

Public Private Partnership Contract Management Failure in Information Technology Service Delivery: a Qualitative Inquiry into the South African Department of Labour ERP Implementation Project

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by *Rene Winifred Albertus*

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Review

Rene Winifred Albertus undertook this significant piece of research which effectively develops an understanding of the special challenges of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) management in the context of emerging and developing countries. The research is guided by an agency theory framework and utilises a multi-method approach to conduct three empirical studies into the PPP institutional framework, project governance and public accountability aspects of the South African Department of Labour (DOL) and Siemens Information Services (SIS) project.

- Study 1 of this publication used an agency theory framework to interrogate the PPP institutional framework to understand its provisions for identifying and managing risk factors in information and communication technology service delivery projects.
- Study 2 of this publication analysed data from interviews with stakeholders, the contract meeting minutes and other relevant documents, guided by the agency theory framework to develop an understanding of project governance challenges.
- Study 3 of this research focused on identifying public accountability issues and used a critical discourse analysis methodology to interrogate the media discourse concerning the failure of the DOL-SIS enterprise resource planning implementation failure.

Chapter 1 clearly states the research problem and effectively lays out the context of this research with great selection of research papers. Study goals and objectives are clearly stated and the research questions are well formatted for this publication; a table (pg. 10) clearly summarises the empirical questions related to each investigation, the research method to be used and the research strategy involved.

Chapter 2 provides us with a comprehensive and up-to-date literature review which facilitates good understanding of the topics involved (e.g. PPP, PPP legislative guidelines, and critical success factors for Information Systems implementation projects). This is an excellent literature review which provides differing viewpoints; the author has clearly spent time finding the relevant articles.



Chapter 3 presents a detailed and well explained overview of agency theory framework used and its appropriateness to this publication.

Chapter 4 describes the multi-method approach adopted for this publication, which combines content analysis and critical discourse analysis. Pg. 56 (table 7) summarises research method for each area of investigation which has been explained in detail earlier in the chapter. This chapter takes one through the study very effectively and guides every step of the process.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 explain all three studies in this publication very well, highlighting why these studies are important and what will be the usefulness of these studies along with limitations and future research directions. All chapters have a clear layout with clear explanation of why researcher is doing what she is doing.

Chapter 8 presents a detailed discussion of the empirical findings of the three studies (explained in chapters 5, 6 and 7) and provides an integrative theoretical explanation of the conditions influencing the failure of the DOL/PPP initiative, along with recommendations for improving PPP management practice in South Africa and the wider context of developing countries. This chapter explains the findings very clearly, identifies limitations and provides useful conclusions. Based on the findings from the three studies, the researcher proposes a new model for formulating PPP contracts for ICT/IS service delivery (pg. 157).

Conclusion

Without any ambiguity, this is a good-quality publication which presents contribution to knowledge in PPP. The research undertaken is contextualised clearly, and accurately references the larger field of knowledge on the topic. The research results are reported clearly and are easy to understand. The analyses and conclusions drawn from the research are well-justified and integrated into the larger field of knowledge. The implications and limitations of the publication are discussed and the writing of the document is of a professional standard.

Furthermore, the publication is beautifully presented, in a top down approach, which greatly improves readability. All in all, this is an impressive work and lays the foundation for additional scholarly work to further advance knowledge in this important field of PPPs.

This publication is relevant not only to the South African public sector but to public sectors in other countries, that use PPPs for contracting with private organisations for information systems implementation.

I hope you will find this reading as interesting as I did and appreciate how it is linked with making improvements in societies and businesses. If you have interest in PPPs, this is a great read!

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