

Exploring the Perceived Inequities and Potential Reforms in Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development: A Qualitative Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Zimbabwe

¹Nhlanhla Moyamoya, ²Julius Tapera*

¹ZB Bank Limited, Zimbabwe

²Lupane State University, Zimbabwe

*juliustapera@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: Dr Julius Tapera

Abstract: Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are an essential tool for mobilizing private investment and expertise to address infrastructure shortfalls globally, especially in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. However, the public sector is frequently harmed and citizens are burdened by Zimbabwe's current PPP frameworks, which calls for an analysis of the financial dynamics and consequences for equity. The purpose of this study is to investigate perceived inequities in Zimbabwe's PPP arrangements. Research gaps include inadequate attention to comprehensively explore perceived inequities and socio-economic impacts across sectors beyond transport, such as energy and healthcare, and a lack of focused, in-depth qualitative analysis of stakeholder perspectives specific to Zimbabwe, particularly from affected communities and local officials. The study adopts a descriptive and exploratory design, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions with a range of stakeholders. The data was analyzed using NVivo software and thematic analysis. The findings highlight the need for an in-depth qualitative understanding of stakeholder difficulties, demographic variety, and effects on development and financial well-being. While Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have improved infrastructure and local economic prospects, worries about financial strain on local governments, socioeconomic inequality, and environmental sustainability still exist. To promote transparency, justice, and more public benefit, recommendations for restructuring PPPs include equal risk sharing, more robust accountability systems, greater stakeholder participation, and giving priority to initiatives that benefit communities. These changes are necessary to guarantee that PPPs properly support Zimbabwe's aims for sustainable development and cater to the wide range of requirements of its populace.

Keywords: *Public-private partnerships, inequities, infrastructure development, reforms*

1. Introduction

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have played a significant role in alleviating infrastructure deficiencies worldwide, especially in developing nations. PPPs have been effectively implemented by nations including the UK, Canada, and Australia to improve infrastructure while dividing risks between the public and private sectors (Boardman, Greve, and Hodge, 2015). PPPs have become more widely used in Africa to address the continent's expanding infrastructure demands. This is evident in nations such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya which have built roads, hospitals, and energy projects by utilizing these partnerships (Kyei and Chan, 2016). Despite these initiatives, PPPs have had varying degrees of success in Africa, frequently hampered by issues including inadequate risk-sharing agreements, opaque regulations, and weak regulatory frameworks (Bloomfield, 2006). Projects that disproportionately benefit private investors at the expense of the general welfare have been the outcome of these difficulties. PPPs have emerged as a key tool for the development of infrastructure in many developing African nations, including Zimbabwe (Chilunjika, 2023). The goal of these partnerships is to improve public infrastructure projects by utilizing private capital, expertise, and efficiency. PPPs in Zimbabwe, however, have frequently faced criticism due to their unbalanced structures that prioritize private investors above public interests, raising expenses and burdens on the populace despite their possible advantages (Miraftab, 2004). PPPs in Zimbabwe need to be thoroughly examined and reformed to ensure that these partnerships effectively contribute to national development and public well-being. These criticisms have generated questions about the long-term sustainability and equality of PPPs (Masekesa, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to comprehend these processes to rethink PPP frameworks that are more equitable and advantageous to Zimbabwe's socioeconomic environment.

Statement of the Problem

Public-private partnerships as they currently exist in Zimbabwe frequently burden Zimbabwean citizens and disadvantage the public sector (Miraftab, 2004). The Beitbridge to Chirundu road project is a notable example

illustrating these concerns. It was awarded to Gieger International, a foreign entity, under a PPP model based on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) framework in 2016 and was initially valued at US\$2.7 billion. Nearly three years later, no construction had begun because the company was unable to secure the necessary funds (Maguwu, 2018). The tender was subsequently cancelled and the project is currently being completed for US\$1 billion by a local player who was directly chosen by the government (AIDDATA, 2017; Matabvu, 2019). This case illustrates the risks and financial difficulties associated with PPPs. The large decrease in the cost of building highways also begs the question of whether private investors stand to gain disproportionately at the expense of the state, other local construction companies, taxpayers, and project users in the future. These incidents highlight the necessity of closely examining the implications on equity and financial dynamics of PPP agreements. Furthermore, the difference in execution and cost between international and local stakeholders emphasizes the necessity of a thorough qualitative examination of stakeholder perceptions and experiences. To improve the effectiveness and fairness of PPPs that benefit Zimbabwe as a whole, this study aims to identify key problems and offer workable solutions by looking at the perspectives of various PPP players regarding the injustices within the current PPP frameworks.

Objectives of the Study

This study's main goal is to investigate and comprehend the perceived injustices in Zimbabwe's current PPP institutions. The study's specific objectives are:

- To evaluate the perceived injustices in Zimbabwe's current PPP arrangements.
- To determine, from the viewpoint of various stakeholders, the principal issues and challenges related to current PPP agreements.
- To evaluate how PPPs affect Zimbabwean citizens' possibilities for development and financial security.
- Investigating possible changes and tactics that might be used to reorganize PPPs to guarantee more equitable results and benefits to the general public.
- To offer suggestions to stakeholders and legislators on how to develop more equitable and balanced PPP frameworks.

Significance and relevance of the study

This study tackles a critical problem in Zimbabwe's infrastructure development, which makes it noteworthy. By highlighting perceived disparities within PPPs, the study establishes the structural defects impeding just and fair growth. Policymakers, investors, and the general public should find value in the findings because they offer insights into how PPPs might be redesigned to increase efficiency and fairness. Furthermore, the study's recommendations may influence frameworks and policies in the future, ensuring that PPPs enhance national development objectives and raise the standard of living for Zimbabweans.

Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited to investigating the views of parties engaged in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for the development of infrastructure in Zimbabwe, with particular emphasis on the transportation, energy, and healthcare sectors. It will focus on qualitative information obtained from government representatives, private investors, businesses who submitted bids, and members of the public that utilize these PPPs through focus group discussions and interviews. The technical evaluation of specific projects or the quantitative examination of financial data will not be covered by the research. Additionally, to guarantee relevance and up-to-date findings, the study will only include PPP projects that have been completed in the last ten years.

2. Literature Review

To identify the perceived injustices and possible reform paths, this review of related literature will critically analyze these two points of view while concentrating on the unique circumstances of Zimbabwe.

Theoretical Framework

The following theories offer a thorough comprehension of the dynamics involved in public-private partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure development. They emphasize the significance of coordinating interests, handling disputes, and upholding justice to establish partnerships that are both equitable and long-lasting.

Public Choice Theory

Developed by James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, the Public Choice Theory emphasizes the self-interested conduct of persons in the public sector and offers a framework for understanding how public decisions are formed (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962). The Public Choice Theory explains why government officials and private investors choose to structure partnerships in the setting of PPPs (Black, 2020). Private investors want to maximize profits, whereas government officials may pursue personal or political rewards. PPP agreements that favor private interests over public benefit may result from this. To establish equitable and fruitful partnerships, the idea emphasizes the necessity of procedures that align the interests of all parties.

Agency Theory

Introduced by Michael Jensen and William Meckling, agency theory investigates the conflicts that result from asymmetric information and different goals between principals (owners) and agents (managers) (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). The government serves as the principal in PPPs while private investors serve as agents, as captured by the Agency Theory (Wang and Liu, 2015). The idea clarifies how private investors could use informational advantages to bargain for conditions that favor them disproportionately, resulting in unfair consequences for the general public. Strong incentive programs and efficient oversight are necessary to reduce these conflicts and guarantee that PPPs advance the interests of the general public.

Stakeholder Theory

According to Freeman's Stakeholder Theory, businesses should take into account the interests of all parties involved in their decision-making processes (Freeman, 1984). When it comes to PPPs, the Stakeholder Theory recommends that all relevant parties—private investors, government agencies, and the general public—ought to have their concerns taken into consideration (Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Węgrzyn, 2019). PPPs can therefore be designed to balance advantages and avoid disparities, promoting a more inclusive approach and guaranteeing that the projects serve the general good rather than specific private interests.

Equity Theory

According to John Stacey Adams' (1965) Equity Theory, people should try to strike a balance between the inputs they provide and the results they receive in social transactions. The theory centers on the idea of fairness. By analyzing whether the distribution of advantages and responsibilities between the public and private sectors is equitable, the Equity Theory can be applied to PPPs to evaluate the fairness of the partnership structures. A partnership may be considered unfair if private investors profit disproportionately from their contributions while the general public pays disproportionately high costs. PPPs must be reformed to guarantee a more equitable distribution of risks and profits for them to be accepted and successful.

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework is set up to give readers a thorough grasp of the dynamics among different stakeholders and the ramifications that follow in Zimbabwe's socioeconomic and political environment. The framework encompasses multiple essential components, including stakeholders, perceived disparities, structural issues, and possible solutions. Within the larger framework of Zimbabwe's political and socioeconomic environment, these components interact. A thorough description of each component of the conceptual framework may be found below. The variables that comprise this research's conceptual framework are as follows:

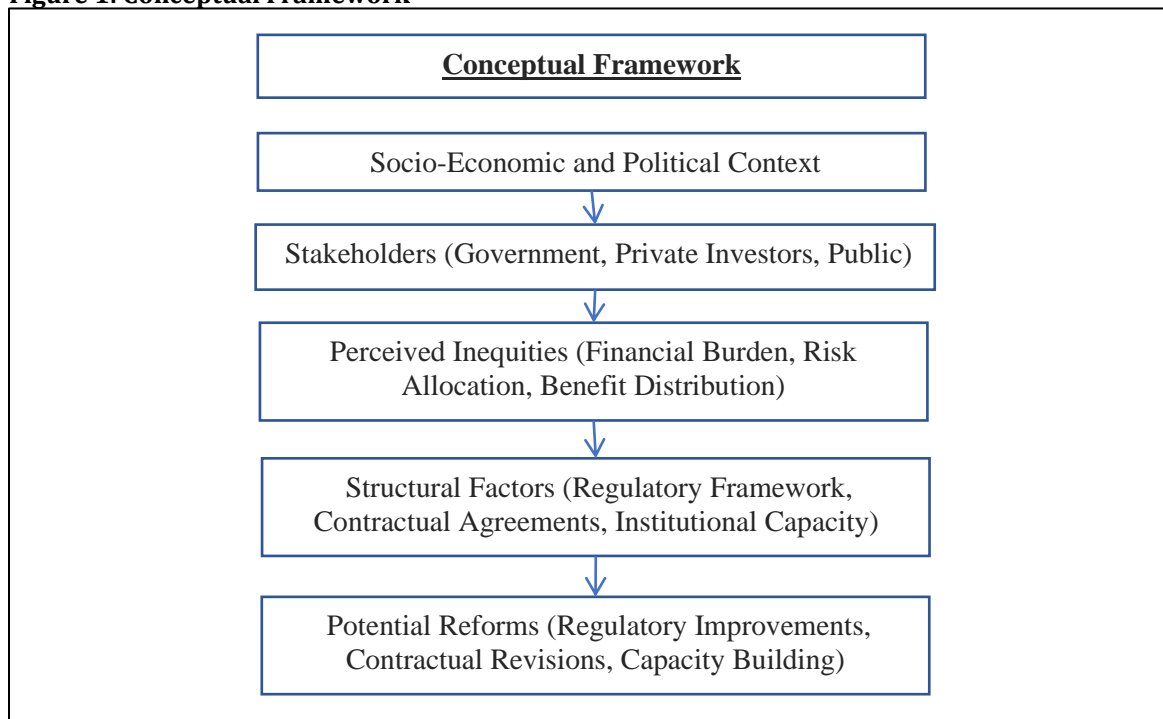
- i. The public, government, and private investors are among the stakeholders involved in PPPs, and each has distinct goals and objectives (Dyeyeva and Khmurova, 2018). The goals of the government are to gain political clout, promote economic expansion, and upgrade infrastructure. The goals of private investors are to reduce risks and maximize rewards. Tender-awarded companies strive to supply services, keep costs down, and fulfill deadlines. On the other hand, the public wants better infrastructure without having to pay too much.
- ii. Financial burden, risk allocation, and benefit distribution are all perceived as unfair in PPP frameworks, favoring private investors at the expense of the general public (He, Shi, and Li, 2021). High fees and costs, an unequal risk distribution for the project, and disproportionate rewards that benefit private investors are some examples of these imbalances.

iii. Public-private partnership (PPP) agreements are shaped and affected by structural elements (Brogaard, 2021). These elements include the contractual agreements, which show the bargaining power of private investors, and the regulatory environment, which might not include provisions for justice and transparency. Furthermore, the ability of government agencies to efficiently manage and supervise PPP projects is referred to as institutional capacity.

iv. According to Shen et al. (2016), reforms that have the potential to be implemented are meant to rectify perceived injustices and enhance the efficacy and fairness of PPPs. These include: strengthening capability, amending contracts, and streamlining regulations. Enhancement of regulations guarantees openness, responsibility, and fair risk distribution. While capacity building improves government entities' ability to successfully oversee and enforce PPP projects, contractual modifications create balanced agreements.

v. The socioeconomic and political environment of Zimbabwe influences how these elements interact. The success and fairness of PPPs are influenced by various factors, including social expectations, political dynamics, and economic instability.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Empirical Studies

Together, these empirical studies show how PPP frameworks are unfair and how changes are necessary to guarantee more equitable results in Zimbabwe.

The usefulness of PPPs in infrastructure projects in several African nations, including Zimbabwe, has been examined by Mutambatsere (2017). The analysis draws attention to the operational and financial advantages of PPPs, but it also exposes the disparities in risk-sharing and public financial obligations. According to Mutambara, PPPs frequently lead to higher service prices and cost overruns, which disproportionately impact the populace. Stronger regulatory frameworks are necessary to safeguard the public interest, as highlighted. The study offers a general picture, but it falls short of providing a concentrated, in-depth investigation of Zimbabwe-specific stakeholder perspectives, especially qualitative information from local officials and impacted populations.

In contrast, Vallé and Stucchi's (2024) study analyses the PPP frameworks in Zimbabwe and Nigeria,

highlighting issues that both countries face as well as possible changes. It highlights the differences between the gains made by the public sector and the rewards reaped by private investors. Public displeasure is captured in the study's substantial revelations regarding PPP agreements' accountability and transparency. The study calls for increased public involvement in PPP project design and implementation. Although the comparison method is useful, the study just briefly explores the subjective experiences and views of specific Zimbabwean stakeholders.

Nkomo and Nhema (2015) examine the financial aspects of PPPs in Zimbabwe, examining the economic ramifications and the difficulties in obtaining long-term funding for infrastructure projects. According to Nkomo and Nhema (2015), there is a mismatch between the interests of the general public and private investors' profit goals, which results in unfair outcomes. Better risk management techniques and financial changes are recommended by the report. The study focuses on financial opportunities and problems, but it does not examine stakeholder perspectives or provide qualitative information on perceived injustices.

Ittmann's (2017) analysis highlights concerns about justice and fairness and offers insights into the perspectives of many stakeholders involved in PPPs within the transportation industry. The study discovers that private investors frequently put profit ahead of the interests of the general public, making stakeholders—especially the public—feel excluded from the decision-making process. The study recommends enhancing transparency and boosting stakeholder participation. While providing insightful qualitative data on attitudes, the study only looks at the transportation industry; it leaves out other critical infrastructure sectors like electricity and healthcare.

Chilunjika (2023) assesses the total effect of PPPs, taking into account both achievements and shortcomings on the development of Zimbabwe's infrastructure. The report emphasizes that although PPPs have helped to enhance infrastructure, the gains have not been properly shared, with the general population frequently paying more and having less access to services. It suggests stronger regulatory control and extensive policy changes. The assessment is quantitative and lacks a comprehensive qualitative examination of the viewpoints of stakeholders or the particular injustices encountered by the general population.

Public-Private-Partnerships with the Zimbabwean Context

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a strategic approach to infrastructure development in Zimbabwe, aiming to bridge the funding gap and enhance service delivery. Despite their potential benefits, PPPs have raised concerns regarding inequities, accountability, and sustainability. Zimbabwe's PPP landscape is characterized by inadequate regulatory frameworks, limited institutional capacity, and insufficient stakeholder engagement (Ncube, 2019; Chirisa et al., 2019). The country's PPP policy framework, established in 2011, lacks clarity and coherence, leading to inconsistencies in implementation (Mushanyuri, 2018). Researchers emphasize the need for robust legal frameworks to ensure accountability and transparency (Chirisa et al., 2019; Ncube, 2019). For instance, a study by Bandauko et al. (2020) highlighted the significance of community participation to ensure project sustainability.

Zimbabwe's infrastructure sector faces significant challenges, including aging infrastructure, inadequate funding, and inefficient management (Mhlanga et al., 2020). PPPs have been proposed as a solution, particularly in the transportation, energy, and water sectors (Moyo et al., 2020). However, existing research primarily focuses on transportation infrastructure, neglecting other critical sectors (Gukurume, 2017). A study by Mushanyuri (2018) explored PPPs in Zimbabwe's water sector, revealing issues with project implementation and management. The Zimbabwean government has initiated efforts to promote PPPs, including establishing the Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency (ZIDA) and the Public-Private Partnership Unit (PPPU) (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2021). Researchers emphasize the importance of effective institutional frameworks in facilitating successful PPPs (Ncube, 2019; Chirisa et al., 2019). Community engagement and participation are crucial in ensuring project acceptance and sustainability (Bandauko et al., 2020; Gukurume, 2017).

To address perceived inequities, Zimbabwe requires tailored PPP approaches prioritizing transparency, accountability, and community engagement (Ncube, 2019). Collaborative research between academics, policymakers, and practitioners can inform evidence-based reforms. Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 1 (2021) emphasizes infrastructure development through PPPs, which underscores the research's

significance. Effective PPP implementation necessitates robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks (Chirisa, 2020). Zimbabwe lacks standardized monitoring and evaluation frameworks, thereby hindering the assessment of PPP effectiveness (Mhlanga et al., 2020). Researchers recommend developing context-specific monitoring frameworks to ensure PPP projects align with national development objectives.

Zimbabwe's socio-economic context presents unique challenges for PPP implementation. Economic instability, political uncertainty, and corruption pose significant risks (Mushanyuri, 2018). Researchers emphasize the need for PPP frameworks to address these contextual factors (Ncube, 2019). Future research should explore strategies mitigating these risks which, ensure that PPPs contribute meaningfully to Zimbabwe's development.

Research Gaps

Although the first study offers a comprehensive overview, it falls short of providing a targeted, in-depth investigation of Zimbabwe-specific stakeholder viewpoints, especially the qualitative information that local officials and impacted communities would need to contribute. This makes it harder to understand how various groups view and interact with PPP initiatives locally. The second study, while taking a comparative approach, falls short in exploring the qualitative experiences and perspectives of specific stakeholders in Zimbabwe, which are essential for placing PPP consequences in context. The third study covers financial issues, but it falls short of capturing the entire spectrum of socioeconomic effects by omitting a convincing investigation of stakeholder perspectives and qualitative data on perceived disparities. Furthermore, the fourth study only looks at the transportation sector, it ignores other important infrastructure sectors like electricity and healthcare, which are equally important for a comprehensive evaluation of the societal effects of PPPs. Last but not least, Chilunjika's quantitative evaluation method ignores the complex qualitative analysis required to comprehend stakeholder viewpoints and particular injustices faced by the general public, thus limiting the breadth of understanding regarding the human and community aspects of PPP implementations.

The existing literature on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Zimbabwe's infrastructure development highlights significant gaps, necessitating further research. Despite Zimbabwe's reliance on PPPs, studies focusing exclusively on the Zimbabwean context are scarce (Chirisa et al., 2019; Mushanyuri, 2018). This analysis identifies key research gaps. Institutional Frameworks and Policy: Research on Zimbabwe's PPP policy framework reveals inconsistencies and inadequacies (Ncube, 2019; Chirisa et al., 2019). Gaps exist in understanding institutional capacity, regulatory environments, and stakeholder engagement (Mhlanga et al., 2020). Studies have not adequately explored Zimbabwe's Public-Private Partnership Unit (PPPU) and Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency (ZIDA) roles (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2021). Future research should investigate the effectiveness of existing PPP institutional frameworks. Sector-Specific Research: Existing research primarily focuses on transportation infrastructure (Mhlanga et al., 2020). Other critical sectors, such as healthcare (Moyo et al., 2020), energy, and water (Mushanyuri, 2018), require attention. Sector-specific studies can identify unique challenges and opportunities. Research gaps exist regarding PPPs in Zimbabwe's social infrastructure, including education and housing. Community Engagement and Participation: Community engagement is crucial for PPP project acceptance and sustainability (Bandaiko et al., 2020; Gukurume, 2017).

However, research on community participation mechanisms and effectiveness in Zimbabwean PPPs is limited. Studies should explore community engagement strategies, benefits, and challenges. Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks: Zimbabwe lacks standardized monitoring and evaluation frameworks for PPPs (Chirisa, 2020). Research gaps exist regarding performance metrics, evaluation methodologies, and impact assessments. Developing context-specific monitoring frameworks can ensure PPP alignment with national development objectives. Socio-Economic Context: Zimbabwe's socio-economic context presents unique challenges, including economic instability, political uncertainty, and corruption (Mushanyuri, 2018). Research should investigate strategies for mitigating these risks. Exploring contextual factors' impact on PPP effectiveness can inform policy reforms.

3. Research Methodology

By offering in-depth qualitative insights into the experiences and viewpoints of many stakeholders, this research seeks to close the above-mentioned gaps and contribute to the development of more fair and efficient PPP frameworks.

Research Design

This study adopts an exploratory and descriptive research design to examine perceived injustices and possible changes to Zimbabwe's PPPs for infrastructure development. The intricacies and nuances of the diverse viewpoints of PPP stakeholders are well captured by this design which facilitates a comprehension of the obstacles and prospects for change.

Research Approach

The study uses a qualitative research methodology, which Denny and Weckesser (2022) say is suitable for examining stakeholders' experiences, views, and insights. This methodology enables a comprehensive analysis of the subjective elements of PPPs, encompassing the varying perspectives of stakeholders about disparities and the possible modifications they deem imperative. The richness of stakeholder perspectives, which is crucial for this study, can best be captured through qualitative methodologies (Denny and Weckesser, 2022).

Research Population

Various stakeholders involved in Zimbabwe's PPPs for infrastructure development were included in this study. Key government representatives shared their knowledge of regulatory obstacles, policy frameworks, and government viewpoints on PPP efficacy and equity. Their views on partnership structures, risk assessments, and motivations were presumably understood by private investors. Three companies that submitted bids for PPP projects also provided valuable insights into the phenomena under study. Three members of the general public were also interviewed to learn more about the expectations, worries, and societal impact of PPPs. The participant selection process aimed to guarantee diverse viewpoints, enhancing the authenticity and dependability of the results. Twelve participants were categorized into four roles: Government Officials (GO), responsible for policy formulation and implementation; Private Investors (PI), providing financial expertise; Company Representatives (CT), overseeing project execution; and General Public (GP) members, affected by PPP projects. This strategic purposive sampling approach ensured representation from various sectors, including transportation, energy, and healthcare, and geographic representation from urban and rural areas. By selecting participants with direct PPP experience, the study gathered rich, qualitative data, providing nuanced insights into Zimbabwe's PPP landscape.

Data Collection Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining semi-structured interviews and focus groups to gather comprehensive data (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including public officials, business investors, and community leaders. These interviews ensured coverage of essential topics while allowing flexibility to explore specific issues in-depth. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to share experiences, perceptions, and insights, providing rich qualitative data. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes were audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim.

Focus groups comprising community members facilitated collaborative exploration of shared concerns and experiences related to Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Moderated discussions encouraged active participation, fostering dynamic interactions among participants. Focus groups consisted of 8-12 participants, lasted 90 minutes, and were audio-recorded. Trained facilitators ensured open-ended questioning and active listening. Data collection continued until saturation was achieved, where no new themes emerged. This mixed-methods approach provided a nuanced understanding of stakeholder perspectives, enhancing validity and reliability.

Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with extensive expertise and experience in Zimbabwe's Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). This strategic approach ensured the selection of

information-rich cases thereby optimizing data quality. Participants included public servants directly involved in PPP projects, private sector executives managing PPP initiatives, and local leaders impacted by PPP projects. Criteria for selection comprised: (1) minimum 2 years experience in PPP-related roles; (2) direct involvement in PPP project planning, implementation, or evaluation; and (3) representation from diverse sectors (e.g., transportation, energy, healthcare).

Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis, a qualitative research methodology, was employed to identify, examine, and synthesize patterns within the collected data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This approach enabled the extraction of rich insights from stakeholder perspectives on perceived injustices and potential solutions. The analysis commenced with coding, where raw data was systematically categorized to reveal emergent themes and sub-themes. This iterative process involved continually refining and revising themes as new data emerged, ensuring a comprehensive understanding.

To facilitate meticulous data administration and analysis, NVivo software was utilized, providing a systematic framework for organizing and synthesizing findings. Coding processes involved assigning descriptive labels to segments of text, enabling pattern identification. Themes were subsequently grouped into categories, revealing relationships between perceived injustices and proposed solutions. Data interpretation focused on contextualizing themes within Zimbabwe's socio-economic landscape, considering factors influencing PPP effectiveness. By integrating empirical evidence with theoretical frameworks, the analysis provided nuanced insights into addressing inequities in Zimbabwe's PPP frameworks, informing evidence-based policy recommendations.

Procedures

A multi-phase approach was used to address the research questions. First, a review of the literature was done to place the study in the perspective of previous research. After that, focus groups and semi-structured interviews were held to gather primary data. To find important themes about perceived injustices and possible reforms, the data were transcribed and then thematically analyzed. Conclusions were drawn based on the findings and recommendations were informed by comparing the findings with the literature to establish similarities and differences. Throughout the research procedure, ethical principles such as informed consent and confidentiality were closely followed.

4. Findings of the Study

The research findings are presented in this section, using text and tables to highlight important information on examining and comprehending the apparent injustices in Zimbabwe's current PPP arrangements.

Demographics of Research Participants

The following data in Table 1 describes the characteristics of the participants involved in the research:

Table 1: Demographics of Research Participants

Code	Role	Age	Gender	PPPs Experience (years)
G01	Government Official	45	Male	10
G02	Government Official	52	Female	15
G03	Government Official	38	Male	8
PI1	Private Investor	50	Female	20
PI2	Private Investor	42	Male	12
PI3	Private Investor	36	Female	7
CT1	Company Representative	48	Male	14
CT2	Company Representative	40	Female	10
CT3	Company Representative	35	Male	5

GP1	General Public	30	Female	2
GP2	General Public	25	Male	1
GP3	General Public	28	Female	3
Total				107

This dataset includes 12 groups of participants categorized by their roles: Government Officials (GO), Private Investors (PI), Company Representatives (CT), and members of the General Public (GP). The participants' ages ranged from 25 to 52 years, reflecting a broad representation of different age groups. Their experience with Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) varies from 1 to 20 years, providing a spectrum of insights from both novices and seasoned professionals. Government Officials and Private Investors generally have more years of experience compared to Company Representatives and the General Public. This diverse dataset facilitates a comprehensive analysis of perspectives on PPPs across different roles, ages, genders, and experience levels.

The findings reveal significant disparities in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) experience among stakeholders ranging from 1 to 20 years, providing a spectrum of insights from both novices and seasoned professionals. Government Officials (GO) and Private Investors (PI) possess substantially more experience (10-20 years) compared to Company Representatives (CT) and the General Public (GP) (1-7 years) (GO1, GO2, PI1, PI2). This means Government Officials and Private Investors generally have more years of experience compared to Company Representatives and the General Public. This experience gap underscores perceived inequities in PPP decision-making processes, echoing concerns raised by scholars (Chirisa et al., 2019; Mushanyuri, 2018). For instance, GO1 emphasized the importance of community engagement, while GP1 highlighted limited access to information. These divergent perspectives suggest that PPP reforms should prioritize stakeholder capacity-building and inclusive decision-making (Ncube, 2019). This diverse dataset facilitates a comprehensive analysis of perspectives on PPPs across different roles, ages, genders, and experience levels.

The findings also indicate gender disparities in PPP experience, with female participants (GO2, PI1, CT2, GP1) generally having fewer years of experience. This echoes concerns raised by researchers regarding gender inequities in infrastructure development (Gukurume, 2017; Moyo et al., 2020). To address this, reforms should prioritize gender-sensitive capacity building and inclusive decision-making processes. Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 1 (2021) emphasizes gender mainstreaming in development projects. Effective implementation of such strategies can enhance PPP equity and socio-economic impacts (Chirisa et al., 2019; Ncube, 2019).

Perceived Inequities in Current PPP Structures in Zimbabwe

The thematic analysis tables below synthesize perspectives from diverse stakeholders in Zimbabwe's PPP sector, revealing widespread concerns about inequities in benefit distribution and risk allocation. Government officials, private investors, companies awarded tenders, and the general public highlighted disparities in accessing PPP opportunities, influenced by factors such as gender, organizational size, and socioeconomic status. These insights underscore the complexity of challenges within current PPP structures and emphasize the need for targeted reforms to enhance fairness and transparency in future projects.

Table 2: Inequities in Current PPP Structures in Zimbabwe

Super-ordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes	Description of Theme	Quotations
Inequitable Benefit Distribution	Unequal distribution of economic benefits	Government officials perceive that PPP projects often result in unequal distribution of economic gains, favoring private partners over public interests.	"Private investors seem to reap substantial profits from PPP projects while public benefits are less evident." (Government Officials)

	Limited access to decision-making	Officials feel marginalized in key decision-making processes, leading to unequal power over project outcomes.	"Decisions regarding PPP project priorities are often made without adequate consultation with government stakeholders." (Government Officials)
Access and Opportunity	Access to project information	Private investors express concerns over limited access to comprehensive project details, affecting their ability to make informed investment decisions.	"Critical project information such as financial projections and risks are often not disclosed adequately." (Private Investors)
	Barriers to entry	Investors perceive bureaucratic hurdles and opaque tender processes as barriers that favor established firms, limiting fair competition.	"The tender process seems to favor companies with political connections and large financial reserves." (Private Investors)
Transparency	Lack of transparency	Companies note a lack of transparency in contract negotiations and project execution, leading to suspicions of favoritism and corruption.	"The awarding of tenders often lacks clarity, making it difficult to ascertain if decisions are based on merit." (Company Given a Tender)
	Accountability	Companies perceive a lack of accountability in PPP projects, with delays and cost overruns often blamed on unclear responsibilities.	"When issues arise, there is often a blame game between public and private partners, delaying project progress." (Company Given a Tender)
Social Equity	Unequal service delivery	The public identifies disparities in service quality across regions, with PPP projects benefiting urban areas more than rural communities.	"Infrastructure improvements from PPPs seem to bypass rural areas where they are most needed." (General Public)
	Affordability	Concerns are raised about the affordability of services provided through PPPs, often leading to the exclusion of low-income households.	"The cost of accessing newly privatized services is beyond the reach of many ordinary citizens." (General Public)

The thematic analysis highlights significant concerns about the unequal distribution of benefits and risks in Zimbabwe's Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Stakeholders from the government, private sector, businesses, and the public point to disparities in access to PPP opportunities, influenced by factors such as gender, company size, and socioeconomic status (Chirisa et al., 2019; Mushanyuri, 2018). These concerns align with findings in the literature which show that economic benefits in PPPs often favor private investors (Eberhard et al., 2019). For example, government officials feel that while private investors enjoy significant profits, the public benefits are less clear. This reflects Ncube's (2019) concerns about weak regulatory frameworks that enable unfair benefit distribution. On the other hand, some studies argue that PPPs can foster economic growth and infrastructure development (Moyo et al., 2020). Nevertheless, Zimbabwe's situation requires reforms specifically designed to address these inequalities.

The analysis also brings attention to social equity issues, such as unequal service delivery and affordability challenges (Gukurume, 2017). The general public observes that infrastructure projects tend to favor urban

areas, leaving rural communities underdeveloped. This mirrors findings in Mushanyuri's (2018) research on Zimbabwe's water sector, which highlights disparities in service distribution. Literature suggests that these inequalities can be addressed by more inclusive decision-making (Chirisa et al., 2019) and greater community engagement (Bandauko et al., 2020). Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 1 (2021) emphasizes the need for inclusive economic growth. To address these issues effectively, reforms could focus on building stakeholder capacity, ensuring transparency in decision-making, and conducting social impact assessments (Ncube, 2019). Case studies from South Africa's renewable energy IPP procurement program show the positive outcomes of successful stakeholder collaboration and fair benefit distribution (Eberhard et al., 2019).

Table 3: Perceptions of Benefit and Risk Distribution Disparities in Access to PPP Opportunities

Super-ordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes	Description of Theme	Quotations
Perceptions of Benefit and Risk Distribution	Economic Benefits	Officials perceive economic benefits from PPPs tend to favor private partners over public interests.	"Private investors often enjoy higher profit margins, while public benefits remain uncertain." Government Officials
	Risk allocation	Risks are disproportionately allocated to the government, potentially straining public finances.	"Governments bear most of the financial risks, which can strain public finances when projects face setbacks." Government Officials
	Profitability	PPPs offer potentially higher returns due to guaranteed revenue streams and government-backed contracts.	"Investors see PPPs as lucrative due to guaranteed revenue streams and government-backed contracts." Private Investors
	Risk-sharing agreements	Risk-sharing agreements in PPP contracts mitigate financial exposure compared to solely public-funded projects.	"Shared risks with public entities make PPPs more attractive despite initial investment challenges." Private Investors
	Contractual Obligations	Profitability hinges on favorable contract terms negotiated with public entities.	"Profitability hinges on favorable contract clauses such as payment schedules and performance incentives." Company Given a Tender
	Risk mitigation strategies	Companies employ diverse risk mitigation strategies to ensure financial stability throughout the project lifecycle.	"Effective risk management includes contingency plans for potential delays and cost overruns." Company Given a Tender
	Service Quality	Disparities in service quality across different communities affect public satisfaction with PPP projects.	"Urban areas often receive better-maintained infrastructure compared to rural regions under PPP schemes." General Public
	Affordability	Rising costs of privatized services pose financial challenges for low-income households.	"Rising costs of privatized services pose financial challenges for households already struggling with basic living expenses." General Public
	Disparities in Access to PPP Opportunities	Socio-economic Factors	Gender disparities exist in accessing PPP opportunities, with fewer women in decision-making roles.

Age and organizational capacity	Emerging professionals and smaller organizations face barriers in competing for PPP tenders.	"Smaller firms often struggle to meet the financial and technical requirements set by PPP project specifications." Government Officials
Financial Resources	Access to capital remains a critical barrier for smaller firms and start-ups.	"Start-ups struggle to secure financing for upfront project costs required in PPP bids." Private Investors
Market knowledge	Companies with prior experience and market knowledge have a competitive advantage in winning PPP tenders.	"Experienced firms leverage industry contacts and insights to navigate complex tender processes effectively." Private Investors
Size and Capability	Larger firms have an advantage in securing PPP contracts due to their financial capacity and project execution capabilities.	"Larger firms can absorb higher upfront costs and have established track records in delivering large-scale infrastructure projects." Company Given a Tender
Technological expertise	Firms with advanced technological capabilities are better positioned to meet PPP project requirements and innovate within project frameworks.	"Technological advancements play a crucial role in optimizing project performance and attracting future PPP opportunities." Company Given a Tender
Socioeconomic Factors	Socioeconomic status influences access to PPP benefits, with wealthier individuals having greater access to quality services.	"Low-income communities often face barriers in accessing services upgraded through PPP investments." General Public
Geographic location	Urban centers receive more attention in PPP investments, limiting rural communities access to essential infrastructure improvements.	"Rural areas struggle to attract PPP investments despite pressing infrastructure needs." General Public

Stakeholder Perspectives on Key Challenges and Concerns in Existing PPP Agreements

This thematic analysis table provides a structured overview of the main challenges and concerns associated with existing PPP agreements in Zimbabwe, as perceived by different stakeholders. Each theme is supported by relevant quotations that illustrate the perspectives and experiences of government officials, private investors, companies awarded tenders for PPP projects, and the general public.

Table 4: Thematic Analysis of Challenges and Concerns in PPP Agreements: Stakeholder Perspectives

Super-ordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes	Description of Theme	Quotations
Challenges in PPP Implementation	Operational Challenges	Challenges related to project delays, cost overruns, and technical complexities in PPP execution.	"One of the main challenges we face is the lengthy approval processes which delay project timelines significantly." - Government Official

Fairness and Transparency Concerns	Financial Challenges	Issues concerning funding gaps, budget constraints, and financial viability of PPP projects.	"Securing adequate financing remains a persistent challenge, often leading to compromises in project quality." - Private Investor
	Legal and Regulatory Challenges	Difficulties associated with navigating complex legal frameworks and inconsistent regulatory practices.	"The regulatory environment lacks clarity, leading to disputes and delays in project implementation." - Company Representative
	Transparency in Decision-Making	Concerns regarding the lack of openness and accountability in decision-making processes related to PPPs.	"Transparency is crucial; decisions on project allocations should be more inclusive and publicly accessible." - General Public Participant
	Equity in Risk Sharing	Issues related to unequal distribution of risks between public and private sectors, often favor private investors.	"The risk-sharing agreements heavily favor private investors, exposing the public to excessive financial liabilities." - Government Official
	Contractual Terms and Conditions	Criticisms about the fairness and clarity of contractual terms, including procurement practices and contract renegotiations.	"Contract terms are often skewed, with frequent amendments that disadvantage local businesses." - Company Representative

Challenges in PPP Implementation and Socio-Economic Impacts

Stakeholders have highlighted issues about the challenges involved in implementing PPPs, such as operational, financial, legal, and regulatory complexities, which align with findings in the literature on the difficulties faced by developing countries (Akintoye et al., 2020; Osei-Kyei et al., 2020). Government officials have highlighted the delays caused by lengthy approval processes, while private investors point to financing constraints, both of which highlight the need for more efficient regulatory frameworks and innovative financing solutions (Ahadzi et al., 2020). Effective reforms could include building stakeholder capacity, ensuring transparent decision-making, and conducting social impact assessments (Tchouamou Njoya et al., 2020; Ansah et al., 2020).

Fairness, Transparency, and Equity Concerns

Furthermore, the research findings raise concerns about fairness, transparency, and equity in PPP agreements, aligning with research that highlights the importance of inclusive decision-making and community involvement (Kwak et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2020). Stakeholders have expressed concerns about the unequal distribution of risks and contractual terms that disadvantage local businesses, underscoring the need for more equitable PPP frameworks (Osei-Kyei et al., 2020; Alfen et al., 2020). To address these issues, Zimbabwe's PPP reforms should focus on transparency, accountability, and socio-economic equity; incorporating stakeholder forums, capacity-building initiatives, and social impact assessments.

Impact of PPPs on Financial Well-being and Development Prospects of Zimbabwean Citizens

The following table allows for a more detailed analysis of the impacts of PPP projects on financial well-being, development prospects, and various other dimensions relevant to Zimbabwean citizens and stakeholders.

Table 5: Impact of PPP Projects on Financial Well-being and Development Prospects in Zimbabwe

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate themes	Description of theme	Quotations
Impact of PPP Projects on Financial Well-being and Development Prospects in Zimbabwe	Financial obligations and economic opportunities for local communities	Examining how PPP projects impact local finances and economic prospects.	"PPP projects have increased local employment and income levels, benefiting our community." - Local Resident
		Assessing any additional financial burdens imposed on local governments.	"The maintenance costs of the new infrastructure are straining our municipal budget." - Government Official
	Socio-economic impacts on marginalized groups	Analyzing whether PPP projects have addressed or exacerbated inequalities.	"The new housing project under PPP has improved living conditions for low-income families." - Social Worker
	Environmental sustainability of infrastructure developments	Evaluating the ecological impact of PPP-funded projects.	"The new renewable energy plant has reduced our carbon footprint, promoting sustainable development." - Environmental Activist
	Public perception & community engagement	Exploring how PPP projects are perceived and engaged with by the community.	"There was insufficient public consultation regarding the new development, leading to community discontent." - Community Leader
	Long-term sustainability & maintenance of infrastructure	Assessing the sustainability of PPP projects beyond initial construction.	"Ensuring adequate funding for maintenance is crucial to the longevity of these infrastructure projects." - Infrastructure Planner

Financial Well-being and Socio-Economic Impacts

The findings reveal a mixed impact of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) on Zimbabwe's financial well-being and development prospects. While some PPP projects have contributed to higher local employment and income (Manyika et al., 2018), they have also placed additional financial strain on local governments (Kwak et al., 2018). The socio-economic effects on marginalized groups are varied, with some projects helping to reduce inequalities (UNDP, 2020), while others may have worsened them (World Bank, 2018). Research suggests that targeted interventions are necessary to ensure that PPPs benefit underserved communities (OECD, 2019). Case studies from South Africa's renewable energy IPP procurement program highlight successful community involvement and fair distribution of benefits (Eberhard et al., 2019).

Environmental Sustainability and Long-term Maintenance

The findings also raise concerns about the environmental sustainability and long-term upkeep of infrastructure funded through PPPs. Stakeholders stress the importance of considering ecological factors (UN Environment, 2020) and ensuring sufficient funding for ongoing maintenance (Asian Development Bank, 2019). Research highlights the need for a holistic approach that addresses both socio-economic and environmental impacts (World Health Organization, 2019). To achieve sustainable development, PPP reforms should prioritize transparency, accountability, and active community engagement (Transparency International, 2020). Thus, Zimbabwe's PPP framework must include environmental impact assessments and strategies for long-term maintenance.

Potential Reforms and Strategies for Restructuring PPPs

This structured approach examines reforms and strategies for restructuring PPPs in Zimbabwe, emphasizing fairness, transparency, and public benefit. It integrates perspectives and recommendations from diverse

stakeholders involved in PPP projects. The strategic focus is on maximizing public value, strengthening oversight, and ensuring financial sustainability, aiming to enhance the contribution of PPPs to national development objectives while protecting public interests and resources.

Table 6: Reforms and strategies for restructuring PPPs in Zimbabwe

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate themes	Description of theme	Quotations
Reforms and Strategies for Restructuring PPPs in Zimbabwe	Equity in PPP agreements	Discussing necessary reforms to ensure equitable distribution of risks and benefits.	"We need clearer guidelines on risk allocation to avoid disproportionate burdens on public finances." - Government Official
	Transparency and accountability mechanisms	Suggesting strategies to enhance project oversight and accountability.	"Regular audits and public reporting are crucial to maintaining trust and ensuring PPP funds are used effectively." - Auditor
	Stakeholder participation and engagement	Exploring ways to increase public and stakeholder involvement in PPP decision-making.	"Consultative forums should be mandatory to gather community input and address concerns early in the project cycle." - Community Representative
Restructuring PPPs for Government and Public Benefit in Zimbabwe	Maximizing public value and benefits	Discussing ways to ensure PPP projects deliver substantial public goods and services.	"PPP agreements should prioritize projects that directly improve public infrastructure and services, such as healthcare and education." - Government Official
	Enhancing government oversight and control	Exploring measures to strengthen regulatory frameworks and improve project monitoring.	"The government should have greater involvement in project planning and implementation to safeguard public interests." - Policy Analyst
	Ensuring financial sustainability	Analyzing methods to mitigate financial risks and ensure long-term project viability.	"PPP contracts should include provisions for lifecycle cost assessments and funding mechanisms for maintenance." - Financial Advisor

Restructuring Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Restructuring Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Zimbabwe requires a strong focus on equity, transparency, and accountability. Clear guidelines on risk allocation are essential to prevent undue financial strain on public resources. Regular audits, public reporting, and consultative forums can help ensure community concerns are addressed early in the project lifecycle while promoting openness and trust. Research highlights the importance of robust transparency and accountability measures in building confidence and ensuring funds are used effectively (Kwak et al., 2018; OECD, 2019). A notable example is South Africa's renewable energy IPP procurement program, which showcases the benefits of effective stakeholder collaboration and fair distribution of outcomes (Eberhard et al., 2019).

Maximising public value and benefits

To ensure maximum public value and benefit, PPP agreements should focus on projects that improve essential infrastructure and services, such as healthcare and education. Strengthening government oversight through robust regulatory frameworks and thorough project monitoring is crucial (Manyika et al., 2018; UNDP, 2020). Including lifecycle cost assessments and dedicated funding mechanisms for maintenance in PPP contracts is key to maintaining financial sustainability. Examples from Zimbabwe's health sector show how well-structured PPPs can enhance service delivery and outcomes (MEFMI, 2022). Reforms must carefully balance socio-economic and environmental factors, always prioritizing public interests and resources (World Bank, 2018; Transparency International, 2020).

Recommendations for Creating Balanced and Equitable PPP Frameworks

This thematic analysis table offers structured recommendations from diverse stakeholders for creating more balanced and equitable PPP frameworks in Zimbabwe. It focuses on policy improvements and stakeholder actions to enhance public benefits and equity, aiming to foster better outcomes and accountability in PPP projects. By incorporating perspectives from government officials, private investors, companies awarded tenders, and the general public, the table provides a comprehensive view that promotes transparency, fairness, and greater public benefit in future PPP projects.

Table 7: Recommendations for Creating Balanced and Equitable PPP Frameworks in Zimbabwe

Super-ordinate theme	Subordinate themes	Description of theme	of Quotations
Recommendations for Creating Balanced and Equitable Frameworks in Zimbabwe	Policy recommendations for policymakers	Suggestions to policymakers for improving fairness and effectiveness of PPP agreements.	"Policymakers should prioritize clear and balanced risk allocation in PPP contracts to avoid undue financial burdens on the public sector." - Government Official
	Measures for stakeholders to enhance public benefits and equity	Strategies for stakeholders to maximize public benefits and minimize inequities in PPP projects.	"Private investors should commit to transparent project planning and robust community engagement to ensure local needs are met." - Private Investor
	Perspectives from companies given tenders	Insights and opinions from companies involved in PPP projects on improving PPP frameworks.	"As a company involved in PPPs, we believe in stronger regulatory oversight and fairer bidding processes to foster competition and drive down costs." - Company Representative
	Perspectives from the general public	Insights and opinions from the general public on improving PPP frameworks.	"The public expects PPP projects to deliver tangible benefits like improved services and infrastructure without compromising affordability and accessibility." - Concerned Citizen

Balanced PPP Frameworks and Socio-Economic Impacts

Stakeholders agree on the importance of creating balanced and fair Public-Private Partnership (PPP) frameworks in Zimbabwe, with a focus on clear risk-sharing, transparency, and active community involvement (Kwak et al., 2018; OECD, 2019). Policymakers are urged to design PPP contracts that protect public interests, while private investors are expected to prioritize transparent project planning and meaningful community engagement (Manyika et al., 2018). Businesses involved in PPPs emphasize the need for stronger regulatory oversight and more equitable bidding processes to encourage healthy competition (UNDP, 2020). Research highlights the role of well-structured PPP frameworks in delivering socio-economic benefits, citing successful projects from South Africa's renewable energy sector as examples (Eberhard et al., 2019). Case studies from Zimbabwe's health sector also demonstrate how equitable PPPs can enhance service delivery and improve outcomes (MEFMI, 2022).

Stakeholder Perspectives and Accountability

Stakeholders from various backgrounds agree on the importance of transparency, fairness, and public benefit in PPP projects. Government officials, private investors, businesses, and the public all highlight the need for strong accountability mechanisms, active community engagement, and effective regulatory oversight (Transparency International, 2020). For PPPs to succeed, frameworks must include comprehensive lifecycle cost assessments, reliable funding strategies, and thorough monitoring systems (World Bank, 2018). The

research underscores the importance of stakeholders' involvement throughout the process, with examples from African infrastructure projects demonstrating the impact of inclusive engagement (AfDB, 2020). As Zimbabwe advances its PPP reforms, it must emphasize inclusivity, transparency, and accountability to ensure the greatest benefit for the public.

Discussion of Results

This section explains the findings of this study which sought to investigate and comprehend the perceived injustices in Zimbabwe's current PPP systems while highlighting significant accomplishments.

Demographics of Research Participants:

The dataset comprises 12 participants from diverse backgrounds, aged 25-52, with equal gender distribution, and varying experience levels with Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The demographic diversity ensures a comprehensive analysis of PPP perspectives across different roles and experience levels. This echoes Siemiatycki's (2019) observation that women and racial minorities are significantly underrepresented in senior leadership roles in the PPP industry worldwide thereby affecting project management outcomes.

Perceived Inequities in Current PPP Structures in Zimbabwe

Stakeholders identified disparities in accessing PPP opportunities influenced by gender, organizational size, and socioeconomic status. Key themes included unequal economic benefit distribution favoring private partners, limited decision-making access for government officials, transparency and accountability issues in contract negotiations, and social equity concerns such as service quality disparities. These insights underscore the complexity of challenges within current PPP structures which calls for reforms to enhance fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in future projects. This is supported by Krawiec (2016) who noted that the perception of women's statutory place within organizations has been influenced by gender bias, which has led to discrimination

Stakeholder Perspectives on Key Challenges and Concerns in Existing PPP Agreements

The research findings pointed out that operational challenges such as project delays and technical complexities, financial issues including funding gaps and budget constraints, and legal and regulatory hurdles characterized by complex frameworks and inconsistent practices. Fairness and transparency concerns emerged regarding decision-making transparency, equity in risk sharing between sectors, and criticisms of contractual terms and procurement practices. Stakeholders emphasized the need for improved governance and regulatory clarity to mitigate these issues effectively. This was similar to Jayasuriya, Zhang, and Yang (2019) who stated that poor stakeholder management, complexity of risk management models, project delivery time and cost overruns, inadequate consideration of whole life-cycle aspects, and over-reliance on Public Sector Comparator are key challenges in PPPs.

Impact of PPPs on Financial Well-being and Development Prospects

The impact of PPP projects on various dimensions crucial to Zimbabwean citizens and stakeholders included positive impacts which included increased local economic opportunities and improved infrastructure. This resonates with Chilunjika (2023) who noted that PPP arrangements in Zimbabwe led to faster completion of trunk roads, lower project lifecycle costs, better risk allocation, improved service quality, and additional revenue streams. However, concerns were raised about financial burdens on local governments, socio-economic inequalities, and environmental sustainability. Public perception and community engagement issues, such as insufficient consultation and long-term infrastructure maintenance, were also highlighted, suggesting a need for comprehensive planning and community involvement in PPP projects.

Potential Reforms and Strategies for Restructuring PPPs

The research also focused on reforms and strategies to restructure PPPs in Zimbabwe for enhanced fairness, transparency, and public benefit. It synthesized recommendations from stakeholders for equitable risk distribution, stronger accountability mechanisms, and increased stakeholder participation in decision-making. This was similar to Aimone and Pan (2020) who highlighted that stakeholders should hold trustees accountable for risky decisions based on outcomes and the degree to which their choices align with their own choices in similar situations. The strategic restructuring aims to maximize public value by prioritizing projects that

improve infrastructure and services while ensuring financial sustainability through rigorous oversight and life cycle cost assessments.

Recommendations for Creating Balanced and Equitable PPP Frameworks

Recommendations from stakeholders to create more balanced and equitable PPP frameworks in Zimbabwe included the need for clear and balanced risk allocation, transparent project planning, fair bidding processes, and prioritizing projects that deliver tangible benefits to communities. This resonates with Edson and Gideon (2021) who postulated that reworking the legislative framework, harnessing the demographic dividend, and ensuring community participation are key recommendations for creating more balanced and equitable PPP frameworks in Zimbabwe. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of regulatory oversight, community engagement, and affordability in ensuring PPP projects meet public needs effectively. These recommendations collectively aim to foster transparency, fairness, and greater public benefit in future PPP endeavors in Zimbabwe.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The thorough examination of Zimbabwe's PPP industry leads to a number of important findings and suggestions that may be used to solve the problems found and improve the efficacy of PPP initiatives in the future. First of all, it is clear that disparities in risk and benefit distribution provide major obstacles to attaining balanced results in PPPs. Stakeholders have drawn attention to differences in access to PPP opportunities caused by factors such as gender, organizational size, and socioeconomic level. These stakeholders include government officials, private investors, businesses, and the general public. Policymakers should give top priority to changes that guarantee open decision-making procedures and fair sharing of risks and rewards to lessen these disparities. As suggested by government authorities, this involves creating more precise standards for risk allocation to avoid placing an excessive financial load on the public sector. Furthermore, there is a need to increase stakeholder involvement through consultative forums

Recommendations

The stakeholder proposals highlight how urgently better governance and regulatory frameworks are needed to solve the practical, economical, and legal issues related to PPP agreements in Zimbabwe. Stronger accountability measures, such as frequent audits and open reporting, are supported by stakeholders to guarantee the effective use of PPP money and guard against instances of corruption or favoritism in project execution. Furthermore, increasing openness in contract negotiations and procurement procedures is crucial to fostering investor trust and reducing unfair practices. Businesses that participate in PPPs emphasize the significance of equitable bidding procedures and regulatory supervision to foster competition, reduce project costs, improve the efficiency of infrastructure development for the benefit of taxpayers and guarantee PPP projects' long-term viability.

Recommended for Reforms

- i. Developing clear guidelines for distributing risks between the public and private sectors ensures shared accountability and better management of complex projects. Risk allocation frameworks should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect evolving circumstances and stakeholder needs.
- ii. Online platforms can facilitate information sharing, provide regular updates, and foster stakeholder engagement while project management tools enable real-time tracking and collaboration. Transparency in decision-making can be enhanced through clear communication channels on these platforms.
- iii. Electronic tendering systems help reduce corruption and promote competition by standardizing bidding documents and evaluation criteria. Independent review committees play a critical role in ensuring fair and objective bid evaluations.
- iv. Projects should prioritize tangible community benefits, aligning their socio-economic impacts with national development goals. Community needs assessments can inform project design, and advisory boards can provide valuable feedback throughout the project lifecycle.

- v. Institutions responsible for monitoring PPPs must be strengthened to enforce compliance with laws and regulations. Clear regulatory frameworks and regular audits ensure accountability and adherence to established standards.
- vi. Public participation can be encouraged through public hearings, surveys, and capacity-building programs. Establishing community liaison officers and grievance mechanisms ensures effective communication and addresses local concerns.
- vii. Conducting cost-benefit analyses and value-for-money assessments is crucial for evaluating the financial sustainability of projects. Sensitivity analyses can test project viability under different economic conditions, while contingency plans prepare for potential financial risks.
- viii. Key performance indicators (KPIs) should be developed to measure success, with regular evaluation cycles and data analytics guiding decision-making and implementation improvements.
- ix. Clear dispute resolution procedures, including mediation and arbitration, help address conflicts effectively. Independent dispute resolution bodies can oversee these processes to ensure fairness.
- x. Comprehensive environmental and social impact assessments (EIAs and SIAs) must be conducted to identify potential risks. Environmental management plans and social mitigation strategies should align with international standards to ensure compliance.
- xi. Training programs focusing on PPP management, procurement, and contract management can build capacity among public sector officials. Collaborating with international organizations allows for valuable knowledge sharing, while mentorship initiatives can pair experienced professionals with junior officials for hands-on learning.
- xii. Stakeholder engagement can also be strengthened through workshops, seminars, and public awareness campaigns that highlight the benefits and risks of PPPs. Accessible online resources, such as guidelines and FAQs, can further enable stakeholders to understand and participate in these initiatives.

Policy Recommendations

- i. **Updating Laws to Meet Global Standards:** Modernize existing legislation to align with international best practices, such as those outlined by the OECD or World Bank, to boost credibility and effectiveness. Establish a regular review process to ensure laws remain relevant and responsive to emerging challenges.
- ii. **Leveraging the Demographic Dividend:** With 70% of Zimbabwe's population under the age of 35, there's immense potential to engage the youth in PPP projects. Focusing skills-building programs in areas like construction and technology helps to improve employability. Additionally, support youth-led entrepreneurial ventures through mentorship and funding opportunities.
- iii. **Building Institutional Capacity:** Strengthen the public sector's ability to manage PPPs by offering specialized training programs. Create a dedicated PPP unit within the government to oversee project implementation and coordination. Partner with international organizations like the World Bank or IMF to gain technical expertise and share best practices.
- iv. **Offering Fiscal Incentives:** Encourage private sector investment in PPP projects by introducing targeted tax breaks and subsidies, particularly for infrastructure development in underserved areas. Implement a viability gap funding mechanism to support economically sound projects that might otherwise struggle to get off the ground.
- v. **Encouraging Public-Private Collaboration:** Promote strong partnerships between the public and private sectors by forming joint committees for planning and implementing projects. Draft cooperative agreements that foster knowledge sharing and resource pooling to maximize impact.
- vi. **Creating an Infrastructure Development Fund:** Establish a dedicated fund to finance critical infrastructure projects, using contributions from both the public and private sectors. Allocate resources to high-priority areas like transportation, energy, and water systems, while ensuring the fund is managed transparently and held accountable.

Strategies for Improved Implementation

To implement reforms effectively and efficiently, the following strategies are envisaged to assist:

- i. **Phased Implementation:** Start by piloting reforms in specific sectors such as transportation or energy. This allows policymakers to test and refine initiatives before rolling them out on a larger scale. By

closely monitoring these pilot projects, challenges can be identified and addressed early, ensuring smoother nationwide implementation and long-term sustainability.

- ii. **Stakeholder Training:** Hosting workshops, seminars, and conferences for policymakers, private investors, and community leaders can build the necessary knowledge and skills for managing reforms. Tailored training programs help meet the unique needs of different stakeholders, particularly in areas like managing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Encouraging peer-to-peer learning also fosters collaboration and the exchange of best practices.
- iii. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Clear performance metrics aligned with project goals are essential for tracking progress. Regular reviews—whether quarterly or annually—help measure success and highlight areas for improvement. Independent audits and evaluations promote transparency and accountability while leveraging data analytics can refine and optimize strategies over time.

Potential Challenges and Limitations

Policymakers face significant hurdles when attempting to implement successful reforms, and recognizing these challenges is critical for building resilience and navigating potential roadblocks. Some of the key issues include:

- i. **Resistance to Change:** Opposition often arises from stakeholders with vested interests who fear losing power or resources. This resistance can make it difficult to build consensus and generate widespread support for reform efforts.
- ii. **Capacity Constraints:** Limited resources—whether financial, human, or technological—can hamper progress. Gaps in infrastructure or expertise may leave governments struggling to meet the demands for reform, particularly in complex or underdeveloped systems.
- iii. **Corruption Risks:** Corruption poses a serious threat to the integrity of reforms. Without strong safeguards, reforms can be undermined by malfeasance, eroding public trust and derailing progress.

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