote the government to improve its responsiveness, strengthen the adjustment and improvement of services, and finally improve the effectiveness of the government's purchase of public services<sup>[3]</sup>. Secondly, we should strengthen the training related to public participation in government purchase of public services, so as to enhance the citizens' ability to participate in the discussion of state affairs. Finally, the public should take the initiative to participate in the whole link of the government's purchase of public services, timely grasp the information of public service supply and give feedback to the government. Promote the expression of public demands for public services and the government's response to public needs.

#### **3.2 Actively transforming to a service-oriented government and giving appropriate empowerment to other participants**

The government purchase of public services is an effective way to give full play to the market and social resources and play a role in achieving better supply of public services. It is also an objective need to promote the transformation of government functions and build an efficient service-oriented government. At present, we are accelerating the transformation to service administration. The content, scope, quantity and quality of services are gradually improving, and the sense of security and satisfaction of the people and society continue to increase. The cooperation between the government and society in the field of public services needs to be achieved through the active participation of social forces. Government procurement of public services can optimize resource allocation and facilitate the use of evidence-based decision-making<sup>[4]</sup>. Therefore, the government should give appropriate power to other participants in the purchase of public services and production and supply. Government procurement services should timely, actively and effectively respond to the public's demands, and improve the public's satisfaction and recognition of government services<sup>[5]</sup>. After the introduction of public services into the market mechanism, the government should give the public the choice of public service, and the right of production and supply to the market enterprises with the ability to produce and provide services, and play a leading role in the whole purchasing stage, selecting public services and selecting appropriate production and supply enterprises according to the public needs.

### **3.3 Fully give the public's right to know and choose, and establish a whole-process information disclosure system**

The government must have the public participation in the purchase of public services. First of all, the public should be fully given the right to know and choose, so that the public can timely understand the public service information, choose appropriate public services, and the government should timely respond to and adjust the opinions of the public. Secondly, the whole-process information disclosure system should be established to give the public a full right to know, and make the information open and transparent. Let the public directly feel the process of public service supply, and improve the public's willingness to participate. Finally, we should clarify the right of the public to participate in the purchase of public services at the legal level, give the legitimacy of public participation, prevent the absence of public participation, and effectively protect the legitimate rights and interests of the public.

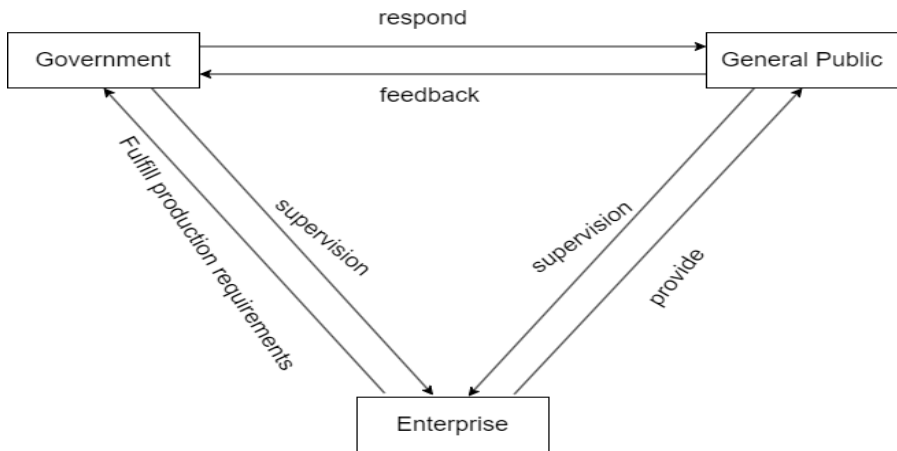
### **3.4 Improve the supervision mechanism for government purchase of services and improve the evaluation system of public service quality.**

In order to enable the government to provide public services with high quality and efficiency, it is necessary to strengthen the supervision of the government and the public on production and supply enterprises. It is necessary to establish a whole-process, multi-subject and dynamic circular regulatory system to meet the continuous improvement of public services, meet the needs of the public and respond to public concerns, so as to improve the supply efficiency of public goods<sup>[6]</sup>. First of all, we should improve the supervision mechanism of government purchase of public services. The government should strictly require the quality of public services to ensure that production and supply enterprises can provide high-quality public services. As a supply enterprise of public services, it should comply with the requirements of the government and the public for the quality of public services while pursuing interests and efficiency. Secondly, we should improve the public service evaluation system. In the stage of public service supply, the government and the public should evaluate the enterprises. After experiencing the quality of public service, the public should give feedback to the government in time, and the government should respond quickly according to the public feedback and make adjustments. For enterprises that supply high-quality public services, the government can cooperate with the enterprise for a long time. For enterprises that supply low-quality public services, the government should punish the enterprise and enhance the efficiency and democracy of the government's purchase of public services.

## **4 Conclusions**

Public participation can not only promote the efficiency of government public service procurement, but also promote the construction of service-oriented government. In the whole process of purchasing, producing and providing public services, the government, the public and enterprises, as the three main participants, should closely cooperate and cooperate together. As shown in Figure 1, in the production and provision of public

services, enterprises should fulfill their production responsibilities according to the service requirements of the public and the government. The government and the public, as the subject of supervision, should pay attention to and supervise the production links of enterprises, so as to prevent enterprises from reducing their service quality driven by interests. In the process of public service supply, the public should give feedback to the government and put forward their opinions according to the quality of public service, while the government should make timely responses and adjustments according to the feedback from the public. Finally, the government will assess the quality of service of enterprises, and then implement rewards or penalties. In order to speed up the construction of a service-oriented government, we must let the public participate more in public affairs, and then transform to a service-oriented government.



**Fig. 1.** The supervision mechanism of government purchase of public services

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