


Chapter 4

Exploring Cultural Dimensions in Public–Private Partnerships: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Public-private partnerships offer a rationale opportunity to determine the cultural factors' impact on effectiveness and strategically address societal needs by combining government and private sector contributions. Although cultural dynamics crucial to the success of PPPs are often neglected. The study examines the existing literature to analyse cultural factors that impacts the negotiation, management and outcome derived from PPPs. The study applies Hofstede and Trompenaars' frameworks to demonstrate that culture affects business communication, conflict and leadership, high-power distance cultures employ hierarchical bargaining methods, whereas collectivist cultures prioritise negotiations that foster long-term connections. However, there are differences in communication and time perspectives, the high/low-context model in particular, significantly influencing the partnership. The findings indicate that PPP requires cultural sensitivity and flexible management, with culturally aligned partners are better positioned for successful collaboration, impacting future policy and practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are acknowledged as an efficient model in order to address multifaceted issues and provide infrastructure and development goals in the economy (Torchia *et al.*, 2015; Sarmiento & Renneboog, 2016). These collaborations provide private-sector skills, capital, and innovation in partnership along with the aim of social welfare from the public sector meeting mutual objectives (Iossa & Martimort, 2015). PPPs encompass various sectors including infrastructure, health and education sectors to provide new prospects in service delivery and societal improvement. Cultural factors, deeply rooted in shared values, beliefs, and norms, profoundly influence behaviors and expectations in organizational settings (Caiazza & Volpe, 2015; Jain & Pareek, 2019). This impact becomes most conspicuous in PPPs that are between partners with different cultures, as cultural differences will influence both process and procedure (Ghauri & Rosendo, 2016; Cui *et al.*, 2018). For instance, government institutions may use a high-power distance in contract negotiations and have clearly defined subordinates and superior officers, while private institutions using a low-power distance may favour a more egalitarian approach (Yu, 2017; Prim *et al.*, 2017). Such misalignments frequently cause misunderstandings, prolonged decision-making, and strained relationships (Shayya, 2018). Similarly, partnership operations reflect differences in collectivist vs individualist cultures, the former value long-term partnership, while the latter focus on contracts and short-term outcomes (Felfe *et al.*, 2008). The chapter incorporates Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's further developed categorization to enhance comprehension of PPP's cultural characteristics (Sattorovich, 2020). In Hofstede's model, cultural dimensions such as individualism or collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity or femininity depict some form of organizational culture that defines the behavior of organizational actors (Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2017; Hofstede & Regout, 1996). All these frameworks show how cultural values are present in institutional settings and organizational norms (Moonen, 2017). Other cross-cultural characteristics which include communication patterns, leadership behaviors and time perspective support the rationale for pro-active cultural sensitivity in creating the requisite trust as well as cooperation and PPPs. From an extensive review of the literature, the chapter discusses how culture influences communication, leadership, as well as strategic management and partnership development and outcomes. The study is thus categorized into five sections. The following section provides a theoretical background for the domain. The third section deals with the methodological framework section. The fourth section presents a discussion and the fifth section concludes the study.

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