

Public-Private Partnerships in Times of Uncertainty: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Multisector Governance Approaches in Nigeria

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Abstract

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have become an important governance mechanism for improving public service delivery and strengthening institutional resilience, particularly during periods of national uncertainty. Despite their growing adoption in Nigeria, concerns remain regarding the institutional and governance factors that influence their effectiveness. This study evaluated the effectiveness of public-private partnerships as a multisector governance approach during periods of uncertainty in Nigeria and identified the barriers that limit their success. A cross-sectional survey design was employed to collect data from 300 purposively selected respondents comprising 150 public-sector officials from selected federal ministries and 150 private-sector representatives involved in partnership initiatives. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis. The findings indicate strong support for public-private partnerships, with 76%-86% of respondents agreeing that these partnerships improve public service delivery, enhance institutional responsiveness, and facilitate effective resource mobilization during crises. Despite these positive perceptions, policy inconsistency, corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, weak regulatory frameworks, and limited stakeholder trust were identified as major constraints to partnership effectiveness. More than 70% of respondents reported low levels of trust among stakeholders, while over half indicated that information sharing and collaborative decision-making remained inadequate. Although 65.3% agreed that public-private partnerships remain effective during periods of uncertainty, institutional frameworks exhibited only a weak and statistically insignificant relationship with perceived partnership effectiveness. The study concludes that strengthening institutional capacity, promoting policy consistency, improving regulatory frameworks, and fostering trust and collaboration among stakeholders are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of public-private partnerships in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty.

Keywords: institutional trust; service delivery; public-private partnerships.

Introduction

The governance landscape has become increasingly complex in the twenty-first century because of rapid global transformations, economic instability, public health emergencies, climate-related shocks, and persistent institutional challenges. These developments have exposed the limitations of traditional government-centered approaches to public administration, particularly in developing countries where public institutions often face severe financial and administrative constraints. Consequently, collaborative governance arrangements, particularly public-private partnerships (PPPs), have gained increasing attention as practical mechanisms for enhancing institutional resilience, improving service delivery, and promoting sustainable development during periods of uncertainty (World Bank, 2022; Central Bank of Nigeria, 2023).

Nigeria provides an important context for examining the effectiveness of public-private partnerships in uncertain environments. As Africa's most populous country, Nigeria continues to experience significant infrastructure deficits, fiscal volatility, and institutional weaknesses despite its enormous economic potential (Akinrinade & Akinola, 2021). Over the past decade, the country has experienced several major economic and public health crises, most notably the 2014 global oil price collapse and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The decline in global oil prices reduced government revenue by more than 60%, contributing to a recession in which the country's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 1.6% (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2016). Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted economic activities, resulting in a 6.1% contraction in GDP during the second quarter of 2020 (World Bank, 2020). These events highlighted the limitations of relying solely on government institutions to respond effectively to national emergencies.

In response to these challenges, public-private partnerships and other forms of multi-sector collaboration have become increasingly central to Nigeria's development agenda. Although PPPs have long been recognized as a strategy for infrastructure development, their role has expanded to include strengthening institutional responsiveness, mobilizing resources, improving public service delivery, and supporting crisis management. The establishment of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) in 2008 provided an institutional framework for coordinating PPP initiatives across sectors, including transportation, energy, healthcare, housing, and agriculture. By 2022, Nigeria had initiated more than 200 PPP projects valued at over US\$20 billion (ICRC, 2022), demonstrating the growing importance of collaborative governance in addressing complex development challenges.

The significance of these partnerships became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID), a private sector-led initiative, mobilized more than ₦39 billion to support the national public health response through the provision of medical equipment, personal protective equipment, food relief, and the construction of isolation centers across the country (CACOVID, 2021). Likewise, organizations such as the Dangote Foundation, MTN Nigeria, and Access Bank collaborated with federal and state governments to strengthen healthcare delivery, logistics, and emergency financing during the crisis (Akinbinu, 2021). Similar collaborative initiatives have been implemented in agriculture through the Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL), which facilitated over ₦120 billion in agricultural financing between 2018 and 2021, thereby contributing to improved food security during periods of economic instability (NIRSAL, 2021).

The increasing reliance on collaborative governance reflects broader developments in public administration theory. Collaborative Governance Theory, developed by Ansell and Gash (2008), provides a useful framework for understanding how governments, private organizations, and civil society can jointly address complex public problems through dialogue, trust, shared responsibility, and collective decision-making. Within the Nigerian context, where governance challenges are frequently characterised by fragmented institutions and limited public trust, collaborative governance offers opportunities to combine resources, expertise, and innovation to achieve shared public objectives.

The effectiveness of collaborative governance, however, depends not only on stakeholder commitment, but also on the quality of institutional arrangements that support these partnerships. Institutional Theory emphasizes that both formal and informal

institutional rules shape organizational behavior and influence governance outcomes (North, 1990). In Nigeria, persistent challenges, including policy inconsistency, weak regulatory enforcement, bureaucratic inefficiency, and corruption continue to undermine the performance of public-private partnerships (Adebayo & Olamitoye, 2019; Salami, 2020). Although the establishment of the ICRC has strengthened the formal institutional framework for PPP implementation, deficiencies in contract enforcement, project monitoring, accountability mechanisms, and risk-sharing arrangements remain significant obstacles (Ilesanmi & Adeniran, 2020; Olajide & Olasina, 2019). Previous studies have also shown that these institutional weaknesses contribute to project delays, cost overruns, and project abandonment across several sectors (Ezeani & Ugwuzor, 2021; Ilesanmi & Adeniran, 2020). Understanding how institutional arrangements facilitate or constrain collaborative governance is therefore essential for evaluating the effectiveness of PPPs in Nigeria.

Despite the increasing adoption of public-private partnerships in Nigeria, empirical evidence on their effectiveness during periods of national uncertainty remains limited. Existing studies have largely focused on infrastructure development or sector-specific outcomes, with relatively little attention given to the broader governance dimensions of institutional effectiveness, stakeholder collaboration, and partnership resilience during crises. Addressing this gap is important for informing policies that strengthen collaborative governance and improve national preparedness for future economic and public health emergencies.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of public-private partnerships as a multisector governance approach during periods of uncertainty in Nigeria. Guided by Collaborative Governance Theory and Institutional Theory, the study specifically seeks to: (i) examine the role of public-private partnerships in enhancing public service delivery and institutional responsiveness during periods of national uncertainty; (ii) evaluate how institutional frameworks, stakeholder coordination, trust, and shared decision-making influence the effectiveness of public-private partnership governance models; and (iii) identify the major challenges and barriers that hinder the effectiveness of public-private partnerships during periods of economic volatility and health crises.

Methods and Materials

Study Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to evaluate the effectiveness of public-private partnerships (PPPs) during periods of national uncertainty in Nigeria. A survey design was considered appropriate because it enables the collection of standardized information from a relatively large number of respondents with direct experience in public-private collaboration. The design also facilitated the assessment of stakeholders' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of PPPs, institutional factors, stakeholder coordination, and the challenges affecting collaborative governance.

Study Population and Sample

The study comprised 300 respondents, including 150 public-sector officials drawn from the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Federal Ministry of Health, and 150 private-sector representatives consisting of executives, project coordinators, and technical personnel from organizations that had partnered with government agencies in the infrastructure, agriculture, and healthcare sectors.

A stratified purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure adequate representation of respondents from both the public and private sectors. The sampling process involved two stages. First, the study population was stratified into two broad groups based on organizational affiliation: (i) public-sector institutions (Federal Ministries of Works and Housing, Agriculture and Rural Development, and Health) and (ii) private-sector organizations that had previously participated in public-private partnership initiatives within these sectors. This stratification ensured that perspectives from both principal stakeholders in collaborative governance were adequately represented.

Within each stratum, purposive sampling was then employed to identify respondents with substantial knowledge and direct experience of public-private partnership

implementation. Eligibility was restricted to individuals who had worked in their organizations for more than ten years. This criterion was adopted because such individuals were more likely to have participated in, or closely observed, PPP implementation during major national events, including the 2014 economic recession, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other periods of institutional uncertainty. Their accumulated experience was therefore expected to provide more informed and reliable assessments of partnership effectiveness than respondents with shorter professional experience.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study. The instrument was designed to obtain information on respondents' demographic characteristics and the major constructs investigated in the study. The questionnaire comprised five sections: - respondents' demographic characteristics; - the nature of public-private partnerships; - effectiveness and outcomes of public-private partnerships; -institutional and regulatory context; and - challenges affecting public-private partnerships.

All substantive items were measured using closed-ended questions based on a four-point Likert response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The use of a structured instrument ensured consistency in data collection and facilitated quantitative analysis.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To establish content validity, the draft questionnaire was reviewed independently by three experts in public administration, governance, and public policy. Their recommendations led to revisions that improved the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the questionnaire items with the study objectives.

A pilot study involving 30 participants (10 respondents from each study sector at the state level) was subsequently conducted to evaluate the reliability of the instrument. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating good reliability and confirming that the instrument was suitable for the main study.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted over eight working days, from April 7 to 16, 2025, excluding weekends. An interviewer-administered questionnaire approach was adopted to improve data quality and minimize incomplete responses. Twelve trained research assistants were recruited and organized into six teams of two. Prior to fieldwork, all research assistants participated in a two-day training program (April 2–3, 2025), during which they were familiarized with the study objectives, ethical requirements, questionnaire administration procedures, and data quality assurance protocols.

Within each team, one research assistant administered the questionnaire electronically using Open Data Kit (ODK) installed on a tablet, while the second research assistant simultaneously completed a paper-based version of the questionnaire to verify the responses recorded electronically. At the end of each fieldwork day, both versions were

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages for Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Response options	Private sector employees (n=150)	Public sector employees (n=150)
Sex	Male	102 (68%)	108 (72%)
	Female	48 (32%)	42 (28%)
Age group	31–40 years	36 (24%)	19 (12.7%)
	41–50 years	66 (44%)	72 (48%)
	51 years and above	48 (32%)	59 (39.3%)
Education	B.Sc. or equivalent	106 (70.7%)	45 (30%)
	Master's degree (MSc)	44 (29.3%)	93 (62%)
	PhD	0 (0%)	12 (8%)
Marital status	Single	30 (20%)	18 (12%)
	Married	117 (78%)	123 (82%)
	Divorced/separated	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)
	Widowed	3 (2%)	8 (5.3%)
Years of experience	11–15 years	45 (30%)	39 (26%)
	16–20 years	72 (48%)	69 (46%)
	21 years and above	33 (22%)	42 (28%)

Role of Public–Private Partnerships in Enhancing Public Service Delivery and Institutional Responsiveness

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate a generally positive perception of public-private partnerships during periods of national uncertainty in Nigeria. Between 76.0% and 86.0% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that PPPs contributed positively to governance outcomes.

The strongest level of agreement (86.0%) was observed for the statement that expanding public-private partnerships is essential for building a resilient and responsive

Table 2

Frequencies (percentages) and mean (standard deviation) for the role of public-private partnerships in enhancing public service delivery and institutional responsiveness during periods of national uncertainty in Nigeria

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean (SD)
Public-private partnerships have contributed to improved public service delivery during national crises in Nigeria.	12 (4.0%)	45 (15.0%)	137 (45.7%)	106 (35.3%)	3.12 (0.76)

compared to identify and correct inconsistencies before the electronic data were uploaded to a secure central server.

This dual-entry verification procedure enhanced data accuracy and reduced the likelihood of transcription errors. Upon completion of data collection, the electronic dataset was exported into Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS for data cleaning and statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The cleaned data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and describe perceptions regarding the effectiveness of public-private partnerships. To examine the relationship between institutional factors and the perceived effectiveness of public-private partnerships, Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis was conducted. This non-parametric statistical technique was considered appropriate because the study variables were measured using ordinal Likert-scale responses. Statistical significance was set at the 5% level ($p < .05$).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Formal permission to conduct the research was obtained from the participating ministries and organizations before data collection commenced. All respondents received detailed information regarding the purpose of the study and were informed that participation was entirely voluntary. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant before questionnaire administration. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes in accordance with accepted ethical standards for social science research.

Results

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Among public sector participants, 48.0% were aged 41–50 years, while 39.3% were aged 51 years and above. Most public sector respondents held a master's degree (62.0%), whereas 8.0% possessed doctoral qualifications. In the private sector, 44.0% of respondents were aged 41–50 years, and 32.0% were aged 51 years and above. The majority (70.7%) held a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Male respondents constituted the larger proportion of participants in both the public sector (72.0%) and the private sector (68.0%). Most respondents were married (82.0% in the public sector and 78.0% in the private sector). In terms of professional experience, almost half of the respondents in both sectors had worked for between 16 and 20 years, indicating that the study largely captured the perceptions of experienced professionals who had participated in public-private partnerships during different periods of national uncertainty. See Table 1.

public sector ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.72$). Similarly, over four-fifths of respondents agreed that PPPs improved public service delivery (81.0%) and enhanced institutional responsiveness during economic and health emergencies (82.0%). Approximately three-quarters also agreed that PPPs improved resource mobilization (76.6%) and service delivery efficiency (76.0%). These findings suggest that respondents perceive public-private partnerships as valuable governance mechanisms for strengthening institutional responsiveness and improving service delivery during periods of national crisis. See Table 2.

Public-private partnerships have enhanced the responsiveness of public institutions during economic or health emergencies.	15 (5.0%)	39 (13.0%)	142 (47.3%)	104 (34.7%)	3.12 (0.78)
Private sector involvement has improved the efficiency of public service delivery during crises.	18 (6.0%)	54 (18.0%)	133 (44.3%)	95 (31.7%)	3.02 (0.82)
Public-private partnerships have helped in mobilizing resources more effectively during national emergencies.	21 (7.0%)	49 (16.3%)	127 (42.3%)	103 (34.3%)	3.04 (0.85)
Public institutions that partnered with private organizations performed better during national uncertainty.	20 (6.7%)	59 (19.7%)	139 (46.3%)	82 (27.3%)	2.94 (0.84)
Increasing public-private partnerships is essential for a resilient and responsive public sector in Nigeria.	10 (3.3%)	32 (10.7%)	136 (45.3%)	122 (40.7%)	3.23 (0.72)

Influence of Institutional Frameworks on the Effectiveness of Public-Private Partnership Governance Models

Table 3 presents respondents' perceptions of institutional frameworks and their relationship with the effectiveness of public-private partnerships. Exactly half of the respondents agreed that policy consistency and institutional capacity positively influence PPP implementation, whereas the remaining half disagreed. The mean score (2.48 ± 1.01) was slightly below the acceptance threshold of 2.50, suggesting that respondents generally perceived institutional support for PPPs to be inadequate. Similarly, perceptions regarding the overall effectiveness of public-private partnership governance models were divided, with 49.0% expressing positive views and 51.0% expressing negative views.

To determine whether institutional frameworks were associated with perceived partnership effectiveness, Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis was conducted. The analysis produced a weak positive correlation ($\rho = 0.089$), indicating only a minimal tendency for stronger institutional frameworks to be associated with higher perceived effectiveness of public-private partnerships. However, this relationship was not statistically

significant ($p = 0.104$). Consequently, the study failed to provide sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that institutional frameworks significantly influenced the perceived effectiveness of public-private partnership governance models among the respondents.

Although respondents perceived institutional frameworks as important for effective public-private partnerships, Spearman's correlation analysis revealed only a weak and statistically non-significant association between institutional frameworks and perceived partnership effectiveness ($\rho = 0.089$, $p = 0.104$), suggesting that partnership outcomes are likely shaped by multiple governance and contextual factors beyond formal institutional arrangements.

The weak and non-significant association may reflect the complexity of collaborative governance in Nigeria, where partnership effectiveness is influenced by multiple interacting factors beyond formal institutional arrangements, including stakeholder trust, political commitment, leadership quality, bureaucratic efficiency, resource availability, and inter-organizational collaboration. It is therefore likely that institutional frameworks alone are insufficient to explain variations in partnership effectiveness. See Table 3.

Table 3
Frequencies, Percentages, Means, Standard Deviations, and Spearman Rank-Order Correlation for the Influence of Institutional Frameworks on the Effectiveness of Public-Private Governance Models in Nigeria

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean (SD)
Policy consistency and institutional capacity have influenced PPP implementation in Nigeria	50 (18.0%)	96 (32.0%)	102 (34.0%)	48 (16.0%)	2.48 (1.01)
Public-private governance models in Nigeria have been effective	42 (14.0%)	111 (37.0%)	96 (32.0%)	51 (17.0%)	2.52 (1.02)
Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient	0.089				
p value	0.104				
N	300				

Stakeholder Coordination, Trust, and Shared Decision-Making

The findings presented in Table 4 reveal notable weaknesses in stakeholder coordination within public-private partnerships. More than half of respondents (55.0%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that stakeholders openly shared relevant information, resulting in a relatively low mean score (2.09 ± 1.01). Perceived trust among public, private, and civil society actors was particularly low, with 71.6% of respondents expressing disagreement that high levels of trust existed ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 0.96$).

Similarly, over half of the respondents (53.3%) disagreed that decision-making processes adequately reflected input from all participating sectors, while 55.7% believed that partnership goals were not clearly defined or understood by all stakeholders.

Despite these governance challenges, respondents remained generally optimistic regarding the resilience of PPPs. Approximately two-thirds (65.3%) agreed that public-private partnerships remained effective during periods of uncertainty and crisis ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.00$), suggesting that respondents perceived collaborative governance as capable of delivering positive outcomes despite persistent institutional and coordination challenges. See Table 4.

Table 4
Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations for Stakeholder Coordination, Trust, and Shared Decision-Making in Public-Private Partnerships

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean (SD)
Stakeholders in our partnership openly share relevant information with one another.	76 (25.3%)	89 (29.7%)	85 (28.3%)	50 (16.7%)	2.09 (1.01)
There is a high level of trust among the public, private, and civil society actors involved in this partnership.	118 (39.3%)	97 (32.3%)	58 (19.3%)	27 (9.0%)	1.80 (0.96)
Decision-making processes in our partnership reflect input from all key sectors.	67 (22.3%)	93 (31.0%)	91 (30.3%)	49 (16.3%)	2.21 (0.99)
Shared goals are clearly defined and understood by all stakeholders in this partnership.	71 (23.7%)	96 (32.0%)	81 (27.0%)	52 (17.3%)	2.18 (1.01)
Our partnership remains effective even during periods of uncertainty or crisis.	41 (13.7%)	63 (21.0%)	109 (36.3%)	87 (29.0%)	2.71 (1.00)

Challenges Affecting Public-Private Partnerships

Table 5 presents respondents' perceptions of the principal barriers affecting the effectiveness of public-private partnerships in Nigeria.

Policy inconsistency and corruption emerged as the most significant challenges, with more than three-quarters of respondents agreeing that both factors undermine partnership effectiveness ($M = 3.09$ and $M = 3.13$, respectively). Bureaucratic inefficiency ($M = 3.08$), inadequate operational capacity among partner organizations ($M = 3.08$), and weak regulatory frameworks ($M = 3.05$) were also widely recognized as major constraints.

Interestingly, inadequate physical infrastructure was not perceived as the primary barrier. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64.0%) disagreed that infrastructure limitations constituted the principal obstacle to effective partnership implementation during crises ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 1.03$).

Unlike the other barrier variables, the infrastructure item was negatively worded. Consequently, lower mean scores indicate greater disagreement with the statement that inadequate infrastructure limits public-private partnerships. The mean score of 1.72 therefore represents a reverse interpretation, indicating that respondents generally did not perceive inadequate infrastructure as a major barrier to PPP effectiveness during periods of uncertainty. This interpretation is consistent with the finding that 64.0% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

A lack of stakeholder trust was also identified as a critical challenge, with almost four-fifths (79.7%) of respondents agreeing that insufficient trust undermines successful collaboration ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.88$). These findings suggest that governance and institutional challenges, rather than physical infrastructure deficiencies, constitute the principal barriers to effective public-private partnerships in Nigeria. See Table 5.

Table 5
Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations for Challenges and Barriers to Public-Private Partnerships in Nigeria During Periods of Economic Volatility and Health Crises

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean (SD)
Policy inconsistencies between government administrations negatively affect the stability of public-private partnerships.	30 (10.0%)	40 (13.3%)	105 (35.0%)	125 (41.7%)	3.09 (0.93)
Corruption among stakeholders poses a significant barrier to effective partnership.	22 (7.3%)	35 (11.7%)	118 (39.3%)	125 (41.7%)	3.13 (0.88)
Inadequate infrastructure limits the ability of public-private partnerships to function effectively during crises.	89 (29.7%)	103 (34.3%)	61 (20.3%)	47 (15.7%)	1.72 (1.03)
Bureaucratic procedures in government agencies slow down decision-making and project implementation.	28 (9.3%)	39 (13.0%)	112 (37.3%)	121 (40.3%)	3.08 (0.92)
Regulatory frameworks in Nigeria are unclear or insufficient to support sustainable public-private partnerships.	31 (10.3%)	42 (14.0%)	109 (36.3%)	118 (39.3%)	3.05 (0.91)
There is a lack of operational capacity within some partner organizations to respond effectively during emergencies.	26 (8.7%)	41 (13.7%)	114 (38.0%)	119 (39.7%)	3.08 (0.91)
A lack of trust among stakeholders undermines the success of public-private partnership.	24 (8.0%)	37 (12.3%)	117 (39.0%)	122 (40.7%)	3.13 (0.88)

Discussion

This study examined the effectiveness of public–private partnerships (PPPs) as a multisector governance mechanism during periods of national uncertainty in Nigeria. Overall, respondents perceived PPPs as valuable for improving public service delivery, strengthening institutional responsiveness, and mobilizing resources during crises. More than three-quarters of respondents indicated positive perceptions of these functions, suggesting that collaborative arrangements can provide governments with additional expertise, resources, and implementation capacity during periods of heightened uncertainty. This finding is consistent with Collaborative Governance Theory and previous studies showing that partnerships can improve public-sector responsiveness when public and private actors effectively combine their resources and capabilities (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Akintoye & Fitzgerald, 2000). In Nigeria, these perceptions may partly reflect experiences during national emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic, when private-sector organizations supported government interventions through financing, logistics, and healthcare-related initiatives.

A particularly important finding concerns the relationship between institutional frameworks and PPP effectiveness. Although respondents generally recognized the importance of policy consistency and institutional capacity, Spearman's rank correlation showed only a weak positive and statistically non-significant relationship between institutional frameworks and perceived partnership effectiveness ($p = 0.089$, $p = 0.104$). Thus, the study did not find sufficient statistical evidence that stronger institutional frameworks were associated with greater perceived PPP effectiveness among respondents. This result should not be interpreted as indicating that institutions are unimportant. Rather, it suggests that formal institutional arrangements alone may not adequately explain differences in PPP effectiveness within the Nigerian governance environment.

This finding highlights the multidimensional character of PPP performance. Partnership outcomes may depend simultaneously on stakeholder trust, leadership commitment, organizational capacity, political support, communication, resource availability, and administrative efficiency. Formal policies and regulatory structures may therefore have limited practical influence when implementation is weakened by bureaucratic inefficiency, political interference, or inconsistent enforcement. This may explain why the present result differs from studies that report stronger relationships between institutional quality and PPP performance. The implication is that strengthening legislation and formal institutional arrangements, while necessary, may not automatically improve partnership outcomes unless the wider governance environment in which those arrangements operate is also strengthened.

The findings on stakeholder coordination reinforce this interpretation. Respondents reported limited information sharing, weak participation in collaborative decision-making, and particularly low levels of stakeholder trust. These conditions are important because Collaborative Governance Theory identifies trust, dialogue, shared goals, and joint decision-making as central mechanisms through which collaboration produces effective outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Previous PPP research similarly emphasizes the importance of communication and alignment among participating organizations (Klijn & Teisman, 2003; Nair & Harvie, 2017). Consequently, even appropriately designed institutional arrangements may produce limited results where relationships among participating organizations remain fragmented.

Despite these weaknesses, respondents generally considered PPPs effective during periods of national uncertainty. This apparent contrast between perceived effectiveness and weak coordination is an important finding. It suggests that crisis conditions may generate strong incentives for collaboration, allowing participating organizations to achieve useful outcomes despite deficiencies in routine governance processes. The urgency created by national emergencies may temporarily encourage organizations to mobilize resources, coordinate activities, and pursue common objectives that might otherwise be hindered by institutional and organizational barriers. PPP effectiveness during crises may therefore depend not only on the strength of formal institutions but also on the capacity of participating actors to cooperate pragmatically under conditions of urgency.

The principal barriers identified in the study were policy inconsistency, corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, inadequate operational capacity, weak regulatory frameworks, and lack of stakeholder trust. Corruption and weak trust were particularly prominent, reinforcing evidence that governance failures remain significant constraints on PPP implementation in Nigeria (Akinwale, 2015; Nwachukwu & Okolie, 2017). Corruption can weaken accountability and transparency, while unstable policies and bureaucratic delays increase uncertainty and transaction costs for private-sector participants. These interconnected governance problems may therefore explain why formal institutional

frameworks alone showed little statistical association with perceived partnership effectiveness.

Importantly, inadequate physical infrastructure was not perceived as the principal constraint on PPP effectiveness. This contrasts with conventional explanations that emphasize infrastructure deficits as a major impediment to PPP performance in developing countries (Grant & Rader, 2012). Instead, respondents placed greater emphasis on governance, regulatory, administrative, and relational constraints. This finding sharpens the study's contribution by suggesting that, within the Nigerian context examined, strengthening institutional implementation, administrative efficiency, stakeholder trust, and coordination may be at least as important as expanding physical infrastructure. The broader implication is that improving PPP performance during periods of national uncertainty requires an integrated governance approach in which formal institutions are supported by effective implementation, credible regulation, organizational capacity, and sustained collaboration among public and private actors.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the effectiveness of public–private partnerships (PPPs) as a multisector governance approach during periods of national uncertainty in Nigeria. The findings demonstrate that PPPs were widely perceived as valuable mechanisms for improving public service delivery, strengthening institutional responsiveness, and mobilizing resources during periods of economic and public health crises. Respondents recognized the important role of collaborative governance in enhancing national resilience and supporting government responses when public resources are constrained.

Despite these positive perceptions, the study also identified important governance challenges that limit the effectiveness of PPPs. Policy inconsistency, corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, weak regulatory frameworks, inadequate operational capacity, and low levels of stakeholder trust were consistently identified as major obstacles to successful partnership implementation. Although institutional frameworks were recognized as important for effective collaboration, the correlation analysis revealed only a weak and statistically non-significant relationship between institutional frameworks and perceived partnership effectiveness. This finding suggests that partnership performance in Nigeria is influenced by a broader combination of governance, organizational, and behavioral factors rather than by institutional arrangements alone.

The study contributes to the growing literature on collaborative governance by demonstrating that the effectiveness of PPPs depends not only on formal institutional structures but also on the quality of stakeholder relationships, policy implementation, leadership commitment, and inter-organizational coordination. These findings provide empirical evidence that governance quality is multidimensional and that strengthening institutions, while necessary, may not be sufficient to improve partnership performance unless accompanied by broader governance reforms.

Policy Implications

The findings have important implications for policymakers and public administrators. Government should prioritize the development of stable and predictable policy environments that encourage long-term collaboration between public and private organizations. Regulatory institutions responsible for PPP oversight should be strengthened to improve accountability, transparency, contract enforcement, and project monitoring. Equally important is the need to promote trust through regular stakeholder engagement, transparent communication, and inclusive decision-making processes. Capacity-building initiatives for both public and private-sector organizations should also be strengthened to improve technical competence and collaborative effectiveness during periods of uncertainty.

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