

Integrating Public Private Partnership Strategy for Sustainable Students Skills Development in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Zimbabwe

Tapiwa Muzari

Department of Technical and Engineering Education and Training
National University of Science and Technology
tmuzari5@gmail.com

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0309>

Published September 23 2023

Citation: Muzari T. (2023) Integrating Public Private Partnership Strategy for Sustainable Students Skills Development in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Zimbabwe, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies: Sustainability*, 4(5),1-16

ABSTRACT: *Traditionally, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are known to contribute to infrastructure development in diverse socio-economic sectors. It is a misconception that PPPs are streamlined to a single functioning of developing and improving infrastructure yet this strategy can be adopted to integrate PPP for sustainable skills development in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with a view of responding to the labour market demand realities. Using a mixed methods approach the study sought to establish the feasibility of PPPs for sustainable skills development in TVET by soliciting data from institutions of higher learning and industry. A simple random sampling of 5 TVET institutions and 10 lecturers, 5 administrators, and 5 captains of industry were purposively sampled to respond and participate in the study respectively. The data were descriptively and thematically analyzed for a balanced view of the findings. The results revealed that TVET institutions did not consider PPPs as a strategy for sustainable skills development for employability. Also established was policy inconsistency at the government level which hampers possibilities of partnerships in skills development. The results further show that industry plays an important role in skills development through internship, traineeship, and on-the-job education and training. The study recommended government through the relevant ministry and agents expedite the PPPs policy framework to include skills development as a standalone component. There is a need for government to incentivise private sector players to have PPPs in sustainable skills development for increased return on investment and subsequently economic growth.*

KEYWORDS: public-private partnerships, technical and vocational education and training, skills development

INTRODUCTION

The transition of skills focussed education is characterised by different strategies which are informed of modern trends in global interventions for sustainability. The Sustainable

Development Goals(SDGs) Agenda 2030 endeavour to empower communities by leaving no one behind. Globally, member states agree that SDGs play a critical role in addressing the world economic predicaments as they are responsive to the day-to-day world challenges. The Incheon Declaration advanced the Education for Sustainable Development which is solely anchored on SDG Goal Number 4 on Quality Education which seeks to promote life-long learning opportunities through skills development for employability (UNESCO-COL, 2017). Several strategies are adopted for sustainable skills development for employability. A deliberate approach that has become a pinnacle for skills development is the use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) with a view of responding to the labour demand-supply realities. A Public Private Partnership (PPP) is regarded as a wide range of likely associations and relationships in task allocation and risk sharing between the public and private sectors for the delivery of infrastructural projects and other agreeable services through private sector investments (NAMACO, 2011). It is also viewed as a long-range legally-binding contract between a private entity and a government unit, for providing a public asset or service with the private party bearing risk and administration responsibility (Partnerships British Colombia as cited in Dube & Chigumira, 2010). Thus, PPPs are joint ventures between the public and private sectors with the view of providing noteworthy public infrastructure or other facilities and services.

In Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), PPPs aim mostly at bringing into line teaching, learning, and training programmes by real requirements of the job market by including the private sector in needs assessment, planning and implementing teaching, learning, and training programmes as well as the contribution of industry in bearing the costs of training (UNESCO, 2019). Most of the developed nations, such as Singapore, Germany, the Netherlands, and the USA crafted and applied enterprises for developing labour force skills, founded on robust cooperation between the government and private sectors (UNESCO, 2019).

Importing from the three basic TVET models that are highly referred to in global career development programmes, the PPPs strategy is an enabler in sustainable skills development. Prominently used TVET models in the Western states provide a tripartite relationship among the government, industry, and training institutions showing concerted efforts in the production of skilled personnel for employability. These models put the industry and government at par in initiating programmes for skills development by sharing expertise on what the labour market and economy demand.

Developed countries have specific TVET models which service the labour market demands (International Labour Organisation, 2019). UNESCO and ILO (2002) indicate that TVET is an instrument of readying human capital for job-related fields and effective functioning in the world of work. This has seen the conception of TVET models which were meant to bridge a gap in the demands of skilled and qualified personnel for industrial skills needs. Three TVET models are the flagship in modeling Technical and Vocational Education globally. These are the liberal market economy model, the state-regulated bureaucratic model, and the dual system model (Fawcett, El Sawi, & Allison , 2014). These models direct and shape TVET and they are tried and tested interventions in the developed states.

The liberal market economy model hails from Great Britain with Australia following a similar model that responds to the demands of the private sector with industries and firms dictating the pace in deciding the types of job skills and competencies that industry requires (Fawcett, El Sawi, & Allison , 2014). This model is anchored on the notion that the industry covers a performance gap with the view of improving productivity. In the state-regulated bureaucratic model which is largely found in France, Italy, Sweden, and Finland where the government's central education systems describe and provides finance for TVET. In this model, it is the state that funds TVET as an extension to the national education system but with a bias on practical and hands-on skills. Mainly the state leads in curriculum making but has a reservation about reflecting industry skills demand realities (Fawcett, El Sawi, & Allison , 2014). The dual system model mainly practiced in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, and Norway provides TVET with an extensive collaboration of public and private sectors. Therefore, the dual system consists of solid public-private collaboration since both parties play an equally important role in funding the TVET programmes. The industry finances apprenticeship training and the government finances the TVET institutions (International Labour Organisation, 2019 ; Fawcett, El Sawi, & Allison , 2014).

In Bangladesh, there is a dedicated strategy for efficient methods to increase the quality of TVET programmes by incorporating private sector industry and government. This strategy is contained in the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) with the thrust on providing experiential learning that would help graduates secure employment when they complete their studies (International Labor Organization , 2018). Similarly, South Africa has a National Skills Development Strategy, which emphasizes the critical skills that the country so desires to fill through a collaborative approach between the government and the private sector. The desirous aspect of the two case studies is the availability of regulatory framework in form of policy and strategy for Bangladesh and South Africa respectively. This demonstrates the potential of integrating the PPPs strategy for sustainable skills development. When there is sustainable skills development it means such skills are responsive to the demands of the labour market.

In Zimbabwe, the PPPs strategy was adopted mainly for growth-enhancing infrastructure and development projects particularly power, transport, water sectors, and national highways (Dube & Chigumira, 2010; Zinyama & Nhema, 2015). This is also supported by a historical context of PPPs which mainly focussed on having public works contracts with binding eight to ten-year periods of maintenance for construction works in Europe (PPIAF, 2009). The crux of the matter was these contracts which became precursors to the contemporary concession agreements in public investment developments dominated by infrastructure projects (PPIAF, 2009). Of interest from this historical context of PPPs is the continued use of the same model in achieving public works with the help of private partners. The focus is on construction yet the same approach can be integrated with education and training for sustainable skills development.

Zimbabwe has been recognized worldwide for making strides in high literacy rates since independence from colonial rule in 1980. The government of Zimbabwe proffered solutions to socio-economic challenges through excellent blueprints. The Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP) (2009), Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation(ZIM-ASSET) (2013-2018), Transitional Stabilisation Programme(TSP)

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK (2018-2020), and National Development Strategy (NDS1) (2021-2025) are economic blueprints which do not spell out with clarity the partnerships of public and private entities in skills development. The silence on PPPs' strategy for skills development as an entryway to Education for Sustainable Development is deafening. This is an area that requires exploration to establish the contribution of PPPs in skills development. The global trend in skills development in TVET emanates from national policy development, project establishment, and service delivery (Project Report P1.1, n.d). This suggestive evidence motivates this paper to interrogate PPPs beyond traditional infrastructure development.

The Zimbabwe situation for the past 2 decades has been under pressure with limited fiscal space due to socio-political reasons which have affected the education system in delivering the desired products for economic turnaround (Chanakira, 2013). There is concern from the general populace that education is not changing and improving livelihoods. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development has reconfigured the Higher and Tertiary education model through a Heritage Based Philosophy named Education 5.0 so that it becomes meaningful and responsive to the needs of society. In an economy like Zimbabwe TVET plays a role in skills development for employability which then translates to the improved economic functioning of individuals. PPPs strategy should focus on skills development for a swift response to the labour market mandate truths both in informal and formal sectors.

Zimbabwe was celebrated as one of the best countries in Africa producing highly trained human capital which is competitive regionally and beyond. This assertion is now contested as there is a public outcry on the calibre of graduates leaving institutions of training in recent times. There is a concern that graduates cannot meet the demands of the labour market which render them unemployable besides qualifying (s) for the job. There is no private sector innovation and financing of public skills development in technical and vocational programmes that serve for payment of levies. This study focuses on the nature of PPPs for sustainable skills development in Technical and Vocational Education and Training and this work will generate fresh insights into the feasibility of using PPPs strategy for skills development in TVET in Zimbabwe.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following Research Questions

- What is the role of PPPs in sustainable skills development in TVET?
- What are the challenges of PPPs in sustainable skills development in TVET?
- How can PPPs benefit sustainable skills development in TVET?

Conceptual Framework –The Responsive Curriculum Approach

This paper is informed by the responsive curriculum approach found in the discourse of the curriculum transformation framework. The narrative is based on the notion that when there are quick and adequate changes in the line of work, it is entitled to responsiveness. According to Vreuls, Koeslag-Kreunen, Klink, Nieuwenhuis, and Boshuizen (2022), a responsive curriculum approach is the capacity of a curriculum to convert information about new

developments into curriculum topics, content, and its structure. This resonates well with the integration of the PPPs strategy for sustainable skills development in TVET. Integrating PPPs in the traditional approach of teaching and learning TVET programmes is responsiveness. A deliberate approach in attempting to bring in the private sector participation in skills development beyond infrastructure development is being responsive to the contemporary challenges of employability of TVET graduates. A specific context of a responsive curriculum is the program of study that is pertinent to the up-to-date and projected essentials, problems, and ambitions of the learner (Emah as cited in Aneke, Nnabuike, & Otegbulu, 2016). In this view, progressive educational standpoints are evolving because of the growing pace of transformation in the skills, knowledge, and attitudes desired by employers which the traditional curricula are failing to address hence the incorporation of private sector funding for skills training. This is in sync with Saskatchewan's Education Group (as cited in Human, 2017) which delineates a responsive curriculum as a flexible and adjustable educational programme that reacts to the requirements of the student and industry. It is a curriculum that offers students a selection of developmental and progressive learning proficiencies needed to improve their human capacity and eventually their employment marketability (Human, 2017). This assertion can be sufficiently complemented by integrating the PPPs strategy for sustainable skills development in career development due to a strong sectorial tie between training institutions and industry. Owing to quick and random developments, skilled education is challenged to be responsive to the demands of rethinking orthodox curriculum development methodologies (Vreuls, Koeslag-Kreunen, Klink, Nieuwenhuis, & Boshuizen, 2022). At an epistemological level, improved responsiveness entails a shift from covert knowledge systems which are naturally controlled and driven by established standards of outmoded approaches to more overt knowledge systems in vibrant collaboration with contemporary demands (Human, 2017). In essence, there is a need for flexibility and adaptability in integrating PPPs strategy into the mainstream skills training programmes. Thus, central to this paper is the responsiveness of the TVET curriculum in the engineering sector towards, economic development, innovativeness, and employability as it seeks to provide skills that the labour market and economy demand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of PPPs in skills development in TVET

PPPs play a critical role in availing funds for more robust, work-relevant, customised skills, knowledge, and attitudes that were not in existence between the public and private sectors in the olden days. United Nations (2011) opines that many states have found that partnership with the private sector increase and improves the supply of resources in skills training. PPPs allow the sharing of risks, responsibilities, resources, and expertise of each partner toward meeting the objectives of both entities (International Labor Organization, 2018).

Furthermore, PPPs contribute to supporting engagement with the public sector and industry in identifying training gaps through ascertaining and judging the demanded skills against the training curricula, upgrading staff qualifications, and enabling work placement for graduates. (International Labor Organization, 2018). In South Africa, it was reported that 50% of the Grade 12 graduates are insufficiently trained with elementary skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are necessary to find a job which can be redressed by involving the private sector to

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK contribute to training (Dakchyata TVET Practical Partnership , 2018). A Kenyan experience attests that private sector participation plays a crucial role in increasing employment and revenue for society, community, and individuals (Manyonge & Kyalo, 2020). The challenges heightened above can be successfully averted if a responsive curriculum is put in place in TVET institutions so that training becomes relevant and responsive to the labor market skills realities.

The challenges of PPPs for skills development in TVET

The scenario in most developing countries substantiates the adoption of PPPs by many governments to leverage socio-economic standing. The undeniable truth is hinged on the lack of capacity in the public sector in implementing PPPs projects (United Nations, 2011; UNESCO, 2019). The barometer for readiness to implement PPPs is accredited to the availability of handbooks and complementary information materials in support of PPPs development as well as the capacity-building of public service officials. The argument is that in the absence of such guidebooks, manuals, information materials, and trained public servants it becomes a challenge that makes it difficult to develop, implement and effectively monitor PPPs (United Nations, 2011).

In most cases of PPPs, there are overt rifts between the public sector and private sector policy conception of a PPP, with some industry representatives in an open clash with the government (Dakchyata TVET Practical Partnership , 2018). This is the evidence of discord on PPPs with the private sector and public sector seeming to be advancing different goals, outcomes, aims, and objectives with the private sector seeking to grow their industries' profits margin and the private sector interested in getting people qualified (Dakchyata TVET Practical Partnership , 2018). This disharmony is caused by the failure of involved parties in partnership to agree on set priorities leading to the delivery failure of a PPP.

The benefit of PPPs in sustainable skills development in TVET

Benefits drawn from any PPP agreement according to International Labor Organization (2018) include assisting students in specific trades to gain teaching that leads to employment in industry and the underprivileged especially women are supported through funding to see their training through. There is also sharing of financial and human resources with private sector entities to perform industry-specific training.

Through PPPs, both parties benefit by having shared costs and the right to use TVET institution expertise, machinery, and equipment, and students have a dual learning approach of college and workplace-related learning leading to pertinent skills for the enterprises (International Labor Organization , 2018). The dual experience through PPPs benefits students by getting an action-oriented learning experience making an enormous impact on the sustainable skills development of TVET scholars as they will be equipped with the right skills for employability.

Moreover, the establishment of joint ventures with the industry especially those who enjoy respected fiscal and material resources and know-how can support governments to increase the excellence of teaching, learning, and training services of TVET programs (Manyonge & Kyalo, 2020). Such technical support from the private sector to the public sector leads to the attainment of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) goals.

METHODOLOGY

Using a mixed methods approach located in the pragmatism paradigm, the study sought to establish the feasibility of PPPs for sustainable skills development in TVET by soliciting data from institutions of higher learning and industry. A simple random sampling of 5 TVET institutions and 10 lecturers, 5 administrators, and 5 captains of industry were purposively sampled to respond and participate in the study respectively. The research strategy was informed by exploratory design with a sequential qualitative and then quantitative qualitative research informing the quantitative aspect (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The data were descriptively and thematically analysed for a balanced view of the findings. Document analysis was also used to buttress the emerging responses and views from the respondents and participants respectively. The participants were coded with pseudo names; Lecturer =L1 –L10, Administrators =A1-A5, and Captains of Industry =COI 1-COI 5.

Results and Discussion

The collected data are presented and analysed in themes as well as emergent trends from the data. The presentation includes well-chosen themes which are understanding the concept Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), the possibility of PPPs strategy for skills development in TVET, the role of PPPs strategy in skills development in TVET, the contribution of industry in skills development in TVET, motivation of TVET institutions in PPPs, challenges in having PPPs for skills development in TVET and viability of private sector financing skills development in TVET.

Understanding the concept Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

The study looked at how participants understood the concept of PPPs regarding their experience in Higher and Tertiary education. The thrust was to find out the level of comprehension of this strategy since it is widely accepted in providing equitable, affordable, and spot-on skills focussed education. Understanding the concept of PPPs forms the foundation of notable variables contributing to this study. Excerpts of lecturers are as follows;

L2: I am not that familiarised with the term PPPs since we rarely use this strategy in training students, but I frequently hear about it on TV when they speak about mega construction projects. As a lecturer who is into teaching, I don't bother myself much about PPPs for I think it's an administration issue.

L5 had a similar view as L2 as asserted: As for me this concept is for business-related stuff which does not affect me at this college because there are bosses who are into that. One administrator divulged that: This concept is about two parties working together and that is the government and private companies. They work together on projects but on skills training I have not seen that happening over the years I have been here.

A captain of industry COI 1 emphasized the concept that:

This is when private and public entities come up with agreeable terms of conditions through signed contracts to carry out a project where private companies bring in funding and other resources.

The data revealed mixed views on understanding the concept of PPPs among lecturers, administrators, and captains of the industry. Some lecturers admitted that the concept of PPPs was relatively new to them as they apportioned its contribution and relevance to mega construction projects. They divorced the concept from their day-to-day work by relegating PPPs to an administrative issue that does not directly involve them. From the administrator and captain of industry's views, the concept of PPPs was well explained showing greater understanding and familiarization at their level of operation. It is also evident that participants' understanding of the concept was linked to construction work as they never indicate a link of PPPs to skills training.

Possibility of PPPs strategy for skills development in TVET

An analysis of the possibility of a PPPs strategy for skills development in TVET was done. 91.7% appraised the possibility of PPPs strategy for skills development and 8.3% were of the contrary view. Responses strongly indicate that PPPs can be exploited for skills development according to the respondents. The above statistics were substantiated through data solicited from the interviews as evidenced by the ensuing extracts

L1: *It is very possible to engage in PPPs for skills development. As TVET colleges we train students for the industry so partnerships are a possibility but there is a need to spell out the exact skills which should be considered for such an arrangement.*

L7: *Yes, I believe it is quite possible to bring the private sector as an equal partner in our programs because we are here to supply the industry with skilled workers. At this college, we are guided by the skills proficiency schedule from industry which is a partnership of some sort.*

L10: *This is possible because Polytechnic is meant to produce graduates who would serve the industry, so PPPs would mean more support from the industry.*

Agreeing with the lecturers' views were Administrators who had this to say;

A1: *It is more than possible as long as there is a clear road map for doing it. PPPs are contractual so the two parties agree on skills to focus on.*

A4: *We are already in partnership with the industry because we engage them when we review our programmes so that we become relevant. Apprenticeship is a collaboration between us and the private players.*

Contrary to the above assertions were lecturers L2 and L4 who insisted respectively that:

This is problematic in the sense that the private sector is for profit-making so it does not have time to part with resources so partnering for skills development is impossible.

I think PPPs can work for infrastructural development where the private sector advances its interests of making money not training people.

The data indicated that PPPs are exploitable as a strategy for skills development as most of the participants averred its possibility. Some participants claimed that due to consultancy they make with the private sector and offering apprenticeship programmes they are already implementing PPPs. This view is partially accepted save for the lack of signed contracts or agreements between the entities which disqualify it as a public-private partnership. Also emerging from data were conflicting sentiments on the possibility of a PPPs strategy for skills development with a major argument based on different goals of the private and public sectors

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK where the private sector is for profit realisation so it cannot sufficiently contribute to skills development.

Role of PPPs strategy in skills development in TVET

The study also sought to find out from participants the role of PPPs to verify their depth of conceptualisation of the strategy and its potential in skills training.

Lectures expounded

L1: *To expose TVET to industry, promote research, take students on attachments & possibly funding...*

L3: *Supporting the pedagogy of TVET through program modification/ upgrading to mean the demands of society and addressing Education,5.0 mantra, Increasing relevant skills*

L6: *Attachment of students and their training to enhance the hands-on approach. Also, help in the fulfillment of Education 5.0.*

Administrators explained;

A3: *To equip graduates with the skills to develop the country*

A4: *Provision of laboratory equipment and training software, student mentorship (industrial attachment training), collaboration in design and conduct of academic and research activities.*

Captain of Industry averred;

COI 2: *Firstly, giving the students the experience that is required by the industries then secondly, equipping them with the latest knowledge and technology*

COI4: *It plays a role in skills development and knowledge exchange, creating a sustainable economy, and creating opportunities for the students to gain hands-on experience. It can also provide a pathway to full-time employment after graduation/completion of their studies.*

The data confirmed a variety of roles of PPPs in skills development in TVET. Most of the views were centred on the collaboration of TVET and industry particularly with on hands skills, industrial attachment, student mentorship, technology knowledge, and supporting pedagogy. Some participants indicated that PPPs have a role in providing skills to develop the country as well as providing a pathway for employment after their studies. The data was not specific on the skills that develop the country. It was a generalised view that needed further clarity.

Contribution of industry in skills development in TVET

Making a follow-up on the role of PPPs the study pursued to find out the contribution of industry in skills development in TVET. The contribution of the industry was of importance to integrating the PPPs strategy for sustainable skills development in TVET. Participants had this to say;

L3: *Internship, presentations, engagement, interaction, exchange of ideas, funding of research, scholarships, etc*

L6: *The industry contribute to skills development by offering opportunities for learning to pursue their careers through on-the-job education and training platform.*

The industry also contributes to TVET skills development through funding and taking care of students on work-related training.

A1: It contributes to skills development by opening up facilities for learners to gain hands-on through the shop floor platforms at the industry's disposal.

A5: Through industry attachment and PPPs and donation of equipment to the tertiary institutions

COI5: Industrial attachment opportunities which can provide students with technical/professional skills. Provide students with access to state-of-the-art research facilities/equipment which will enhance the student's skills and capacities.

A divergent view of L4 highlighted that;

Not much is being done due to the non-functionality of industry and the dead economy [in Zimbabwe].

The data reveal an array of the direct and indirect contributions of industry to the skills development in TVET. Notable points on the contribution of the industry were professional development, funding, donation, sharing of facilities, shop floor platforms, and scholarships. It can be analyzed that major contributions were job education and training platforms, equipping students with work knowledge and experience, and donation of equipment to tertiary institutions for students to have experiential learning. However, one lecture argued that there is not much in the current fold considering that the fiscal space of Zimbabwe is stretched for any meaningful contribution by the industry toward skills development.

The motivation of TVET institutions in Public-Private Partnerships

The study wanted to find out the motivation of TVET institutions in PPPs based on four variables namely sharing expertise, funding, skills development, and Prestige. These variables were considered not exclusively therefore an open variable of stating any other reason was also considered.

On what motivates PPPs in TVET institutions, sharing expertise and skills development stood out with 100% agreeing responses followed by funding sitting on 80% and as few respondents as 30% indicating prestige. The responses indicate that TVET institutions are motivated to be in partnership with the private sector by the need to share and exchange expertise in skills transfer and development. Funding had a high regard as a motivator for TVET colleges in PPPs, highlighting the need to harness financial resources through partnerships. A very small percentage was interested in the prestige of being in partnership with the private sector which is attributed to self-glory expediency.

Some participants suggested one other reason of political mileage which motivated TVET institutions to be in PPPs. Other TVET institutions would opt to be in partnership with private players for political appropriateness which may increase their chances of getting support somehow.

Challenges in having PPPs for skills development in TVET

Four explicit variables namely lack of knowledge of PPPs, lack of incentives, policy, and legal frameworks, and negative attitudes were streamlined as major challenges in having PPPs for sustainable skills development. Respondents were allowed to respond to offered challenges but an option to add any other challenge was provided to solicit new insights.

Respondents provided their responses about the challenges that affect the adoption of PPPs for skills development where 100% agreed on lack of knowledge in PPPs, 90% agreed on the unavailability of Policy and Legal Frameworks, 85% agreed on lack of incentives and 75% agreed on a negative attitude.

Another challenge proffered was *politics, with strings attached and manipulation as well as conflicting interests between the private and public sectors.*

The percentages above are reflective of challenges of ignorance of PPPs, limited or no legal policies on PPPs skills development, and lack of motivators such as incentives and institutional barriers in form of negative attitudes. Conflict of interest is commonly found in PPPs because the government would be targeting public development and appraisal yet the industry focuses on improved return on investment. Reviewed literature supported this notion as witnessed in South Africa's PPPs set-up where private and public sectors advance different goals, outcomes aims and objectives with the private sector seeking to grow its industries and profits and the public sector aims getting people qualified (Dakchyata TVET Practical Partnership , 2018). This narrative of conflicting interests can be addressed through a responsive curriculum that would specify each part's contribution to the production of skilled personnel.

Viability of private sector financing skills development in TVET

A deliberate effort of understanding the viability of private sector financing skills development was made to solicit both quantitative and qualitative responses and views respectively. Regarding a quantitative approach to whether it was sustainable for the private sector to finance skills in TVET, obtaining statistics showed that 81,8% of the respondents agreed and 18,2% disagreed.

A qualitative approach through interviews had the following excerpts;

Lecturers L4 and L9 appraised respectively that

Partnerships also contribute more to productivity so private entities can finance skills development and entrepreneurship skills development agenda.

The private sector has enough resources to help out. They have financial resources from their operations. They have all the resources

One administrators A5 asserted that;

It is very sustainable. After all, when the students complete their courses in TVET they will find no challenges in joining the industry because they would have dealt with the right skills required by those particular industries.

Captains of Industry weighed in,

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COI 1: *It is sustainable in the sense that acquired skills will be implemented to make the economy sustainable since the skills will not benefit those individuals alone.*

Investing in skills development in TVET will lead to graduates who are better prepared for the industry than a quality workforce when they eventually join the industry upon graduation.

COI 3: *The industry has the finances and in any case, TVET skills will benefit them [industry] through PPPs in the long run.*

COI 4: *This a viable model because all parties benefit. If the private sector finances skills training programmes they get rebates from Government through agencies like ZIMDEF which will lessen their mandatory skills development levies pay.*

There was a dissenting view regarding the viability of private sector financing skills development in TVET as put across by L10 that;

Given the current economic environment in the country[Zimbabwe] it is unsustainable due to economic and political instability. Industries are finding it hard to survive, the environment is fluid.

The data showed that some of the views supporting the statistics were the private sector's ability to have enough resources to help out TVET institutions in skills development. Some views noted investment in skills development in the TVET as beneficial to both the public and private sectors. It also came out from data that when the private sector finance skills development graduates become relevant and employable. This is in agreement with reviewed literature where in South Africa the Skills Development Act (1998) mandates Sector Education and Training Authorities to collect a 1% levy of the salary bill from private companies through the revenue authority (Dakchyata TVET Practical Partnership , 2018). This is similar to the Zimbabwe situation which commands private employers to pay a levy to Zimbabwe Manpower Planning and Development(ZIMDEF) to finance the production of professionals, skilled workers, and trainees in general (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001). Accordingly, it is viable for private sector financing skills training through levies and donations. Contrary, the current economic situation in the country was exposed as a deterrent to private sector financing skills development due to poor fiscal space.

The study established a mixed view on understanding the concept of PPPs among lecturers, administrators, and captains of the industry. Participants confessed the concept of PPPs was relatively new to them, particularly to skills development in TVET. There was a detachment of the concept from training programmes relegating PPPs to infrastructure development. This corroborates with reviewed literature that PPPs strategy was embraced mostly for the development improving infrastructure and expansion projects principally in power, transport, water sectors, and national highways (Dube & Chigumira, 2010; Zinyama & Nhema, 2015). The argument was based on labelling PPPs as a business strategy normally managed and implemented by senior officers of the public and private sectors. This notion was verified to be a leadership-driven concept because administrators and captains of industry were much familiar with the concept of PPP and its functions. This calls for sensitisation on the concept so that lecturers, tutors, and training officers are made aware of what it entails to have joint ventures in skills training.

It was established that PPP is exploitable as a strategy for skills development. Though the dispute arises in the lack of sector-specific statutes, particularly in Zimbabwe where legal clauses are yet to be harmonised with the new constitution as amended in 2013 (Masekesa, 2021). The possibility of PPPs contributing meaningfully towards sustainable skills development requires precise sectorial definitions so that the model is seen beyond infrastructure improvement. Some participants highlighted apprenticeship programs and routine industry consultations as a testimony to the feasibility of the PPPs strategy for skills development because they have a collaborative aspect of including the government and industry. However, this narrative of considering an apprenticeship or situated learning as PPPs is relatively correct as the literature refers to apprenticeship as that form of learning entrenched in the real work situation and positioned in the workplace (Gessler, 2019). Experience has it that apprenticeship programmes are legally binding between public and private sectors for skilling but it is an initiative of private entities to capacitate its human resources with relevant skills for performance and effective production as pronounced in the Zimbabwe Manpower Planning and Development Act Amended 2001 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001). The Manpower Planning and Development Act, 2001 does not mention public-private partnership on the Contract of Apprenticeship but Section 38 Sub-section 3 states that, "A contract of apprenticeship in a designated trade shall be lodged for registration by the employer and the Secretary shall, upon the registration of the contract, notify the employer and the apprentice of the registration in such form and manner as may be prescribed." (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001). It is evident, according to the cited section that a partnership for manpower development is entered into among an apprentice, employer, and the secretary, where the employer represents the private sector and the secretary represents the government which satisfies a PPP model of skills training. Though there is public authority intervention in skills training in Zimbabwe the term PPPs for skills development is not mentioned within the discourse of the production of trained professional human resources. There is a need for explicit statutes on the involvement of PPPs for sustainable development where the model is given preference on interpretation for the avoidance of doubt.

The study further notes the role of PPPs in skills development in TVET with substantial views centred on the provision of hands-on skills, industrial attachment, student mentorship, technology knowledge, and supporting adaptive and innovative pedagogy. Reviewed literature indicates that many states have found that partnerships with the private sector have a role of increasing and improving the supply of resources in skills training, curricula formulation, upgrading staff qualifications, and enabling work placement for graduates (United Nations, 2011; International Labor Organization, 2018). It was asserted that PPPs have a role in providing skills to develop the country as well as providing pathways for employment after their studies which are in sync with the Kenyan experience which confirms that private sector participation plays a crucial role in increasing employment and revenue for the society, community and individuals (Manyonge & Kyalo, 2020). The data was not explicit on the skills that develop the country but according to the literature, any critical skill and knowledge that lead to employability are considered skills for national development. In this regard, it is encouraged for the public sector through public training institutions to petition

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK for partnerships with the private sector for the benefit of the public in accessing employment due to exposure and experiential learning.

Concerning challenges in having PPPs for skills development in TVET the study established a lack of knowledge in PPPs which was in tandem with reviewed literature that PPPs fail due to a lack of capacity in the public sector in implementing projects (United Nations, 2011; UNESCO, 2019). On the issues of unavailability of Policy and Legal Frameworks literature is at variance because frameworks such as Statutory Instrument(SI) 219 of 1997 and Manpower Planning and Development Act Amended 2001 are already in place but are mute on exact PPP strategy for skills development. These frameworks testify to the availability of legal and regulatory frameworks for government and non-governmental skills development institutions. The challenge is on the vague interpretation of the term PPPs but a critical analogy of the wording of these statutes points to the joint ventures between the public and private sectors. It is recommended to have a review of the existing statutes to responsive and proactive policies which directly pronounce how PPPs for skills development are supposed to function. On the lack of incentives respondents highly scored it as a challenge though this can be partially correct for the reason that Zimbabwe has got a financing model for the production of skilled personnel. Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) is a specific funding and incentivising model for students/trainees and companies respectively. This is contained in the Manpower Planning and Development Act Amended 2001 on Section 47 sub-section 2 that, "Subject to this Act, the object for which the Fund is established shall be the development of skilled manpower in Zimbabwe." The function of the fund motivates students through paying for allowances, costs, and out-of-pocket expenses and awards for excelling trainees and institutions /employers benefit from ZIMDEF in form of rebates for the promotion of human resources development (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001). This proves that PPPs strategy can be integrated into mainstream skills training since motivators and incentives for both parties are already contained in legal and regulatory frameworks.

CONCLUSIONS

Emanating from the findings of the study it can be concluded that PPPs is a strategy that most of the participants exclusively link to infrastructure improvement. The concept was divorced from skills development, particularly from lecturers' views. Captains of industry had depth and diverse understanding of the strategy beyond scope of infrastructure development. There should be awareness raising and sensitisation on the PPPs strategy as a model for pronounced opportunities for skills development in TVET. Additionally, the study concluded that PPPs are exploitable as a strategy for skills development since there are existing partnerships between industry and government in apprenticeship programmes. There should be clarity of Policy and Legal Frameworks to incorporate PPPs for skills development. The current policies emphasize on PPPs for the construction of mega projects which can be widened to include joint ventures in skills development with clear terms and conditions. On the role of industry in skills development it was summed up that it is essential to action-oriented learning characterised by hands-on skills, industrial attachment, student mentorship, technology knowledge, and supporting adaptive and innovative pedagogy. Regarding factors that motivate TVET institutions in joint ventures for skills production, it was concluded that, to a greater extent,

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is the need to share and exchange expertise and funding also to a lesser extent was prestige and political mileage for those in charge of the institutions. It is suggested that TVET institutions should be dynamic and responsive to modifications and innovation in the TVET space by incorporating other strategies for enhanced and responsive skills training. The study further indicated that unawareness of PPPs, limited or no legal clear policies on PPPs, lack of incentives, conflicting interests between entities, institutional barriers in form of negative attitudes and socio-political instability were major challenges to Public Private Partnerships. Lastly, it was established that it is viable for private sector financing skills training through levies and donations with Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund(ZIMDEF) confirming that skills development is viable for economic and customised human capital development.

Author's biography

Tapiwa Muzari is a lecturer in the Department of Technical and Engineering Education and Training in the Faculty of Science and Technology Education at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Zimbabwe. The author's research interests include Wood Science and Technology (processing, designing, and manufacturing), Education for Sustainable Development in Technical and Vocational Education, and Training and Skills Development.

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