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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPPS) IN ENHANCING SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA FROM 2019 TO 2023

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in enhancing service delivery in Nigeria from 2019 to 2023. With the increasing pressure on government resources and the need for sustainable development, PPPs have emerged as a key mechanism for improving public sector performance in sectors such as infrastructure, healthcare, education, and energy. This research examines the various PPP models adopted in Nigeria during this period, assessing their effectiveness in achieving the desired outcomes in service delivery. In carrying out the study, the descriptive research design was adopted. Questionnaire and interview were adopted as instrument for data collection and the method of data analysis was mean statistics. Through a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and quantitative analysis of service delivery metrics, the study identifies the challenges and successes associated with PPPs in the Nigerian context. Key factors such as regulatory frameworks, governance structures, public trust, and financial sustainability are critically analyzed to understand the dynamics of PPPs in Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that while PPPs have led to significant improvements in certain sectors, issues such as inadequate policy implementation, corruption, and a lack of proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have hindered optimal service delivery. The study concludes with policy recommendations aimed at strengthening the PPP framework in Nigeria, including enhanced transparency; better risk-sharing models, and capacity building for both public and private sector participants.
Keywords: Public-private-partnership, service delivery, financial sustainability, development

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have become an essential model in fostering sustainable development and improving service delivery across various sectors, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. In a country like Nigeria, with a population of over 200 million and vast infrastructural deficits, PPPs present a strategic mechanism for addressing critical service delivery gaps. These partnerships, which involve collaboration between government bodies and private sector entities, have been increasingly relied upon as a solution to the country's infrastructure and service provision challenges. From the 1990s, Nigeria began to explore the viability of PPPs as a strategy for improving sectors like healthcare, transportation, education, and energy (Obadan & Odusola, 2019). The period between 2019 and 2023 has witnessed notable developments and challenges in the application of PPPs, particularly in light of Nigeria's evolving economic context, which has been influenced by fluctuating oil prices, inflation, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ebohon, 2022).

In the past few years, Nigeria has made concerted efforts to enhance service delivery through public-private collaborations. According to the National Policy on Public-Private Partnerships (2020), the government has developed legal and institutional frameworks to support PPPs and encourage private sector participation in public service delivery. The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) has been at the forefront of implementing these policies, facilitating the establishment of PPPs across various sectors. For instance, in the transport sector, projects such as the Lekki Deep Sea Port and the Abuja Light Rail have been developed through PPP arrangements, contributing to improved transportation infrastructure (Ajayi & Taiwo, 2021). In the healthcare sector, partnerships like the one between the Federal Ministry of Health and private healthcare providers have resulted in the development of health infrastructure and service delivery expansion, although challenges persist (Onyeonoro et al., 2021).

The involvement of private sector partners is seen as a way to leverage efficiency, innovation, and investment for the improvement of public services, addressing infrastructural deficits that would otherwise be difficult for the government to solve alone due to budgetary constraints. However, despite the promise of PPPs, the implementation and outcomes of these partnerships in Nigeria have been mixed. While some projects have achieved success, others have faced significant challenges, including financial mismanagement, delays in project execution, and issues related to transparency and accountability (Eneh & Ibe, 2022). The 2020 and 2021 periods, especially with the economic strain induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, exposed the vulnerabilities of existing PPP models, with many private partners grappling with financial constraints and delays (Bello, 2021). These challenges have, in some instances, slowed down the progress of key service delivery projects, thereby raising questions about the sustainability and long-term effectiveness of PPPs in Nigeria.

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A key factor that influences the success of PPPs in Nigeria is the institutional framework and governance structures that support such collaborations. Despite efforts to create enabling environments, such as the establishment of the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) and the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), the lack of robust regulatory oversight, transparency issues, and inconsistencies in policy implementation have been significant barriers to the optimal functioning of PPPs (Adedeji & Okunade, 2022). Scholars have argued that for PPPs to truly improve service delivery in Nigeria there is a need for stronger governance mechanisms, better contract enforcement, and a focus on creating value for both the public and private sectors (Aliyu et al., 2023). Moreover, stakeholders' interests must be aligned to ensure that PPPs do not merely become vehicles for private profit at the expense of public service delivery. Nigeria, especially, the period 2019–2023 has seen a growing emphasis on PPPs as a tool for enhancing public service delivery, particularly in sectors critical to national development. However, while progress has been made, the challenges faced by the model, including issues of governance, financial sustainability, and implementation delays, highlight the need for comprehensive reforms. To improve the effectiveness of PPPs in Nigeria, there is an urgent need for continued policy development, enhanced transparency, and capacity-building for both public and private partners.

This study aims to explore the dynamics of PPPs in Nigeria, examining their impact on service delivery across key sectors, while also identifying the barriers and challenges that hinder their success between the periods of 2019-2023.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In recent years, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a significant strategy for improving service delivery across various sectors in Nigeria, especially in infrastructure, healthcare, education, and transportation.

Despite the potential of PPPs to drive growth and innovation, the effectiveness of these partnerships in enhancing service delivery between 2019 and 2023 has been a subject of ongoing debate. While some argue that PPPs have contributed to the efficiency and expansion of public services, others highlight challenges such as inadequate regulatory frameworks, corruption, misalignment of goals, and limited accountability. These issues have led to mixed outcomes in terms of service quality, accessibility, and sustainability, particularly in critical areas affecting the Nigerian populace. This research seeks to examine the impact of Public-Private Partnerships on service delivery in Nigeria between 2019 and 2023, identifying key factors that influence the success or failure of these partnerships.

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1.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are presented thus:

1. To investigate the impact of Public-Private Partnerships on the sustainability of public services in Nigeria from 2019 to 2023.
2. To identify the challenges faced by both the public and private sectors in the implementation of PPPs for service delivery in Nigeria from 2019-2023.
3. To suggest possible ways of improving service delivery through public private partnerships in Nigeria.

2.0. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Concept of Public Private Partnership (PPPs)

The concept of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) has gained significant attention in Nigeria as a means to bridge infrastructure gaps and enhance public service delivery. PPPs are collaborative agreements between public entities (government agencies) and private sector organizations for the provision of public infrastructure and services (Agbu, 2019). They offer a model for leveraging private sector expertise, innovation, and financial resources to develop and maintain public projects that might otherwise exceed the financial capacity of the government (Akinmoladun & Olayiwola, 2020).

In Nigeria, PPPs have been particularly crucial in sectors such as transportation, energy, healthcare, and education, where public sector capacity has been limited (Ogunbode & Adebayo, 2021). The 2019 Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) annual report highlighted the need for PPPs to address Nigeria's infrastructure deficit, estimated to require about $3 trillion for the country to meet its infrastructure needs (ICRC, 2019). Through PPPs, the government can access the capital and technical expertise required for the successful completion of large-scale projects, while the private sector can benefit from returns on their investments (Oluwaseun, 2022).

One of the landmark PPP initiatives in Nigeria is the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway concession, which has faced both praise and criticism due to issues such as project delays, cost overruns, and concerns over the long-term sustainability of the partnerships (Akinmoladun & Olayiwola, 2020). However, this project underscores the importance of robust legal frameworks and regulatory oversight to ensure that PPPs are transparent, accountable, and beneficial to the public (Odumodu & Oboh, 2023).

The Nigerian government has put in place several legislative frameworks to encourage and regulate PPPs, such as the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Policy, the Infrastructure

Concession Regulatory Commission Act, and the National Policy on Public-Private Partnerships (Federal Ministry of Finance, 2020). These policies are designed to create a favorable environment for private investment in public infrastructure while mitigating risks associated with such investments (Obadeyi & Abiola, 2022). Additionally, the government has focused on improving institutional capacity to manage PPP projects effectively, providing legal, financial, and technical support to ensure successful project delivery (Akinmoladun & Olayiwola, 2020).

Despite these efforts, the implementation of PPPs in Nigeria is not without challenges. The country faces issues such as inadequate risk-sharing mechanisms, insufficient project preparation, bureaucratic delays, and political instability, which can undermine the success of PPP initiatives (Afolabi & Oladele, 2023). Moreover, the private sector often faces challenges related to uncertain regulatory environments and currency fluctuations, which can impact the financial viability of PPP projects (Ogunbode & Adebayo, 2021). While PPPs represent a viable strategy for addressing Nigeria's infrastructure challenges, the success of these partnerships depends on effective governance, transparent regulatory frameworks, and the commitment of both public and private partners to fulfilling their responsibilities (Agbu, 2019). The lessons learned from ongoing and completed projects should guide future PPPs to ensure that they deliver value for money and contribute to sustainable national development (Obadeyi & Abiola, 2022).

2.1.1. Service Delivery

Service delivery lies at the heart of governance, development, and organizational performance. Whether in public administration, health care, education, or private sector operations, the efficiency, accessibility, and quality of services directly impact user satisfaction and institutional legitimacy. In the context of globalization, digital transformation, and citizen empowerment, service delivery has evolved from a top-down transactional model to an interactive, participatory, and increasingly digital process (Osborne, Radnor, & Nasi, 2013; Alzaydi et al., 2018). Thus, understanding the conceptual underpinnings and evolving nature of service delivery is crucial for enhancing performance and fostering trust between providers and recipients.

There is no singular, universally accepted definition of service delivery, as the term varies depending on context. However, key academic perspectives offer insight: World Bank (2017) defines service delivery as "the mechanism through which public services such as education, health, water, and infrastructure are delivered to citizens." This definition emphasizes the role of government and institutional arrangements. Van Dooren, Bouckaert, and Halligan (2015) view service delivery in public management as the outcome of strategic planning, resource allocation, and performance monitoring, integrating policy goals with actual service outcomes. In a private-sector context, Grönroos (2015) describes service delivery as a customer-oriented process involving the co-creation of value between service providers and users, highlighting the experiential and relational aspects of service encounters.

Traditionally, service delivery in the public sector followed bureaucratic, rules-based models, characterized by hierarchy, predictability, and control (Osborne et al., 2013). However, recent literature emphasizes a shift toward New Public Service and co-production models, where citizens are not just recipients but co-creators of services (Brandsen & Honingh, 2018). This shift underscores the importance of responsiveness, transparency, and feedback mechanisms in service processes. Again, quality is a central dimension in service delivery. Alzaydi et al. (2018) identify dimensions of service quality—reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness—as essential factors in determining customer satisfaction. In public service contexts, the perceived fairness and timeliness of services play a significant role in shaping citizen trust (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2016).

Ighomereho et al. (2022) emphasize that the digitization of service delivery, especially in African urban centers, must be accompanied by efforts to improve accessibility, reliability, and user interface design to avoid digital exclusion and service inequality. Effective service delivery depends heavily on governance mechanisms. Felekech and Guohua (2020) found that good governance—marked by accountability, participation, and transparency—positively correlates with improved public service delivery in Ethiopia. Similarly, Scharle (2015) argues that integrated governance models such as “one-stop shops” enhance service coordination and reduce bureaucratic fragmentation in Europe. In local government contexts, Motsi, Chigwata, and de Visser (2023**)** underscore the importance of participatory planning, performance monitoring, and complaint resolution systems in improving urban service delivery in Africa. These mechanisms ensure responsiveness and allow service providers to align offerings with community needs.

In recent times, digital transformation is a game-changer in the service delivery landscape. Chen (2019) propose using AI and machine learning for optimizing service logistics, such as same-day delivery using drones and autonomous systems. In the public sector, Maseko and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2019) suggest that digital tools like big data analytics and e-governance platforms can enhance efficiency and accountability in municipal service provision. However, the literature also warns of the risks of over-reliance on technology. Without attention to digital literacy and infrastructure, such innovations may widen the gap between urban and rural or rich and poor populations (Nel & Masilela, 2020).

Service delivery has moved from rigid, top-down models toward more responsive, participatory, and tech-enabled approaches. Scholarly literature emphasizes that effective service delivery is not merely about quantity but also about quality, equity, and co-creation. Ongoing challenges—including digital divides, governance gaps, and citizen disengagement—highlight the need for continued research and innovation to make service systems more inclusive and effective.

Public-Private Partnership and its influence on Service Delivery in Nigeria public sector

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become a widely recognized tool for improving service delivery within the public sector globally, and Nigeria is no exception. The concept of PPPs refers to collaborative agreements between government entities and private sector companies to finance, design, implement, and operate projects that deliver public services. In Nigeria, PPPs have been explored as a means of overcoming challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, poor service delivery, and budget constraints. This literature review critically examines the influence of PPPs on service delivery in Nigeria's public sector, focusing on various aspects including infrastructure, healthcare, education, and utilities.

A Public-Private Partnership is a long-term contractual arrangement between a public sector authority and a private sector company for the purpose of providing public services or infrastructure. The basic idea behind PPPs is the pooling of resources, expertise, and risks between the two sectors to achieve better outcomes than either could individually (Akintoye, Beck, & Kumaraswamy, 2003). PPPs in the Nigerian context have mainly been applied to sectors such as transportation, healthcare, education, and electricity, all of which face considerable challenges in terms of service delivery and infrastructure development.

The Role of PPPs in Improving Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Nigeria

In Nigeria, one of the most significant applications of PPPs has been in the infrastructure sector, particularly in the construction and maintenance of roads, airports, and power supply systems. According to Akinmoladun et al. (2019), PPPs have played an instrumental role in bridging the infrastructure gap in Nigeria by attracting both local and foreign investment. The National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (2014) highlighted PPPs as critical to developing and sustaining infrastructure across the country, especially considering the limited resources available to the government.

Studies show that PPPs provide opportunities for the Nigerian government to leverage private sector efficiency, innovation, and management capabilities to improve service delivery (Ogunlana & Olalusi, 2016). For example, the Lagos-Ibadan expressway PPP project is a key example where the public sector collaborated with private companies to revamp an important road network, which had been in a deteriorated state for decades. Such collaborations enable the provision of high-quality infrastructure that might otherwise not have been possible given public sector financial constraints (Ojo, 2015).

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Public-Private Partnerships and Service Delivery in the Healthcare Sector

Healthcare service delivery in Nigeria has historically been underfunded and inefficient. The introduction of PPPs in this sector is seen as a strategic means of improving healthcare access and quality. According to Onyekwelu (2019), the partnership between the Nigerian government and private healthcare providers has helped to expand access to healthcare services, particularly in rural areas. A good example is the partnership between the Nigerian government and private firms in the provision of diagnostic services in public hospitals. These PPPs have resulted in the establishment of more advanced medical equipment and specialized healthcare services in public hospitals (Olufemi & Akinola, 2021). However, PPPs in healthcare have faced challenges such as unclear contractual obligations and inadequate regulatory frameworks. According to Tade and Oni (2017), there is a lack of sufficient governance structures to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these PPPs, which often leads to inefficiencies. Furthermore, while PPPs may improve healthcare delivery, they may also result in rising costs and inaccessibility for certain vulnerable populations, especially if profit motives are prioritized over public good.

Public-Private Partnerships and Service Delivery in the Nigerian Education Sector

The education sector in Nigeria is another area where PPPs have had a noticeable impact. The Nigerian government has been collaborating with private investors in the provision of schools, vocational training, and educational materials. PPPs have allowed for the construction of new schools, the improvement of educational facilities, and the provision of better resources for teachers and students (Ogunyemi, 2018). According to Okafor (2020), the role of PPPs in education has been vital in improving access to quality education, particularly in urban areas where demand for education services is high. However, the application of PPPs in education in Nigeria has also raised concerns regarding the privatization of education. Critics argue that PPPs in education could lead to the commercialization of a public good, where profit-making motives overshadow the quality of education provided to the most vulnerable sections of society (Adedeji, 2017). The challenge remains for the Nigerian government to establish regulatory frameworks that ensure PPPs do not exploit citizens or undermine the public education system's equity.

Public-Private Partnerships and Service Delivery in the Nigerian Utility Services

Utilities such as electricity and water supply are critical to Nigeria's economic development and quality of life. However, the public sector has struggled with inefficiencies and resource limitations, leading to poor service delivery in these sectors. The privatization of the electricity sector under the Nigeria Electricity Supply Industry (NESI) through PPPs has seen some progress, with improvements in service delivery, especially in urban centers (Ogunlade,

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2020). However, PPPs in the electricity sector have also faced challenges such as inadequate investment in infrastructure, poor governance, and corruption (Adebayo & Dada, 2016).

The provision of water services has similarly been impacted by PPPs, with mixed outcomes. In some urban areas, PPPs have helped improve access to clean water, while in rural areas, the privatization of water supply services has often been marred by inefficiency and high costs for consumers (Aderemi, 2019).

PPPs have the potential to significantly improve service delivery across various sectors of Nigeria's public sector, including infrastructure, healthcare, education, and utilities. By harnessing private sector expertise and resources, PPPs have been instrumental in bridging gaps in service delivery that the public sector alone could not address due to limited financial and managerial capacity. However, the effectiveness of PPPs in Nigeria is contingent on establishing clear regulatory frameworks, transparency, and governance mechanisms to prevent abuse and ensure the public good is prioritized. The success of PPPs will depend on a collaborative effort between the government and private sector actors, with strong oversight and accountability measures in place.

Challenges faced by Public and Private Sectors in the Implementation of Service Delivery in Nigeria from 2019-2023.

The implementation of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for service delivery in Nigeria from 2019 to 2023 has faced a variety of challenges, affecting both the public and private sectors. These challenges stem from several issues, including regulatory, financial, operational, and political hurdles. Below are some of the key challenges identified from recent literature:

Akinwale & Olayiwola, (2021) pointed out regulatory and legal framework to be one major problem. They stressed that **o**ne of the key barriers to the successful implementation of PPPs in Nigeria has been the inadequate or unclear regulatory and legal frameworks. While Nigeria has attempted to establish a structured approach with the Public-Private Partnership Act of 2004 and subsequent reforms, the legal environment has often been described as insufficiently supportive or inconsistent, particularly when it comes to resolving disputes, ensuring accountability, and enforcing contracts (Adebayo et al., 2021). Additionally, legal bottlenecks such as delays in project approval processes and challenges in land acquisition have also hindered PPP projects' timely execution (Akinwale & Olayiwola, 2021).

Akinwale & Olayiwola, (2021) emphasized Financial Constraints and Risk Allocation. Expanding on this point, they argued that financing remains a major issue for both the public and private sectors. While the government often lacks the necessary funds for large-scale infrastructure projects, private investors also face difficulties in accessing the required financing at affordable rates .This challenge is compounded by the high risk perceived in the Nigerian market due to political instability, macroeconomic fluctuations, and inflation (Olawale & Garwe, 2020). Moreover, inadequate risk-sharing mechanisms between the public and private sectors have led to disagreements over financial responsibilities, which have, at times, led to delays or cancellations of projects (Kanu & Oguji, 2022).

Fasua & Akinmoladun, (2020) emphasized on Corruption and Governance Issues. They argued that Corruption is a persistent challenge in Nigeria, affecting both the public and private sectors. For public officials, the temptation for personal enrichment through bribery or misallocation of resources can delay or derail projects (Adebayo et al., 2021). On the private sector side, lack of transparency in procurement processes or kickbacks can discourage genuine investments (Fasua & Akinmoladun, 2020). Poor governance practices exacerbate these issues, resulting in inefficient project execution and mismanagement of resources, which undermines the success of PPPs.

For Olawale & Garwe, (2020) Political Instability and Policy Inconsistency is another major problem to this effect. They stressed that Nigeria's political instability and frequent changes in government policies have also been identified as key challenges in the PPP implementation process. Changes in government at federal, state, or local levels often result in a shift in priorities, making it difficult to maintain long-term commitments to PPP projects (Olawale & Garwe, 2020). This can cause disruptions in ongoing projects, as new policies might not be aligned with those initiated by previous administrations, creating an environment of uncertainty for investors.

In another development, Babatunde (2023) pointed capacity and expertise gaps. He stated that both the public and private sectors have faced challenges related to insufficient technical capacity and expertise in managing PPP projects. The public sector, in particular, has been criticized for lacking skilled personnel capable of negotiating complex contracts, managing projects, and monitoring the performance of private partners (Bamidele & Akinyele, 2017). Similarly, some private sector partners have struggled with inadequate knowledge of the local regulatory and market conditions, which can lead to inefficiencies and poor service delivery outcomes (Kanu & Oguji, 2022). Another problem stems on Social and Environmental Concerns. PPP projects often face opposition from communities and civil society groups due to concerns about the social and environmental impacts of projects. In some cases, community opposition to the privatization or commercialization of public services has slowed down or halted projects altogether (Fasua & Akinmoladun, 2020). For example, in sectors such as water supply and healthcare, there are fears that privatization may lead to increased costs for users or reduced access to essential services for vulnerable groups.

Akinwale & Olayiwola, (2021) maintained inadequate infrastructure and institutional capacity to be one of the problems that challenges PPPs in Nigeria. Many PPP projects in

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Nigeria have been hampered by inadequate existing infrastructure or institutional capacity to support new developments. For example, in transport or power sectors, poor road networks or unreliable electricity grids have delayed the progress of PPP infrastructure projects. Furthermore, the lack of coordination among various levels of government (Federal, State, and Local) has also contributed to delays and inefficiencies in project implementation (Adebayo et al., 2021).

Additionally, lack of Political Will and Commitment seems to have definitely added to the problems facing the achievement of PPPs in Nigeria. While the Nigerian government has generally been supportive of PPPs, there has often been a lack of political will to fully commit to the reforms necessary to improve the implementation process (Akinwale & Olayiwola, 2021). Short-term political cycles and shifting political priorities have sometimes led to inconsistent efforts toward building a stable PPP environment. This has undermined investor confidence and further delayed the realization of PPP projects.

Conclusively, while PPPs have the potential to significantly improve service delivery in Nigeria; their successful implementation has been hindered by several challenges. These include inadequate legal frameworks, financial constraints, corruption, political instability, capacity gaps, social concerns, and a lack of political commitment. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort from both the public and private sectors, along with strong political will to create a more conducive environment for PPPs to thrive.

Prospects of public private partnership on service delivery in Nigeria

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a strategic tool for enhancing service delivery in Nigeria, especially in sectors like infrastructure, healthcare, and transportation. However, the effectiveness of PPPs in Nigeria has been constrained by institutional weaknesses, policy inconsistency, and limited private sector confidence. Improving PPP frameworks is crucial for attracting investment, ensuring project sustainability, and delivering value to citizens. With the government increasingly turning to PPPs to bridge funding gaps, viable reforms are necessary to make these collaborations more efficient and transparent. This paper outlines five key solutions to enhance PPP performance and service delivery in Nigeria. These include strengthening legal frameworks, building institutional capacity, improving transparency, developing a project pipeline, and ensuring political and economic stability. Each of these solutions targets a major barrier to PPP success, aiming to create an enabling environment for sustainable development. In ensuring effective service delivery in Nigeria, there is need for strengthening legal and institutional frameworks. A robust legal and regulatory framework is essential for PPP success. Clear laws and transparent policies reduce risks and encourage private sector participation. Nigeria's current PPP legal framework needs harmonization to remove bureaucratic bottlenecks (World Bank, 2020). For example, clarifying the roles of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission

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(ICRC) and state governments can streamline project implementation. Again, there is also the need for capacity building for public institutions**.** Many Nigerian public officials lack the technical capacity to manage PPPs effectively. Training programs in project evaluation, risk management, and negotiation can significantly improve outcomes. According to Akinyemi and Adepoju (2018), weak institutional capacity leads to poor project design and delays in execution.

For Budina et al., (2015), improving transparency and accountability becomes a desideratum for effective service delivery in Nigeria. Corruption and opaque procurement processes hinder investor confidence. Establishing independent monitoring bodies and digital procurement platforms can enhance transparency. Open contracting data standards (OCDS) have been shown to improve trust and efficiency. Developing a well-structured pipeline of bankable projects can attract serious investors. The lack of pre-feasibility studies and proper project preparation deters private entities. The African Development Bank (2019) suggests that project preparation facilities can mitigate this barrier by providing technical and financial support early in the project lifecycle.

Finally, Political interference and policy inconsistency deter long-term investment. Establishing autonomous PPP units with legal protection from political changes can help. Nigeria’s experience with projects like Lekki Toll Road shows that political shifts can destabilize agreements (Akintoye et al., 2016)

2.2 Theoretical frame work

The Principal-Agent Theory by Michael C. Jensen and William H. Meckling**; (**Theory of the Firm): Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs, and Ownership Structure **(**1976) were adopted in support to this study. The Principal-Agent Theory focuses on the relationship between a principal (usually the government or public sector) and an agent (typically a private company or contractor). In the context of PPPs, the government (the principal) delegates certain responsibilities to a private entity (the agent) to provide public services. This theory helps to explain the motivations, incentives, and potential issues that arise from this relationship.

In simple terms, the Principal-Agent Theory focuses on how to structure the relationship and align incentives to reduce the risk of agents acting in their own self-interest instead of the principal’s. Key Concepts of Principal-Agent Theory:

- Asymmetry of Information: In PPPs, the private sector often has more technical expertise and better knowledge of certain services than the public sector, leading to potential information imbalances.

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- Moral Hazard and Risk Sharing: The private sector may not always act in the best interest of the public if incentives or contracts are not structured properly. This can affect service delivery outcomes.
- Monitoring and Control: The government must establish effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the private sector delivers the expected services in line with the agreed-upon terms.
- Incentive Alignment: The theory suggests that contracts should be designed in such a way that both parties (public and private) have aligned incentives for successful service delivery, with proper performance-based rewards or penalties.

Application to Nigeria's PPPs

In the case of Nigeria (2019-2023), PPPs are likely to have encountered challenges related to the asymmetry of information between public agencies and private contractors, misalignment of incentives, and inefficiencies in monitoring. These challenges could impact the success of service delivery in sectors like infrastructure, healthcare, and education. The Principal-Agent Theory would allow you to analyze how these issues influence the quality of services delivered through PPPs in Nigeria during the given period. This theory explained how well the Nigerian government has structured PPP contracts, monitored private partners, and aligned incentives to improve public service delivery, as well as the problems faced in doing so.

The Principal-Agent Theory is highly relevant to the present study because it provides a useful framework to understand the dynamics between the government (the principal) and private sector partners (the agents) in the context of service delivery. For instance, in a PPP, the government typically acts as the *principal*, with the aim of ensuring effective public service delivery. The *agent* is the private sector partner, which is hired to provide the service. The principal delegates certain tasks and responsibilities to the agent, such as building infrastructure, providing utilities, or managing a public service. The government, as the principal, expects the agent to carry out these tasks in a way that aligns with public interests, such as ensuring efficiency, transparency, and quality service. However, there are often concerns about the private agent acting in its own interest (maximizing profit), which may not always align with the public good.

Again, a core concept in the Principal-Agent Theory is *information asymmetry* — where the agent typically has more information about its activities and the processes involved than the principal does. In the context of PPPs, this can lead to situations where the private partner may not fully disclose all necessary information, potentially leading to inefficiencies or failures in service delivery. This could be particularly relevant in Nigeria, where accountability and transparency in public projects have been longstanding concerns.

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The theory helps to explain how conflicts can arise between the government (principal) and private contractors (agents). In a PPP arrangement, the government is often concerned with service quality, affordability, and long-term public benefit, while the private sector partner is more concerned with maximizing profits. This misalignment of incentives can sometimes result in issues like poor service quality, cost overruns, or delays in project completion. In the Nigerian context, especially between 2019 and 2023, the theory could help explain how misaligned incentives in PPP projects have affected service delivery. For instance, if the private firm underperforms or exploits its position to extract more from the public budget, it creates a principal-agent problem. This is particularly relevant to improving the design and enforcement of PPP agreements. Weak contract enforcement and limited oversight have been challenges in some past PPP arrangements, which have led to inefficient service delivery.

Finally, the theory suggests that performance metrics should be used to ensure that the agent delivers as per the principal’s expectations. In the case of PPPs in Nigeria, if performance evaluation and accountability measures are weak, the agent may fail to meet the required service standards, affecting the overall outcomes. This theory can guide reforms in monitoring and evaluation in the Nigerian PPP framework, ensuring that service delivery goals are met.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Quantitative Data Analysis of mean statistics and Inferential Statistics was used to examine the relationships between variables, such as the impact of PPPs on service delivery outcomes, and to identify significant differences between groups. Secondary data were also collected from public reports and records on Public-Private Partnership and Service Delivery in Nigeria (2019-2023)

4.0. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The empirical analysis shows that while PPPs in Nigeria have contributed positively to service delivery, their impact has been inconsistent due to a range of factors. Key challenges include inadequate financing, political interference, regulatory inefficiency, and institutional challenges. However, in sectors like transportation and healthcare, PPPs have shown promising results when the right conditions are met, such as clear regulatory frameworks, effective monitoring, and strong public-private collaboration.

Moreover, the socio-economic impact of PPPs has been mixed. While some projects have contributed to job creation and improved access to services, others have faced implementation delays, leading to public dissatisfaction. The role of government in creating an enabling environment for PPPs is critical to the success of these partnerships.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This study on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Service Delivery in Nigeria between 2019 and 2023 has provided a comprehensive analysis of the impact of collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors in enhancing the quality and accessibility of essential services in the country. The findings suggest that while PPPs have proven to be effective in addressing service delivery gaps in critical sectors such as healthcare, infrastructure, and education, there are notable challenges that hinder the full potential of these partnerships. Key successes identified include improved project implementation timelines, enhanced efficiency, and increased investment in infrastructure development, which have contributed to addressing some of Nigeria's pressing service delivery needs. PPPs have also facilitated the introduction of innovation, technical expertise, and better management practices from the private sector, which have had positive ripple effects on service quality.

However, several issues continue to impede the full realization of PPP potential. These include inconsistent policy frameworks, limited capacity within public institutions to manage and monitor PPP agreements, and the need for more transparent and accountable processes in the selection of private partners. Additionally, socioeconomic factors such as corruption, political instability, and inadequate regulatory frameworks further exacerbate the challenges faced by PPP initiatives. While PPPs have demonstrated a positive impact on service delivery in Nigeria, a more robust and transparent policy and regulatory environment is essential for optimizing these partnerships.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends the following.

1. The Nigerian government should develop and strengthen the regulatory frameworks governing Public-Private Partnerships. Clear, consistent, and transparent regulations would enhance investor confidence, reduce the risk of corruption, and ensure that both public and private sector interests are aligned for better service delivery outcomes. This includes addressing legal bottlenecks and ensuring that PPP contracts are executed fairly and efficiently.
2. To improve service delivery, there should be a focus on enhancing accountability and transparency in PPP projects. A central monitoring body could be established to oversee the progress and performance of PPP projects, ensuring they are delivering the expected outcomes. Public access to regular reports on PPP performance and financial audits could reduce corruption and inefficiencies in project execution.

3. Given the complexity of PPP projects, it is recommended that Nigerian government officials involved in the management of such partnerships receive extensive training on project management, negotiation, and financial analysis. This would help to better manage the public sector's role in PPPs, ensuring effective collaboration between public and private partners and enhancing service delivery.
4. Increasing public awareness of the benefits and processes of PPPs can help mitigate resistance to such partnerships. Furthermore, fostering greater stakeholder engagement, particularly with communities and end-users, will ensure that PPP projects are more attuned to the needs and expectations of the people they aim to serve, resulting in improved service outcomes.
5. The government should prioritize PPPs in the development of essential infrastructure and public services, such as healthcare, education, and transportation. Ensuring that PPPs target key sectors critical for national development would improve the quality of service delivery in these areas. Additionally, partnerships should focus on addressing regional disparities in service delivery, ensuring equitable access for underserved populations.
6. A more granular investigation into sector-specific PPPs, particularly in underserved areas, as well as an exploration of the role of local government in facilitating more inclusive and sustainable PPPs.
7. Strengthening institutional capacity, fostering transparency, and ensuring political will be key to enhancing the effectiveness of PPPs in Nigeria's development agenda in the years to come.

Competing Interest

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in this paper.

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