

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIPS STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT FROM
NEW ZEALAND AND MALAYSIA**

MUZZAMMIL ZEKRI

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ABSTRACT

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have received considerable attention due to their ability to enhance public infrastructure services through collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors under a single project organisation. Due to the complex nature and the diverse interests and expectations of stakeholders, the success of PPP is heavily reliant on effective stakeholder management. Whilst stakeholder issues cannot be prevented, it can be lessened through effective stakeholder management. However, stakeholder management was rather an ad hoc approach, which often uncoordinated. Additionally, most frameworks available are developed based on conventional construction projects; as a result, these frameworks failed to capture the intricacy of PPP. Accordingly, this study aims to address the gap in PPP knowledge by conducting an in-depth investigation into the experiences of PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia to uncover the stakeholder management practices and develop a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP projects.

The present study adopts an interpretivist theoretical perspective and a qualitative approach, which aligns with the tenets of interpretivism philosophy. As PPP becomes an international concept, it is essential to examine it from the perspective of various jurisdictions. Several studies have demonstrated the value of cross-country analyses in expanding the international best practices for PPP. The study employs semi-structured interviews with PPP practitioners from both New Zealand and Malaysia to understand the stakeholder management practices and address stakeholder management issues.

Based on the lived experiences of PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia, it is apparent that a comprehensive stakeholder management framework is essential for the success of PPP projects. Through consolidation of the findings from the three stakeholder management research areas (stakeholder identification, stakeholder attitudes and stakeholder relationships) and the understanding of stakeholder management practices, this present study has developed a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP. The framework has been validated by several PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia with more than ten years of PPP experience. They have confirmed the framework's comprehensive nature and importance in managing diverse stakeholders in PPP. Overall, this study makes significant empirical contributions to the PPP stakeholder management research field and enriches the literature on successful PPP implementation strategies.

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***Terima Kasih Semua* | Thank You All**

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008, governments worldwide considered infrastructure investment as an opportunity to increase economic activity (Bivens, 2014) and utilised Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as a way to enable such opportunities (Deloitte, 2006; Fischer *et al.*, 2006; Engel *et al.*, 2010; United Nations, 2011; Ameyaw *et al.*, 2016; World Bank, 2017). PPPs involve a long-term collaboration between the public and private sectors to deliver the required public infrastructure services (Liu and Yamamoto, 2009; Gambo and Gomez, 2014; Guo *et al.*, 2019). This mechanism enables the utilisation of the private sector's resources to address the problems surrounding infrastructure underinvestment by providing quality infrastructure services to the public (Liu and Yamamoto, 2009; Pârnu and Voicu-Olteanu, 2009; Sulser, 2018). Shifting the funding to the private sector simultaneously reduces public debt and finance costs, freeing up government funds to invest in other areas (Ng and Loosemore, 2007). As governments face a shortfall in the budget for public infrastructure provision, PPPs are considered an effective mechanism for public infrastructure procurement.

PPP application in delivering public infrastructure services has increased enormously across various sectors, especially in developing countries. Based on the data provided by the World Bank through the Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPI) database, there were more than 6500 active PPP projects in developing countries from 1990 to 2020, with a total investment of nearly USD 1,700 billion. Asia-Pacific region is one of the regions that heavily invested in PPP, with a total investment of more than USD 500 billion. Malaysia is one of the prime examples of countries from the Asia-Pacific region rapidly adopting PPP as an alternative to the conventional financing model in delivering infrastructure and services (Karim, 2011). Since the inception of the dedicated PPP unit (Unit Kerjasama Awam Swasta – UKAS) and introduction of proper PPP guidance (that is made specifically for PPP procurement) in 2009, Malaysia has been involved with more than 20 projects (USD 11 billion) across various sectors and committed to more than 100 PPP/ private finance initiatives (PFI) projects till 2047. Although Malaysia has vast experience with private participation programmes such as privatisation and PFI, the establishment of UKAS under the Prime Minister's Department was necessary as the government saw the need for a dedicated agency to act as a secretariat to the

government to plan, process, evaluate, negotiate, initiate and supervise PPP projects (Rashid, 2014).

Apart from developing countries, countries struggling with infrastructure investment also adopted PPP as a form of alternative public procurement model. New Zealand, for example, faces severe infrastructure deficits that have been going on for decades (Chapman Tripp, 2018; PwC, 2020). The National Infrastructure Unit (NIU) was established to address the issue in 2009 with the purpose of taking overall responsibility for infrastructure activities by providing expert guidance to various agencies across different sectors (Liu and Wilkinson, 2011; National Infrastructure Unit, 2013). As a result, PPP was formally introduced in New Zealand as an infrastructure procurement model. New Zealand's primary purpose of using PPP, according to the New Zealand Treasury (2015, p. 1), is to "*focus on, and delivery of, required service outcomes from major infrastructure assets*", and it is only used when the model offers better value-for-money compared to the conventional approach. However, as of 2023, only thirteen PPP projects were initiated, with the last one reaching its financial close in 2018.

Despite following the same common procedures in public procurement (Khaderi *et al.*, 2019), the ability of PPP to provide far greater financing options (UN-Habitat, 2011) to deliver infrastructure efficiently compared to traditional public provision (Ng and Loosemore, 2007; World Bank, 2017) made PPP more attractive for governments worldwide. However, the features of PPP, such as lengthy contract period, bundling of services and involvement of various stakeholders guided by their self-interest (Shen *et al.*, 2006; Chowdhury and Chowdhury, 2018; Iossa and Saussier, 2018; Mandiriza *et al.*, 2021) have added a new layer to the public procurement process, which requires custom protocols (Zawawi *et al.*, 2022). This new layer also made PPP more complex and sensitive than a conventional procurement model or a typical construction project (Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2016; Zawawi *et al.*, 2022) and just like any other type of public infrastructure procurement model, PPP is not immune to various issues, such as time overruns (Rajan *et al.*, 2014; Bao *et al.*, 2018; Purbo *et al.*, 2020), cost overruns (Iyer and Sagheer, 2010; Budayan, 2019) and regulatory issues (Song *et al.*, 2013; Liu *et al.*, 2018).

Some of the issues that caught the interest of this research are related to stakeholder management, and an understanding of most PPP problems is directly or indirectly associated with inefficient stakeholder management (El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; Smyth and Edkins, 2007; Roehrich *et al.*, 2014; Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2020). Earlier studies have documented that

stakeholder-related issues such as a lack of transparency (Katusiimeh *et al.*, 2012; Bao *et al.*, 2018; Tariq and Leung, 2019; Abdullah and Khadaroo, 2020), lack of accountability (Murphy, 2008; Rahman *et al.*, 2014) and lack of capacity or understanding (El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; Jashar and Jasar, 2016; Umar *et al.*, 2021) may lead to dispute among stakeholders (Lam and Javed, 2015; Chou *et al.*, 2016; Marques, 2018; Osei-Kyei *et al.*, 2019) leading to project failures or cancellations (Harris and Pratap, 2009; Li and Wang, 2019).

Multiple stakeholders in PPP with different interests and expectations (Shen *et al.*, 2006; Burke and Demirag, 2019; Warsen *et al.*, 2020) have continued to influence PPP implementation (Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2020) to satisfy their interests and to achieve their objectives (Mok *et al.*, 2015). In addition, the complexity of the stakeholder network in PPP entails a more complex decision-making process (Blokhuys *et al.*, 2012), which proves to be challenging, as the discrepancies between different stakeholders carry different risks to the project, if not properly managed (Xia *et al.*, 2018). In this regard, stakeholder management skills are the most critical skills in PPP (Zawawi *et al.*, 2014) and

Stakeholder management has been widely discussed for decades, especially since the introduction of the concept of ‘stakeholder in management’ through an internal memorandum from the Stanford Research Institute (Freeman, 1984; Jongbloed *et al.*, 2008; Mainardes *et al.*, 2012; McErlane *et al.*, 2016), which provided a platform for stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). Parmar *et al.* (2010) claimed that using stakeholder theory provides a better chance of dealing with problems effectively by analysing the relationship between the business and people, which directs how managers should operate in a firm (Freeman *et al.*, 2018).

The stakeholder management concept is not something new within the built environment discipline and has been discussed extensively in the past, mainly within the paradigm of conventional construction projects. The significance of this concept lies within the importance that stakeholders are to be managed and maintained for project success (Karlsen, 2002; El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; Eskerod and Jepsen, 2013, Amadi *et al.*, 2018; Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2020), which includes transparency, commitment, understanding and collaboration between different partners (Osei-Kyei *et al.*, 2015; Yang and Shen, 2015; Rodrigues and Zucco, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2019a; Biygautane *et al.*, 2019). Although studies have noted the importance of stakeholder management for project success (Chinyio and Akintoye, 2008; Aaltonen, 2011; Tang *et al.*, 2013). However, construction professionals lack the skills needed (Close and Loosemore, 2014) and much more in PPP (Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2020; Zhang and Tariq, 2020). Furthermore,

stakeholder management is still in its infancy within the built environment discipline, and due to non-functioning strategies, it was rather an ad hoc approach, leading to a non-coherent approach for practical use (Karlsen, 2002; Yang and Shen, 2015), whether it is within the conventional construction space (Rowlinson *et al.*, 2010) or PPP (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014; Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2019). As such, a systematic stakeholder management approach is needed (Jergeas *et al.*, 2020; Cleland and Ireland, 2006). Therefore, an in-depth investigation of stakeholder management in PPP is necessary as it is key to the PPP project's success (Chinyio and Akintoye, 2008; Cheung *et al.*, 2012).

Notwithstanding, stakeholder management research manages to attract considerable attention from PPP researchers, covering various topics. Classic studies of stakeholder management in PPP focus on investigating stakeholder management-related issues. For instance, the issues related to stakeholder dynamics in PPP (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014; Rwelamila *et al.*, 2014; Chen *et al.*, 2016), stakeholder relationships (Teicher *et al.*, 2006; Smyth and Edkins, 2007; English and Baxter, 2010; Foo *et al.*, 2011; Zou *et al.*, 2014; Torvinen and Ulkuniemi, 2016; Burke and Demirag, 2017) and even behavioural aspects of PPP stakeholders (Hodge *et al.*, 2017; Willems *et al.*, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2018; Warsen *et al.*, 2020). Whilst typical studies of stakeholder management in PPP focus on specific stakeholder management-related issues, these studies pay less attention to the fundamental concept of stakeholder management (Eyiah-Botwe *et al.*, 2020) such as the stakeholder management frameworks/processes despite its importance for successful stakeholder management (Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2019; Amadi *et al.*, 2020).

To conceptualise the key construct of stakeholder management, some studies have attempted to develop a stakeholder management framework for PPP, providing structured guidance pivotal to effective stakeholder management. For instance, El-Gohary *et al.* (2006) proposed a semantic stakeholder management model for PPP. However, the model is too complex and only applicable to projects that are in the early phase of PPP (Henjewele *et al.*, 2013; Amadi *et al.*, 2020). Henjewele *et al.* (2013) argue that the framework by El-Gohary *et al.* (2006) was not practical and too complex for adoption in real PPP projects. Henjewele *et al.* (2013) then proposed a framework that focuses on the life cycle of PPP projects. However, the framework only focuses on managing external stakeholders, specifically the general public/affected groups. Additionally, the model is too generic and does not explicitly highlight the various activities within the stakeholder management process, and it is also based on a review of

existing practices and theories of project stakeholder management, which does not fully capture the lived experiences of PPP practitioners. More recently, Jayasuriya *et al.* (2020) proposed a hypothetical framework highlighting the relationship of stakeholder management processes in PPP based on a questionnaire survey, which leaves room for further in-depth exploration. Amadi *et al.* (2020) developed a stakeholder management framework; however, the framework is based on case studies of two road transportation projects in Nigeria, which may not be applicable to global or different infrastructure contexts. Furthermore, as the authors suggest, the study may only be applicable to the public sector in managing external stakeholders in PPP.

Despite considerable contributions to the stakeholder management research space, stakeholder management issues prove to be challenging to address. However, as indicated earlier, stakeholder management in PPP is still an understudied topic. The observation also concurs with the findings presented in the literature review in Section 2.5 (p. 42), as researchers tended to investigate the project side of PPP. Furthermore, investigating stakeholder management research areas in PPP (see Section 2.6.1, p. 51) revealed that limited attention has been given to develop a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP, supporting the statement by Jayasuriya *et al.* (2019). Thus, it is worthwhile to explore the research area further.

1.2 Problem Statement

Whilst a significant number of megaprojects have been delivered successfully under PPPs, some projects have suffered and appeared to be on the verge of failure despite various efforts by governments and private companies. East West Link (EWL) highway (Australia), Móstoles-Navalcarnero railway (Spain), Highway 407 (Canada), Panay-Guimara-Negros Inter-Island Bridge (the Philippines) and Lester B. Pearson International Airport (Canada) (Murphy, 2008; Roxas *et al.*, 2015; De Martinis and Moyan, 2017; de Albornoz *et al.*, 2022) are some of the examples of failed PPP projects globally as a result of poor stakeholder management such as lack of awareness or knowledge of PPP, lack of engagement or disclosure with stakeholders leading to stakeholder's dissatisfaction or discontent and misunderstanding.

United Nations (2008) argued that the unique nature of PPP requires that it be managed and developed differently from a typical construction project. Supporting the statement, De Schepper *et al.* (2014) argued the importance of taking different approaches in PPP due to the difference in stakeholder legitimacy and in PPP over conventional construction projects.

Consoli (2006) noted that the various needs of stakeholders, paired with sophisticated contractual agreements and interests, led to friction between stakeholders.

As noted in the previous section, numerous studies have explored stakeholder management areas in PPP. However, from the literature review presented in Chapter 2 of the thesis, the researcher discovered that there is a lack of consideration in understanding multiple stakeholder management-related areas or scopes and consolidating the best practice approaches to developing the stakeholder management framework. Furthermore, Eyiah-Botwe *et al.* (2020) suggest that past studies also tended to address stakeholder management at certain project phases. Additionally, most frameworks are developed only based on one stakeholder management issue. For instance, the stakeholder management framework by Henjeweke *et al.* (2013) was developed because of general public marginalisation; hence, the framework is only applicable to address that specific issue. In this sense, it is important to understand a range of stakeholder management-related issues before developing a stakeholder management framework. Therefore, this present study bridges the gap between a variety of stakeholder management issues and the stakeholder management framework for PPP.

Furthermore, stakeholder management studies in PPP tended to observe the research subject through a single case study (sector, project and country), which may only consider the peculiarities of the specific perspective, making it challenging to implement the findings into different contexts. This thesis recognises the institutional differences between different jurisdictions, and since PPP has been widely adopted and is now an ‘international concept’ (Osei-Kyei *et al.*, 2019), it would be advantageous to explore the topic from the viewpoint of different economies. The designation of PPP as an ‘international concept’ does not preclude the existence of variations across jurisdictions, encompassing legal structures, risk distribution mechanisms, and other critical aspects. This study examines the perspectives of New Zealand and Malaysian PPP practitioners across a variety of PPP sectors to understand the diverse experiences across different jurisdictions. By including both countries, a broad perspective of different strategies and approaches for successful stakeholder management for PPP between developed and developing jurisdictions can be observed, which is yet to be conducted.

Both New Zealand and Malaysia were selected for this study for several reasons. Despite both countries being different in terms of overall development (New Zealand – developed country, Malaysia – developing country), both countries are the same in terms of PPP market maturity (Stage 2) based on the PPP market benchmark by Deloitte (2006) (see discussion in Section

2.3, p. 30), and both countries aim to improve the quality of infrastructure and service delivery through private sector involvement. However, both countries' approaches and experiences have influenced the implementation of PPP and the perception of stakeholders. For example, Malaysia has had vast experience with private sector participation in infrastructure since the 90s, from privatisation to PPP across multiple project sectors; however, Malaysia lacks government guidelines specific to PPP (Ismail and Haris, 2014a; 2014b). Meanwhile, New Zealand is the opposite, with only thirteen PPP projects to date across three sectors since its inception in 2009 (Infracom, 2021); nonetheless, New Zealand has robust PPP guidelines with higher transparency in public procurement (InfraCompass, 2020). As such, the distinction between these two economies based on how they adopted and perceived PPP helps to build the understanding and as mentioned before, expand the international best practice framework for PPP.

In addition, studies such as Henjeweale *et al.* (2013) and De Schepper *et al.* (2014) describe PPP as an environment with two focal organisations (public and private sectors, represented by the procuring authority and SPV/private consortium, respectively) and the integration of these focal organisations is important for effective stakeholder management. Through this collaboration, synergies between partners can evolve (Sheppard and Beck, 2022) over long contractual durations; however, studies over the last decade failed to sufficiently provide an understanding or inform the integration between both sides as focal organisations for stakeholder management in PPP, especially with respect to their roles and responsibilities. An understanding of the integration may address issues such as overlapping responsibilities between sides (Forrer *et al.*, 2010; Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2016). Hence, the integration between these organisations and the allocation of stakeholder management responsibilities should be properly addressed for effective stakeholder management in PPP.

As such, a major gap needs to be filled, and it is worthwhile to investigate the stakeholder management research areas in PPP. In view of this argument, since PPP involves multiple interactions between different actors, an understanding of PPP practitioners' perspectives or lived experiences can inform important practical guidance for effective stakeholder management and, in turn, the development of a more robust and inclusive stakeholder management framework for PPP can be developed. This is especially important since Jepsen and Eskerod (2009) criticise that most frameworks are conceptual rather than instructions for the real world.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Research Aim and Questions

The main premise of this research is to develop a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP through an in-depth understanding of stakeholder management practices from the perspectives of New Zealand and Malaysian PPP practitioners. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is one of the first studies focusing on stakeholder management from the context of developed and developing countries and one of the first studies where the development of the framework was guided by an in-depth understanding of multiple stakeholder management issues, which may yield significant theoretical and practical contributions. In guiding the research, the overarching research question is:

“How an understanding of stakeholder management practices can be used to develop a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP?”

Supporting the overarching research questions, six research questions (RQ) were extracted:

RQ1. Who are the key stakeholders in PPP, and what are the criteria used for stakeholder identification?

There are still arguments in the literature on who should be considered as stakeholders in PPP (Henjeweale *et al.*, 2013). Due to the ambiguity and vagueness of stakeholder concepts in identifying stakeholders (Heugens and van Oosterhout, 2002), studies concerning this research area mainly identify stakeholders based on their subjective analysis of the concept (Miles, 2017), leading to inconsistencies in their findings. Henjeweale *et al.* (2013) argue that a broad strategy is ‘imprecise’, and whilst a narrow perspective provides higher accuracy, it is easily exposed to stakeholder marginalisation, which is frequently associated with PPP failure (Rwelamila *et al.*, 2014). Yet, the identification process or criteria of stakeholders has not been well examined, including in the framework provided by Henjeweale *et al.* (2013). Exploring this is critical as in modern stakeholder theory, more specifically for effective stakeholder management, as revealed by Freeman (1984), which must start with a question of who the stakeholders are. As such, it is not something that must be neglected when designing the stakeholder management framework for PPP.

RQ2. What are the attitudes and factors influencing the attitudes of PPP stakeholders?

Studies on stakeholder attitudes have been explored in various industries such as food, banking, education, tourism, forestry, and construction (Amin *et al.*, 2013; Yang *et al.*, 2014; Gholami and Qurbanzada, 2016; Lupo *et al.*, 2016; Hashim *et al.*, 2017a; Peters *et al.*, 2018; Fuente-Robles *et al.*, 2020; Cidrás and Pauli, 2021). Recent studies confirmed the importance of achieving stakeholder satisfaction for project success (Eyiah-Botwe, 2019) and that stakeholder attitudes are able to influence the level of commitment towards PPP (Zhang *et al.*, 2018); however, the discourse surrounding stakeholder attitudes has not received the attention that they deserve (Kabahinda and Mwesigwa, 2023). Exploring this research subject is critical to the development of a stakeholder management framework, especially when there are correlations between stakeholder attitudes and decision-making (Karlsen *et al.*, 2002; Yang *et al.*, 2014), which requires effective stakeholder management.

RQ3. What are the factors that influence the relationships between stakeholders in PPP?

De Schepper *et al.* (2014) and Jayasuriya *et al.* (2020) suggest that relationship issues in PPP are subject to ineffective stakeholder management. Despite numerous studies within the context of PPP, Burke and Demirag (2017) argue that there is still a noticeable gap in the literature as existing studies have not delved deeply to explore the complexity of stakeholder relationships in PPP, especially factors affecting stakeholder relationships. As such, it is important to go beyond recognising relationship issues by unravelling the multifaceted factors which are critical for effective stakeholder management.

RQ4. How are the two focal organisations responsible for managing stakeholders in PPP work, and how are the responsibilities allocated?

In PPP, two focal organisations (procuring authority and SPV/private consortium) are responsible for stakeholder management throughout the project life cycle (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, due to the merging of two distinct institutions with different cultures, organisations, and social environments under one single project organisation running a public asset (Collin, 1998; El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006), the allocation of stakeholder management responsibilities in PPP is much more complicated than conventional public infrastructure projects. However, integration between the focal organisations in managing stakeholders in PPP is still vague and has not been considered or properly articulated in previous PPP studies

(Amadi *et al.*, 2014; 2020). Understanding the integration between the two focal organisations is important because it is one of the elements that makes PPP different from conventional construction projects.

RQ5. What are the strategies and processes for effective stakeholder management?

Stakeholder management is often uncoordinated or ad hoc and characterised by unpredictable causal actions after events happen (Karlsen, 2002; Yang *et al.*, 2014). As such, it is important to understand the strategies for stakeholder management before developing a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP. Due to the increasing stakeholders' significance in PPP and the lack of comprehensive insights into the practical strategies and best practices in PPP, the opportunity to reflect on the issues surrounding stakeholder management in PPP within the context of comparative study between different jurisdictions may help in informing necessary improvements or strategies based on a range of sentiments, which is essential in expanding the international best practice for stakeholder management.

RQ6. How can a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP be developed from the lived experiences of PPP practitioners managing stakeholder management issues?

Understanding and synthesising various stakeholder management practices and addressing all of the above research questions from the lived experiences of New Zealand and Malaysia PPP practitioners may significantly contribute to the development of a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework. This is important as evidence across various stakeholder management research in PPP has acknowledged the poor record of stakeholder management. Importantly, numerous PPP stakeholder management frameworks presented did not consider observing a variety of stakeholder management issues before developing the framework.

1.3.2 Research Objectives

Several research objectives were identified to accomplish the aims of this thesis and answer the research questions. The objectives, which were drawn upon insights from the lived experiences of PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia through semi-structured interviews, are as follows:

- RO1.** To identify stakeholders involved in PPP, with the aim of understanding the criteria used for stakeholder identification in PPP (corresponding to RQ1).
- RO2.** To investigate PPP stakeholder attitudes with the goal of identifying key influencing factors that contribute to their attitudes (corresponding to RQ2).
- RO3.** To examine the factors shaping stakeholder relationships in PPP projects (corresponding to RQ3).
- RO4.** To investigate the integration and allocation of responsibilities between two focal organisations in PPP projects (corresponding to RQ4).
- RO5.** To document and analyse the stakeholder management process employed by PPP practitioners through comparative analysis of best practices (corresponding to RQ5).
- RO6.** To synthesise the research findings and develop evidence-based recommendations for effective stakeholder management in PPP (corresponding to RQ5).
- RO7.** To consolidate relevant approaches and insights from the research findings with PPP practitioners into the development of a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP projects (corresponding to RQ6).

1.4 Research Significance and Contribution

A significant contribution of this research is that it facilitates a better understanding between parties and informs stakeholders' management practices to accommodate the expectations and interests of different parties in PPP. The following two subsections describe the academic and practical contributions of this study.

1.4.1 Scholarly Contributions

This research contributes to the growing body of PPP literature with a focus on stakeholder management. It explores several stakeholder management areas: stakeholder identification in PPP, stakeholder attitudes, and stakeholder relationships through an interpretivist theoretical perspective through semi-structured interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia in developing the stakeholder management framework for PPP.

Second, cross-country analysis has received little attention from researchers worldwide to date. This study, therefore, contributes to the expansion of the international best practices framework for PPP. Third, the present research aims to provide a clear understanding of the integration

between two focal organisations in managing stakeholders in PPP, which has not been specifically explored in the literature related to stakeholder management in PPP.

Fourth, this research expands the PPP literature pertaining to New Zealand, which has been sparse as compared to other developed jurisdictions such as Australia, the UK, and the United States. Similarly, this study explores new topics within the spectrum of PPP literature in Malaysia. Despite receiving much attention from researchers in the past, the PPP literature in Malaysia mainly focuses on traditional PPP topics, such as PPP application, value-for-money, procurement, and risk management and allocation.

1.4.2 Practical Contributions

There are diverse stakeholders with differing interests and expectations within PPP projects. This research provides a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework that may be utilised by PPP practitioners. By understanding the diverse views among the PPP practitioners, the PPP stakeholder management framework contributes to a structured approach to PPP stakeholder management and helps maintain and build good quality relationships between different parties.

The findings will also help expand and enrich relevant measures or strategic plans that PPP practitioners can adopt to develop a positive PPP environment and relationships, contributing to successful project delivery. In conclusion, this study can be regarded as one of the few to compare the experiences of developed and developing countries and synthesise a variety of stakeholder management practices addressing various stakeholder management issues to develop a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents an overview of the thesis, beginning with a description of the research background. The problem statement given helps to contextualise and understand the issues highlighted in previous studies on stakeholder management in public-private partnerships (PPP). This research demonstrates a gap in the existing literature focused on this topic. This chapter also introduces the research questions and objectives, which are focused on exploring the importance of effective stakeholder management in PPPs. As PPPs involve a multitude of stakeholders with varying interests, it is crucial for these stakeholders to understand each other through effective PPP stakeholder management. In-depth interviews were conducted with

practitioners in the field to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of PPP stakeholders. The findings of this research contribute to the body of knowledge through a comparative study of New Zealand and Malaysia.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis is outlined in nine chapters, and this section summarises each chapter. Chapter 1 introduces the research by setting out the background of the study, the research problems, the research question, the aim, and the objectives.

Chapter 2 presents the literature on PPP and stakeholder management. This chapter also evaluates and compares PPP practices in New Zealand and Malaysia, which is important for cross-cultural study. A comprehensive literature review of 3,548 PPP articles from more than 100 journals from 1997 to 2023 was undertaken to explore the research gaps. Finally, a conceptual framework of the research was developed, highlighting the relationships between topics that contribute to the development of stakeholder management frameworks for PPP.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology adopted to achieve the research aim and objectives. It describes the research design, data collection methods, and procedures used in the study. Chapter 3 also explains the chosen research instruments for meeting the research aim and objectives. Ethical considerations are also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the results and findings guided by interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, covering the topic of stakeholders in PPP. The chapter highlights the key stakeholders involved in PPP and how they are identified.

Chapter 5 presents the findings relating to stakeholder attitudes. The findings identify the factors that contribute to the development of certain attitudes among stakeholders. Chapter 6 presents the results and discusses stakeholder relationships in PPP. Apart from identifying the factors affecting stakeholder relationship quality, it also highlights stakeholder expectations that are fundamental to the development of effective PPP stakeholder management decision-making.

Chapter 7 discusses the identified practical stakeholder management approaches from interviews, which were organised accordingly to ensure a coherent process, which is important to the development of a proposed stakeholder management framework for PPP. Chapter 8

presents a comprehensive systematic PPP stakeholder management framework. Further, all of the components of PPP stakeholder management are explained. Validation from experts were also provided in the chapter.

To close this research, Chapter 9 concludes the overall findings and provides a discussion of the contribution of this research to the industry. A discussion of the research contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future studies is also highlighted. The overall organisation and structure of the thesis are illustrated in Figure 1.1

RESEARCH STAGES

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Overarching Research Question
“How an understanding of stakeholder management practices can be used to develop a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP?”

LITERATURE REVIEW

RESEARCH DESIGN

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- RO1** To identify stakeholders involved in PPP, with the aim of understanding the criteria used for stakeholder identification in PPP.
- RO2** To investigate PPP stakeholder attitudes with the goal of identifying key influencing factors that contribute to their attitudes.
- RO3** To examine the factors shaping stakeholder relationships in PPP projects.
- RO4** To investigate the integration and allocation of responsibilities between two focal organisations in PPP projects.
- RO5** To document and analyse the stakeholder management process employed by PPP practitioners through comparative analysis of best practices.
- RO6** To synthesise the research findings and develop evidence-based recommendations for effective stakeholder management in PPP.
- RO7** To consolidate relevant approaches and insights from the research findings with PPP practitioners into the development of a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP projects.

Discussion, conclusion and future recommendations

THESIS STRUCTURE

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction
 Background
 Problem Statement
 Aim and Objectives
 Thesis Outline

CHAPTER 2 – Literature Review (PPP)
 Public-Private Partnership (PPP)
 PPP Research Development
 Thesis Directions

CHAPTER 3 – Research Methodology
 Research Design Data Collection
 Research Philosophy Data Analysis
 Research Methodology Ethical Consideration

CHAPTER 4 – Stakeholder Identification in PPP

CHAPTER 5 – Evaluation of PPP Stakeholder Attitudes

CHAPTER 6 – Factors Shaping PPP Stakeholder Relationships

CHAPTER 7 – Stakeholder Management Practices

CHAPTER 8 – PPP Stakeholder Management Framework
 Framework Development
 Framework Validation

CHAPTER 9 – Research Conclusion
 Future Recommendations
 Implications and Limitations

PROCESS

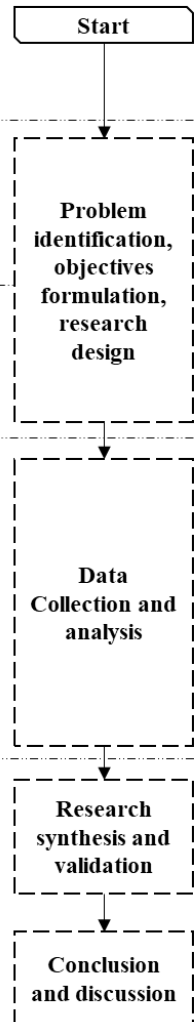


Figure 1.1. Thesis organisation and structure

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed review of relevant PPP and stakeholder management literature to provide an understanding of the context of this study. This chapter begins with the fundamentals of PPP, then describes the main facets, and reviews the literature related to PPP, focusing on its application, especially in infrastructure projects. A comprehensive review of PPP literature from 1997 to 2023 is also conducted, highlighting the need to explore stakeholder management research in PPP. Following this, a review of existing literature relevant to stakeholder management provides a theoretical framework for this research.

Overall, the literature review consolidates existing studies and forms the theoretical foundation of research, which adds value to the overall research by highlighting the rationale of the research area and guiding the research process (Adom *et al.*, 2018; Lynch *et al.*, 2020). By doing so, this study is able to identify the current research gaps and narrow down the research topics, driving the direction of the research.

2.2 Public Private Partnership (PPP)

2.2.1 The Concept of PPP

Before exploring the topic of PPP further, it is important to understand its concept and definition. Hodge and Greve (2010) categorised PPP into at least five ‘families of arrangements’: (1) institutional cooperation for joint production of risk sharing, (2) long-term infrastructure contracts, (3) public policy networks, (4) civil society and community development, and (5) urban renewal and downtown economic development. The most recognisable form of PPP to deliver public infrastructure services is the second type, whereby “*the tasks and responsibilities of private sector actors are significantly expanded*” (Willems *et al.*, 2017, p. 317). This form of PPP can be considered a “*refinement of the private finance initiatives*”, which started in the United Kingdom (UK) in the 90s (Grimsey and Lewis, 2005, p. 346) to reform public management to become more efficient and effective (Flinders, 2005; Connolly *et al.*, 2008). Since then, this form of PPP has become mainstream in the built environment.

Despite this, there is still no universally accepted legal definition of PPPs (Grimsey and Lewis, 2005; ACCA, 2012; Leviäkangas *et al.*, 2016; Ke *et al.*, 2024). A possible explanation is that PPPs are defined differently across jurisdictions (Bovaird, 2010; Ke *et al.*, 2024), and the definition of PPPs is tailored to suit the jurisdictions' objectives for using PPPs based on a jurisdiction's specific needs (Nathan Associates, 2017) (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. PPP definition in various jurisdictions

| Source | Definition |
|---|--|
| Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Australia (2008) | A PPP is a long-term contract between the public and private sectors where the government pays the private sector to deliver infrastructure and related services on behalf, or in support, of the government's broader service responsibilities. PPPs typically make the private sector parties who build infrastructure responsible for its condition and performance on a whole-of-life basis. |
| Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships (CCPPP), Canada (2020) | A cooperative venture between the public and private sectors, built on the expertise of each partner, that best meets clearly defined public needs through the appropriate allocation of resources, risks and rewards. |
| HM Treasury, United Kingdom (2008) | Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are arrangements typified by joint working between the public and private sectors. In the broadest sense, PPPs can cover all types of collaboration across the interface between the public and private sectors to deliver policies, services and infrastructure. |
| Unit Kerjasama Awam Swasta (UKAS), Malaysia (2009) | PPP involves the transfer to the private sector and the responsibility to finance and manage a package of capital investment and services, including the construction, management, maintenance, refurbishment and replacement of public sector assets such as buildings, infrastructure, equipment and other facilities, which creates a standalone business. |

Table 2.1. PPP definition in various jurisdictions (*Cont'd*)

| Source | Definition |
|---|--|
| Infrastructure Commission (Infracom), New Zealand (2020a) | PPP is a long-term contract for the delivery of a service, where the provision of the service requires the construction of a new asset or the enhancement of an existing asset, which is financed from external sources on a non-recourse basis, and full legal ownership of the asset is retained by the Crown. |

Despite no generally accepted definitions for PPP, researchers in the past have also attempted to define PPP by incorporating unique elements, such as long-term contractual cooperation between the public and private sectors (1) to deliver public facilities or services (2), by bringing together various activities (financing, design, build, maintain, and operate) to the private sector (or with most of the risks managed by the private sector) (3), and as common features of PPP definitions. For example:

“Cooperation of some sort of durability between public and private sectors in which they jointly develop products and services and share risks, costs and resources which are connected with these products.” (van Ham and Koppenjan (2001; p. 598)

“Contracting arrangement in which a private party, normally a consortium structured around a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), takes responsibility for financing and long-term maintenance or operation of a facility to provide long-term service outcomes.” Duffield (2008, p. 7)

It is argued that the partnerships in PPP can be considered a tool that reforms infrastructure service delivery (Asian Development Bank, 2008) to get more quality developments through shared responsibilities between public and private sectors (Espigares and Torres, 2009; Liu and Yamamoto, 2009; Keers and van Fenema, 2018; World Bank, 2019), which allows both sides to share their resources, risks, and benefits whilst ensuring public interests are protected (Liu and Yamamoto, 2009; Muhammad and Johar, 2018; Mwakabole *et al.*, 2019). However, for PPP to deliver public infrastructure services effectively, the model should be developed through well-structured legislation, transparent procurement, and project analysis (Kleiss and Imura, 2006; Jomo *et al.*, 2016; Nathan Associates, 2017).

2.2.2 Types of PPP Arrangements

A wide range of contract arrangements between the public and private sectors can be referred to as PPP (Table 2.2). The government often considers certain PPP arrangements based on various reasons, such as improved services, cost-benefit, risk reduction/management, and effective management (Asian Development Bank, 2008). This shows that the varying degree of private participation in PPP projects or arrangements depends on the government's objectives and the scale of investment needed for the project, meaning that the higher the private sector participation, the higher the risk involved and the higher the amount of investment by the private sector in PPP (Figure 2.1).

Table 2.2. Overview of PPP arrangements (compiled from Yescombe, 2007; United Nations, 2008; PPIAF, 2012; World Bank, 2017; Yescombe and Farquharson, 2018)

| Type of Arrangements | Description |
|---|--|
| Affermage or Lease | Both arrangements are similar to concessions, except for capital expenditure, whereby these arrangements require public capital. These arrangements provide services to users besides being in charge of maintaining and operating public assets. Depending on the duration of the contract, it may not be classified as PPP. <i>Examples: water, sanitation, energy, railways, etc.</i> |
| Build-Own-Operate (BOO) | The private sector owns and operates the asset or service in perpetuity. The public sector plays an active role in overseeing and regulating BOO. <i>Examples: railways, power plants, etc.</i> |
| Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) | BOT and BOOT are often used interchangeably. Under these arrangements, asset ownership is transferred to the public sector after the end of the contract/concession. <i>Examples: power plants, highways, etc.</i> |
| Built-Transfer-Operate (BTO) | Transfer of ownership to the public sector after the end of construction. <i>Example: school</i> |
| Rehabilitation-Operate-Transfer (ROT) | The private sector is responsible for improving existing assets that belong to the public. <i>Example: brownfield infrastructure</i> |

Table 2.2. Overview of PPP arrangements (compiled from Yescombe, 2007; United Nations, 2008; PPIAF, 2012; World Bank, 2017; Yescombe and Farquharson, 2018) (*Cont'd*)

| Type of Arrangements | Description |
|---|---|
| Design-Build-Finance-Operate (DBFO) | The contract types reflect the functions transferred to the private parties. The name of these arrangements can be used interchangeably, as some consider ‘maintenance’ to be part of |
| Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain (DBFOM) | ‘operation’ and vice versa. Generally, the private sector is responsible for everything under a long-term lease and the transfer of ownership after the lease term. <i>Examples: highways,</i> |
| Design-Build-Finance-Maintain (DBFM) | <i>schools, etc.</i> |
| Operation & Maintenance (O&M) | The private sector operates and maintains existing assets owned by the public sector. The contract for this arrangement requires significant long-term private-sector investment, where the payment by the public sector is based on performance. <i>Examples: water, sanitation, etc.</i> |
| Private Finance Initiative (PFI) | The term the UK used to introduce the PPP concept, whereby the arrangement describes PPP as a way to deliver new infrastructure with the private sector responsible for finance, building and management. Some describe PFI as an earlier version of PPP. |
| Concession | Concession is a user-pays PPP in which the private party is allowed to charge end-users for using the asset. This type of payment is also known as ‘service fees’. The control of the asset usually reverts back to the public sector after the concession period ends. <i>Examples: highways, water treatment plants, etc.</i> |

PPP is often confused with privatisation (Singaravello, 2010; Austria, 2013). Although PPP involves private participation, it is not a form of privatisation (Grimsey and Lewis, 2005; Interreg, 2017) but PPP lies between conventional and privatisation (see Figure 2.1) because the use of PPP emphasises the importance of cooperation between the public and private sectors (Jing and Jian, 2014).

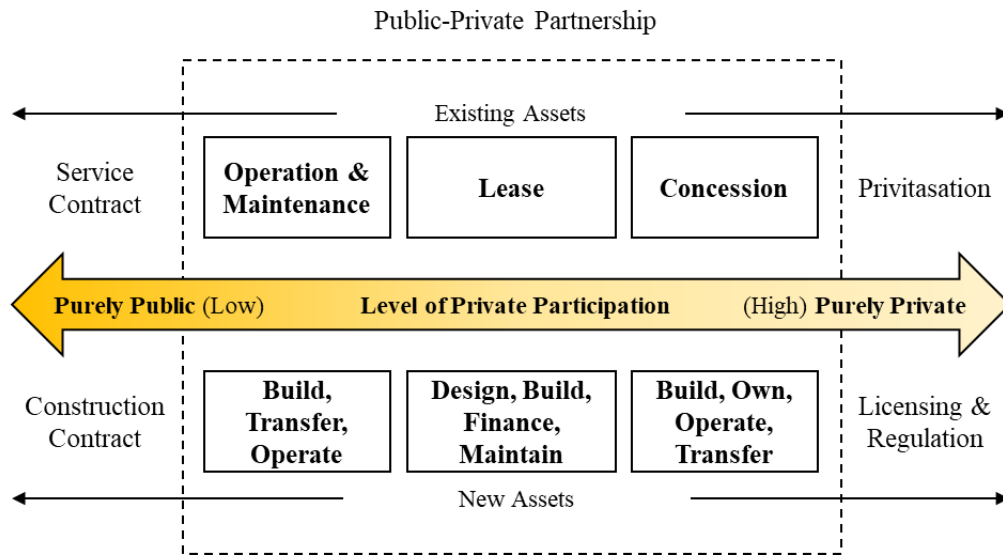


Figure 2.1. Scale of private sector participation in infrastructure development (source: compiled from PPIAF, 2012 and World Bank, 2017)

It may be confusing to some because the PPP terminology did not exist until the mid-1990s (Kupisz, 2022). According to Linder (1999), the government tends to avoid the term ‘privatisation’ or ‘contracting out’ when referring to partnerships in PPP. Hodge and Greve (2010, p. 10) believe that in a language game, the word ‘partnerships’ is “*warmer and more friendly*”. However, the use of PPP modalities is still frequently associated with privatisation to this day (Kupisz, 2022).

To address this confusion, the purpose of privatisation is to redeploy assets belonging to the public sector, which is presumably inefficient, where it is expected to be utilised more efficiently by the private agency (Mackenzie, 1998). In other words, privatisation is the transfer of ownership of assets owned by the government to the private sector. In addition, the term privatisation is usually associated with the shift in commitment from the public sector to the private sector, with the public having minimal involvement in the project or asset (CDIAC, 2007).

The government can only impose regulatory control under privatisation (Austria, 2013). According to Grimsey and Lewis (2005), the government does not have a direct role in operations. In contrast, the government retains ownership and responsibility in PPP with private sector participation. This shows that a higher degree of private involvement is needed under privatisation compared to PPP. In addition, to reflect the types of cooperation, the degree of private participation also reflects the risk undertaken by the private sector via the SPV. In

this sense, risks in PPP are allocated depending on the roles of the parties involved. Meanwhile, under privatisation, the private sector bears all the project risks (Austria, 2013). The contractual structure between the public and private sectors is explained further in the next section.

2.2.3 Contractual Structure of PPP

PPP projects involve an array of relationships between different parties, and a PPP contract is key in integrating both public and private sectors under one single contract (Collin, 1998). Under the PPP contract, the procuring or contracting authority is the public sector representative who is involved with the PPP infrastructure projects (McErlane *et al.*, 2016; Yescombe and Farquharson, 2018). The procuring authority is responsible for implementing PPP, including project identification and appraisal (World Bank, 2017). The role of procuring authority in PPP can be seen as a facilitator for a project and holds responsibility throughout the entire project or contract lifetime by ensuring that the PPP project is planned carefully, including it being “*economically sound and socially acceptable*” (PPIAF, 2009).

Meanwhile, the private sector, represented by the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) or project company, is a legal instrument that is generally engaged in megaprojects (Sainati *et al.*, 2020) and was formed only to engage in the PPP project for a specific period with the government (Meng and Harshaw, 2013; McErlane *et al.*, 2016; Chu and Muneeza, 2019). In PPP, the SPV is obliged to deliver the project following certain specifications and requirements. This means that the SPV is responsible for designing, constructing, managing, operating and financing new infrastructure projects (Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, 2007; Witters *et al.*, 2012), depending on what is required in the PPP contract.

Despite this, the SPV is not the one that is directly responsible for the delivery of all the works; instead, it commissions the works to parties that are best able to manage the risks (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2011; 2012). For this reason, besides the PPP contract between the procuring authority and the SPV, various other contracts exist in a PPP project, such as engineering, construction and procurement (EPC) contracts, operation and maintenance (O&M) contracts and financial agreements. Furthermore, what makes PPP different from traditional or conventional public procurement is that, in PPP, the subcontractors and financiers establish a contractual relationship with the SPV instead of the procuring authority or the government. A typical contractual structure of a PPP project is shown in Figure 2.2.

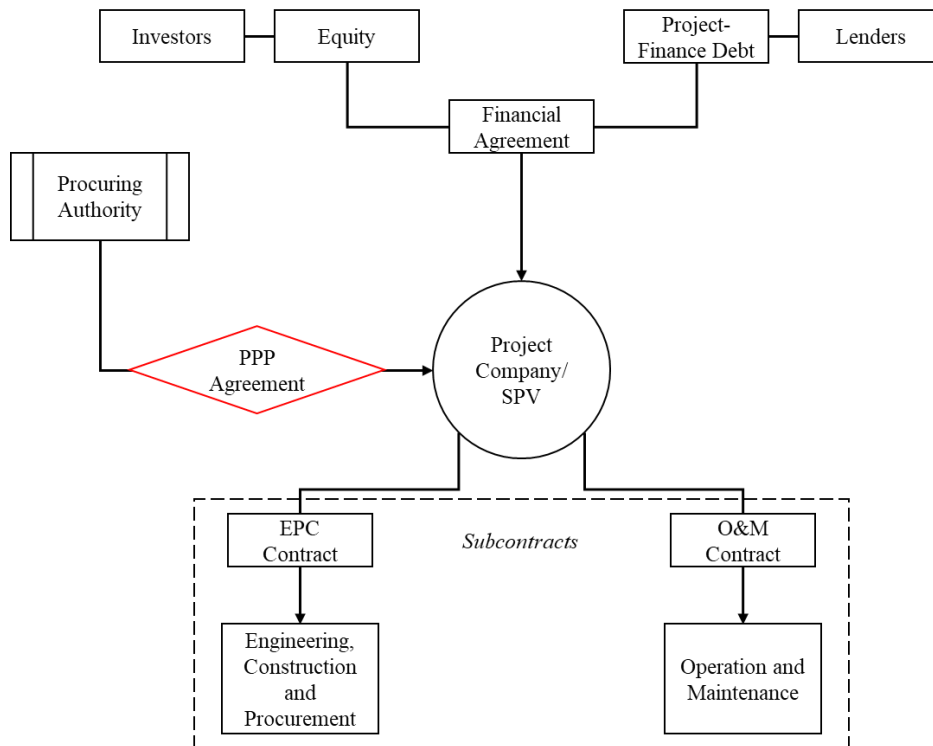


Figure 2.2. Typical contractual structure of a PPP project (source: modified from Yescombe, 2007; World Bank, 2017)

From Figure 2.2, SPV can be considered the heart of the project. The role of SPV in PPP project development is crucial as everything depends on the ability of the SPV. The SPV is commonly embraced by lenders (e.g., banks, financial institutions, and investors) and equity investors (e.g., developers, construction companies, and engineering companies) to provide financial assistance through financial agreements. The benefit of having an SPV is that it allows off-balance sheet financing, which prevents financiers from showing their debt on the balance sheet; instead, it would only appear on the SPV’s balance sheet (Chowdhury and Chen, 2010).

SPV then appoints or sub-contracts the construction, maintenance, and operation work. The engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contractors will carry out the development of the project, whereas operation and maintenance contractors will carry out the operation and maintenance after the construction work is complete.

Whilst the role of the SPV is consistent across different PPP projects and jurisdictions, there is no rule on how SPV should be formed. Typically, companies interested in a PPP project work together as a consortium to form the SPV before the bidding process, and these companies then subcontract all the work requirements to themselves. In some cases, a company with strong

financial strength and portfolio can establish the SPV by themselves and then subcontract all or some of the work required in the PPP contract to other companies.

The companies that formed the SPV are also known as project sponsors or equity investors, and the relationship between them is set out in a shareholders' agreement (Alfen *et al.*, 2009). Engel *et al.* (2014) categorised PPP sponsors into operational and financial sponsors. According to the authors, operational sponsors refer to private companies in the industry that are involved in the project as subcontractors (e.g., builders or service providers), whilst financial sponsors refer to private investment companies (e.g., banks and infrastructure investors).

The services provided by the SPV allow them to receive a stream of payments either from the government or, the end-users (public), or both. This can be available payments, shadow tolls, usage payments, or user fees (Moore *et al.*, 2017). These types of payment can be considered as compensation for the services provided by the private sector, and the payment usually covers the private sector's initial investment and other expenses (Engel *et al.*, 2010). Yescombe (2007) notes that the form of payment depends on the nature of the service on a pre-agreed basis, including bonuses and penalties (if private consortia fail to comply with the performance standard). For usage-based, fees from end-users are usually collected directly, such as toll fees. The stream of payments received by the SPV is usually invested back into the PPP to provide better services besides paying back the finance of the project (Alfen *et al.*, 2009), especially when the demand exceeds expectations (Burke and Demirag, 2015). For availability-based payments, the payment is a form of regular payments from the government after the assets is available to use, conditional on the performance and output levels of the asset and adjusted with bonuses or penalties (Engel *et al.*, 2010; World Bank, 2017; Matsumoto *et al.*, 2021). Figure 2.3 illustrates the typical flow of funds in PPP projects.

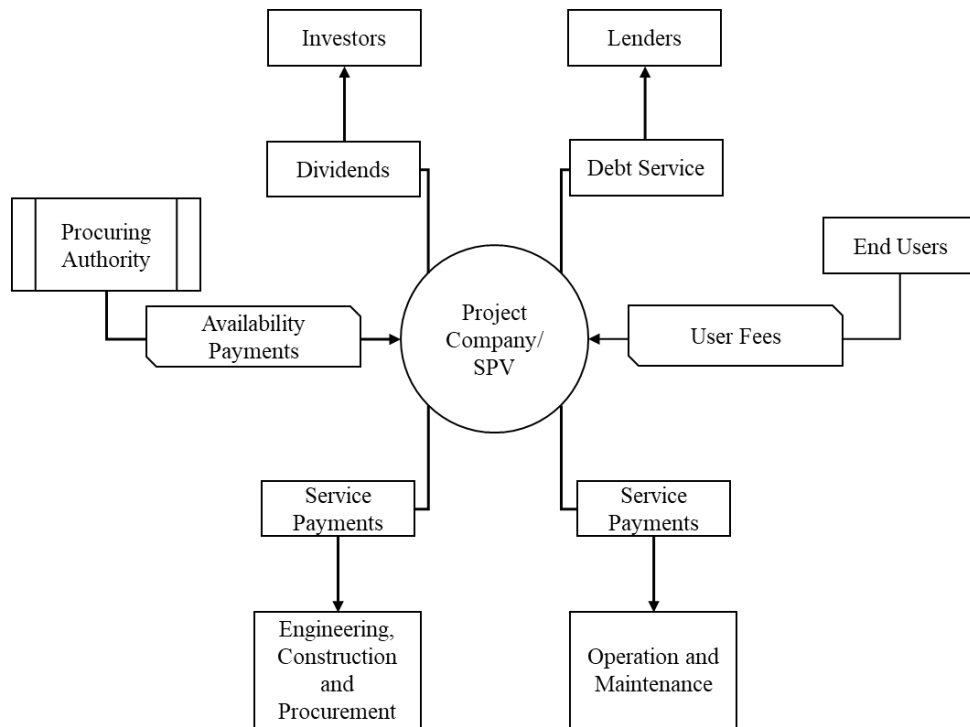


Figure 2.3. Typical flow of funds in a PPP project (source: modified from Yescombe, 2007; World Bank, 2017)

2.2.4 PPP Process

Various jurisdictions that embark on PPP have developed a PPP process that must be followed when procuring public infrastructure projects. This uniform process allows all PPPs to be delivered consistently across different sectors. It is important to note that different jurisdictions may have different processes and guidelines provided by the respective PPP units when procuring public infrastructure using PPP. It is well known that PPP is a complex form of infrastructure delivery mechanism. As such, a project to be procured as a PPP will undergo a few stages to reach that (Figure 2.4).

The typical process of developing PPP starts by identifying a potential project, which is basically a project that is already planned by the government or unsolicited proposals from the private sector. The government/relevant ministries then screen and select the project based on the priority level. The proposed projects that pass the project selection criteria then move to the screening process to decide whether the project should be launched as PPP or not. Given the limited information available regarding the project, screening is conducted using a ‘pre-feasibility’ analysis, which does not involve a full ‘cost-benefit’ analysis (World Bank, 2017).

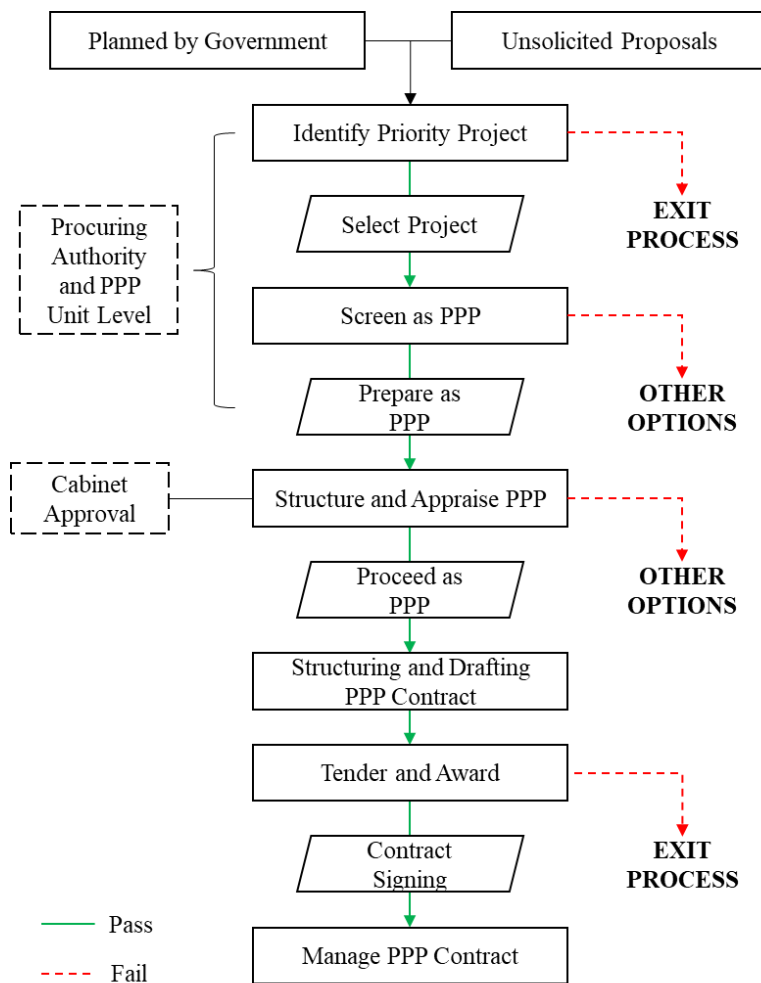


Figure 2.4. Typical PPP process (source: modified from APMG International, 2016; World Bank, 2017)

During the ‘structure and appraisal’ stage, the public sector justifies the use of PPP in procuring potential public infrastructure. To do so, the government, through the PPP unit, must first identify whether the project offers value-for-money using PPP compared to other options. This can be achieved using value-for-money assessments in the form of quantitative or qualitative analyses. Typically, the assessment is conducted using a quantitative method by comparing the PPP option with public procurement (public sector comparator – PSC). During this phase, the PPP unit is also involved in identifying the ability of the project to attract sponsors or lenders and the ability of the public sector or end-users to pay for the infrastructure service in the future (World Bank, 2017). This is important, as PPIAF (2009) indicates that, during this stage, the public sector must decide whether the proposed project can be successfully tendered and implemented using PPP. This phase can be very challenging for the public sector, given the limited experience the public sector has in procuring megaprojects.

After the successful ‘structure and appraise’ stage, the selected PPP proposal will be brought by the procuring authority to the cabinet (through the PPP unit) for principal approval before it can proceed to the next phase of the PPP process (APMG International, 2016; World Bank, 2017). If a PPP proposal fails to obtain approval from the cabinet, the procuring authority may then continue with other available procurement models (e.g., conventional, privatisation, etc.).

After gaining cabinet approval to proceed as a PPP, the PPP unit and the procuring authority typically collaborate in structuring and drafting the PPP contract. The World Bank (2017) clearly indicates that the aim of a PPP contract design is to provide a clear, comprehensive, and safe bet for the contracting parties. Further, the PPP contract design is fundamental in PPP procurement as it facilitates the relationship between the procuring authority and the private sector, more precisely, the SPV. The contract defines the performance requirements, payment mechanisms, etc. (World Bank, 2017). In addition, with long contractual terms, the complexity of PPP as a form of procurement method, paired with the risks involved, is often managed by the private sector through contractual obligations (Sundarajan and Tseng, 2017). Hence, the contracts are typically designed to be incomplete, as parties involved cannot predict future conditions (HM Treasury, 2012a; World Bank, 2017). In this sense, PPP contract must be flexible in anticipating any future changes. However, the flexibility imposed in PPP contracts has the potential to be abused. Hence, well-designed contracts must be drafted to prevent any abuses, and most importantly, the contracts must provide the best efficiency with limited capacity for unpredicted future change (Iossa *et al.*, 2007; HM Treasury, 2012a).

Next is the ‘tender and award’ stage, which is one of the crucial stages in PPP procurement. It is important to note that before bidding, the government, through the PPP unit, usually conducts a pre-qualification assessment to select the right bidders (potential SPV) for the proposed project (Yescombe, 2007). This ensures prospective bidders have the ability and experience to deliver a project. In addition, competition among bidders is important during this stage. To guarantee optimum competition during the bidding process, the government must secure an optimum number of bidders (Zawawi, 2017). Competition within the private sector is important in improving the quality, efficiency, and sustainability of public infrastructure and service delivery (Ismail, 2014; Zawawi *et al.*, 2016). In addition, with most of the technical risk borne by private companies or SPV, a strong private consortium is important, which could be achieved through competition during the bidding process (Zhang, 2005).

Once the preferred bidder is selected, the procuring authority then negotiates the contract with the winning bidder to clarify the terms and conditions in the PPP contract if necessary. In some instances, for example, in Malaysia, the cabinet is required to agree with the terms and conditions of the PPP contract. This transaction process is complete when the PPP contract is signed by the procuring authority and SPV (preferred bidder), including the financial close (Yescombe, 2007). After the PPP reaches a financial close, the project will be managed by the SPV, and at the same time, the procuring authority is responsible for managing the PPP contract over the duration of the contract. In other words, the procuring authority supervises the development of the project until the end of the contract/concession. This is to ensure that the objectives and value-for-money of the project can be achieved (Global Infrastructure Hub, 2018).

2.2.5 PPP in Delivering Public Infrastructure Services

Both PPP and conventional public procurement are built on the premise of providing public facilities through private participation, and both require proper managerial practices in public administration (Guo and Ho, 2019). A PPP contract is distinctly different from a conventional procurement model. A central characteristic of PPP contracts compared to conventional procurement models is that PPP contracts bundle together multiple functions or infrastructure activities to the private sector (Salleh and Siong, 2008; Matsumoto *et al.*, 2021), whilst non-PPP contracts, such as conventional follow an all-around project structure (Willems and Van Dorren, 2011) and unbundle the contract separately by phase (Hoppe *et al.*, 2013; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014). As such, in non-PPP contracts, each party is only interested in the success of their part (Figure 2.5).

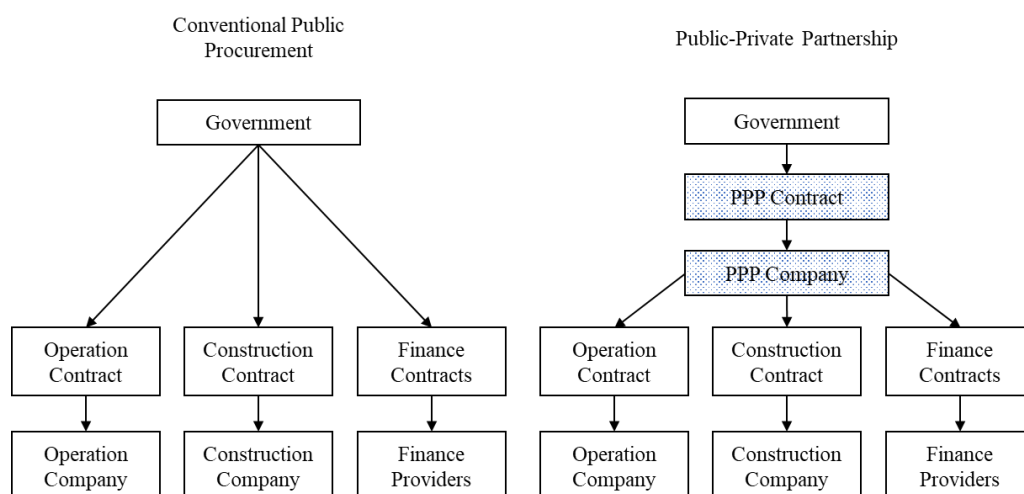


Figure 2.5. Conventional public procurement versus PPP (source: Funke *et al.*, 2013)

Despite the use of conventional public procurement is more straightforward than PPP in delivering public infrastructure services, it is less efficient than PPP (Hrab, 2004; Funke *et al.*, 2013) as the latter offers better management of contracts as the “*plurality of contracts requires good project management*” (Matsumoto *et al.*, 2021, p. 6). Additionally, bundling all infrastructure activities into a single contract (PPP contract) helps reduce the burden on the government (Matsumoto *et al.*, 2021) and allows most of the risks to be transferred to the private sector, including technical design risks.

With much of the risks and responsibilities on the private sector side, the provision of these services typically requires the creation of an SPV. This is critical because a “*dedicated SPV allows for the segregation of all assets and liabilities linked to the private provision of services*” (World Bank, 2017, p. 8). Furthermore, the SPV also undertakes the contract negotiation process with other parties in PPP (United Nations, 2008) as opposed to the government in conventional procurement.

Owing to the overall project structure, the contractual duration between PPP and conventional public procurement is also different. For PPP, the contract between the procuring authority and the private sector tends to be long-term (Symth and Edkins, 2007; Matsumoto *et al.*, 2021), which should be sufficient to incentivise the private sector based on the integrated service provided. Long-term contracts also allow private sector efficiency to optimise the life cycle costs (PPIAF, 2009). Conversely, for conventional public procurement, the contract is shorter as it is broken down into different parts and managed separately by different parties (Li and Akintoye, 2003).

Another fundamental difference between PPP and conventional public procurement is the source of funding. According to Smith (2009), under a PPP arrangement, the funding for public infrastructure predominantly or wholly comes from the private sector; meanwhile, conventional public procurement wholly relies on public funds through government revenues collected from tax or public borrowing (Hrab, 2004; Yescombe, 2007). According to Funke *et al.* (2013), despite the difference in the financing structures, there was not a huge difference between conventional procurement and PPP in terms of net present value, but the inefficiencies in the former could hugely affect public investment. This makes it impractical, especially when the government faces budgetary constraints (Charles, 2006; Liu and Yamamoto, 2009; Acharya *et al.*, 2019).

Whilst the use of PPP offers efficiency or value-for-money and remains the main motivation for governments worldwide (Grimsey and Lewis, 2005; Chan *et al.*, 2009; Osei-Kyei *et al.*, 2014; Chou and Pramudawardhani, 2015; Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018a), partnership through PPP goes beyond that. Apart from providing alternative sources of funding (Klein, 2015; Love *et al.*, 2015; Bolanos *et al.*, 2019; Sresakoolchai and Kaewunruen, 2020), PPP also provides access to better innovation, managerial expertise, and high-quality services, thus improving the supply of infrastructure (Liu and Yamamoto, 2009; United Nations, 2011; HM Treasury, 2012b; Liu and Liu, 2017; Oktavianus *et al.*, 2018; Matsumoto *et al.*, 2021). Taking advantage of the private sector, PPP has shifted the government's role from direct service providers to buyers of services on behalf of the general public (Haynes and Roden, 1999; Matsumoto *et al.*, 2021).

Due to the benefits of PPP, it has become a method of choice in delivering public infrastructure services in the UK (Haynes and Roden, 1999) and other countries, including New Zealand and Malaysia, to improve the delivery of public infrastructure services and simultaneously close the infrastructure gap (Takim *et al.*, 2008; Liu and Wilkinson, 2011; Hashim *et al.*, 2019; Duffield *et al.*, 2020).

2.3 Global PPP Market

With the global human population expected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050 (United Nations, 2019), massive investment in infrastructure is required to accommodate the global population. Infrastructure is regarded as an essential element for economic and social well-being (Marzuki and Newell, 2021). However, delivering infrastructure is quite challenging as it is highly complex, and attention should be given to funding and other aspects such as the environment, politics, and society (Estache *et al.*, 2009).

Government alone cannot deliver or meet the infrastructure need; as such, governments worldwide have shifted their attention towards private involvement in infrastructure. The private sector involvement helps increase the “*stocks of infrastructure assets*” and improve the quality of services (Moheildin, 2018). One of the most recognisable forms in this venture is PPP, which plays a massive role in addressing this problem by narrowing the use of public funds and has proven as one of the most viable ways the private sector can get involved in developing infrastructure (Lee *et al.*, 2020). Under PPP, the private sector plays a major role in delivering infrastructure. The public can leverage private resources and expertise to

effectively fill the demand for infrastructure (Li *et al.*, 2005; Sambrani, 2014; Geddes and Reeves, 2017; Oktavianus, 2017; Acharya *et al.*, 2019). Deloitte (2006), Ameyaw *et al.* (2016) and World Bank (2017) listed several ways in which PPP could address the infrastructure challenges:

- Bringing construction forward,
- Completing construction on time and on-budget,
- Mitigate the risk to the private sector,
- Providing long-term investment,
- Cost savings, and
- Enabling the public sector to focus on core business.

However, the use of PPP does not necessarily mean that PPP is the perfect solution. PPP should be considered a tool among many, and PPP should not be considered the first choice in addressing the infrastructure gap but the final resort, as PPP also brings different challenges, especially during the early and final stages (Deloitte, 2006). With PPP being utilised in most parts of the world, the understanding and application of using PPP mean that every country has its own way of developing PPP, and many factors can contribute to the development, such as geographic location, financial market maturity and political climate (Deloitte, 2006). In this sense, the level of PPP development across countries and regions is varied, and countries with more favourable markets have a more mature and robust PPP policy compared to countries that are still ‘testing the water’. To understand more about PPP development, Deloitte (2006) has developed the PPP market maturity stage (Figure 2.6), whereby the development of PPP is evaluated against several benchmarks and measures against the level of sophistication and activity.

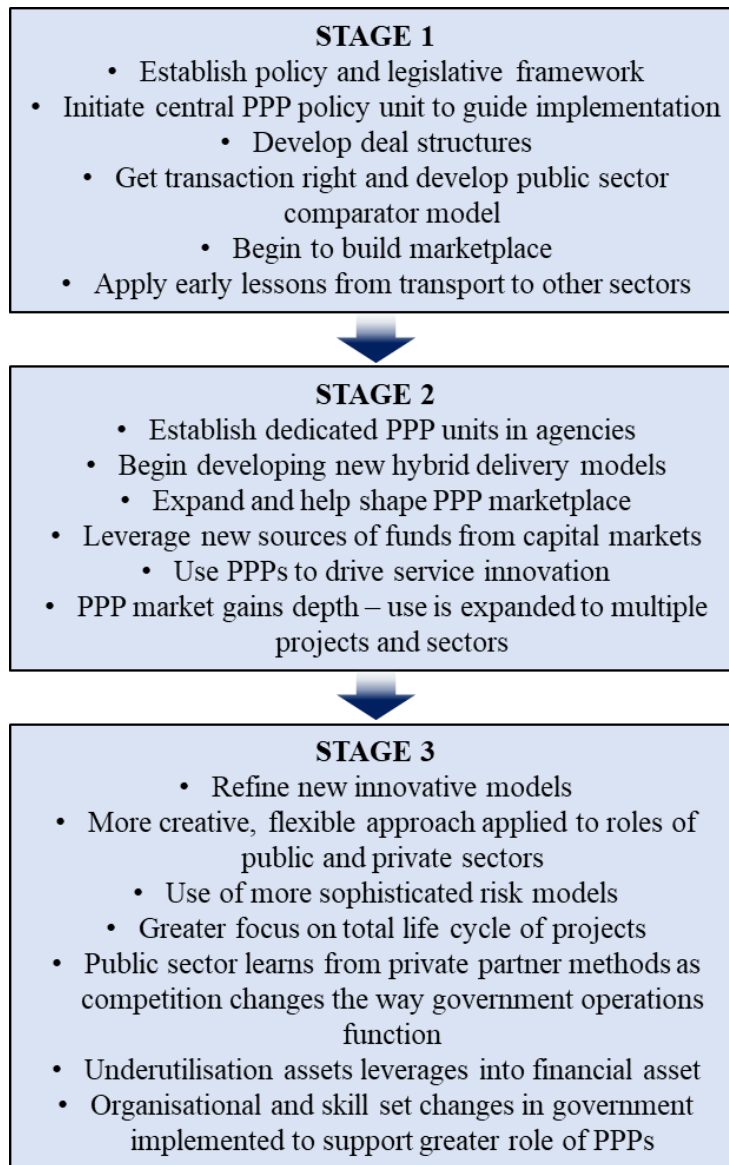


Figure 2.6. PPP market maturity stages (source: Deloitte, 2006)

According to the benchmark, few countries, mainly developed countries, have achieved the highest level of PPP market maturity (Stage 3) due to the country's ability to use PPP more sophisticatedly compared to other nations (Hodge, 2004; Siemiatycki, 2010). In the UK, an earlier version of PPP known as the PFI has been extensively implemented across a variety of infrastructure sectors. However, due to the lack of clarity and inappropriate risk management and allocation, the use of PFI has resulted in more risk to the private sector, affecting the public sector's commitment (HM Treasury 2012b). To overcome these issues, a new model of PFI known as PF2 or PPP was introduced, which is designed to refine new innovative private sector participation models and address key issues that the government faces under the previous model (PFI) (HM Treasury, 2012a). To further support PPP development, a PPP unit

(Partnerships UK) was introduced in 2000, which has significantly contributed to the development of PPP maturity in the UK, offering support to the Treasury in developing PPP projects in the UK (Mainelli, 2003). Back in 2006, Deloitte (2006) reported that PPP projects represented between 10% to 13% of the UK's total infrastructure investment.

Other developed jurisdictions, such as Australia, also achieved the highest PPP maturity level and continue to grow and evolve (Infrastructure Partnership Australia, 2007), with data provided by the World Bank showcasing that Australia has higher PPP scores than the global average in every aspect. As one of the mature PPP markets in the Eastern Hemisphere, Australia focuses greatly on the project life cycle, evident through their proper planning, ensuring that PPP projects and the PPP consortia are able to sustain over the contract period (English, 2006). The Australian PPP market is also known for its focus on financial accountability, access to private sector skills, and innovation from the competition (Saeed, 2018). The significance of PPP in Australia is also evident when developing countries recognise the policy by Partnership Victoria as the best practice model for PPP (Infrastructure Partnership Australia, 2007). Similar to the UK, PPP accounts for 10% to 15% of the total public infrastructure investment and is expected to increase to 25% (Duffield *et al.*, 2020).

Countries in the American continent, especially in the North American region, such as the US and Canada, also have developed a well-structured PPP market. In the US, due to profit-driven orientation, the private sector has more control or dominance than the public sector in PPP (Akintoye, 2009). Despite this, the government managed to leverage private sector expertise by converting future revenues into current spending (Engel *et al.*, 2011). New policies have also been introduced at state and federal levels to encourage PPP to leverage underutilised assets into financial assets (Casady and Geddes, 2016).

Canada shares the same infrastructure challenges as the US; however, two waves of PPP have been crucial in shaping PPP development in the country (Siemiatycki, 2015), especially the second wave in the early 2000s, which has been instrumental as Canada managed to attract six times the amount of private investment via PPP compared to the US, making Canada the world leader in PPP (Casady and Geddes, 2016). The public sector in Canada is also more creative in managing PPP by adopting two-tiered institutional frameworks, provincial and national, facilitating better infrastructure delivery via PPP by providing advisory services to public departments and agencies (OECD, 2010; Siemiatycki, 2015; Casady and Geddes, 2016). The second wave of PPP also shifts Canada's perception of the importance of value-for-money

throughout the PPP life cycle. This also saw the refinement of innovative PPP approaches via upfront project planning, incentives and more sophisticated risk models (Infrastructure Canada, 2012).

Overall, the success of some of these jurisdictions as some of the most mature PPP markets globally was contributed by the creation of dedicated agencies overseeing the development of PPPs. The establishment of dedicated agencies helps develop a deep understanding of PPP. Coupled with their practical PPP experience across different project sectors, it helps these jurisdictions employ lessons learned, avoiding mistakes such as improper risk allocation in future PPP projects. This suggests that stakeholders in well-established PPP jurisdictions have greater familiarity with the model in terms of its application, especially in balancing divergent interests. Accompanied by well-established PPP frameworks, it creates opportunities for collaboration and transparency between stakeholders, cultivating trust, which is important for PPP project success. Overall, interpreting Deloitte's (2006) PPP maturity model suggests that a more sophisticated and active PPP market is able to promote a more positive PPP environment. The next section discusses PPP in New Zealand and Malaysian contexts to provide an understanding between these two jurisdictions.

2.4 PPP in New Zealand and Malaysian Contexts

2.4.1 PPP in New Zealand

Infrastructure underinvestment in New Zealand has been going on for over a decade (Chapman Tripp, 2018; PwC, 2020), and the level of infrastructure investment is well below the OECD average (NZCID, 2008; Brook, 2021). Lack of skills and expertise and heavy reliance on public capital have been identified as some of the factors that contribute to the infrastructure deficits in New Zealand (Infracom, 2020b). Through the 'Budget Policy Statement 2020', the New Zealand government admitted that they failed to invest accordingly (New Zealand Treasury, 2019). Thus, private investment looks to be a great alternative in delivering the required infrastructure and reducing the government's financial burden (Salleh and Siong, 2008).

The official development and implementation of PPP in New Zealand started in 2009 at the 'Building Nations' symposium, which saw the central government becoming more open to implementing PPP for public projects. This was the first time the government planned to procure public infrastructure properly under the PPP scheme (Liu and Wilkinson, 2011). Prior to that, PPP projects or similar in New Zealand were managed by local councils (Duffield *et*

al., 2020); however, there were no general guidelines by the central government regarding PPP and “*policy settings were generally unfavourable towards PPP*” (Liu and Wilkinson, 2014, p. 92). As a result, previous projects that were delivered through so-called ‘PPP’ were not classified as PPP (Liu and Wilkinson, 2011).

The New Zealand Government aims to use PPP whenever the arrangement represents better value-for-money and to improve service quality (National Infrastructure Unit – NIU, 2010; New Zealand Treasury, 2015; Duffield *et al.*, 2020). In the New Zealand context, PPP is defined as:

“A long-term contract for the delivery of a service, where provision of the service requires the construction of a new asset, or enhancement of an existing asset, that is financed from external sources on a non-recourse basis, and full legal ownership of the asset is retained by the Crown” (New Zealand Treasury, 2015, p. 6; Infracom, 2020a, p. 7).

Owing to high infrastructure needs, the adoption of PPP in New Zealand marked an important milestone (Sheng *et al.*, 2020). Generally, two types of PPP arrangements are used in the New Zealand PPP programme, distinguished by the services required (New Zealand Treasury, 2015). These arrangements are the design-build-finance-maintain (DBFM) and design-build-finance-maintain-operate (DBFMO). When PPP was first implemented in New Zealand, two projects were selected as pilot PPP projects, namely Wiri Prison and Hobsonville Schools (Controller and Auditor-General, 2011; EY, 2013).

These projects are the first two that have been initiated under the modern PPP arrangement, and the first two are overseen by a specific authority, the NIU. The success of these two projects has opened the door for the government to consider implementing PPP in future projects (NIU, 2013). Since then, eleven other projects have been initiated, bringing a total of thirteen PPP projects across three sectors: transportation, corrections, and education, with the last one (Waikeria Prison) reaching its financial close in 2018 (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3. List of PPP projects initiated in New Zealand since 2009 (source: Infracom, 2021)

| Project | Sector | Expression of Interest (EOI) | Financial Close |
|--|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Hobsonville Schools | Education | 2011 | 2012 |
| Auckland South Correctional Facility (Wiri Prison) | Corrections | 2010 | 2012 |
| Schools 2 PPP (4 schools in Canterbury, Auckland and Queenstown) | Education | 2014 | 2015 |
| Auckland Prison | Corrections | 2013 | 2015 |
| Schools 3 PPP (3 schools in Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch) | Education | 2016 | 2017 |
| Waikeria Prison | Corrections | 2017 | 2018 |
| Pūhoi to Warkworth Motorway | Transportation | 2015 | 2016 |
| Transmission Gully Motorway | Transportation | 2013 | 2014 |

2.4.2 PPP in Malaysia

Malaysia has been involved with several private participation programmes, and to an extent, most of the public infrastructure was delivered through these means. Triggered by the economic crisis in the 1980s (Ismail, 2014) and influenced by the ‘Washington Consensus’ (Babb, 2013), the private participation programme in Malaysia can be traced back to the era with the introduction of the ‘Malaysia Incorporated Policy’ in 1981, followed by the ‘Privatisation Policy’ in 1983 (Ismail, 2014; Ahmad *et al.*, 2017). These policies saw the need to reduce the government’s involvement in the economy, giving rise to the privatisation of state-owned enterprises through corporatisation or sale of government assets, which contributed to the sustained growth of the Malaysian economy (Sundaram, 2014).

As a result of these policies, the country’s financial constraints have eroded and helped the government deliver improved public infrastructure services (Ismail *et al.*, 2012; Rahman *et al.*,

2014; Rashid, 2014; Hashim *et al.*, 2019). In line with the development and success of the two privatisation policies, the Malaysian government saw the need to restructure and improve the existing private participation policies; hence, PFI was introduced in 2006 as part of the Ninth Malaysian Plan to provide greater participation from private companies and to improve the delivery of public infrastructure services using both public and private resources (Economic Planning Unit, 2006; Takim *et al.*, 2008). The transition also signifies the change from a short-term to a long-term contract in delivering public infrastructure services (Som *et al.*, 2020).

However, the use of PFI relies solely on private financing from government-linked companies (GLCs) (Abdullah, 2015; Loh, 2020) or from the Employees Provident Fund and Retirement Fund (Ministry of Finance, 2023) as the government saw it as one of the ways governments can generate income by delivering public infrastructure services. Although the source of financing for PFI may seem against the principle of PPP, the practice is common worldwide (World Bank, 2017). However, this approach can easily be exposed to political pressure since PPP is non-recourse financing, which allows the debt in the project to be excluded from public debt (OECD, 2012).

Following the success of the PFI programme in Malaysia, the government adopted PPP in 2009, this time relying on purely private sector financing. Like PFI, the use of PPP is relevant whenever the procurement offers efficiency or value-for-money to the government, including socio-economic impacts. In line with this development, proper PPP guidance was also introduced.

Although the use of PFI/PPP terminology started after the Ninth Malaysian Plan in 2006, a review of the Privatisation Master Plan by the Economic Planning Unit (1991) and an official report from the same department in 1996 revealed that the use of PPP modalities started after the introduction of the Privatisation Master Plan in 1991, nearly twenty years before the introduction of official PPP guidance in 2009, which was absent prior to the establishment of UKAS as a dedicated PPP unit in Malaysia (Yong, 2022). However, during those periods, only a limited set of PPP arrangements were used, for example, the BOT model, which is still used until today, especially for the development of highways in Malaysia.

If success in PPP is measured by the number of PPP projects initiated, Malaysia is successful in doing so. Based on the Fiscal Outlook 2024 report by the Ministry of Finance (2023), the

Malaysian government committed to more than 100 PPP projects across various sectors, amounting to nearly RM 150 billion (approx. USD 31 billion).

Considering Malaysia is still a developing country, the country also saw the importance of further accelerating private investment in strategic areas. More recently, the government, through UKAS (2022), has published an implementation guideline for PPP (known as PPP 3.0), which aims to improve the PPP principle in Malaysia by introducing several new elements, such as the use of ROT PPP arrangement to rehabilitate and maintain existing public infrastructure services. Importantly, under the new framework, the government aims to enhance existing policies (Ministry of Finance, 2023). Overall, the initiatives from the Malaysian government to promote PPP adoption show that Malaysia is serious in improving the nation's facilities through PPP.

2.4.3 Comparison Between New Zealand and Malaysia

Comparisons between New Zealand and Malaysia have provided insights into the differences between these two jurisdictions (Table 2.4). Being a developed country, New Zealand is way ahead of Malaysia in terms of transparency and checks and balances. This means that the business environment in New Zealand is more immune to corruption and abuse of power compared to Malaysia. Despite New Zealand having the highest transparency in public procurement (InfraCompass, 2020), which in theory encourages more private participation and subsequently drives value-for-money, New Zealand has not used this opportunity to attract private investment into PPP, which affects Infracom to retain the knowledge and experience of handling PPP projects (Infracom, 2021).

The level of transparency also influences the burden of government regulation. With a high transparency level, New Zealand's PPP guidelines are more detailed than those of Malaysia. The simplistic nature of the PPP guideline in Malaysia (Ismail and Haris, 2014a) has resulted in less burden for the private sector. However, this also results in no clear PPP framework for auditing or monitoring PPP performance (Takim *et al.*, 2009), which has also been criticised by the likes of Beh (2010) and Ismail and Haris (2014a). Ismail and Haris (2014a) reported that Malaysia was lacking in providing guidelines for tendering/contract and supervision, affecting overall project quality and cost (Beh, 2010) and leading to issues between stakeholders. As a result, stakeholders tend to rely on their previous experience.

Table 2.4. Comparison between New Zealand and Malaysia (World Economic Forum, 2019; Infracom, 2021, UKAS, 2009, 2022)

| | New Zealand | Malaysia |
|---|---|--|
| Level of Development | Developed | Developing |
| Level of Transparency | #2 | #55 |
| Checks and Balances | #2 | #32 |
| Burden of Government Regulation | #25 | #5 |
| Policy Stability | #25 | #14 |
| Government Long-Term Vision | #45 | #9 |
| Infrastructure | #46 | #35 |
| Dedicated PPP Unit | Infrastructure Commission (Infracom) | Unit Kerjasama Awam Swasta (UKAS) |
| Year of Establishment | 2009 | 2009 |
| Latest Project Announced/Reach Financial Close | Wakeria Prison (financial close in 2018) | 16 projects under the 12 th Malaysian Plan (announced in 2021 – commenced between 2021 and 2025) |
| PPP Objectives | Value-for-money Quality services Major infrastructure project | Value-for-money Cost savings Accountability Service enhancement Quick delivery Socio-economic |

Table 2.4. Comparison between New Zealand and Malaysia (World Economic Forum, 2019; Infracom, 2021, UKAS, 2009, 2022) (*Cont'd*)

| | New Zealand | Malaysia |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| No. of PPP Projects | | 170 (99 projects announced |
| Officially Signed (since 2009) | 8 | in the 10 th Malaysian Plan: 2011-2015) |
| | | Transport |
| | | Energy |
| | | Water and Sanitation |
| | Prison | ICT |
| PPP Sectors | Education | Healthcare |
| | Transport | Education |
| | | Housing |
| | | Port |
| | | Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) |
| | | Build-Lease-Transfer (BLT) |
| | Design-Build-Finance-Maintain (DBFM) | Build-Operate-Own (BOO) |
| Type of PPP Arrangements | Design-Build-Finance-Maintain-Operate (DBFMO) | Build-Least-Maintain-Operate-Transfer (BLMOT) |
| | | Operation-Maintenance (OM) |
| | | Build-Lease-Maintain-Transfer (BLMT) |
| Unsolicited Proposal | No | Yes |

In terms of policy stability, Malaysia is ahead of New Zealand, and it is evident within the context of PPP. In New Zealand, the change in government has resulted in the politicisation of PPP. Several news reports, such as by RNZ in 2023, suggested that due to the political climate

in New Zealand, the policy surrounding PPP is still unclear, especially since “*government policy since 2018 has banned the PPP approach in health, education and prisons*” (Pennington, 2023). As such, it is hard to predict how far PPP will be utilised in New Zealand. In comparison, the change in government in Malaysia hardly affects PPP implementation as the government continuously announces new PPP projects regardless of which side they are in the political spectrum.

Comparing New Zealand and Malaysia in the last two sections reflected the government’s long-term vision with PPP, and it is unsurprising that Malaysia is far ahead in this aspect. Despite the use of PPP has achieved most of its objectives, New Zealand has not come out with a definitive list of future PPP projects, and experts believe that the lack of long-term vision in New Zealand especially related to PPP, resulting in missed opportunities to learn and improve (Infrastructure New Zealand, 2021). This has resulted in infrastructure deficits, posing significant challenges for the New Zealanders (Infracom, 2020b). The next section highlights the significance of conducting comparative analysis between countries.

2.4.4 Significance of Cross-Country Analysis

Due to the diversity of PPP internationally, comparative analysis between different jurisdictions may provide an opportunity to understand PPP from different policy contexts and perspectives. This type of study in PPP has been emphasised by the likes of Cheung *et al.* (2012) and Osei-Kyei *et al.* (2019). New Zealand and Malaysia are selected as case studies, as both jurisdictions have diverse PPP experiences. Combining Malaysia’s long experiences with private sector participation in public infrastructure delivery and New Zealand’s already well-established PPP framework may provide a broader perspective that is significant in informing stakeholder management in PPP and policy improvement. This may also unfold something new and expand existing knowledge on PPP, which may inform future PPP practices and contribute to the development of an appropriate stakeholder management framework for PPP. Since multiple stakeholders are involved in PPP procurement and it is more complex than conventional procurement, understanding this research area is deemed essential to the success of PPP projects. In essence, a comparative study between New Zealand and Malaysia is important in extracting important lessons that can inform both jurisdictions and, by extension, other jurisdictions, as well as inform the management of stakeholders through effective mitigation strategies and mechanisms. In addition, the research will also expand the discussion

surrounding PPP in New Zealand and Malaysia as limited attempt has been made by researchers in these jurisdictions.

2.5 Development of PPP Research in the Built Environment

In line with the rapid development of PPP as a form of public infrastructure procurement and service delivery, it has piqued the interest of researchers worldwide (Al-Sharif and Kaka, 2004), especially in the last couple of decades (Cui *et al.*, 2018; Song *et al.*, 2019). This section of the thesis reviews relevant academic works of PPP in the built environment discipline. This review aims to identify the research domains associated with PPP and highlight the gap that shapes the direction of this study.

2.5.1 Data Collection and Method of Analysis

Several systematic PPP literature reviews have been carried out in the last couple of decades, summarising PPP research development and trends (Zhang *et al.*, 2020). Focusing on the construction management discipline, research by Al-Sharif and Kaka (2004) reviewed PPP 34 research published in four selected construction journals: Construction and Architectural Management (ECAM), Construction Management and Economics (CME), International Journal of Project Management (IJPM), and Journal of Construction Engineering and Management (JCEM). Inspired by Al-Sharif and Kaka (2004), Ke *et al.* (2009) extended the literature size to 170, collected from seven Scopus-indexed construction journals. As the research paradigm review study changes, researchers have taken more progressive steps to review PPP research, providing a more holistic understanding of PPP research development. Instead of focusing on specific journals, researchers started relying on academic databases to provide them with literature information for them to review.

Generally, most existing PPP review studies rely only on either Scopus (Ke *et al.*, 2009; Narbaev *et al.*, 2020) or WoS (Neto *et al.*, 2016; Wang *et al.*, 2018) as their source of information. Both of these databases have their own advantages; for example, WoS has strong literature coverage (Viera and Gomes, 2009; Chadegani *et al.*, 2013), whilst Scopus has a higher journal count (Chadegani *et al.*, 2013). However, the systematic literature reviews produced by the studies in the past are less likely to fully capture the diversity of PPP research. The reason for this is that the use of both databases (Scopus and WoS) ensures that a broader scope of disciplines of PPP research is covered (Cui *et al.*, 2018; Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2019).

A comprehensive keyword search needs to be carried out to extract the literature information from these academic databases. Using precise keywords such as ‘public private partnership’, ‘public-private partnership’, ‘public private partnerships’, ‘public-private partnerships’, ‘private finance initiative’, and ‘private finance initiatives’, a total of 13,447 articles published between 1997 and 2023 were extracted from both Scopus (7,592) and WoS (5,855) databases. Only journal publications are included as part of the analysis to ensure that selected articles are subject to peer-review (Callon *et al.*, 1993).

Data from both academic databases are then merged into one using the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software. To maintain the comprehensiveness of the data and analysis, all duplicates and articles that are irrelevant to the PPP research subject, although the word ‘PPP’ is mentioned in the abstracts and keywords, were also removed. This includes using PPP as a form of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to address social issues, such as poverty or crime prevention. For papers that came without abstracts, the content of the articles was analysed to determine whether the papers fell into the PPP research topic.

From the data cleaning process, 3,548 articles were considered ‘fit’ for further analysis. A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide an overview of the development of PPP publications between 1997 and 2023 (Figure 2.7). As shown in the figure, PPP research received significant attention from researchers. However, it is still unclear what has been explored what has not been explored. Therefore, this presents an opportunity to investigate the gaps in PPP research, shaping the direction of this thesis.

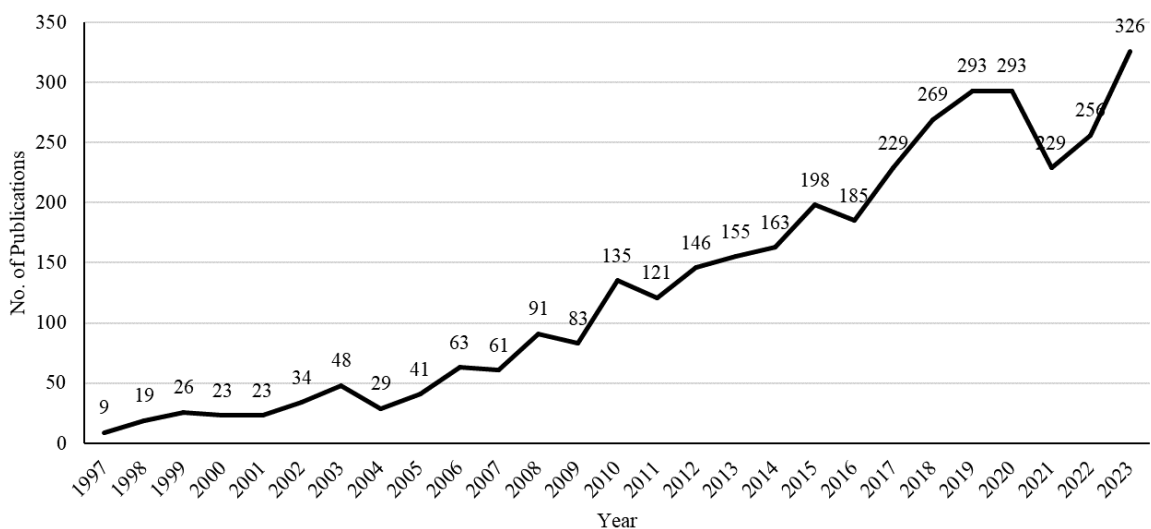


Figure 2.7. Annual PPP publication growth (1997 – 2023)

Recent review studies have adopted keyword analysis to validate or provide insight into PPP research. The keyword can be derived from the title, abstract, and author's keywords (Cobo *et al.*, 2011). Keywords provided by researchers aim to highlight the content of a publication within the boundaries of the research domain (Su and Lee, 2010; Narbaev *et al.*, 2020). Many researchers from different backgrounds have argued the importance of keyword analysis in review papers (Scharp, 2021; Zhou *et al.*, 2022). However, this approach may not be accurate, especially since Themistocleous and Wearne (2000) and Babaii and Taase (2013) noted that some researchers did not prioritise keyword selection as much as expected. Furthermore, some journals did not provide the author's keywords in their publications (Al-Sharif and Kaka, 2004). Based on the initial analysis of bibliometric data collected from Scopus and WoS, almost 1/6 of the total publications came without the author's keyword. As a result, these publications are constantly excluded in the final analysis of research that solely relies on keywords to highlight the development of PPP research.

To address the limitations of keyword analysis, a content analysis was adopted to review all the publications and unveil the gaps in PPP literature. To determine the themes of PPP research publications, the themes were analysed based on the abstract of the PPP paper, and for articles that came without an abstract, the whole content of the paper was studied. For PPP publications that cover multiple research agendas, the papers were categorised based on the prominent agenda of the paper. Therefore, every article only falls under one research theme. Next, a timeline map of these publications is developed to observe the chronological development of PPP research agendas, which could be an excellent starting point for researchers interested in investigating the emergence of certain concepts (Soaita *et al.*, 2019) because it provides a more objective view of research trends (Gough *et al.*, 2012). Figure 2.8 shows a summary of the research plan.

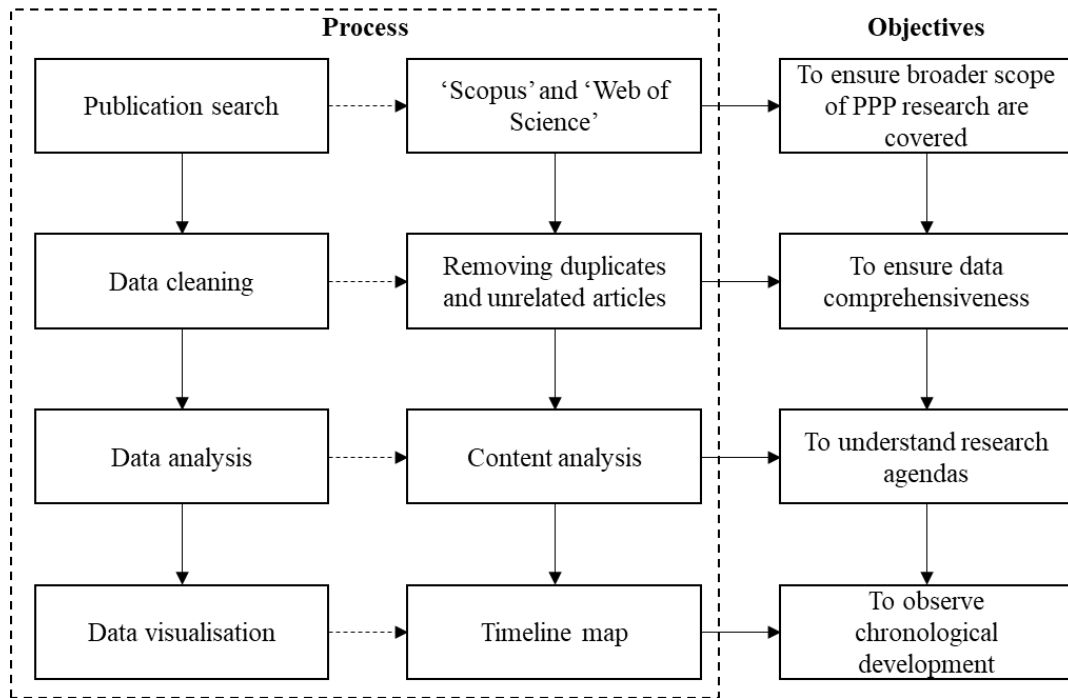


Figure 2.8. Methodology for reviewing PPP publications

2.5.2 PPP Research Development

2.5.2.1 Research Streams

Review studies in the past have classified PPP research into several research streams to better inform future research directions. For example, Al-Sharif and Kaka (2004) have classified PPP research into three research streams: risk management, procurement, and financial management. Ke *et al.* (2009) expanded the research streams to seven, consisting of (1) investment environment, (2) procurement, (3) economic viability, (4) financial package, (5) risk management, (6) governance issues, and (7) integration research. Since then, review studies such as those by Cui *et al.* (2018), Narbaev *et al.* (2020), and Shi *et al.* (2020) utilised keyword analysis to identify prominent research streams. As mentioned earlier, the methodology is unable to holistically capture the essence of each publication. To provide a more accurate view of PPP research streams, this research utilises content analysis, as the researcher believes that it is the best way to identify and categorise PPP research topics.

From content analysis, ten (10) research streams are identified (Table 2.5). From the table, only three research streams ('performance, economic and value-for-money'; 'procurement' and 'PPP governance') have been extensively explored by researchers and have collectively contributed more than 60% of the total publications from 1997 to 2023. These topics, along

with ‘risk management and allocation’ can be considered traditional PPP research topics, and researchers have extensively covered them over the years. Owing to this nature, research areas such as ‘stakeholder management’, ‘financing’ and ‘innovation and sustainability’ were compromised and only contributed around 11% of the total PPP publications, thus creating opportunities for future research to explore these areas.

Apart from being compromised, proceeding review studies have also merged some of the topics into one research agenda; for example, the topics of ‘financing’ and ‘economic’ together since both are closely related (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). As such, it is difficult to differentiate the contribution of ‘financing’ as a PPP research topic. Interestingly, some review studies have also merged the topic of ‘financing’ with other topics based on the word frequency or cluster analysis, whereby the word ‘financing’ is placed in the same cluster as other research streams. For example, Cui *et al.* (2018) merged ‘financial package’ with ‘PPP application’, as both words are in the same cluster. Nonetheless, the findings presented in this section are consistent with those of Ke *et al.* (2009) and Neto *et al.* (2016), who state that ‘financing’ is one of the least studied research topics. One of the topics that recently emerged in PPP is ‘innovation and sustainability’. Papers such as PPP within the context of SDGs (Choi *et al.*, 2020; Owusu-Manu *et al.*, 2020) and innovative technology in PPP (Yuan *et al.*, 2020; Owolabi *et al.*, 2020) were published following the trend of sustainability through SDGs.

In conclusion, the diversity of PPP research is expected because PPP has become a multidisciplinary research topic (Narbaev *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, academic studies on PPP are essential to ensure that PPP as a form of public procurement can be delivered accordingly. Al-Sharif and Kaka (2004) mentioned that researchers should publish work on PPP by finding solutions and overcoming the problems associated with PPP, which may attract private consortiums and the government to get involved with the procurement model. Overall, this section of the thesis contributes to the literature by providing a more nuanced understanding of the PPP research stream compared to previous review studies.

Table 2.5. PPP research streams

| Stream | Example of Topic | Papers | Coverage |
|---|---|---------------|-----------------|
| Contract Management | Contractual issues; contract negotiation; contract design; contract period | 197 | 5.55% |
| Drivers and Barriers | Critical success factors; barriers for PPP; drivers for PPP; critical failure factors | 358 | 10.09% |
| Financing | Capital structure; source of financing, debt interest; financing capacity | 135 | 3.80% |
| Innovation and Sustainability | Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), innovative technology in PPP; industrial revolution 4.0 | 134 | 3.78% |
| Literature Review | Systematic review, bibliometric review | 33 | 0.93% |
| Performance, economic and value-for-money | Performance of PPP vs traditional model; value-for-money, key performance indicator | 821 | 23.14% |
| Procurement | Phases in PPP; PPP model; PPP application | 760 | 21.45% |
| PPP Governance | PPP law and regulation; accountability; PPP institution | 634 | 17.87% |
| Risk Management and Allocation | Risk identification; risk management; risk allocation; risk evaluation | 344 | 9.70% |
| Stakeholder Management | Stakeholder theory; stakeholder relationships; stakeholder attitudes | 131 | 3.69% |

2.5.2.2 Timeline Map of PPP Research

Whilst the classification of PPP research provides useful information for future researchers, it is difficult to observe the trends of PPP research. This section aims to address the limitation by establishing a timeline map of PPP research. Accordingly, this helps to build and improve the understanding of the chronological evolution of PPP research agendas (Soaita *et al.*, 2019). A research timeline map is an excellent starting point for researchers interested in investigating the emergence of certain concepts (Soaita *et al.*, 2019) because it provides a more objective

view of research trends (Gough *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, future researchers can utilise timeline mapping to help choose which research streams they should explore (Figure 2.9).

Whilst the use of a timeline map has been adopted in PPP research by Song *et al.* (2019) and Shi *et al.* (2020), both studies construct the timeline based on word frequency analysis by capturing the word that appears in the title, abstract, and keyword. It is argued that this is the quickest way to explore PPP research streams; however, as mentioned before, it does not provide a holistic view of PPP research, as some researchers “*seemed to treat keyword selection less seriously than expected*” (Babaii and Taase, 2013, p. 15). Hence, content analysis was found to be appropriate for filling the gap.

Through the timeline mapping provided, PPP research topics that fall under ‘performance, economic and value-for-money’, ‘procurement’ and ‘PPP governance’ have attracted significant attention from researchers since 1997. Whilst these research streams were popular from the start, the timeline mapping provided revealed that research under ‘performance, economic and value-for-money’ has increased drastically in 2018 compared to other research streams. Surprisingly, it is almost double that of ‘procurement’ and has remained the most studied research stream since then. According to Neto *et al.* (2016), the reason for this is that first-generation PPP projects that started in the 90s are now reaching their end; hence, it is the most suitable time to investigate whether the PPP projects achieved their expectations in terms of performance.

Furthermore, researchers have attempted to find ways to make PPP more economical and value-for-money through various methodologies such as Monte Carlo simulation and real option (Fitch *et al.*, 2018; Berk and Podhraski, 2018; Liu *et al.*, 2020), which also contributed to the significant growth and understanding of the ‘performance, economic and value-for-money’ research. This is important as PPP is always being promoted as an effective model for delivering public infrastructure services compared to a conventional procurement; however, it is still plagued with issues such as time and cost overruns (Iyer and Sagheer, 2010; Rajan *et al.*, 2014; Budayan, 2019; Purbo *et al.*, 2020).

The timeline map also pointed out that 2010 was the first year that other research streams mentioned above managed to publish more than ten papers: ‘PPP drivers and barriers’ (14) and ‘risk management and allocation’ (13), and it took another three years before another research stream able to contribute more than ten publications: ‘contract management’ (15). In

comparison, the top three research streams managed to publish more than ten papers seven years before other research streams could do so.

This indicates that research streams outside the top three lagged significantly in terms of the number of publications. The logical reason for this is that, since the 2000s, countries worldwide have started to embrace PPP as a procurement model over the conventional procurement model (Burger and Hawkesworth, 2011); as a result, more studies have been conducted to assess the policies, regulations, viability of PPP, and the model associated with PPP (Ball *et al.*, 2001; Pietroforte and Miller, 2002; Bradford, 2003; Heald, 2003) compared to others.

Observing the end of the spectrum, research on ‘innovation and sustainability’, ‘stakeholder management’ and ‘financing’ contributed approximately 11% of the total PPP publications from 1997 to 2023. Interestingly, the timeline mapping showed that these topics have started to gain traction among researchers and have shown steady growth since 2014/2015. Furthermore, whilst other major research topics started to show a slight decline in the number of publications in 2020, these least-studied research streams (apart from ‘innovation and sustainability’) and ‘risk management and allocation’ recorded the highest number of publications in a single year. However, compared to other research streams and looking at the historical movement of other research streams, it may take some time before these research streams become the main topic of discussion among PPP researchers.

One important observation from PPP research trends is that after the pandemic in 2021, most research topics related to PPP within the built environment discipline dropped due to the increased interest in PPP and COVID-19. Topics related to vaccine procurement and CSR through PPP were particularly popular during the period, showcasing the significance of COVID-19 to the academic world regardless of scholar’s background; nevertheless, traditional research areas managed to bounce back as authorities started to prioritise infrastructure projects to stimulate the economy due to the pandemic (World Bank, 2021).

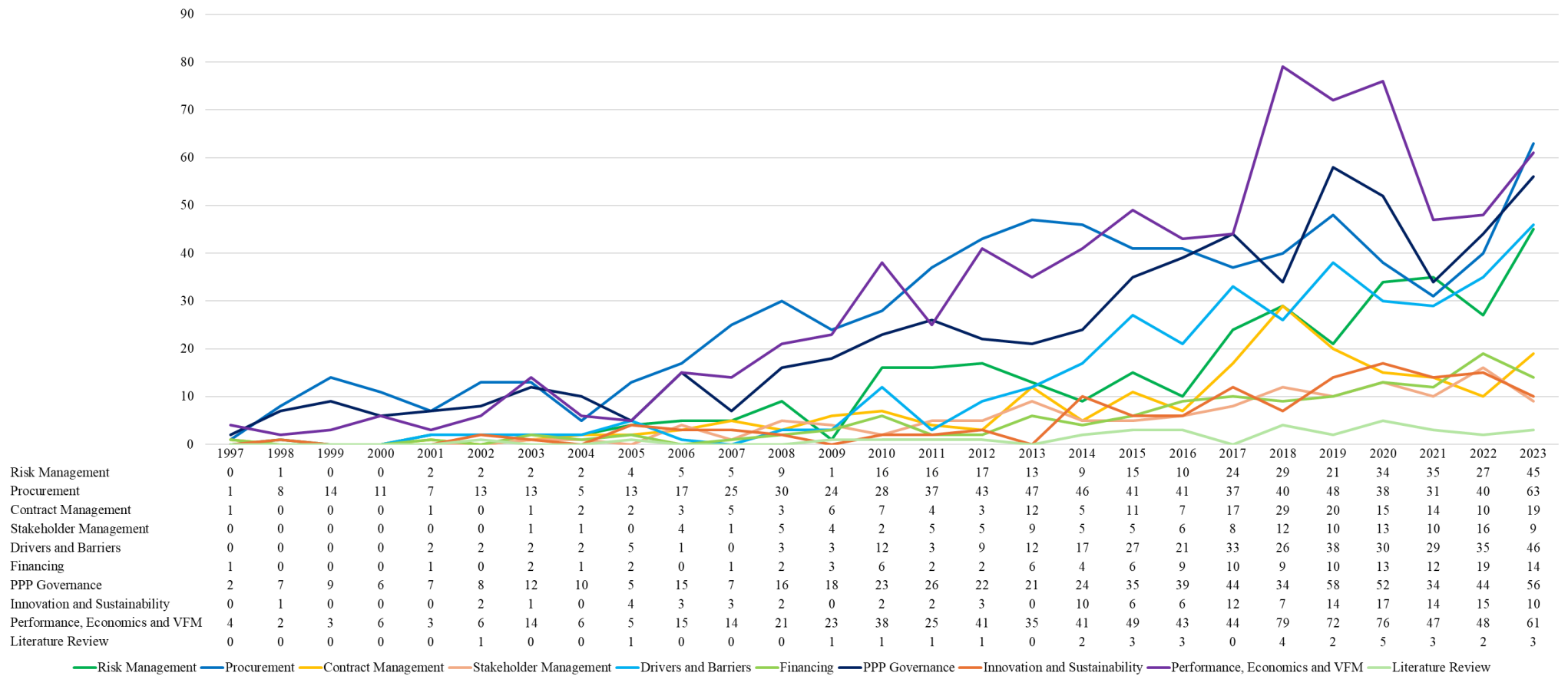


Figure 2.9. Timeline map of PPP research agendas from 1997 to 2023

2.6 Research Directions

The previous subsections have noted the diversifications of PPP research, and studies on PPP have captured the essence of what PPP could offer in delivering public infrastructure services. Despite extensive research and interest in PPP, which contributes significantly to the research community, with only 3.69% of total literature coverage from 1997 to 2023 being related to stakeholder management, this research area remains an understudied topic (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014) and lagging behind other more mature research areas such as ‘risk management’, ‘procurement’ and ‘performance, economic and value-for-money’. Hence, despite the importance of effective stakeholder management in PPP (Chan *et al.*, 2010), significant gaps still need to be filled. The next section provides an overview of PPP stakeholder management research.

2.6.1 Overview of PPP Stakeholder Management Research

Reviewing 131 PPP publications related to stakeholder management from 1997 to 2023 revealed that the research area can be categorised into two: research addressing specific issues within/related to stakeholder management (S1) and research developing stakeholder or addressing management framework/process for PPP (S2) (Table 2.6). From the table, it is evident that classic studies of stakeholder management in PPP focus on the former rather than the latter, signalling a huge gap between the two research categories.

Table 2.6. Classification of research categories

| Category | No. of Publication(s) |
|--|-----------------------|
| S1 – Research exploring specific issues within or related to stakeholder management issues | 119 |
| S2 – Research developing or addressing stakeholder management framework or process for PPP | 12 |

Exploring S1 revealed that classical studies under this category have explored various stakeholder management-related areas. For example, De Schepper *et al.* (2014) investigated stakeholder dynamics in PPP due to imbalances of stakeholder management approaches and the absence of guidance in managing stakeholders in PPP projects. Rwelamila *et al.* (2014) explored the importance of the public as a stakeholder and their position in PPP. Mandiriza and Fourie (2023) investigated the role of stakeholders and argued that stakeholders constantly

pursue self-interest, leading to conflicting interests (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014; Tuffour *et al.*, 2023). Other studies, such as those by Smyth and Edkins (2007), Zou *et al.* (2014), Burke and Demirag (2017) and more recently, Sheppard and Beck (2022), focused more on the engagement aspects of stakeholder management, typically the promotion of positive relationships, such as improvement in consultation approach between internal and external stakeholders. More recently, Osei-Kyei *et al.* (2019) investigated the root causes of conflict and conflict mechanisms in Ghana and China through a questionnaire survey. Inspired by the integrated project delivery model and SPV operations, Malaeb and Hamzeh (2022) investigated the significance of stakeholder integration for SPV in PPP projects and developed integration metrics and assessment rubrics for the process. Despite their immense contribution, these studies have less regard for the key construct of stakeholder management (Eyiah-Botwe *et al.*, 2020).

As a result, several studies have emerged covering the key construct of stakeholder management (S2), especially in recent years. Researchers contributing to this research space argued the pivotal role of a systematic stakeholder management framework in promoting stakeholder management success (Henjewe *et al.*, 2013; Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2020; Amadi *et al.*, 2020). However, a comprehensive stakeholder management framework in PPP has yet to be fully developed, which was also confirmed by Jayasuriya *et al.* (2019). Reviewing these studies also revealed that the framework was typically developed because of one stakeholder management issue. For instance, a framework by Henjewe *et al.* (2013) was developed because of the marginalisation of the general public. Meanwhile, focusing on sustainable development, Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Węgrzyn (2019) developed a framework for stakeholder analysis because the authors argued the importance of stakeholder analysis for project success. An earlier study by Carrillo *et al.* (2006) identified issues with knowledge transfer, and a knowledge transfer framework for stakeholders was developed. More recently, a framework by Dong *et al.* (2022) was developed to manage stakeholders' behaviour. However, due to the nature of the study, the framework developed by these scholars, including recommendations, focuses more on addressing specific aspects of stakeholder management. Moreover, their incoherent nature made it impractical to use them in addressing the wider stakeholder management context.

To address the gap, some scholars have shifted their attention from developing a framework addressing specific stakeholder management-related issues in PPP to focusing on developing a

general stakeholder management framework, including practical steps for engaging different stakeholders in different PPP project phases, providing a complete approach to stakeholder management. The seminal work of El-Gohary *et al.* (2006) was one of the first to explore the stakeholder management process in the PPP context. The motivation behind the work was due to the significance of different stakeholders involved in PPP. The development of the PPP stakeholder management framework or process was then extended by Amadi *et al.* (2020) and Jayasuriya *et al.* (2020). However, there are several limitations to these studies. For instance, scholars such as Henjewe *et al.* (2013) and Amadi *et al.* (2020) criticised the complexity of El-Gohary *et al.*'s (2006) framework, which was designed to integrate stakeholder input only during the early phase of PPP, specifically the design phase. On the other hand, Amadi *et al.*'s (2020) framework may only be practical for the public sector in managing external stakeholders, whilst the framework by Jayasuriya *et al.* (2020) was hypothetical, leaving room for improvement.

Reviewing both S1 and S2 suggested that there should be a connection between these two categories, where consolidation of strategies and best practices addressing various stakeholder management issues in PPP (S1) should help with the development of a comprehensive and formal stakeholder management framework for PPP (S2). Furthermore, the majority of studies in S1 and S2 investigated stakeholder management using a single case study, focusing on a specific country, sector and even project. As a result, it is challenging for the findings to be contextualised into different environments.

Further reviewing the studies in S1 and S2, including other studies in other research themes, suggested that PPP is a form of integrated procurement model. Apart from the need to integrate different views for project success, PPP also merges the culture of stakeholders, mainly public and private sectors, into one single project (Starr, 1988; Collin, 1998; El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014; Amadi *et al.*, 2020). Yet, the integration between public and private sectors, particularly the procuring authority and SPV as parties or focal organisations responsible for stakeholder management, is still poorly understood, leading to issues such as overlapping responsibilities or poor coordination between the sides (Forrer *et al.*, 2010; Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2016; Tuffour *et al.*, 2023). This current condition creates significant risks for effective stakeholder management. As such, since integration is central in PPP, informing the gap may promote a more robust and practical PPP stakeholder management framework. Overall, these gaps drive the direction of this thesis. Figure 2.10 highlights the gaps in the PPP

stakeholder management literature, and the next section presents the theoretical framework suitable to guide the stakeholder management process.

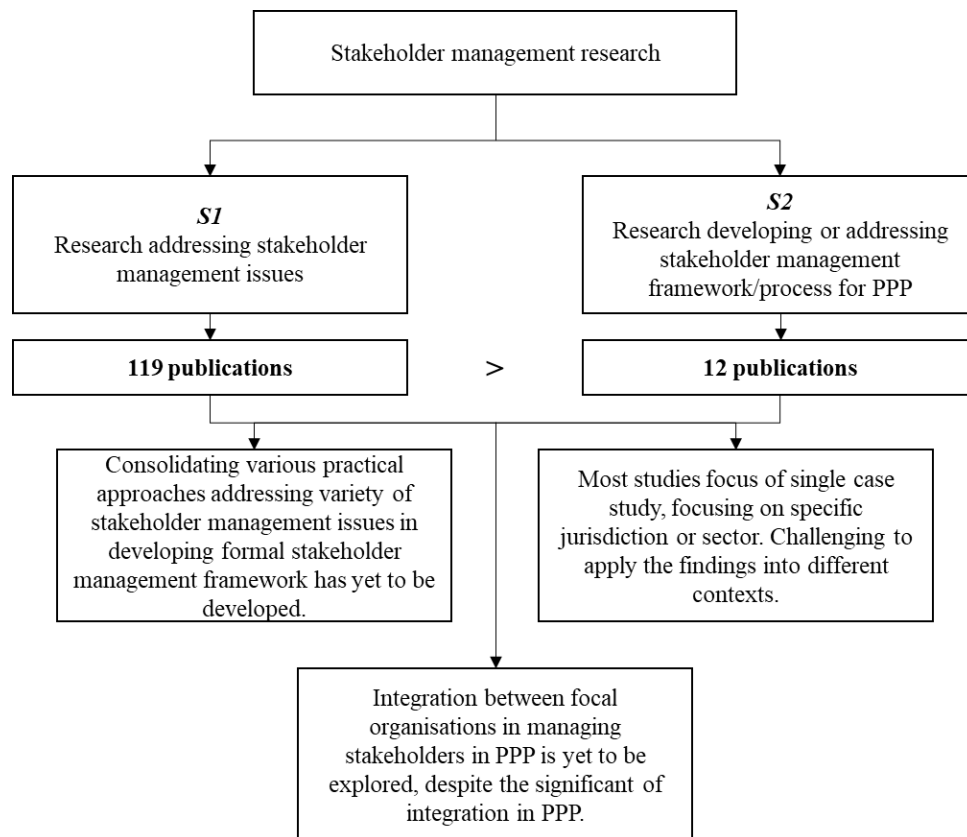


Figure 2.10. PPP stakeholder management research gaps

2.6.2 Theoretical Framework

Various management theories are available to guide stakeholder management across different contexts (Pedrini and Ferri, 2019). Pedrini and Ferri (2019) argue for the need to link stakeholder management to existing managerial theories to support and contribute to the improvement of corporate practice and the value-creation process. For this research, an extensive literature review was undertaken, and five theories were identified: agency theory, institutional theory, theory of planned behaviour, social network theory, and stakeholder theory. Understanding these theoretical constructs helps inform the direction of this study, which subsequently informs the framework development.

- **Agency Theory**

According to Bendickson *et al.* (2016), agency theory is one of the dominant theories in strategic corporate governance. “Agency theory is based on the relationship between one party,

the principal, who designates certain tasks and decisions to another party, the agent. The focus of agency theory stems from assumptions that the agent will behave opportunistically, particularly if their interests conflict with the principal” (Mitchell and Meacham, 2011, p. 151). According to Shankman (1999), the fundamentals of agency theory only recognise the relationship between a principal and an agent, which has received criticism due to its focus. Shankman (1999) added that there is an institutionalised bias in agency theory due to its focus on neglecting other stakeholders. Studies in PPP, such as Rwelamila *et al.* (2014), also criticised the fundamentals of the theory as it leads to the marginalisation of the general public because it only recognises the relationship between the public sector (procuring authority) as the principal and the SPV or private consortium as the agent.

- **Institutional Theory**

Institutional theory focuses on the sociological and organisational aspects across various disciplines (Mohamed, 2017; Munir, 2020). This theory explains the influence of institutions on individuals or groups (DiMaggio and Powell, 2000) through legitimacy, logic and isomorphism (Mohamed, 2017), which provides a framework for understanding the role of institutions and the process of governing, including its relevance in achieving organisational goals (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

On the surface level, institutional theory can be considered fit to guide stakeholder management in PPP, where institutions (referring to the PPP framework) shape the stakeholders. However, Lammers and Garcia (2013) argued that institutional theory has four distinctive ‘features’: functionalism and limited rationality, external environments, attenuated consciousness and the symbolic life of an organisation. Thus, these four ‘features’, including the isomorphic characteristic of institutional theory, are deemed impractical for stakeholder management (Herold, 2018) as they are incapable of explaining the dynamics of stakeholders, including the role of stakeholders and their degree of influence (Wooten and Hoffman, 2008; Kostova *et al.*, 2008).

- **Social Network Theory**

Social network theory emphasises the relationship between individuals or groups and institutions (Fuhse, 2015; Gamper, 2022). According to Liu *et al.* (2017), three concepts are critical to the theory: centrality, cohesion and structural equivalence. Centrality measures the

degree of closeness and betweenness between stakeholders (Freeman, 1978). Network cohesion measures the interrelationships among stakeholders, and structural equivalence indicates the position where a stakeholder shares the same pattern with other stakeholders, such as interests. Under the structural equivalence concept, the stakeholders with the same traits are more likely to receive similar attention from those managing the stakeholders (Liu *et al.*, 2017). However, conceptualising the stakeholder management process is unclear under social network theory as the theory tends to focus on visualising the network of connections (ties) between different stakeholders (Granovetter, 1973; Nimmon *et al.*, 2019) (Figure 2.11).

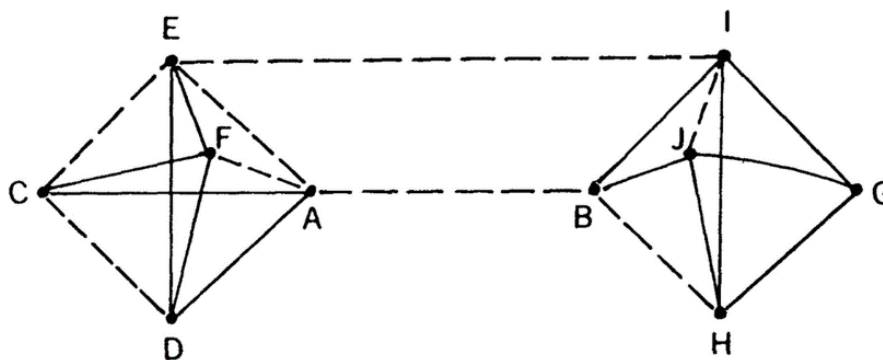


Figure 2.11. Example of the network of connections – solid lines: strong connections; dashed lines: weak connections (source: Granovetter, 1973)

- **Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The theory of planned behaviour has the potential to contribute to the development of a stakeholder management framework. The premise of this theory is that “*individuals make logical, reasoned decisions to engage in specific behaviours by evaluating the information available to them*” (Ryan and Carr, 2010, pp. 69). These decisions are guided by three different considerations - affective, behavioural and cognitive components or ABC (Ajzen, 1993; Altmann, 2008; Olufemi, 2012; Chi *et al.*, 2018). Over time, the concept of attitude became less complicated as scholars started to define attitudes as something that represents favour or disfavour towards certain things (Bem, 1970; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Although the development of the theory is to understand individual behaviours, it has also been adopted to understand organisations’ behaviour, such as private sector intentions in PPP (Zhang *et al.*, 2018), which should help inform relevant engagement strategies. Nevertheless, like other theories, the emergence of the theory of planned behaviour has also faced several criticisms.

For instance, Barber (2011) criticises that the theory does not address stakeholder relationships, which is critical in stakeholder management.

- **Stakeholder Theory**

A book titled *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* by Freeman (1984) has been recognised as the foundation for the modern stakeholder theory, which was built upon corporate planning, systems theory, corporate social responsibility, and organisation theory (Elias *et al.*, 2002). The theory promotes a practical, ethical, effective and efficient way to manage stakeholders in a highly complex environment (Freeman, 1984). Harrison *et al.* (2010) suggested that, at minimum, the theory involves attending to the interests and well-being of stakeholders. This includes the comprehensiveness in attending to the interests and well-being of groups that are difficult to comprehend and do not have clear legitimacy (communities, special interest groups and society as a whole) (Harrison *et al.*, 2015). This highlights the importance of “*fairness, honesty and even generosity*” in stakeholder theory (Harrison *et al.*, 2015, p. 859). Furthermore, the theory emphasises accountability, and that relationship is a two-way exchange between stakeholders (Shankman, 1999).

Donaldson and Preston (1995) argue that numerous scholarly works have implemented stakeholder theory as the central model for managing stakeholders in a firm, including the relationships and critical means for organisational success. Pedrini and Ferri (2019) acknowledge the significance of stakeholder theory in stakeholder management, especially as a foundational framework that informs the stakeholder management process, which was also supported by numerous scholars in PPP (Henjewele *et al.*, 2013; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014; Amadi *et al.*, 2020).

Despite all the theories presented being able to contribute to effective stakeholder management, the researcher believes that stakeholder theory encapsulates the relevant aspects that are critical for developing a stakeholder management framework for PPP. In addition, understanding the stakeholder management practices of PPP practitioners is important in providing practical insights into stakeholder management, ensuring the framework developed is theoretically and practically sound. This is because theory only provides the fundamental principles that shape the framework. Further discussion of stakeholder theory is presented in the following section. Figure 2.12 illustrates the theoretical framework of this study based on the analysis of various theoretical concepts.

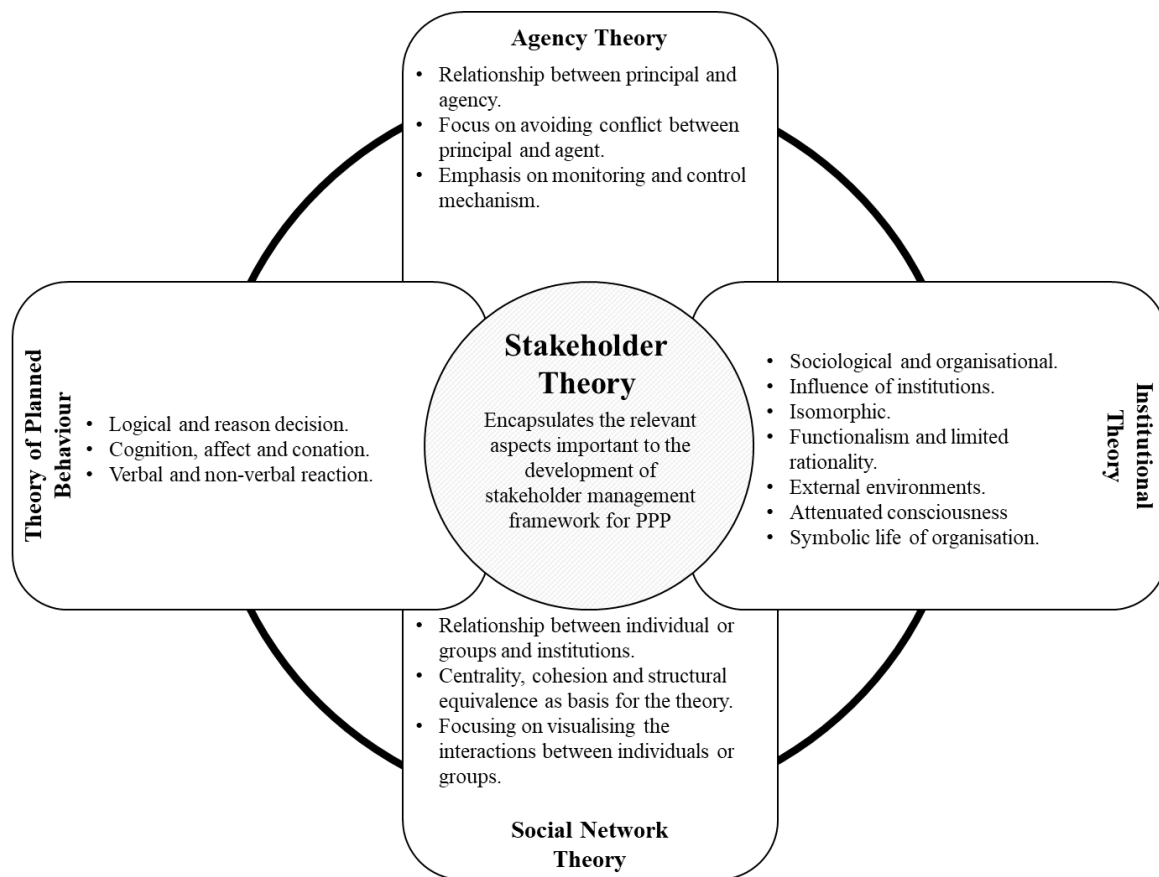


Figure 2.12. The theoretical framework for the present study based on the analysis of various theories

2.7 Relevance of Stakeholder Theory

2.7.1 The Stakeholder Concept

The term ‘stakeholders’ was introduced in an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute in 1963 (Freeman, 1984; Jongbloed *et al.*, 2008; Mainardes *et al.*, 2012; McErlane *et al.*, 2016), which was developed from four areas of social sciences: economics, ethics, politics and sociology (Mainardes *et al.*, 2012). Essentially, the term stakeholder refers to “*stockholder as the only group to whom management need to be responsive*” (Freeman, 1984, p. 31). Ever since, the term ‘stakeholder’ has expanded across different contexts (Freeman, 1984; Heugens and van Oosterhout, 2002). As such, defining stakeholders can be confusing, and there is no common consensus on who or what stakeholders are (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997), which made the concept highly contested among scholars. Consequently, there are various definitions that exist in theory, as some researchers took a broader perspective, whereas others took a relatively narrow perspective.

For instance, Freeman and Reed (1983) and Freeman (1984) took the broader perspective, describing the stakeholders as any individual or group that can affect or be affected by an organisation. Freeman (1984) then classified the groups or individuals into internal stakeholders (those who are directly involved in the organisation) and external stakeholders (those who can affect or be affected by the organisation). According to Friedman and Miles (2006), Freeman's (1984) definition of stakeholder was also frequently adopted by scholars across different contexts. This is because the impact of Freeman's (1984) book lays the foundation of what is known today as modern stakeholder theory. For example, Clarkson (1995, p. 106) identifies stakeholders as "*persons or groups that have, or claim, ownership, rights or interests in a corporation and its activities*". Professional organisations, such as Project Management Institute (2021, p. 31), also took a broad perspective and defines stakeholders in their Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) book as "*individuals, groups, or organisations that may affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a portfolio, program, or project.*"

Notwithstanding, Mitchell *et al.* (1997) argued that the broad perspective may result in anyone being a stakeholder. The authors argued that managers are unable to attend to all or potential stakeholders due to constraints, which leads to the 'birth' narrow perspective. Based on this perspective, stakeholders refer to someone who is truly 'legitimate' in a project or organisation (Carroll and Buchholtz, 2008). Mitchell *et al.* (1997) classified them as anyone directly related to the company's core business. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) argued that a narrow view encourages managers to give direct attention to one that is legitimate or has a 'stake', and the authors also argued that the 'stake' is something that can be lost. Hence, this suggests that various perspectives exist in theory when identifying the stakeholders.

Regardless of the definition, Freeman (1984, p. 49) in his book explained that identifying stakeholders "*must be prescriptive*", meaning that it should be a guidance that drives the managerial action. One of the key requirements highlighted by Freeman (1984) is the rationale perspective, where the identification of stakeholders must be based on the environment, including industries and geographical locations.

2.7.2 Development of Stakeholder Theory

A book written by Freeman (1984) titled Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach has been recognised as the foundation of modern stakeholder theory. The theory from Freeman

(1984) is drawn from four branches of management research: corporate planning, systems theory, corporate social responsibility, and organisation theory (Elias *et al.*, 2002), which is rooted in the concept of stakeholder that was brought in an internal memorandum in 1963 at the Stanford Research Institute (see Figure 2.13). Marcoux (2015) claims that the concept the was introduced in 1963 was traditionally more concerned with financial outputs, and this idea was latter supported by Narbel and Muff (2017), who argued that the concept constantly pursues economic value maximisation.

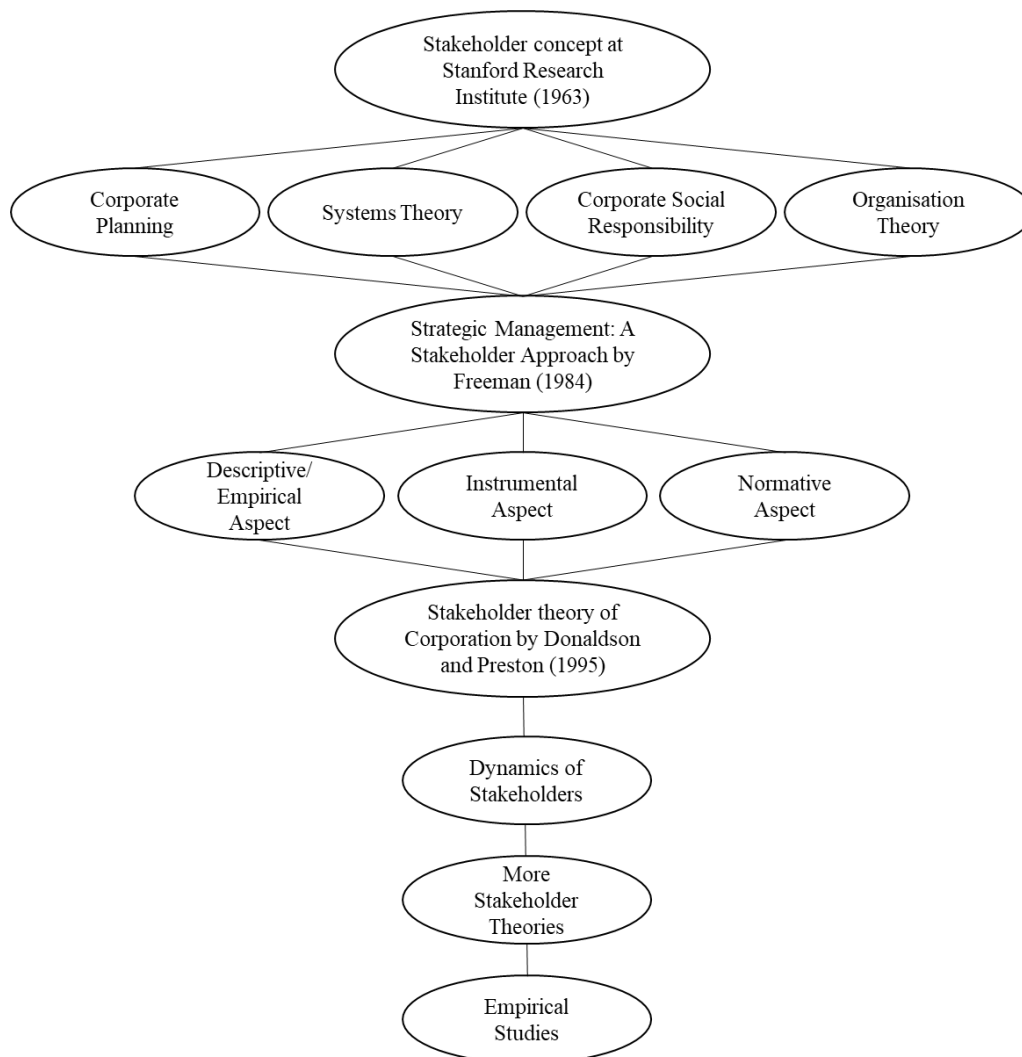


Figure 2.13. Stakeholder literature map (source: Elias *et al.*, 2002)

Freeman (1984) believes that the establishment of modern stakeholder theory is important as previous theories were unsuitable due to changes in the business environment in the 1980s. The facet of Freeman’s (1984) stakeholder theory, according to Mainardes *et al.* (2012, p. 1863) revolves around the “*relationship between the company and its external environment in conjunction with its behaviour within this environment*”. Freeman *et al.* (2018) stated that

managing the stakeholder goes beyond maximising the stakeholder's wealth; it also directs how managers should operate in a firm. According to Shankman (1999, p. 322), this includes *"defining the concept of stakeholder, providing an explication of the kinds of responsibilities that corporations had to stakeholders, and setting forth a suitable justification for such duties"*. In this sense, the modern stakeholder theory emphasises the moral and ethical aspects of managing different stakeholders, including non-stakeholders and the importance of relationship building for project success.

Elias *et al.* (2002) noted that after the introduction of the book by Freeman (1984), the literature expanded around three different perspectives: descriptive/empirical, instrumental and normative aspect. The descriptive/empirical perspective explains practice and relationship, which merely describes what the organisation is, who the stakeholders are, and what their relationships are (Amaeshi, 2010). Donaldson and Preston (1995) claimed that it is based on empirical evidence in managing stakeholders.

The instrumental perspective values the overall objectives as key to success, and stakeholder management bridges these (objective and success) (Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001). Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 72) stated that the instrumental perspective is hypothetical and *"If you want to achieve (avoid) results X, Y, or Z, then adopt (don't adopt) principles and practices A, B, or C"*. Jones (1995) argued that the instrumental perspective seeks to understand 'what happens if?'. Amaeshi (2010) postulates that the instrumental perspective also seeks to describe the outcome of behaviour.

The normative perspective is used to interpret the function of the organisation (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Friedman and Miles (2006) posit that the normative perspective is the heart of stakeholder theory, as it is inclined towards moral standards. Phillips *et al.* (2003, p. 481) argue that it *"addresses the morals and values explicitly as a central feature of managing organisation"*, which contrasts with the instrumental perspective. Donaldson and Preston (1995) describe the perspective as categorical, and with moral standards in place, it essentially says, *"Do (Don't do) this because it is the right (wrong) thing to do"* (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p. 72).

A later study by Donaldson and Preston (1995) combined these three perspectives and established a stakeholder theory for corporations. According to the authors, despite three distinct perspectives, they are mutually supportive and nest within one another (Figure 2.14).

Donaldson and Preston (1995) stated that the normative perspective is the core of stakeholder theory, and the accuracy of the descriptive perspective is attached to the instrumental perspective. Afterwards, stakeholder literature expanded and started to focus on the dynamics of stakeholders (see Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) and the expansion of stakeholder theory, including empirical studies validating the theoretical claims (see Heugens and van Oosterhout, 2002; Friedman and Miles, 2002; Ambler and Wilson, 1995; Narbel and Muff, 2017).

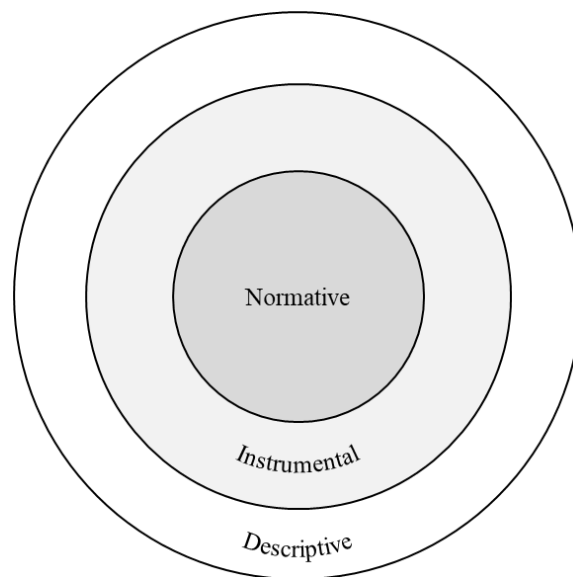


Figure 2.14. Aspects of stakeholder theory (source: Donaldson and Preston, 1995)

2.8 The Concept of Stakeholder Management

Studies concerning stakeholder management have attracted researchers' interest in various disciplines, more frequently in construction project management, whereby managing stakeholders has been proven to be challenging. Pedrini and Ferri (2019) acknowledge that the concept has its roots in stakeholder theory, as the theory emphasises firm-creating value for all stakeholders. Freeman (1999) states that the initial purpose of stakeholder theory is to allow managers to understand and manage stakeholders.

Stakeholder management is the concept of managing stakeholders, including maintaining good relationships (Das *et al.*, 2022). Yang and Shen (2015, p. 2) define stakeholder management as “*a process comprising problem-solving activities, minimising project risks, and facilitating projects to move forward in a timely and effective manner*”. Turner (2003) defines stakeholder management as a form of continuous development of stakeholder relationships for successful project outcomes. Eskerod and Jepsen (2013) consider stakeholder management as a

purposeful activity to enhance project success. According to Cleland and Ireland (2006), stakeholder management is important in any project. Robbins *et al.* (2014, p. 93) explain that managing stakeholders “*can lead to other organisational outcomes, such as improved predictability of environmental changes, more successful innovations, greater degree of trust among stakeholders, and greater organisational flexibility to reduce the impact of change*”.

Karlsen (2002) noted that if stakeholder management is not adequately addressed in a project, it may lead to unexpected problems and uncertainty. Cleland and Ireland (2006) suggested that meeting stakeholders' different interests and expectations is key to project success, and it is no longer attached to on-time and on-budget delivery. Supporting this, Assudani and Kloppenborg (2010) confirmed that stakeholder management is vital for facilitating project success. However, Karlsen (2002) argued that stakeholder management is often uncoordinated and characterised by causal actions after events happen, which are often unpredictable. Close and Loosemore (2014) posited that the events motivated stakeholder management.

Bourne (2009) points out that success in managing stakeholders requires long-term commitment and is only accomplished when the following actions are delivered, which were also outlined by the likes of RICS (2014) and Project Management Institute (2021) as some of the best practices for effective stakeholder management:

- Identifying the stakeholders.
- Understanding stakeholders' expectations.
- Managing those expectations accordingly.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of activities regarding stakeholder engagement.
- Reviewing the stakeholders throughout the process.

In this sense, these strategies or activities are important in nurturing relationships between stakeholders and making the organisation/project more effective. Bourne (2009) explains that, through effective stakeholder management, the stakeholders will gain benefits in the following ways:

- Stakeholders learn to operate more effectively as a team.
- Stakeholders gain a sense of achievement through successful engagement and communication.
- Stakeholders learn more from each other through discussion and consultation.

- Stakeholders learn more about politics, the environment, and the subject by working together.

Owing to the importance of stakeholder management, a variety of stakeholder management concepts have been developed to address the complexity and dynamism of stakeholders. However, to date, these concepts have mainly been developed or proposed to inform stakeholder management in general construction or project management. Nonetheless, over the years, various stakeholder management studies within the context of PPP have emerged, which helps contribute to the development of stakeholder theory and the formulation of the theoretical foundation for this research. The next section discusses in detail the significance of stakeholder management in PPP.

2.8.1 Nature of PPP and the Need for Stakeholder Management

A significant number of megaprojects have been delivered successfully under PPPs, and some projects have suffered and appeared to be on the verge of failure despite various efforts by governments and private companies. According to the Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPI) database, from 1990 to 2020, nearly 300 cancelled and distressed PPP projects were reported in developing countries, accounting for nearly \$98 billion in losses. Previous studies have noted that proper risk allocation and management (Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2015; Kukah *et al.*, 2023), government commitments (Kleiss and Imura, 2006; Ismail, 2013a; Sambrani, 2014; Biygautane *et al.*, 2019), well-organised public agencies (Bing *et al.*, 2005; Chan *et al.*, 2010; Chou *et al.*, 2012) and private sector commitments (Ismail, 2013b; Sulser, 2018; Rodrigues and Zucco, 2018) are important to the success of PPP, which are all stakeholder related (Eyiah-Botwe *et al.*, 2020) and showcase the importance of building partnership between public and private sector for PPP project success (Sajida and Kusumasari, 2023). World Bank (2017) emphasised effective accountability mechanisms to deliver a more transparent and legitimate PPP programme, besides enhancing participation from the public and private sectors.

Since stakeholders are key to project success (Amadi *et al.*, 2018), several studies in the construction industry have explored the concept of stakeholder management and argued the importance of effective stakeholder management (Karlsen, 2002; Yang and Shen, 2015; Park *et al.*, 2018). However, despite their immense contributions, these studies are not specific to PPP, which may not be practical for PPP. Similarly, the international best practices for stakeholder management highlighted by several renowned institutions are also not specific to

PPP projects. For example, despite the World Bank's (2017) best practices tailored for PPP, it draws on various sources, including the IFC Handbook, European Commission documents, and World Bank working papers. Rwelamila (2010) explained that the management of stakeholders must be based on the type of procurement. Tang and Shen (2013) contended that the unique nature of the stakeholder environment in PPP compared to typical construction projects means that PPP should not be developed and managed like a typical construction project (The United Nations, 2008).

PPP is a network that involves two or more parties in a project (Koch and Buser, 2006; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2006; Hodge and Greve, 2010; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014; Chen *et al.*, 2016). With multiple stakeholders in PPP, this means that these stakeholders may have different interests and concerns (Shen *et al.*, 2006; Kwak *et al.*, 2009; Amadi *et al.*, 2014; Darškuvienė and Bendoraitienė, 2014; Burke and Demirag, 2019; Warsen *et al.*, 2020), whereby any conflicting ideas between the stakeholders can lead to devastating consequences, such as project failure or cancellation if not identified and managed in the early stages of the project (Harris and Pratap, 2009; Li and Wang, 2019). Bakhtawar *et al.* (2018, p. 373) metaphorically explain that the “*stakeholder is the seed of unpredictability and subjectivity in decision-making over the long-lasting, relationship driven, life cycle of PPP projects*”. In this sense, stakeholder management is quintessential in PPP.

Scholars such as Chinyio and Akintoye (2008), Chowdhury *et al.* (2011), Tang and Shen (2013), De Schepper *et al.* (2014) and Amadi *et al.* (2014) confirmed that the relationship between stakeholders in PPP projects is highly complicated than conventional projects, leading to complex stakeholder management process. Owing to the complexity of PPP, Bakhtawar *et al.* (2018) added that the decision-making behind PPP is greatly fragmented, dynamic, and contextual. Furthermore, the lengthy contractual durations across various phases made PPP more unique than conventional public procurement (Amadi *et al.*, 2014). Hence, deliberate stakeholder management for PPP is necessary to better facilitate PPP project development (El Gohary *et al.*, 2006) without jeopardising public interests (Kusio, 2021).

According to De Schepper *et al.* (2014, p. 2), “*in a traditional tender, as opposed to PPPs, no questions arise on the allocation of responsibility and accountability for the project stakeholders*” as the management responsibilities are given to one party, typically the ministry/procuring authority/client. On the same note, Amadi *et al.* (2014) argued that conventional stakeholder management for conventional projects is often inadequate in

managing the variety of stakeholders in PPP and an understanding of integrated stakeholder management between two main focal organisations or dual-stakeholder management approach is needed for managing the multi-stakeholder dimension in PPP (Henjeweles *et al.*, 2013; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014).

Collin (1998) describes that PPP brings two distinct institutions under one single project organisation running a public asset. Supporting this statement, El-Gohary *et al.* (2006) stated that the multidimensional nature of stakeholders in PPP requires the merging of different cultures, organisations, and social environments into one, which can present a serious threat in PPP if not properly managed (van Ham and Koppenjan, 2001). Therefore, the allocation of stakeholders' responsibilities in PPP is more complex, and a balance between both sides is needed throughout the PPP project life cycle due to different perceptions of the stakeholder environment (Starr, 1988; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014; Birchall and Sacchetti, 2017). For this reason, De Schepper *et al.* (2014) also recommended the establishment of a governance structure to facilitate stakeholder management in PPP.

Yescombe (2007) argued that incorporating different views in PPP projects is necessary; however, a review of the literature suggested that the integration between the sides is still vague, which was also argued by Amadi *et al.* (2014; 2020). Compared to conventional construction projects, there is no need for integration of stakeholder management as the integration can be seen “*as a cost to the business rather than an activity that adds value*” (Birchall and Sacchetti, 2017, p. 4), whilst in PPP, the integration is key to ensure accountability in managing diverse stakeholders.

2.8.2 Review of Stakeholder Management Process and Previous Works in PPP

Stakeholders are key players in any project (Cleland, 1986), and stakeholder management is key to project success because of the diverse characteristics, interests, and expectations of stakeholders, which can influence project outcomes (Buerthey *et al.*, 2016; Nguyen and Mohamed, 2021). Pedrini and Ferri (2019) revealed that stakeholder management is increasingly deep-rooted in corporate activities. Cleland and Ireland (2006) pointed out that a successful stakeholder management framework should inform stakeholders in decision-making. Eskerod and Jepsen (2013) noted that stakeholder management activities must be carried out in relation to the project for successful project outcomes.

Karlsen (2002) proposed several stages of stakeholder management: plan, identify, analyse, communicate, act and follow-up. The process was developed based on the findings from construction projects, IT/IS projects, product development projects, and organisational development projects with an average project size of USD 50 million. Following the steps of Freeman (1984) and Mitchell *et al.* (1997), Elias *et al.* (2002) developed a model consisting of stakeholder mapping, chart preparation, identifying stakeholders' stakes, and analysing stakeholder dynamics.

Bourne and Walker's (2006) stakeholder management stages consist of identifying stakeholders, prioritising stakeholders, and developing stakeholder engagement strategies, which were inspired by the stakeholder circle proposed by the authors in 2005. Cleland and Ireland (2006) proposed a project stakeholder management process consisting of seven key steps: stakeholder identification, stakeholder information collection, the identification of stakeholders' missions, determination of the strengths and weaknesses of stakeholders, the identification of strategy, predictions of stakeholder behaviour, and the implementation of management strategies. Yang and Shen (2015) presented a systematic framework for construction projects, which includes preconditions, stakeholder identification, stakeholder assessment, decision-making, and action and evaluation as part of the stakeholder management process. The assessment by Yang and Shen (2015) also focuses on assessing stakeholder behaviour and attributes.

Robbins *et al.* (2014) proposed a four-step process consisting of identifying the stakeholders, determining their interests, identifying the criticality of each stakeholder, and deciding the approach to engaging and managing the relationship. The authors also encourage managers to establish partnerships with critical stakeholders instead of merely acknowledging their presence in the organisation or project.

In addition to the above stakeholder management process, the Project Management Institute (2021) also proposed a strategy for an effective stakeholder management process for project management and identified six main processes: identify, understand, analyse, prioritise, engage, and monitor. For long-term complex mega-construction projects, Park *et al.*'s (2018) stakeholder management framework consists of various CSFs, which can be divided into several agendas: clear understanding of stakeholders, clear definition of the project, effective communication, responding to environmental changes, and social corporation.

Apart from general construction projects, the stakeholder management process or framework has also been explored by researchers in PPP. One of the earliest stakeholder management frameworks for PPP was developed by El-Gohary *et al.* (2006). The authors proposed a twelve-step process. Nonetheless, it can be grouped into stakeholder identification, identifying stakeholder interests and stakeholder engagement. However, as indicated earlier, the framework is too complex and impractical as it was designed to integrate input only during the design phase (Henjeweale *et al.*, 2013; Amadi *et al.*, 2020). Henjeweale *et al.* (2013) extended the framework by El-Gohary *et al.* (2006) and developed a simpler framework consisting of an initial and review process: identify, prioritise, build relationships, identify and manage concerns and manage communications. The framework also covers four different project phases: conception, business case development and financial close phase, design and construction phase, and operation and maintenance phase. However, the framework is only applicable for project stakeholders to address general public marginalisation. Carrillo *et al.* (2006) developed a stakeholder knowledge transfer management framework. Due to the study's focus, the framework only consisted of stakeholder analysis, evaluation, and monitoring.

The proposed framework by Chou *et al.* (2015) consisted of identifying project goals and objectives, identifying key stakeholders, capturing their needs, addressing them, and evaluating performance. The framework also emphasised the importance of ongoing effort by responding to change. However, the framework was only validated by government officials from Taiwan, who focused more on the tools and solutions to improve the PPP institutional framework. Observing through the agency theory perspective, the proposed framework by Parker *et al.* (2018) consisted of an approach that is atypical in traditional stakeholder management framework as the framework emphasises the relationship between agents and principals. Nonetheless, the framework included activities such as structured processes, communication and monitoring, and evaluation. Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Węgrzyn (2019) proposed a framework for stakeholder analysis. Within the context of Australian PPPs, Jayasuriya *et al.* (2020) proposed a hypothetical PPP stakeholder management framework consisting of stakeholder analysis, stakeholder engagement, stakeholder management plan, stakeholder monitoring, and stakeholder management-related issues. The study confirms that stakeholder engagement-related strategies are key to managing the issues in PPP projects and provides insights into the importance of stakeholder engagement in mitigating the issues in PPP projects and its related strategies.

Amadi *et al.* (2020) developed a framework consisting of six stakeholder management steps, which synthesised from Amadi's (2017) thesis, include determining the purpose of stakeholder management, identifying stakeholders, determining external stakeholders' interests, developing a communication strategy, determining capacity building strategies, and evaluate the stakeholder management process. However, as indicated earlier, the framework is only applicable to the public sector in managing external stakeholders in transportation (highway) projects in Nigeria. Dong *et al.*'s (2022) stakeholder management framework focused on managing stakeholders' behaviour, including stakeholder identification, management strategies, stakeholder engagement, evaluation and monitoring. More recently, Tuffour *et al.* (2023) proposed a cross-sectoral engagement framework for green procurement and classified the stakeholder management strategies into four different engagement phases: pre-engagement, engagement and collaboration, evaluation and feedback, and implementation and monitoring, but does not capture the dynamics of PPP over time.

Regardless of the numerous studies that have proposed stakeholder management concepts across various disciplines, the existing literature provides a fundamental basis for the formulation of an initial conceptual stakeholder management framework for PPP. Table 2.7 summarises the stakeholder management process identified or proposed in the literature from peer-reviewed journals.

Table 2.7. Stakeholder management process extracted from literature

| Source (*PPP studies) | Stakeholder Management Process | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | S0 | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 |
| Karlsen (2002) | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Elias <i>et al.</i> (2002) | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Bourne and Walker (2006) | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| <i>El-Gohary et al. (2006)*</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cleland and Ireland (2006) | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| <i>Carrillo et al. (2006)*</i> | | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| <i>Henjewele et al. (2013)*</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Table 2.7. Stakeholder management process extracted from literature (*Cont'd*)

| Source (*PPP studies) | Stakeholder Management Process | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | S0 | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 |
| <i>Ng et al. (2013)*</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Yang and Shen (2015) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Robbins <i>et al.</i> (2014) | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Chou <i>et al.</i> (2015)* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Park <i>et al.</i> (2018) | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Parker <i>et al.</i> (2018)* | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Węgrzyn (2019)* | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Jayasuriya <i>et al.</i> (2020)* | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Amadi <i>et al.</i> (2020)* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Project Management Institute (2021) | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Dong <i>et al.</i> (2022)* | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Tuffour <i>et al.</i> (2023)* | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Legend: S0 – pre-condition, S1 – identify stakeholders, S2 – identify stakeholder interest, S3 – stakeholder visualisation, S4 – stakeholder analysis/assessment, S5 – stakeholder prioritisation, S6 – stakeholder management strategies, S7 – stakeholder engagement, S8 – stakeholder monitoring and evaluation.

From Table 2.7, there are a variety of stakeholder management processes proposed by different authors or sources, indicating that there are no universally accepted processes. However, one thing that is significant is to ‘identify stakeholders’, which supports the argument by Freeman (1984, p. 54) suggesting that “*any framework which seeks to enhance an organisation’s stakeholder management must begin with an application of the basic definition: who are the stakeholders*”. World Bank (2017) noted that this must be done carefully to avoid stakeholders’ opposition to the project in the future.

For the purposes of this research, despite there being no consensus on the best process, the researcher believes that all processes have their own strengths and purposes, which are critical

for effective stakeholder management. Owing to the discussions presented in previous sections, the stakeholder management processes can be grouped into four, with three of those steps being the pillars of stakeholder management: stakeholder identification, stakeholder assessment and stakeholder decision-making, whilst the monitoring and evaluation process act as the foundation for effective stakeholder management. Furthermore, since integration between procuring authority and SPV is central in PPP, the ‘integration’ must be incorporated into the framework as another foundation (pre-condition) for effective stakeholder management in PPP, which is constantly overlooked in most stakeholder management frameworks for PPP (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, this new stakeholder management framework should recognise the integration between the public and private sectors in managing diverse stakeholders in PPP.

Due to the exploratory nature of this research, the practices or processes within each pillar and foundation will be explored from the lived experiences of PPP practitioners. The significance of exploring the practical approaches is to ensure that the framework developed reflects the ‘real-life’ stakeholder management processes and best practices, enhancing the practicality of the framework. Compared to previous studies, apart from exploring the lived experiences of PPP practitioners, this study also compares the experiences of professionals from two different jurisdictions across different project sectors. Furthermore, the framework aims to inform the focal organisations to manage all relevant stakeholders in PPP, not just the general public. The next five sections (2.8.2.1 to 2.8.2.5) describe all the components of stakeholder management. Figure 2.15 illustrates the basic model of the stakeholder management framework for PPP.

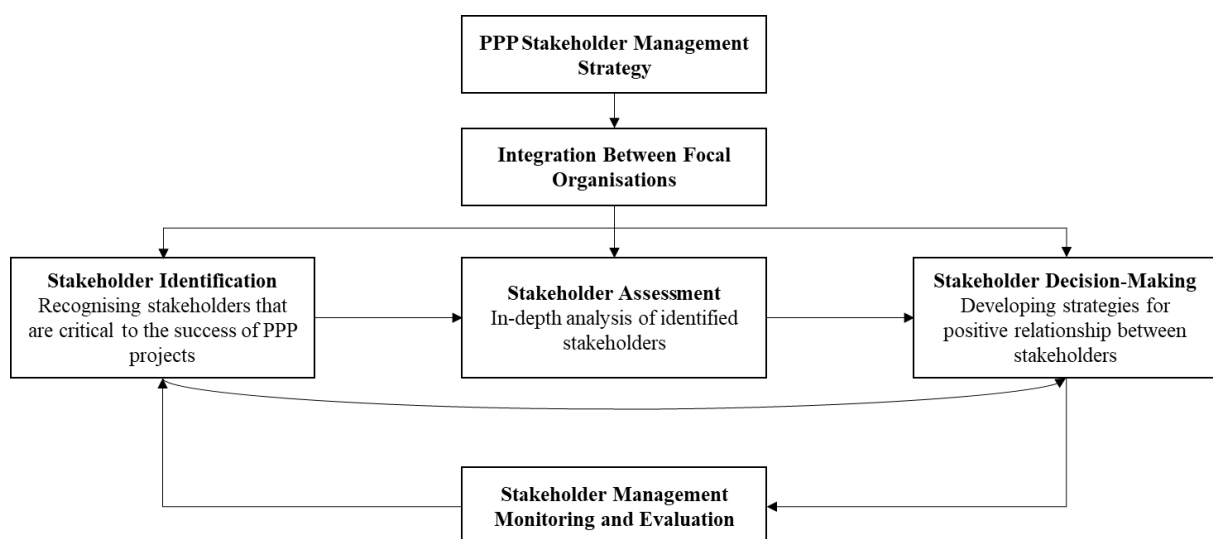


Figure 2.15. Basis of the proposed PPP stakeholder management framework

2.8.2.1 Integration of Focal Organisations

Existing PPP studies have developed an understanding of the importance of integration between two focal organisations (procuring authority and SPV) in PPP (Collin, 1998; El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; Henjeweale *et al.*, 2013; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014). As such, stakeholder integration should be one of the foundations for effective stakeholder management, as integration is crucial in maintaining transparency and accountability between the two focal organisations. Notwithstanding, owing to the discussion in Section 2.8.1 (p. 64), the integration is still poorly understood despite its significance in PPP success; as De Schepper *et al.* (2014) suggest, it has not been considered in previous literature.

2.8.2.2 Stakeholder Identification

The stakeholder identification stage is important in recognising the stakeholders in PPP, which is fundamental before a project goes forward. Gaur *et al.* (2022) suggested that stakeholder identification allows for effective stakeholder management, as a variety of effective management approaches can be developed by identifying the right stakeholders and integrating their interests (Downar, 2018; Mitchell and Lee, 2019; Vurro *et al.*, 2022). Stakeholder identification is also important in value creation (El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; Mitchell and Lee, 2019), leading to improved project performance.

2.8.2.3 Stakeholder Assessment

Stakeholder assessment focuses on analysing the traits of specific stakeholders, such as their attributes. This process allows a more in-depth analysis of identified stakeholders, which aims to prioritise the stakeholders and determine the appropriate level of engagement. This assessment is also crucial in providing valuable insights, such as into the stakeholder's potential behaviour towards PPP, which may help project partners anticipate future challenges and implement new strategies to deal with them (Razia *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2019b). Essentially, stakeholder assessment allows project managers to make informed and sound management decisions.

2.8.2.4 Stakeholder Decision-Making

Stakeholder decision-making is the most important aspect in developing an effective strategic PPP stakeholder management framework. This stage is highly influenced by the outcomes of stakeholder identification and assessment (Banks and Vera, 2007; Eskerod and Vaagaasar,

2014). As such, it covers certain aspects, most notably stakeholder engagement strategies. Deciding the right strategies is critical, as stakeholder management builds and strengthens stakeholder relationships by considering different stakeholders' specific needs and preferences (RICS, 2014). However, it is important to note that this stage is not just limited to developing communication strategies between stakeholders (Project Management Institute, 2021).

2.8.2.5 Stakeholder Management Monitoring and Evaluation

Once a PPP project is initiated, it is crucial to monitor stakeholder management throughout the PPP project life cycle (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014). According to Karlsen (2002), stakeholder monitoring can be defined as a follow-up of activities that have been implemented. From this, the stakeholder management team can identify necessary improvements as the project progresses (Yang *et al.*, 2018). According to Tengan and Aigbavboa (2017), it is critical for the stage to be transparent to promote accountability and organisational learning, leading to project success. World Bank (2017) also noted that monitoring and evaluation are essential in maintaining and improving the relationship that has already been established.

2.9 PPP Stakeholder Management Research Areas

Reviewing PPP publications related to stakeholder management revealed the need to consolidate strategies and best practices that address a variety of stakeholder management issues in developing a systematic stakeholder management framework. From the review of the literature, apart from understanding the stakeholder management process, three areas have been identified that can provide a considerable understanding of specific issues and practical approaches for effective stakeholder management in PPP while simultaneously complementing the framework development. These areas are stakeholder identification in PPP, stakeholder attitudes and stakeholder relationships. The next few sections highlight the significance of all three research areas to the PPP stakeholder management research space and to the development of the PPP stakeholder management framework.

2.9.1 Stakeholder Identification in PPP

2.9.1.1 Overview

There are various stakeholders involved in PPP projects that the project management team should pay attention to, as the word partnership in PPP reflects not just the partnership between the procuring authority and the SPV but also the partnership between different parties.

De Schepper *et al.* (2014, p. 2) stated, “*the primary concern in the initial phase is to define the stakeholders that have a large potential influence on the project’s success*”. Due to the long-term nature and complexity of PPP contracts, parties identified in PPP can create dynamic relationships in PPP projects (Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Węgrzyn, 2019). Identifying the right stakeholders is critical for effective stakeholder management, as different parties can impact the project’s decision, activity, and outcomes.

2.9.1.2 The Need to Investigate Stakeholder Identification in PPP

Jones and Fleming (2003), Yang *et al.* (2009) and Jepsen and Eskerod (2009) have argued that it is challenging to determine who should be considered a stakeholder, as there are no clear rules for the identification process (Heugens and van Oosterhout, 2002), leading to arguments on who should be considered PPP stakeholders (Henjewe *et al.*, 2013; McErlane *et al.*, 2016). The concept of stakeholders was frequently adopted by many researchers to identify stakeholders in certain subjects based on their subjective analysis of the stakeholder concept (Miles, 2017), following two distinct stakeholder identification strategies: broad and narrow perspectives. Henjewe *et al.* (2013) argued that a broad strategy is ‘imprecise’, and whilst a narrow perspective provides higher accuracy, it is easily exposed to stakeholder marginalisation, which is frequently associated with PPP failure in the global context (Rwelamila *et al.*, 2014) as the needs and expectations are ignored during the PPP process. Similarly, the World Bank (2017) also warned that the identification must be done with care and due to the risks of identifying the stakeholders too broadly or narrowly. However, completely taking a theoretical approach in identifying stakeholders and developing a stakeholder management framework for PPP is unable to provide practical guidance for PPP practitioners to follow, as the theory has been expanded across different contexts, leading to the ambiguity and vagueness in identifying stakeholders (Heugens and van Oosterhout, 2002).

Reflecting on the limitations of framing the subject matter through theoretical perspective and argument on who should be considered as PPP stakeholders, it is imperative to gain insights from PPP practitioners from both sides, as it is believed that individuals who are directly involved with PPP projects are the right group that can provide the much-needed additional insight into the research area. This is particularly important as the current stakeholder identification mechanism implemented in conventional projects is insufficient to continuously identify the stakeholders throughout the PPP phase (Amadi *et al.*, 2014). As Freeman (1984) recommended, there should be guidance to inform the process; as such, this portion of the

research is to enhance and supplement these previous findings by providing practical and insightful understandings of the stakeholders in PPP, which is crucial for effective stakeholder management in PPP.

Taking this viewpoint also helps address the concerns raised by Friedman and Miles (2002) with respect to how stakeholder management has been approached and informing them based on the lived experiences of PPP practitioners from both sides may contribute to the expansion of the stakeholder management framework for PPP. Essentially, this helps highlight the nuanced understanding of stakeholders in a more strategic and focused approach, especially since the criticisms surrounding the theory could be challenging for PPP practitioners to implement in practice (practical relevance).

It is critical to thoroughly examine the subject matter from the perspectives of PPP practitioners in both the public and private sectors. However, it must be emphasised that the objective of this portion of the research is not to disregard prior studies that utilised the concept of stakeholders but to provide supplemental evidence to the stakeholder identification process. To expand the existing knowledge on stakeholders in PPP, it is important to view this topic from a cross-country perspective, as it could provide a valuable understanding that contributes to an effective stakeholder management process through best practices and lessons learned.

2.9.2 Stakeholder Attitudes

2.9.2.1 Overview

Different stakeholders from different backgrounds may have different attitudes (Węgrzyn and Wojewnik-Filipkowska, 2022). Researchers in various industries have investigated stakeholder attitudes. Attitude can be defined as a person's view of certain things (Vargas-Sánchez *et al.*, 2015) and is important in providing an in-depth understanding of stakeholder perspectives, preferences, and priorities (Samstad *et al.*, 2019; Kim and Feng, 2021). This analysis is critical as it can inform project managers and make them aware of its impact on project progress and success (Nguyen and Rose, 2009; Ishawu *et al.*, 2020). In the modern stakeholder theory introduced by Freeman (1984), analysing stakeholder attitudes/behaviours is one of the key processes for stakeholder management.

Stakeholder attitudes can be grouped into positive and negative, indicating stakeholders' tendencies to support or threaten a project's success (Savage *et al.*, 1991). Bourne (2015)

explained that these dimensions also indicate the willingness of parties to communicate with others. Between these two key dimensions, Yang *et al.* (2014) found that cooperative potential, competitive threats, opposing positions, and neutral attitudes exist in practice. However, scholars typically accept Freeman's (1984) classification, where stakeholders can be sorted into cooperative potential and opposing threats, with the decision-making strategies influenced by the level of behaviours. For example, under cooperative potential, a partner is willing to be involved in the decision-making process and find a preferred solution, whilst opposing threats reflect a disagreement with the project (Yang *et al.*, 2014).

2.9.2.2 The Need to Investigate Stakeholder Attitudes

Although PPP has always been recognised as an effective procurement model compared to conventional public procurement models in delivering public infrastructure services (Ng and Loosemore, 2007; Takim *et al.*, 2008; World Bank, 2017), this does not mean that each stakeholder holds a positive view of the procurement model. As mentioned before, this is not without a problem. Previous studies have contested the value of PPP arrangement as an efficient public infrastructure service delivery mechanism and governance model. Beringer *et al.* (2013) noted that limited attempts have been made to address stakeholder behaviour in projects. Karlsen (2002) pointed out that there are correlations between decision-making, behaviours and salience. This means that stakeholders with more influence have the upper hand in deciding something based on their perceptions of certain subjects.

Within the context of PPP, several studies related to stakeholder attitudes have been published. Investigating the perception of PPP professionals in Australia, Hodge *et al.* (2017) found that the interviewees had different views toward the governance of PPP despite Australia being one of the leading countries for PPP projects with a high degree of PPP experience, whereby some praised the governance of PPP, whilst others wanted to improve PPP governance. Observing the PPP arrangements in Belgium, Willems *et al.* (2017) revealed that groups of architects were less positive about PPP, and the authors also found that nearly all respondents' enthusiasm towards PPP had gone, although the respondents were positive towards the future of PPP as a policy tool. However, one limitation of the study by Willems *et al.* (2017) is that not every participant was involved in PPP projects; hence, it did not capture the true nature of the attitudes of PPP stakeholders.

Focusing on China, Zhang *et al.* (2018) discovered a positive correlation between stakeholder attitudes and stakeholder intentions or commitments to get involved in PPP. However, the study only covered the positive attitudes of private sector stakeholders. Recently, Kabahinda and Mwesigwa (2023) revealed the mediating role of trust towards stakeholder behaviour in PPP projects in Uganda, which is positively associated with stakeholder management.

Overall, studies have shown that stakeholders have polarising attitudes towards PPP. Based on the advantages and disadvantages of PPP arrangements, in theory, it can influence the perception of parties directly involved in PPP projects. Moreover, in the context of PPP, assessing stakeholder attitudes towards PPP will also reflect the stakeholders' perception of using PPP arrangements for infrastructure projects. This was confirmed by Willems *et al.* (2017) and Zhang *et al.* (2018), as the private sector's positive attitudes positively correlated with their intention to participate in PPP.

Furthermore, whilst previous studies have contributed to the understanding of stakeholder attitudes in PPP, a gap still exists. Existing studies mainly utilise a questionnaire survey, which may lead to response bias, limiting the exploration of the lived experiences of PPP practitioners. To fill this gap in the literature, this thesis seeks to understand attitudes through a qualitative approach by interpreting the lived experiences of PPP practitioners (public and private sectors) in New Zealand and Malaysia. This study will explore the PPP practitioners' perspectives on using PPP to deliver public infrastructure services and inform their attitudes. The study on stakeholder attitudes in PPP is important, as Yang *et al.* (2014) and Kabahinda and Mwesigwa (2023) indicated that there is a connection between stakeholder attitudes and the stakeholder management process. Understanding these attitudes will help PPP stakeholders to develop strategic measures, including risk mitigation, conflict resolution, and engagement strategies. This is critical as extant literature within construction, including PPP, shares the same idea that it is difficult to predict the attitudes in advance (Warsen *et al.*, 2020), and recommending stakeholder management strategies addressing stakeholder attitudes may help minimise conflict between stakeholders, creating positive PPP environments, attracting stakeholders to participate in future PPP projects, ensuring the sustainability of PPP as an alternative procurement model for public infrastructure delivery.

2.9.3 Stakeholder Relationships

2.9.3.1 Overview

The United Nations (2008, p. 3) argued that “*a PPP contract generally has a much longer tenure than a construction contract. Problems may arise over the long contract tenure. Managing the relationship between the private provider and the contracting government agency over this long contract tenure is vital for the success of the PPP project*”. Stakeholder management is a way to proactively manage stakeholder relationships (Moura and Teixeira, 2010). Ledingham (2003) viewed stakeholder relationship management (SRM) as managing the relationships around common interests and goals, resulting in mutual understanding over time. Therefore, it aims to establish mutually beneficial relationships between stakeholders in addition to achieving their common objectives. Building good relationships with different stakeholders in PPP is one of the key principles of stakeholder management (RICS, 2014), and it is equally as important as selecting the right PPP partners (Zou *et al.*, 2014). Numerous publications that investigated the factors for PPP project success identified managing the relationships between project partners (public and private sector stakeholders) as an important but complex factor due to diverse interests and expectations between the stakeholders (Li *et al.*, 2005; Oyedele, 2013; Tang and Shen, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 2020).

2.9.3.2 The Need to Investigate Stakeholder Relationships

De Schepper *et al.* (2014) noted that relationship issues in PPP are subject to ineffective stakeholder management, which was later supported by Jayasuriya *et al.* (2020). Miles and Ringham (2018) stated that if properly managed, it leads to value co-creation. However, there is a dearth of literature investigating stakeholder relationships in PPP in more depth, which has been emphasised in a study by Burke and Demirag (2017).

Zou *et al.* (2014) explain that the relationship can change during various phases throughout the long-term contract durations, and whilst this also happens in normal construction projects (Gusakova and Pavlov, 2021), the complexity associated with PPP stakeholders due to “*diverging objectives of partners involved*” (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014, p. 2) made it more intricate compared to traditionally procured projects; hence, the ability to establish good quality relationships among stakeholders in PPP can be considered as paramount to the success of a PPP project (Zou *et al.*, 2014; Cui *et al.*, 2018).

It is well known that the ethos of PPP agreement is that both public (government) and private sectors work together whilst ensuring public interests are protected (Lui and Yamamoto, 2009; Muhammad and Johar, 2018; Mwakabole *et al.*, 2019); however, the knowledge of stakeholder relationships in PPP remains thin on the ground compared to other studies in the construction industry and in this regard, it is imperative to explore the topic of stakeholder relationships in PPP, as it may help in minimising conflicts between project stakeholders (Deegan and Parkin, 2011).

Despite receiving a lack of coverage by researchers in the past, few researchers have tried to fill the gap in the literature and have covered various topics related to stakeholder relationships, most notably stakeholder relationship management. For instance, Teicher *et al.* (2006) focused on relationship management in Australia. Smyth and Edkins (2007) explored the management of relationships using the concepts of relational management and contracting. Whilst these studies are significant to PPP practitioners, both studies only valued trust and confidence as the foundation of building good relationships in PPP. Understandably, as indicated by Som *et al.* (2020), every stakeholder is subject to specific issues that require trust from all stakeholders.

On the other hand, Zou *et al.* (2014) identify critical success factors for effective relationship management, including senior executives' commitment, the multidisciplinary team responsible for managing relationships, staff commitment, and effective communication. According to Zou *et al.* (2014, p. 266), SRM is not a new concept and “*it has borrowed concepts and tools from relationship marketing, and became a formal approach to understanding, defining, and supporting broad spectrum of inter-business activities related to providing and consuming knowledge and services via networks*”.

Despite the aforementioned studies providing a significant understanding towards stakeholder relationships in PPP, these studies only look into the management of stakeholder relationships. Although it is important to maintain good quality relationships between different partners, it is also essential to look at factors affecting stakeholder relationships to discover the root causes that influence the relationship conditions, which researchers in the construction industry have widely investigated (Osei-Kyei *et al.*, 2019).

In examining the relationship conditions, Burke and Demirag (2017) analysed the situation based on how risk is managed and allocated in Irish road PPP projects. Burke and Demirag (2017) inferred that trust and goodwill are evident between stakeholders based on the risk

management and allocation strategies adopted by PPP stakeholders. English and Baxter (2010) discovered that the change in management practices in Victorian PPP prison projects initiated between pre- and post-2000 PPP had shifted goodwill trust. The authors reported that the approaches to the objectives of PPP prison, risk-management practices, performance measurement and reporting, structuring of incentive and payment mechanisms, and collaboration between partners had instilled positive relationships in the form of goodwill trust. However, both studies only focus on specific jurisdictions and sectors.

Against this backdrop, it is imperative to explore the topic more deeply as it may help address not just the factors that affect stakeholder relationships, but importantly, this will also allow the understanding of the expectations of different stakeholders (Burke and Demirag, 2017) and further expand the concept of stakeholder management by highlighting relevant strategies or specific conflict resolution mechanisms that will improve the decision-making processes in PPP, which are critical for the development of stakeholder management frameworks for PPP.

2.9.4 Reflection on Stakeholder Management Research Areas

Although only three stakeholder management research areas are explored in this research, these three are critical to developing a robust stakeholder management framework for PPP. Apart from providing insights specific to these three research areas, the findings may also provide critical insights and recommendations, such as to the governance and decision-making structures in PPP.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework for this research was developed based on the review of both theoretical and empirical literature on stakeholder management in PPP (Figure 2.16). As presented in Figure 2.16, developing a stakeholder management framework for PPP requires understanding stakeholder management from the context of stakeholder theory. Utilising stakeholder theory as the theoretical foundation is important as the theory provides a holistic approach to framework development.

The review of stakeholder management literature also provides an understanding of the stakeholder management process for PPP. Literature has also demonstrated that developing a systematic stakeholder management framework requires the exploration of stakeholder management issues to ensure a complete and effective framework. Therefore, this study

explores three areas within the stakeholder management context: stakeholder identification in PPP, stakeholder attitudes and stakeholder relationships. However, to ensure its comprehensiveness and suitability in the PPP context, it must be viewed from a professional context. Following this, practical stakeholder management approaches for PPP can be developed, which will be grouped accordingly based on the stakeholder management process presented in Section 2.8.2 (p. 66), which then helps inform the final framework for PPP.

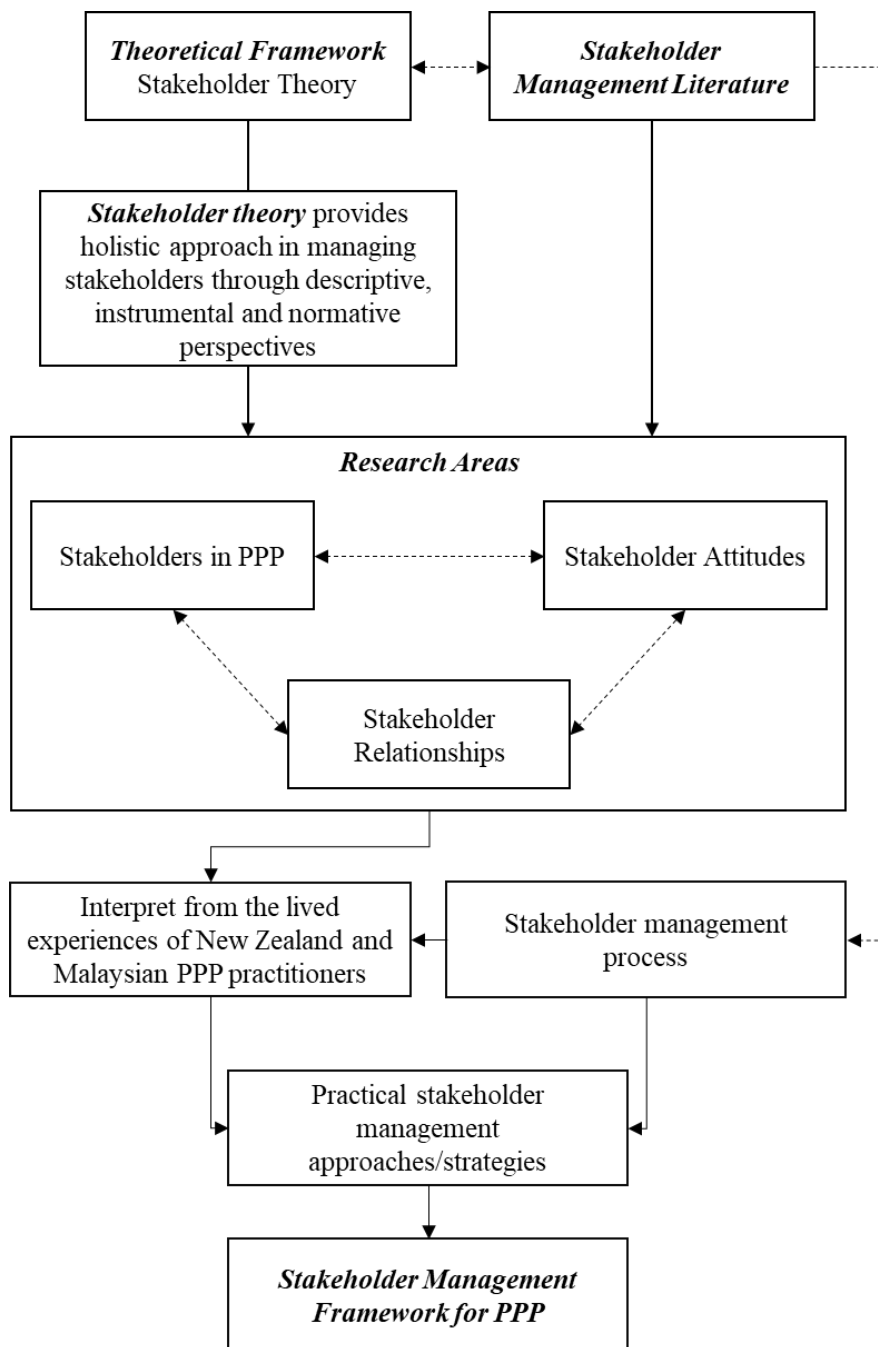


Figure 2.16. Conceptual research framework for developing PPP stakeholder management framework

Overall, the findings will contribute to the expansion of best practices for effective stakeholder management in PPP. In addition, it provides a deeper understanding of key issues in PPP. In developing the stakeholder management framework for PPP, this present study consolidated the findings and structured the framework accordingly, following the conceptual stakeholder management framework as illustrated in Figure 2.16.

Scholars have demonstrated that PPP is an ‘international concept’ that has been applied to deliver public infrastructure services worldwide. Thus, this present research examines the research context through comparative or cross-cultural studies between New Zealand and Malaysia. Taking this approach also means that the present research is able to present a more comprehensive and adaptable stakeholder management framework that can be applied across various projects and jurisdictions.

2.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter begins by providing insights into PPP procurement. The literature clearly shows that PPP offers certain features to the public sector that conventional procurement cannot, such as innovation, managerial expertise, and efficiency. This can be achieved through greater involvement of the private sector in delivering public infrastructure services across various aspects, especially funding, which is valuable for the public sector that faces budgetary constraints to deliver public infrastructure services. This chapter also reviews the development of the PPP literature from 1997 to 2023. Subsequently, this review contributes to the development of PPP literature timeline mapping. From the timeline mapping, it was discovered that stakeholder management research areas did not receive much attention compared to other research areas in PPP. Previous studies have argued that the complexity of PPP and issues within PPP led to the conclusion that it can be avoided with improved stakeholder management practices and a systematic framework. However, a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP is yet to be developed through the understanding of stakeholder management strategies addressing various stakeholder management issues. Most frameworks cannot be applied in different contexts due to several limitations. Therefore, developing an inclusive PPP stakeholder management framework that is practical across different sectors and jurisdictions is necessary. To develop a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP, from the review of the literature, this study explores three stakeholder management research areas: stakeholder identification in PPP, stakeholder attitudes, and stakeholder relationships. The next chapter discusses the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodologies adopted to achieve the research objectives and highlights the justifications for the methods selected. This chapter begins by providing an overview of the research design and then explores the research philosophy used. This chapter then discusses the chosen research approach and methodology of choice. This chapter then highlights the data collection procedure and discusses the ethical considerations required for this research.

3.2 Research Design

When addressing the research question, it is critical for a researcher to choose the most appropriate method. According to Yin (2017, p. 26), a research design can be considered “*a logical plan for getting here to there*”, and the establishment of a research design helps in achieving an understanding of the research. Simply put, research design is a plan or strategy on how to carry out research based on questions that need to be answered. Kumar (2011, p. 20) shares the same idea regarding research design and describes the function of research design as a way “*to explain how you will find the answers to your research*”. It is essential to be aware of the strategy used in the research design, as it can create a solid foundation for further analysis (Yin, 2017). Crotty (1998) highlights the four elements of research design: Epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and method (Figure 3.1), and defines these elements as:

- **Epistemology:** “*The theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby the methodology*”.
- **Theoretical perspective:** “*The philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria*”.
- **Methodology:** “*The strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes*”.
- **Methods:** “*The techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis*”. (Crotty, 1998, p. 4).

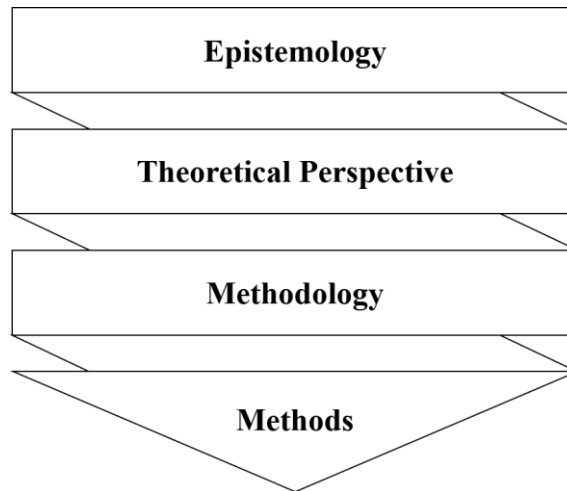


Figure 3.1. Four elements of research design (source: Crotty, 1998)

The four elements of the research design established by Crotty (1998) help inform one element to another, and these elements will be used as a guide for this study in addressing the research objectives and answering the overarching research question.

3.3 Research Philosophy

To ensure that the methods used are appropriate for this study, it is important to clearly identify the research philosophy in this study. Before discussing the theoretical perspective or philosophical stance, it is important to address the elements of epistemology, axiology, and ontology.

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge. Crotty (1998) described epistemology as; “*how we know what we know*”. The author also describes various types of epistemologies, such as objectivism, constructionism, and subjectivism, and views the element as:

Objectivism:

“Objectivist epistemology holds that meaning, and therefore meaningful reality, exists as such apart from the operation of any consciousness” (Crotty (1998, p. 8).

Constructionism:

“There is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it. Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world” (Crotty (1998, p. 8).

Subjectivism:

“Subjectivism comes to the fore in structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodernist forms of thought. In subjectivism, meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject” (Crotty (1998, p. 9).

To determine the impact of the philosophical stance in this thesis, axiology should also be considered, even though it has not been addressed by Crotty (1998). Saunders *et al.* (2019, p. 134) refer to axiology as the *“roles of values and ethics”* because it is how researchers view the impact of their research in a positive manner.

The final element is ontology. Guarino *et al.* (2009, p. 1) view ontology as something that *“deals with the nature and structure of reality”*. Saunders *et al.* (2019) stated that researchers’ views on ontology help shape how they view their research objects. The term ontology as defined in a study by Crotty (1998) is:

“The study of being. It is concerned with ‘what is’, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such” (Crotty, 1998, p. 10).

3.3.1 Theoretical Perspectives

In any field of study, various theoretical perspectives or research stances exist. Saunders *et al.* (2019) highlight five theoretical perspectives: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism. Three perspectives were considered relevant to this study when assessing the theoretical perspectives (Table 3.1). The first theoretical perspective is positivism, which can be directly related to objectivist epistemology, where it attempts to view the real world.

A few decades ago, the positivist approach was the philosophy of choice for researchers in the built environment (Levy and Henry, 2003), and it is still widely used today by researchers. Saunders *et al.* (2019, p. 144) explain that the positivist perspective focuses *“on strictly scientific empiricist method designed to yield pure data and facts uninfluenced by human interpretations or bias”*. Positivists examine the objective reality that *“everyone can observe, perceive and agree upon”*, but *“it leads to the suppression of multiple viewpoints, thoughts and voices”* (Salama, 2019, p. 10). It emphasised what is ‘real’, based on the information that the

researchers obtained, which can be observed and measured due to the objective process adopted by the researchers.

The positivist approach is typically based on quantitative methods, and it tends to present findings in the form of numbers which are obtainable through scientific methods such as mathematical or statistical analysis. According to Amaratunga *et al.* (2002), these numbers represent opinions towards something; however, these data have their own limitations as the numbers cannot provide deeper exploration of specific concepts, even when the results are significant, reliable, and valid (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002). One of the most common forms of analysis is statistical analysis, which has been widely used by researchers in the built environment to investigate the performance of listed or non-listed property/infrastructure companies or real estate investment trusts (REITs) (see Newell and Razali, 2009; Zekri and Razali, 2019; Marzuki and Newell, 2021).

Table 3.1. Comparison of different research theoretical perspectives (source: Saunders *et al.*, 2019)

| Ontology | Epistemology | Axiology | Common Methods |
|---|--|--|---|
| Positivism | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real • External • Independent • One true reality, • Granular • Ordered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific method • Observable and measurable facts • Law like generalisation • Numbers • Causal explanation • Prediction as contribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value-free research • Researchers are detached • Neutral and independent • Researcher maintains an objective stance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonly deductive • Highly structured • Large sample size • Measurable • Quantitative methods. |

Table 3.1. Comparison of different research theoretical perspectives (source: Saunders *et al.*, 2019) (*Cont'd*)

| Ontology | Epistemology | Axiology | Common Methods |
|--|---|--|--|
| Critical Realism | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layered • External • Independent • Intransient • Objective structures • Causal mechanism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epistemological relativism • Knowledge historically situated and transient • Facts are social constructions • Historical causal explanation as contributions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value-laden research • Researcher acknowledges bias • Cultural experience and upbringing • Researcher tries to minimise bias and errors • As objective as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retroductive • In-depth historical analysis of pre-existing structures and emerging agency • Range of methods and data to fit subject matter |
| Interpretivism | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex • Rich • Socially constructed through culture and language • Multiple meanings • Interpretations • Realities • Flux of processes • Experiences • Practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories and concepts too simplistic • Focus on narratives, stories, perceptions and interpretations • New understandings and worldviews as contributions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value-bound research • Researchers are part of what is researched • Researcher interpretations are key • Researcher reflexive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonly inductive • Small sample size • In-depth investigation • Qualitative methods • Range of data can be interpreted |

The second perspective is the critical realist perspective, which lies between the positivist and interpretivist perspectives. According to Vincent and O'Mahoney (2018), critical realists seek to distinguish between ontology and epistemology to overcome the odd assumptions generated by objectivism or subjectivism. Saunders *et al.* (2019, p. 147) describe that “*critical realists see reality as external and independent*”; however, the reality is not directly accessible through the researcher's observation and understanding of it. One interesting example of Saunders *et al.*'s (2019) critical realist perspective is as follows:

“*When you next watch a cricket or rugby match on television you are likely to see an advertisement for the sponsor on the actual playing surface. This advertisement appears to be standing upright on the pitch. However, this is an illusion. It is, in fact, painted on the grass. So what we see are sensations, which are representations of what is real.*” (Saunders *et al.*, 2019, p. 147)

The final perspective considered for this study is the interpretivist approach. This approach started to gain momentum as researchers saw the importance of this approach in providing a new and richer understanding through the perception of individuals who ‘live’ in it (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002; Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Suter, 2012). The interpretive stance relates to constructionism epistemology, as it focuses on narratives that can be extracted from reality or as perceived by individuals. It seeks to understand human experiences and reflect those experiences rather than relying on questions with ‘forced-choice responses’, which have little room to gain in-depth experiences of the subject (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). A qualitative approach is also best for testing new hypotheses and discovering new areas (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002; Borrego *et al.*, 2009). The discovery of new research areas or phenomena is important as it motivates further studies to be conducted. The next section provides a detailed discussion of the philosophical approach selected for this research.

3.3.2 The rationale of Selecting Interpretivism Philosophy

In any study, a variety of assumptions must be made before selecting the right philosophical approach or stance. This study investigates the theoretical perspectives presented by Saunders *et al.* (2019), and the researcher believes that the interpretivist philosophy is best suited for this study by assessing philosophies based on the research elements. Interpretivism is “*inspired by a series of other qualitative concepts and approaches*” (Carson *et al.*, 2001, p. 6). Saunders *et al.* (2019, p. 149) stated that interpretivism looks at the “*perspectives of different groups of*

people”, whilst Suter (2012, p. 344) described interpretivism as understanding the perceptions of the individuals “*who actually live it and make sense of it*”.

The above statements allow the researcher to recognise individuals’ or PPP practitioners’ perceptions and lived experiences. These practitioners can provide valuable information through their lived experiences in PPP, and different practitioners may interpret the same subject differently. According to Saunders *et al.* (2019, p. 149), interpretivism allows the creation of “*new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts*”, which allows for richness in the findings.

Other philosophies are deemed unsuitable for addressing the overarching research question. For instance, the positivist approach is based on direct science or observation, which is unsuitable to conduct due to the nature of this study to probe a deeper understanding of stakeholder management in PPP. According to Suter (2012), positivism is favoured for quantitative analysis, which requires large sample sizes and is unsuitable for achieving the aims and objectives of this research. Critical realism, on the other hand, falls between positivism and interpretivism philosophies and relates to scientific enquiries (Al-Ababneh, 2020), although critical realism shares the same view as interpretivism “*that social phenomena are concept-dependent and need interpretive understanding*” (Zachariadis *et al.*, 2010, p. 6), it also includes a causal explanation within the study (Sayer, 2000).

A critical realist believes that complex interactions may generate or influence an outcome and that the effects may be different if there are other interactions. This study does not attempt to explain the causal effects or relationships; however, it intends to understand the lived experiences of PPP stakeholders. Hence, critical realism does not fit well with the nature of this study.

3.4 Research Methodology

Determining the right methodology is essential for any research. The previous sections have highlighted the appropriate theoretical perspective for this study. Next, it determines the most suitable methodology to be adopted for this thesis. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) stated that the choice of methodology is usually determined by the purpose and nature of the research. Importantly, the selected method should help answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives.

Whilst there have been numerous attempts to investigate PPP internationally, there is still a dearth of literature exploring the topic related to stakeholder management in PPP. Therefore, the exploratory nature of this thesis requires the adoption of a qualitative research method, as pointed out by Amaratunga *et al.* (2002), Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), and Borrego *et al.* (2009). Additionally, qualitative research processes can contribute to the development of theory (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002); however, taking an interpretivist approach, this research aim is not to generate theory but to interpret specific situations (Darcy and Wearing, 2009) based on the lived experience of PPP practitioners to develop a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP.

As described by Suter (2012), qualitative research is able to understand ‘complex phenomena’ by evaluating the lived experiences that the respondents have encountered. In addition, the qualitative method is highly influential in providing richness and holism (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002), which is desired for this study. However, it is important to note that the use of a qualitative approach requires cooperation from various sides. Although other methods, such as the mixed method approach, are available, they were deemed unsuitable as this thesis focuses on gaining PPP practitioners’ perspectives towards the research topics, which can only be obtained through in-depth interviews. Moreover, the selection of interpretivist philosophy as the philosophy of choice also influences the selection of qualitative methodology.

Although the quantitative approach has been used in PPP research before, it has been deemed unsuitable for this type of research, as the method is unable to provide an in-depth understanding of the research topic (Zawawi, 2017). According to Amaratunga *et al.* (2002) and Saunders *et al.* (2019), a quantitative approach or positivism philosophy requires large volumes of samples that can be quantified, such as numeric data. As such, the researcher found it unrealistic for this thesis to adopt a quantitative approach as it is ineffective in understanding PPP practitioners’ point of view or providing an in-depth understanding. Therefore, the nature of this research, which is to provide a better understanding of stakeholder management in PPP and features of qualitative methodology, means that a qualitative methodology is an ideal method to achieve the objectives of this thesis.

3.5 Data Collection Method

The data used in the research can influence the final outcome of the research itself. Grounded by the theoretical constructs of interpretivism philosophy adopted in this research, primary data

collection methods are utilised to achieve the research objectives. Primary data are datasets that have been collected through the researcher's own experience and are obtainable through experiments, surveys, interviews, and observations (Hox and Boeije, 2005).

According to Kabir (2016, p. 204), unpublished primary data is more “*reliable, authentic and objective*”, as primary data is able to overcome the limitations of secondary data, which is typically collected to cater to and answer certain questions or meet certain objectives. As such, secondary data may not be fully appropriate in addressing something outside of the context of the original study or work (Sindin, 2017). However, primary data is harder to obtain, as it requires cooperation from several parties if the data are gathered through a survey or interview (Kabir, 2016).

Various methods can be applied to collect primary data; however, they must be suitable within the context of the research. This research found that the majority of primary data collection methods are unsuitable for use in this research. For instance, using observation as a tool in collecting data must fit the purpose of the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2019), which might not help in providing an in-depth understanding of stakeholder management in PPP and contribute to the development of a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework.

Another common method is questionnaires, which are typically administered through email, mail, phone, or electronic surveys. However, as this research intends to develop a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework based on the experiences of PPP practitioners, the difficulty of going in-depth by seeking clarification from respondents will defeat the purpose of the research. Considering the research methods and the attempts to understand different narratives, one common method associated with the interpretivist and qualitative approach is interview. Interviews are the most suitable method and have been recommended to provide richness in findings (Ryan *et al.*, 2009; Bolderston, 2012; Suter, 2012; Ismail, 2013a; Ismail and Haris, 2014b; Kabir, 2016).

3.5.1 Interview

Grounded by the research philosophy and methodology described in this chapter, interviews are utilised to capture information from New Zealand and Malaysian PPP practitioners. In this study, the qualitative analysis played a significant role in addressing the research questions. Since the topic of this thesis is complex and associated with stakeholder management in PPP,

Schröder (2016) recommended interviews as it provides an opportunity to capture high-quality information (Mathers *et al.*, 2002), as interviewees can speak openly about their views. Mathers *et al.* (2002) noted that other advantages of interviews include greater flexibility, allowing discussions of sensitive subject matter, correcting misunderstandings, and creating new ideas.

According to Amaratunga *et al.* (2002), interviews are the most used method in built environment research. Interviews were conducted to accomplish the research objectives. Interviews involve question-answering from selected respondents for this study and can be conducted in person or through video conferences. The goal of the research interviews was to understand the research topics from a different perspective; in this case, it was the PPP practitioners' perspective. In addition, it provides an in-depth understanding of the reasons behind the answers. Interviews can be classified into three types (Saunders *et al.*, 2009): structured, semi-structured, and unstructured.

A structured interview limits the respondents to the same question, thus leading to less rich information. In other words, every respondent received the same questions, regardless of their position or experience with the research topic. Semi-structured interviews address a set of themes that may vary from one respondent to another. According to Saunders *et al.* (2009), semi-structured interviews allow researchers to omit some questions based on the context of the respondents, and conversations between researchers and respondents may influence the flow of questions. Semi-structured interviews seem more flexible than structured interviews. Lastly, an unstructured interview can be considered an informal interview with no predetermined questions. As such, the questions tend to be open-ended, allowing respondents to express themselves freely (Kabir, 2016).

Building on the above arguments, a semi-structured interview is the most appropriate choice for this research, as it allows flexibility during the interview. Due to the different types of respondents from different types of PPP organisations in New Zealand and Malaysia, well-designed questions need to be established, which is important in achieving the objectives of this research and providing an understanding of the research topics from different perspectives.

Utilising the interpretivist approach provides an understanding of the perception of individuals “*who actually live it and make sense of it*” (Suter, 2012, p. 344). As such, it is expected that the respondents will be able to provide richness in findings and select respondents from both public and private sectors, specifically from the procuring authority and SPV/private consortium critical in developing a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP.

3.5.2 Sampling of Respondents

It is important for researchers adopting interviews to select the right participants/respondents (interviewees), as the right participants can provide the most information-rich data. It is also important that the selection of participants in this thesis is based on a central issue that this thesis aims to address.

Generally, sampling methods in research can be divided into two types (Figure 3.2): probability/random sampling and non-probability/non-random sampling. Although both sampling methods are valuable in providing significant output, selecting the right method is essential in obtaining the desired results. According to Daniel (2012), probability or random sampling provides an equal chance of a sample being selected from a sample group.

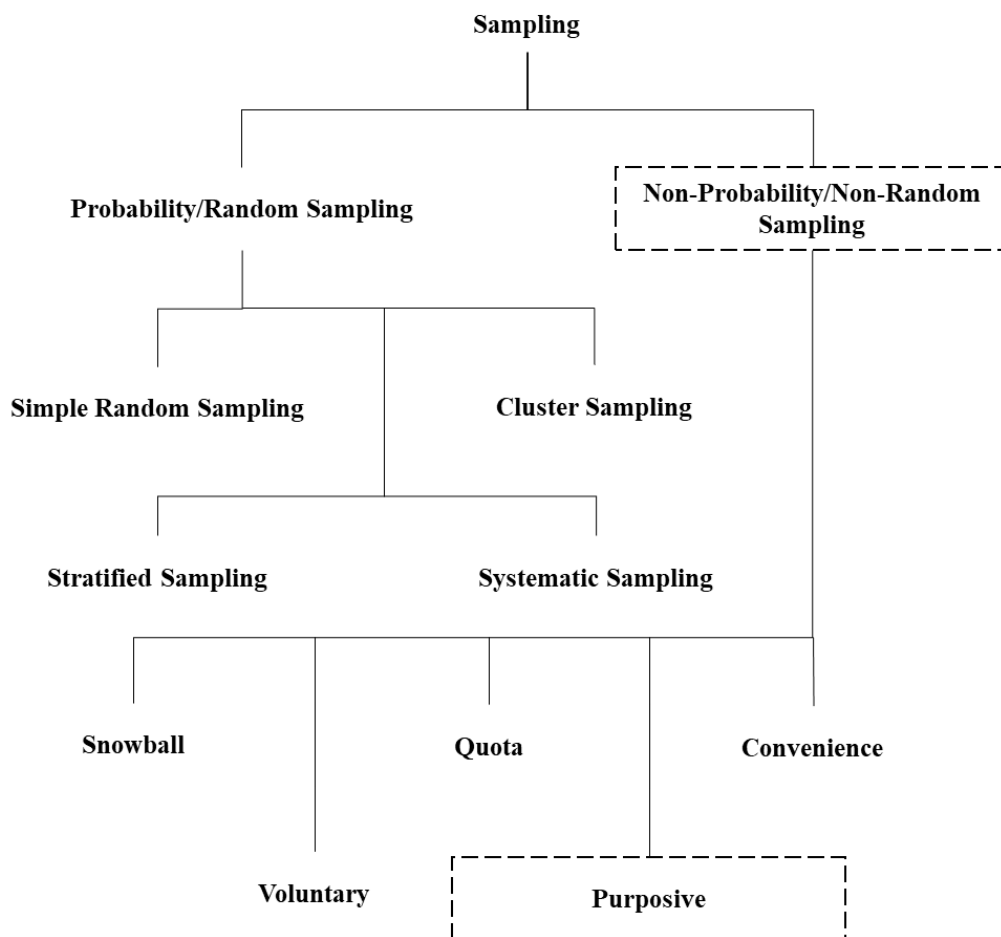


Figure 3.2. Research sampling technique (source: Saunders *et al.* 2009)

Saunders *et al.* (2009) explained that probability sampling is commonly used as a strategy for survey- or questionnaire-based research. Meanwhile, the non-probability sampling method is a technique based on judgement (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Sharma, 2017); simply put, the selection of participants in non-probability is not random but based on the preferences that have been determined by the researcher, such as the qualities of the participants (Tongco, 2007).

In this regard, Saunders *et al.* (2009) revealed that this will provide richness in findings. Additionally, this approach has been used in numerous PPP-related studies in the past, more recently by Osei-Kyei and Chan (2018b) and Kavishe and Chileshe (2020), where both studies are also looking into the perspective of experts in PPP to address specific areas in PPP.

Since this thesis aims to develop a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework through in-depth understanding based on the lived experiences of PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia, the quality of information is more important than quantity. Hence, purposive sampling procedures with predefined criteria were employed in selecting the research participants (Ke *et al.*, 2011; Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018b; Kavishe and Chileshe, 2020), which fall under non-probability sampling techniques as they are consistent with the research philosophy and the intention of the research to provide an in-depth understanding of the research topics from the lived experiences of PPP practitioners. The predefined criteria are:

1. The respondent should have in-depth knowledge of the general practice of PPP; and
2. The respondent should have at least one direct hands-on experience (not research experience) with PPP projects in their respective jurisdictions that are recognised as PPP by the PPP unit or governing body responsible for PPP projects.

3.5.3 Sample Size of Research Participants

Deciding the appropriate sample size is difficult, especially in qualitative research, as the sample size can affect the quality of the data and results. As indicated by Kabir (2016), an increase in sample size helps reduce sampling error. However, it is important to note that due to the nature of qualitative research, the scale of the sample size should not be treated equally as quantitative research, as none of the data can be easily calculated by statistical software (Suter, 2012).

Kumar (2011), on the other hand, stressed that the sample size does not play a vital role in qualitative research, as the purpose of sampling in qualitative research is to ‘gain in-depth knowledge’ and not to ‘draw inferences’. As such, it is sufficient that the data merely satisfy the research objectives and that they are able to build arguments surrounding the research (Suter, 2012).

An adequate data size or sample for qualitative research is achieved when the collected data reaches a saturation point where no new information is discovered (Kumar, 2011). However, as Kumar (2011) indicated, the saturation point is highly subjective, and it depends on the researcher to interpret. Nonetheless, Saunders *et al.* (2012) recommend the following minimum sample size for the non-probability sampling technique (Table 3.2), and from the recommendations, the researcher is able to identify the minimum number of participants needed for this research.

Table 3.2. Minimum sample size in non-probability sampling (source: Saunders *et al.*, 2012)

| Nature of Study | Minimum Sample Size |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Considering a homogenous population | 4 – 12 |
| Considering a heterogenous population | 12 – 30 |
| Semi-structured or in-depth interview | 5 – 25 |
| Grounded theory | 20 – 35 |
| Ethnographic | 35 – 36 |

3.5.4 Research Participants

With the researcher having a clear vision of the specific groups of individuals from New Zealand and Malaysia that could provide rich information for this research, those identified as participants are presented in Table 3.3. In this research, a total of 13 participants from New Zealand and Malaysia showed a strong interest and agreed to participate. After five interviews each from both jurisdictions, the researcher discovered that no new themes or ideas emerged despite all interviewees being from different backgrounds and having been involved with different types of PPP projects in the past, which suggests that saturation has been reached.

Table 3.3. Background of participants

| Country | Code | Position in Organisation | Role in PPP | Sector | PPP Experience (Years) |
|-------------|------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| New Zealand | NZ01 | Executive Director | Fund Manager | Private | 26 |
| | NZ02 | Senior Principal | Design Manager | Private | 8 |
| | NZ03 | Commercial Manager | | Public | 5 |
| | NZ04 | Technical Director | Head of SPV | Private | 13 |
| | NZ05 | PPP Director | | Public | 14 |
| Malaysia | MY01 | Deputy Secretary-General | Contract/Project Administrator | Public | 4 |
| | MY02 | Deputy Senior Undersecretary | Contract Administrator | Public | 4 |
| | MY03 | Assistant Secretary-General | Contract Administrator | Public | 3 |
| | MY04 | Secretary Under General | Contract Administrator | Public | 4 |
| | MY05 | Project Manager | | Private | 17 |
| | MY06 | Chief Operating Officer | Asset and Facilities Manager | Private | 17 |
| | MY07 | Deputy Director | Project Manager | Public | 24 |
| | MY08 | Project Manager | | Private | 14 |

Whilst the sample size is small, it is quite common in studies that utilise a qualitative approach. For instance, Cheung *et al.* (2010) interviewed seven participants from two countries: Hong Kong (five participants) and Australia (two participants). Liu and Wilkinson (2011) investigated PPP in New Zealand by interviewing eight individuals from the public sector. In addition, Osei-Kyei and Chan (2018b) interviewed ten participants from the public sector for their study, and more recently, Kavishe and Chileshe (2020) also conducted ten interviews with PPP experts from Tanzania to examine the driving forces for PPP in Tanzanian housing

projects. Notwithstanding, the lived experiences and knowledge of experts in PPP render credibility.

Furthermore, Saunders *et al.* (2012) consider a sample size between five and twenty-five is sufficient to reach the saturation point for a semi-structured interview (see Section 3.5.3, p. 94). Further, all participants from both jurisdictions had direct hands-on experience with PPP; hence, the participants have been exposed to the complexities of PPP, including the stakeholder environment, which enhances the reliability of the final research findings. Detailed information on each participant is highlighted in the following section.

3.5.5 Interview Protocols

The interviews were conducted in New Zealand and Malaysia between April 2022 and September 2023. Personal arrangements were made by telephone and email with every potential participant in each country, and all potential participants were given a participant information sheet (PIS) containing the research information. No incentives were offered to invite the PPP practitioners to participate in this research, and the participants volunteered to participate and share their experiences.

Due to the participants' busy schedules, they were given the authority to decide where and when the interview should take place. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the interview process is done in a relaxed manner. Due to this approach, the interviewed PPP practitioners could speak openly about their lived experiences, and there was no evidence that interviewees were influenced by external factors when giving their answers.

Thirteen participants have agreed to be part of and contribute their knowledge to the development of this thesis. All interviews were conducted in person or through video conferences, ranging from 45 to 90 minutes per session. All interviews were recorded, either audio or videotaped, with the interviewees' permission. The recordings were transcribed and used for analysis. Furthermore, to maintain anonymity, each participant was coded. Importantly, the questions asked in every interview are essentially the same, with the addition of probing questions to delve deeper into the discussion, allowing richness in findings. The areas of discussion explored in the interviews include the practitioner's experience with PPP, conflicts between stakeholders in PPP, addressing the conflicts between stakeholders in PPP, and the stakeholders in PPP. Overall, the interview aims to understand the PPP practitioner's

knowledge and general practice/experience with PPP projects, with a strong emphasis on stakeholders. Appendix A highlights the research questions that guide the research.

However, since the topic surrounding stakeholder management is a very sensitive topic for some, to prevent the interviewees from being uncomfortable with the questions, the interviewers had to establish some sort of trust with the interviewees by asking the respondents general questions about PPP before delving deeper into the topic of stakeholder management.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data refers to valid information that can be used to answer the researcher's research questions (O'Connor and Gibson, 2003). The use of qualitative data analyses allows researchers to describe and interpret specific situations (Darcy and Wearing, 2009). In qualitative research, data analysis and interpretation may be more complex than in quantitative research (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002). However, Pope and Mays (1995, p. 43) indicated that qualitative research was able to provide an understanding of certain phenomena more naturally based on the "*meanings, experiences and views*" of the respondents.

Adopting a qualitative data analysis approach, Kalof *et al.* (2008) argued that it should begin in the early phase of a research process, and it tends to be less rigid compared to quantitative data analysis, where it is usually collected through observational work, interviews, or document analysis (Kalof *et al.*, 2008). Among a wide range of qualitative data analysis techniques, content analysis has been widely used to extract desired information from written material (e.g., books, newspapers, personal communication) and systematically organise the information into codes before making any further interpretations (Kulatunga *et al.*, 2007; Maier, 2017).

3.6.1 Content Analysis

The use of content analysis in this research allows written materials to be systematically analysed to identify the data based on the other person's perspective (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; White and Marsh, 2006; Kulatunga *et al.*, 2007). One advantage of content analysis is that it can provide researchers with richer data, as researchers are exposed to detailed information which cannot be obtained through other methods, such as questionnaires (Maier, 2017). There are various approaches to content analysis. Krippendorff (2004) and Kulatunga *et al.* (2007) argued that content analysis can be in the form of word count, thematic analysis, prepositional analysis, and referential analysis.

Among the types of content analysis, this study adopts a thematic analysis, which allows the analysis of emerging themes or concepts that emerge within the selected text. Despite Kiger and Varpio's (2020) argument that it is a powerful and flexible method for analysing qualitative data, it needs to be done with care, as it is based on the judgement made by the researcher, which can affect the reliability and validity of the data (Kulatunga *et al.*, 2007).

Thematic content analysis is appropriate for understanding the experiences or perceptions of participants (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). In this research, the qualitative data used for content analysis were mainly based on the form of text generated from interviews with PPP practitioners, which was audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. From dealing with a huge amount of raw data from text generated from interviews with PPP practitioners, key themes and information essential for this thesis emerged through thematic content analysis. The next subsection discusses the coding of the data derived from the text generated from interviews with PPP stakeholders.

3.6.2 Coding of Data

Using thematic content analysis, coding the data using the correct theme is critical. The researcher has experimented with coding the transcript manually and using NVivo software and decided that the latter is more appropriate, especially in dealing with the large amount of raw data. To ensure the smoothness of the qualitative data analysis, the analysis was assisted using the latest version of NVivo software.

According to Zamawe (2015) and Zawawi (2017), NVivo can systematically assist the coding process of the data collected more precisely, thus reducing time consumption. The use of NVivo also assisted in the development of themes or codes/nodes, which arose from preliminary analysis conducted after the first few interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia.

The emerging themes from the preliminary analysis were then incorporated into the subsequent coding process using different transcripts. These nodes were essential for classifying the data from the transcript into relevant categories. Sub-themes also emerged through the coding process, as more detailed analyses were conducted using NVivo.

The coding process of raw data into nodes/themes and sub-nodes/sub-themes in thematic analysis heavily depends on the judgement of the researcher, which has been highlighted by

Kulatunga *et al.* (2007). The coding processes were repeated, where the data from each interview transcript were identified and coded into relevant existing or new themes or sub-themes. By analysing the transcripts, statements by different participants that fall under the same theme or category were synthesised to support the findings presented in Chapters 4 to 7.

3.6.3 Validity and Reliability

According to Noble and Smith (2015), it is important for researchers to adopt a qualitative route to enhance the credibility of the research. Validity and reliability are important aspects that must be delivered to ensure the credibility of research. Validity in research refers to the accuracy of the research data, and for the data to be valid, it should be accurately measured using a valid instrument (Brink, 1993; Yilmaz, 2013). Reliability, on the other hand, according to Saunders *et al.* (2009, p. 156), refers to the “*extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings*”.

Simply put, validity and reliability refer to the fact that the data used must be valid and reliable. To ensure that the research data are valid and reliable, Yilmaz (2013) pointed out that the research needs to achieve certain standards on how the data are collected and measured. Additionally, with the nature of qualitative research allowing the in-depth exploration of a research topic, Golafshani (2003) indicated that validity and reliability in research are also about eliminating bias.

To test the validity and reliability of the research, four aspects have been highlighted by previous researchers, such as Kalof *et al.* (2008), Saunders *et al.* (2009) and Yin (2017), which should be considered when designing the research: internal validity, external validity, construct validity and reliability. These four aspects are followed in this research to minimise and prevent the findings from making invalid conclusions, and several tactics are considered to address the concerns. Concerning internal validity, Kalof *et al.* (2008) revealed that the study must be able to draw appropriate conclusions based on available data at the researcher’s disposal. To do so, this thesis refers to Saunders *et al.* (2012), who recommended the use of the same data collection technique (interview) for each participant. Importantly, this allows this thesis to draw valid comparisons between different participants.

Regarding external validity, given that the topic of PPP is universally homogeneous across the globe, a cross-country analysis between New Zealand and Malaysia helps add external validity

to this research by providing a broader perspective of the same topic. Moreover, the cross-country analysis adopted in this study also helps with the knowledge transfer process, which is important in facilitating the external validity of the research findings (Konradsen *et al.*, 2013).

To ensure construct validity, this research refers to Yin (2017), who suggested that multiple sources of evidence should be utilised instead of a single source. To do so, during the data collection process, interviews are conducted with different PPP practitioners from different sectors. This allows researchers to obtain a variety of information based on the different perspectives perceived by different individuals from different groups. In addition, allowing the results to be reviewed by interviewees also contributes to construct validity (Yin, 2017).

To strengthen the validity, the participants then reviewed all of the transcripts from the interviews to ensure that the information provided was correct. To ensure that the findings and framework developed in this research truly reflects the lived experiences of PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia, several participants from each country were invited to provide feedback on the practicality of the framework.

Each participant was shown copies of the findings in tables and figures presented in Chapters 4 to 8 (including the stakeholder management framework) and asked to comment on the findings. To overcome concerns regarding reliability, the following procedures were established: (1) clear documentation of data collection and (2) performing data analysis several times.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues exist in all fields. Ethical considerations are important to protect or prevent human subjects from harm through the appropriate application of ethical principles (Orb *et al.*, 2001). Due to the nature of qualitative studies, which involve a detailed series of actions, it is important to obtain ethics approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) before making any contact with potential respondents. Conditional approval to conduct this research by UAHPEC was obtained in November 2021. Unconditional approval was then obtained on the 11th of March 2022, after making a few adjustments required by the UAHPEC. The unconditional approval letter by UAHPEC is presented in Appendix B.

Due to the nature of this research, potential participants are provided with an approved participant information sheet (PIS) and consent form (CF). The PIS was given to the

participants to provide them with clear information about the research, whilst a consent form was given to obtain their consent. Special PIS and CF were prepared and given to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), manager, or equivalent. Apart from providing the research background, the CEO could also use the special PIS to select the most qualified person for this research. Meanwhile, special CF was used to protect the participants in this research from any threat regarding their employment status and so on.

3.8 Summary

This chapter discusses and outlines the philosophical stance and view of the researcher to address the research topic (Figure 3.3). In doing so, this chapter also provides justification for the philosophical stance and research method selected, which is important in addressing the research question presented in Chapter 1. Guided by the research question, the relevant theoretical perspective was determined to be interpretivism, as it allows for the exploration of the lived experiences of PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia, which is crucial for the development of a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework.

Further, the decision to adopt the interpretivist approach also affected the choice of research methodology. The thesis aims to develop a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework through an in-depth understanding of stakeholder management in PPP; as such, qualitative methodology, which has been highlighted by extant literature in the research area, was adopted.

Following the selection of the research theoretical perspective and appropriate methodology of choice, in-depth semi-structured interviews were the most suitable research method for this study. In selecting the participants for this research, the quality of information that the interviewees can provide is more important than the number of participants; hence, purposive sampling, which is a type of non-probability sampling method, was used in selecting the participants.

To ensure that quality data were collected, content analysis was utilised to analyse the data collected to understand the lived experiences of each participant. Further, it provides richness within the findings, as the researcher was exposed to detailed information which could not be attained through other forms of analysis. Subsequently, thematic analysis, which is based on emerging themes or concepts, was selected as it is appropriate for understanding the lived

experiences and perceptions of the participants in this research. By designing the right research approach, it helps fulfil the aim of this research. Several interviewees were invited to validate the research findings to ensure the findings are practical.

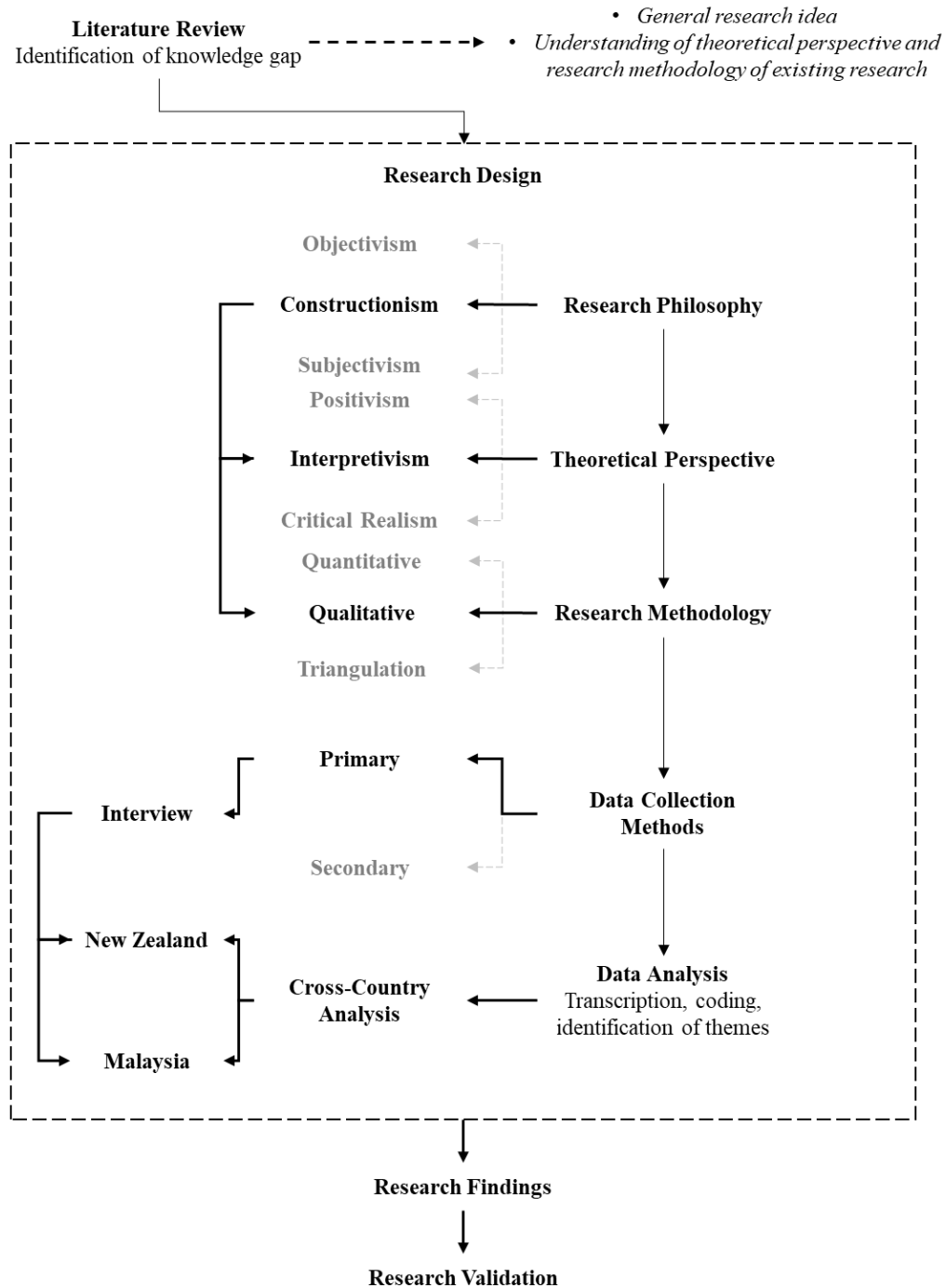


Figure 3.3. Research outline

CHAPTER FOUR

Stakeholder Identification in PPP

4.1 Introduction

This chapter centres on gaining a deeper understanding of the stakeholders in PPP procurement, which is the first step for effective stakeholder management. As indicated in Section 2.9.1 (p. 73), despite previous scholars employed the concept of stakeholder to explain the stakeholders in PPP (McErlane *et al.*, 2016; Amadi *et al.*, 2018; Bakhtawar *et al.*, 2018; Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Węgrzyn, 2019), there are discrepancies between those studies as there was no fixed view of the position of stakeholders in PPP. Thus, making it difficult to conceptualise stakeholders in PPP. Whilst these studies massively contributed to the understanding of stakeholders involved in PPP, they are based on the author's own interpretations of the stakeholder concept, following two distinct stakeholder identification strategies: broad or narrow perspectives. Observing the limitations of previous studies, this chapter provides an understanding of the stakeholders in PPP from the information gathered from interviews with PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia. Taking an interpretivist approach to understanding the research subject may provide a more nuanced understanding of the identification of the stakeholders and stakeholders in PPP, including their interests. To avoid repetition, some of the best practices of stakeholder identification in PPP will be discussed in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

4.2 Interpretations of Data from PPP Practitioners

4.2.1 Stakeholders in PPP

The interpretation of information from interviews with PPP practitioners clearly indicates the importance of identifying stakeholders early in PPP; however, within the context of PPP, there is still no clear indication of who can be considered key stakeholders, which require significant attention due to their significant influence in the decision-making process. Since PPP has the potential to create a collaborative environment between the government and private sectors in delivering high-quality infrastructure services to the public, as expected, all participants acknowledged the significant involvement of different parties. Whilst stakeholder composition can change from project to project, Table 4.1 highlights the common stakeholders that are important for successful PPP delivery, categorised into three: public sector stakeholders, private sector stakeholders, and others.

Table 4.1 Key stakeholders in PPP as identified by PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia

| | New Zealand (NZ) | | | | | Malaysia (MY) | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|----|----|----|----|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 |
| Public Sector Stakeholders | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Procuring authority</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Relevant government agencies/entities</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Private Sector Stakeholders | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>SPV/Private consortium</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Subcontractors</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Financiers</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Advisors</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Others | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>General public/Affected Groups</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | x | x | x | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | ✓ |

4.2.1.1 Public Sector Stakeholders

4.2.1.1.1 Procuring Authority

In PPP, the central government represents itself through its various ministries and departments. From the interviews, it was clear that the government procuring authority plays an important role in PPP procurement, representing the government as one of the key decision-makers, as perceived by all interviewees. According to past literature and reports, this entity is responsible for project delivery and oversees the project throughout its life cycle (McErlane *et al.*, 2016; World Bank, 2017; Yescombe and Farquharson, 2018). NZ03 revealed that it was the ministry's decision to use PPP as an alternative for the delivery of public assets because of all the benefits that PPP could offer, and in his own words:

“[...] the property team here (procuring authority) was looking at alternative procurement method [...] a decision was made to look at PPP as an option.”
– NZ03

Interviewees from Malaysia also shared a similar view with their New Zealand counterparts that the procuring authority holds the final decision despite the proposal coming from the PPP unit:

“[...] we have many departments (within the ministry), such as the planning, development, engineering department, will sit down to discuss, especially the planning division, they (planning division) will give their view, they will value all the needs and after that they will propose [...] we have a committee member chaired by the chief secretary and it will be decided whether it is PPP or not.” – MY04

The significance of the procuring authority in PPP was clarified further by interviewees from both New Zealand and Malaysia, which revealed that the procuring authority outlined the requirements of the PPP project before the project went to tender, and it is the only thing that the private sector needs to comply with. The requirements are very important to the public sector because they are interested in the quality of services or assets delivered, especially through PPP, where the private sector can be innovative. A clear example of requirements set in the contract for schools PPP in New Zealand by the procuring authority, as highlighted by NZ01, the procuring authority:

“[...] want a building that is big enough for this number of kids [...] it is warm inside when it is cold outside, it is cool inside when it is hot outside, it does not leak as well.” – NZ01

In Malaysia, MY06 indicated that it is important for the private sector to follow all the requirements set by the procuring authority because:

“[...] if we (private sector) want the (PPP) contract, we have to comply with their terms because they (procuring authority) have the upper hand in that situation. We cannot argue too much with them, but we can give them our opinion, but in the end, if they want something, we have to comply.” – MY06

Apart from setting the requirements, interviewees from both jurisdictions also explained the role of procuring authority in PPP as the contract facilitator or administrator throughout the project life cycle, whereby the procuring authority is responsible for project coordination and meeting if there are any issues with the PPP project, including issues between the public and private sectors. Interviewees also noted that the procuring authority has power in PPP. For instance, in New Zealand, because the procuring authority is interested in efficient delivery, they are sometimes involved in partner selection if they think the partners selected by the SPV are incapable of handling the risks and fulfilling their obligations. NZ03 shared his experience working for the procuring authority has revealed the following:

“[...] it is up to the SPV to come back to the ministry with a preferred supplier and the ministry will then ratify that or say ‘Look, we have some concerns [...] we would like to you to bring this new contractor on board’ [...]”

Moreover, with New Zealand’s small market, the procuring authority can also force the private sector to run a competition to ensure that the ministry is not losing:

“[...] we (ministry) forced them (private sector) to actually fully compete banks and give us visibility of that process, just to make sure again that we were not losing value through a lack of competition.” – NZ05

With a vested interest in the quality of services or assets, one of the most important aspects that showcase the power of the procuring authority is contract termination if the private sector fails

to meet certain requirements embedded in the commitment register that can affect value-for-money. One interviewee from Malaysia explained:

“When they terminate our contract, they can bring in a new company to replace us and we would not get any compensation from them. They will only pay us until the end of our service date, that is it. [...]” – MY06

In summary, the interpretations of interviewees from New Zealand and Malaysia towards the procuring authority suggest that the power and presence of the procuring authority in PPP procurement cannot be denied, especially since the procuring authority comes out with most of the requirements needed for assets and holds the final decision on whether a project should continue as PPP or not. The interpretation of interview transcripts from both jurisdictions also indicates the significance of other government agencies in realising PPP projects.

4.2.1.1.2 Relevant Government Agencies/Entities

With various procuring authorities starting to embark on PPP, the involvement of other government agencies or bodies is also important to the success of PPP projects, as there is a wide range of issues in PPP, especially surrounding legal, political, social, economic, and other issues (United Nations, 2008; Yescombe and Farquharson, 2018). Interviewees informed that apart from the procuring authority, several relevant government agencies or entities can be considered key decision-makers in PPP.

The most critical government agency in PPP, as reported by all interviewees in both jurisdictions, is the specialised PPP unit or PPP governing body, which acts as a ‘facilitator’ for PPP programmes and policy to ensure all PPP projects adhere to the laws and regulations. The PPP unit is typically established within the Ministry of Finance or Treasury (Yescombe and Farquharson, 2018). The establishment of the PPP unit is vital in creating an enabling environment for PPP (Kumaraswamy and Zhang, 2001; PPIAF, 2009). In New Zealand, various initiatives have been taken, and several interviewees explained that the PPP unit (NIU/Infracom) has modified the UK’s original PPP framework to fit the New Zealand market:

“[...] they (government) had the National Infrastructure Unit, which was part of part of Treasury at the time and they went to the market to procure the legal team to actually take the British contracts, et cetera, and then turn them into a New Zealand version of the standard form contract, which all then contracts sort of followed. But at that time, none of this existed in the New Zealand context [...]” – NZ04

In Malaysia, interviewees also acknowledge the contribution of the PPP unit, which is UKAS, in creating an enabling environment for PPP in Malaysia. Moreover, since every decision requires cabinet approval:

“[...] any decision in PPP going through UKAS is the decision of the cabinet.” – MY03

Decisions that need UKAS approval include changes in the original PPP contract, and the rate of toll for user-pay projects (i.e. highway). Interpreting interview transcripts from Malaysia also indicates that interviewed respondents perceived UKAS as the mediator when an issue arises between the ministry and the private sector:

“[...] if the matter (issues between procuring authority and private sectors) cannot be decided by the ministry, it will indeed be brought the issue to UKAS, and if it requires the decision of the cabinet, it will be taken to the cabinet (by UKAS). For example, issues related to additional provisions and so on.” – MY02

With various risks associated with PPP, to promote an enabling PPP environment, interviewees from both jurisdictions were also informed that frequent reporting to the PPP unit is important, which allows the PPP unit to collect data on PPP activities and provide advisory services to the procuring authority’s core project team for smooth project delivery. In Malaysia, the PPP unit also provides advisory services to the private sector, specifically the SPV if needed, especially when the SPV has little to no experience with PPP. Essentially, the lived experiences of PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions support the findings of Tserng *et al.* (2012). The PPP unit is also the only government agency that involved throughout the PPP process, especially during key decision-making and ensuring that both jurisdictions have the right PPP environment.

Apart from the PPP unit, interviewees from both jurisdictions also notified the involvement of other government agencies or regulatory bodies, including the executive government branch (cabinet/policy makers) in PPP, but the most notable agency is the Treasury or Ministry of Finance (including agencies within), in providing support or advisory service to the procuring authority, when there are issues within the PPP projects and everything related to the PPP business case. In Malaysia, some interviewees noted that some state governments could also be considered key stakeholders, especially when the PPP project needs to be presented to the State Economic Council before the project can proceed to the next stage. It is important to note that although the state government's approval is required to proceed, only the central government, via the procuring authority, has the power to cancel the PPP contract. In summary, the relevant government agencies highlighted by interviewees in both jurisdictions indicate that the decisions of these agencies can also affect the decision-making process despite not being part of the PPP agreement.

4.2.1.2 Private Sector Stakeholders

4.2.1.2.1 Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)/Private Consortium – Project Company

From the interviews, the SPV or the private consortium can be classified as a commercial entity established to engage in a PPP project for a specific period through their direct contractual relationship with the government, specifically the procuring authority. As a commercial entity that was established by one or more private investors or sponsors (parent company) with the sole purpose of engaging in PPP projects, interviewees from both jurisdictions agreed that the SPV is arguably one of the most important parties to the success of PPP projects.

Through the SPV's direct contractual relationship with the procuring authority, this made the SPV the delegated agent/main contractor in delivering public infrastructure services through PPP, and the SPV has rights in the contract:

“[...] if they (SPV) request for amendments to the contract, they have their rights. [...]” – MY02

Moreover, interviewees from both jurisdictions also noted that through the procuring authority/ministry, the public sector could only engage and negotiate with the SPV and not the parent company that established the SPV.

Due to the long-term PPP contract, interviewees from Malaysia indicated that the SPV could be considered the ‘owner’ of the asset before it was transferred to the public sector at the end of the concession. Further, the SPV is also given the:

“[...] ‘first right of refusal’ and any additional work in PPP must be given to the concessionaire (SPV) to carry out [...]” – MY05

As the delegated agent in PPP, everything is up to the SPV to find the preferred contractors that the SPV believes are strong and dedicated to helping with funding, designing, building, and maintaining the PPP project. As such, interview transcripts also indicated that the SPV was willing to go to great lengths to find the right partners with the capabilities and enthusiasm to ensure that the team that was brought together was strong enough to handle the risks given by the public sector.

Interviewees from both jurisdictions also noted that the role of the SPV in selecting the right partners in PPP is important as the purpose of the SPV is to minimise the project risks by transferring the risks to the parties that are best able to manage them:

“[...] we (get) the contract (from the procuring authority) and then we subcontract down to the design and construction contractors and the AM/FM (asset management/facilities management) providers, and that is what our predominant functions [...] includes bringing the equity into the project, bring the debt [...] and then just managing the deliveries and the finance aspect of it [...]” – NZ04

For this reason, the SPV needs to be highly responsible for the actions made by the appointed contractors.

Moreover, since the PPP contract is between the procuring authority and the SPV, several interviewees from the public sector informed that this made the SPV the key connection point between other private companies and the public sector, avoiding any communication breakdown between the sides.

In essence, the SPV often positions itself at the heart of the PPP project. Transcripts from both jurisdictions also highlighted the importance of the SPV understanding the project as a whole, as all of the burden in the PPP project is put on the SPV. The SPV is also responsible for

everything from the start of the construction of the PPP project until the end of the concession period when the project is transferred to the government.

4.2.1.2.2 Subcontractors

All public sector interviewees noted that the role of the SPV is vital to the success of PPP projects; nonetheless, they still recognise the role of the subcontractor in PPPs despite not having a direct connection with them. Interviewees from both jurisdictions highlighted that subcontractors are private companies appointed by the SPV to take overall responsibility for the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of PPP projects. Interviewees from both jurisdictions noted that their presence is important for the SPV to achieve the required objectives set by the government. Interview transcripts suggested that the appointment of subcontractors who can fulfil the requirement without any problems is important.

Since the subcontractors have a contractual relationship with the SPV instead of the procuring authority, this means that the SPV is their client; hence, the subcontractors are under the supervision and direction of the SPV. Throughout the project life cycle, the subcontractors are responsible for ensuring that an effective life cycle can be achieved; hence, getting the right parties involved is critical:

“[...] you need everybody to be on their best game. So, in the selection of your team, you are actually out trying to find the strongest member of every discipline that you need [...]” – NZ01

Similarly, interviewees from Malaysia were also on the same page as their New Zealand counterparts and stated that having the right subcontractors in PPP can help them achieve the required objectives and reduce any potential problems through the project life cycle. Additionally, in Malaysia, just like the SPV, the subcontractors also:

“[...] have a say on every single thing throughout the project.” – MY05

Supporting this statement, New Zealand interviewees also confirmed that this is to ensure that the subcontractors can deliver the task given to them because, just like the SPV, the subcontractors also have an interest in project success.

Additionally, with New Zealand's small construction market, NZ04 revealed that it is also looking at partners with strong financial backgrounds:

"[...] those with a bit of balance sheet provide greater comfort to the banks, because we bring in debt financing to these projects [...] worth good security [...]"

In Malaysia, having subcontractors forming a consortium with one another is a must apart from having a strong balance sheet:

"[...] in case of anything goes wrong in between, that company will suffer a lot (if decided to go alone). And that is why there are three of them (subcontractors forming consortium) and each of them are equally strong and in legal term they are jointly severally." – MY05

Interpreting the lived experiences and perceptions of PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions shows that getting the right subcontractors involved in PPP is important for PPP projects to be successfully delivered and help reduce any potential problems throughout the project life cycle, especially after the project is fully operated. Although various subcontractors in PPP have put their reputations on the line by getting involved in a complex procurement process, interviewees from both jurisdictions noted that each subcontractor is significant; however, their power is limited compared to the SPV.

4.2.1.2.3 Financiers

Governments worldwide have a problem in delivering public infrastructure using their own resources, which is impractical, especially due to budgetary constraints faced by the government (Chege and Rwelamila, 2001; Harris, 2003; Charles, 2006; Lui and Yamamoto, 2009). As such, PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions explained that private funding or investment from banks or institutional investors is important. Indeed, almost all of the interviewees from New Zealand noted that the government could borrow money cheaper than the private sector; however, as explained by NZ01:

"[...] government funding is only cheaper because someone is pricing it as a lower risk [...]"

Notwithstanding, the government also saw the need to transfer the risk to the private sector in PPP, as remarked by one interviewee from the New Zealand public sector:

“[...] we want them (investor) to have money at risk so that there is risk transfer across to them [...]” – NZ03

In Malaysia, without financiers, it is impossible for the PPP project to achieve a financial close, as equity investment alone is insufficient:

“[...] when lenders want to lend you their money, the first thing that they (lenders) want to see is whether the PPP contract has been signed or not. So, that is prerequisite before going forward. Like when we want to get a loan for buying car, the first thing they want to look is our pay slip, without it, it is difficult for the bank to lend their money.” – MY05

Moreover, Malaysian PPP practitioners also believe that with the investment made by the investors in PPP, it is important to address the interests of the investors by making the project a success, and if the PPP project is not going according to plan, the financiers will suffer. This corresponds to the viewpoint of their counterparts in New Zealand. As highlighted by NZ04:

“[...] our success is really based on whether our investors are happy or not.”

In summary, the interviews have identified that financiers have a strong interest in PPP projects, as without their significant financial contributions, it is hard for the projects to come to reality. Further, financiers also hold financial risk, which is commonly associated with a degree of uncertainty, and in PPP, uncertainties are common due to the long-term nature of the contract (Cruz and Marques, 2013; Yang *et al.*, 2020).

4.2.1.2.4 Advisors

The complexity of PPP as a public procurement model requires the knowledge and expertise of professional advisors (Akintoye *et al.*, 2003). PPP advisors help support both the public and private sectors in overcoming their limited capabilities. The role of advisors or consultants in PPP may be small; however, interview transcripts indicate that these advisors' impact on a project is significant. Interviewees from both jurisdictions argued that the advisor appointed in

the PPP project could help the parties involved deliver their obligations smoothly, as indicated by MY06 from Malaysia:

“[...] we sometimes do not have the knowledge and because of that we need to appoint ‘specialists’ which give us all the input that we need to come up with [...]”

In some instances, with how the PPP contract is structured, advisors are also involved in discussing the PPP contract:

“The contract is still a contract, it does specifically dictate the specification, it always goes back to the interpretation, so that is why we have consultant.”
– MY05

Furthermore, some interviewees stated that multiple advisors are also required. For instance, with New Zealand’s small construction market, some of these advisors were brought from overseas, especially from countries with strong PPP experience, to help fill the knowledge gap among industry players:

“[...] there was a number of advisors that you need on these projects, and we just did not have that level of experience in New Zealand, and we had to tap into Australia, we have had to tap into the UK to get that experience [...]” – NZ04

The experience of advisors coming from a highly engaged PPP market also helps to develop the much-needed understanding which is lacking among PPP practitioners in New Zealand:

“[...] two people in my team, that was me and somebody else, and had not done PPP, and yes, we got good external advisors. At that time, we had Advisors A and B helping us, Advisor A basically through Mr. A was bringing all of their experience from the UK back to New Zealand, and we leveraged that. The legal advisors had understanding some key appointments [...]” – NZ03

Apart from contributing to the knowledge and understanding of PPP, these advisors are also important in filling the gaps in certain areas, such as environmental and social. For instance,

most PPP projects which PPP practitioners are involved must go through an environmental impact assessment (EIA), and to do so, they need to employ an ecologist as an advisor to give them input on the impact of the PPP project and how to minimise the impact. Similarly, when the PPP practitioners needed someone to advise them after engagement with the general public.

In summary, interview transcripts from both jurisdictions suggested that, without advisors that help practitioners to properly understand the contract in PPP and provide their input to the projects, it is impossible for other parties involved to carry out their obligations, as the advisors appointed were specialists in certain areas that other parties lacked.

4.2.1.3 Others

4.2.1.3.1 General Public/Affected Groups

There is a lot of confusion regarding whether the wider public or affected groups, such as the community, end-users and other interested parties within the zone of impact, should be classified as stakeholders, especially since they have limited involvement in the PPP process. Interpreting the interview transcripts from both jurisdictions revealed conflicting ideas of the significance of these groups as stakeholders in PPP. Nonetheless, interviewees who engage with this group in PPP agree that they are one of the most important and complicated stakeholders because of their diverse interests and gaining their support is critical, especially during the early phase of the PPP project. This statement supports the argument in an earlier study by Teo and Loosemoore (2014).

All interviewees from New Zealand acknowledge the general public as one of the key stakeholders in PPP due to the importance of social benefits in New Zealand, which have deep roots in New Zealand's culture. From interviews, every guideline that the interviewees refer to emphasises active engagement with the general public (e.g., State Highway Social Impact Assessment Guide, Resource Management Act). Respondents from New Zealand stated the following:

"[...] communities are a big focus in infrastructure delivery in New Zealand." – NZ02

“[...] certainly, there is a lot of initial community engagement [...] make sure that we can deliver something which the community very proud of [...] we take great pride on as well. We are going to be neighbours for the next 25 years [...] so there was a lot of consultation process [...]” – NZ04

Although it is not a direct engagement with the community but through a representative or advocacy group, New Zealand’s PPP practitioners who were interviewed confirmed that it is important to engage with the representative:

“[...] they (representative) are very mindful about what the community wants and need [...]” – NZ04

Furthermore, within the New Zealand context, considering that there are Māori groups in the community, special attention was also given to the groups. All participants revealed that the Māori groups had been heavily involved in PPP projects or any other infrastructure projects, consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi:

“[...] like, you know, kind of acknowledge their guardianship of that land, their Kaitiakitanga.” – NZ01

However, it is important to note that not all engagement with local Iwi or Māori is the same for every project. For example, for Pūhoi to Warkworth motorway, the engagement was done through advocacy group known as Hōkai Nuku, which is the treaty partner for that specific project, carrying the voices of four Iwi groups: Ngāti Manuhiri, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Rango of Kaipara and Ngāti Mauku/Ngāti Kauae of Te Uri o Hau.

Interviewees also noted that engagement with Māori or local Iwi is not a specific requirement for PPP, but involvement is part of a cultural requirement that is very important in the New Zealand context, which of itself shows that it is one of the unique requirements in New Zealand that project partners should understand:

“I mean, yes, Iwi and Māori and other locals. Probably I think, from our perspective, generally have a large part [...] part of our design definitely responds to Iwi and Māori design principles.” – NZ05

As such, institutional investors who wish to invest in future PPP projects in New Zealand must consider the needs and interests of the general public and Māori, regardless of the project type. This is done to ensure a balance between the project's financial, social, and cultural benefits.

In Malaysia, not everyone agrees that the general public/affected groups can be considered a stakeholder in PPP. Interviewees confirmed that in distinguishing whether the general public can be considered a stakeholder in PPP, or any other projects are subject to the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) guideline by the central government (Table 4.2), which was previously under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guideline. From interviewees involved in a PPP project that is not subject to SIA, there was no active engagement between project partners and the general public at all:

“The role of the public is not very significant in this project [...] I do not think they are (stakeholder), because they do not have any role in this project.” – MY05

This was later confirmed by MY08, who has been involved in projects that required SIA and no SIA:

“With SIA, the leverage is with the general public (to provide input for the project) [...] without SIA, the leverage leans towards the public sector [...].”

Nevertheless, there were several engagements during the early phase just to inform about the project. Following the early engagement, the interviewees informed that the general public could address any concerns that they have through a proper platform, which is a reactive one and indirect or informal:

“For now, there are no locals were interviewed. [...] only if there is a need (concern), maybe the people can use the official ministry's channel [...].” – MY01

Essentially, the SIA guideline stated that all projects that deliver significant exogenous shocks to the general public are subject to SIA, which requires active engagement to minimise the shock. Since PPP projects in Malaysia are under the central government's authority via the PPP unit and are of national importance, PPP projects typically fall under Category A SIA.

Table 4.2. Projects subject to SIA (source: Department of Town and Country Planning Malaysia, 2023)

| Category A SIA | Category B SIA |
|--|--|
| Coastal reclamation | Industrial |
| Infrastructure Airport Sea/land port Railway transportation Highways | Waste management |
| Major utilities Toxic waste disposal Power plant Dam | Energy and utilities |
| New township | Roads |
| Development on hilltops or slopes | Coastal reclamation |
| Other infrastructure of national importance – will be determined by the National Physical Planning Council through official directives from time to time, with a focus on infrastructure that spans or involves population catchments from two or more states. | Labour quarters |
| | Commercial |
| | Other developments are determined by state or local authorities from time to time. |

Note: Category A SIA – Large-scale projects involving many residents with high investment values, projects in disaster-prone areas, and projects spanning across two states.
 Category B SIA – Project subject to state approval.

Within the context of PPP in Malaysia, if required, SIA is one of the most critical requirements that need to be fulfilled before the PPP agreement becomes ‘effective’, depending on the results from the engagement with the general public during the assessment:

“After the concession agreement, there are conditions that must be fulfilled to obtain the ‘effective date’ for the agreement. Typically, after the concession agreement is signed, it is not immediately ‘effective’, so it needs to comply with the stipulated conditions for the contract to become ‘effective’. There are usually six or seven conditions [...] ‘social impact assessment’ approval is one of it [...]” – MY07

As for end-users for PPP projects that are not subject to SIA, such as hospitals and universities, interviewees from Malaysia confirmed that end-users such as doctors and lecturers are all part of the planning department under procuring authority. Hence, the ‘end-users’ decisions are the decision of the ministry:

“[...] the planning department is headed by doctors, so they will make a decision.” – MY04

“[...] we (private sector) had a lot of discussions with the procuring authority, namely the planning department, in short, they were lecturers at Public University A [...]” – MY06

As such, it can be concluded that for PPP practitioners in Malaysia who do not view the general public as stakeholders in PPP, this means that the PPP projects that they are involved in are not subject to any requirement (the project has minimal to no impact on the daily lives of the community); hence, this is the reason for no active engagement as stated earlier. In this regard, it is important for all parties to understand the regulatory requirements, and since PPP is a fixed price contract, understanding the requirements allows the project management team to allocate the resources appropriately, as ex-ante assessment by the public sector considers key planning concerns such, as community engagement.

4.3 Considerations for Stakeholder Identification

Interviews with PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions revealed that the identification of internal stakeholders (public and private sectors) who have formal or official relationships with

PPP projects took place as early as during the PPP project conception/planning stage and was similar across different sectors and jurisdictions. The considerations are based on regulatory frameworks and contractual connections (related to project scope and objectives). In terms of contractual connections, they are either direct, through PPP contracts or indirect, through various other contracts.

In identifying external stakeholders, particularly the general public, the findings revealed that requirement/regulation is critical in distinguishing whether individuals or organisations can be considered stakeholders. In Malaysia, this requirement is set through the SIA guideline by the Ministry of Local Government Development. Meanwhile, in New Zealand, findings from interviews confirm that a wider approach and variety of regulations are used to identify the general public as stakeholders. Notwithstanding, the identification of external stakeholders in New Zealand is consistent across different sectors, whether the general public is affected or not by the projects.

In addition to regulations, unique cultural/historical practices (e.g., the Treaty of Waitangi) in New Zealand also influence the identification of indigenous groups as stakeholders. This indicates that values and norms influence the stakeholder identification process for the general public in New Zealand, which is currently absent in Malaysia despite there are indigenous tribes scattered all over Malaysia. Interviewees from Malaysia believe that the regulatory frameworks are sufficient to ensure accountability in identifying the external stakeholders. The findings from Malaysian interviewees are consistent with Takim (2009) regarding the use of informal processes based on moral consideration when identifying the stakeholders in construction projects.

Despite all these considerations in identifying the stakeholders in PPP, proper stakeholder management planning is still necessary to avoid stakeholder marginalisation, specifically the general public. The reason for this is that the concept of 'partnership' in PPP, which 'integrates' both public and private sectors under one project organisation (Collin, 1998; El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014), requires both sides to cooperate for this process, despite the SPV being appointed as the delegated agent to deliver the project. Compared to conventional projects, the interviewees, especially from the private sector, informed that stakeholders in conventional projects are those they engage with, mainly because of their contractual relationships.

Figure 4.1 highlights the considerations for stakeholder identification as identified from interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, and Figure 4.2 illustrates the conceptual model for stakeholder identification based on interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia.

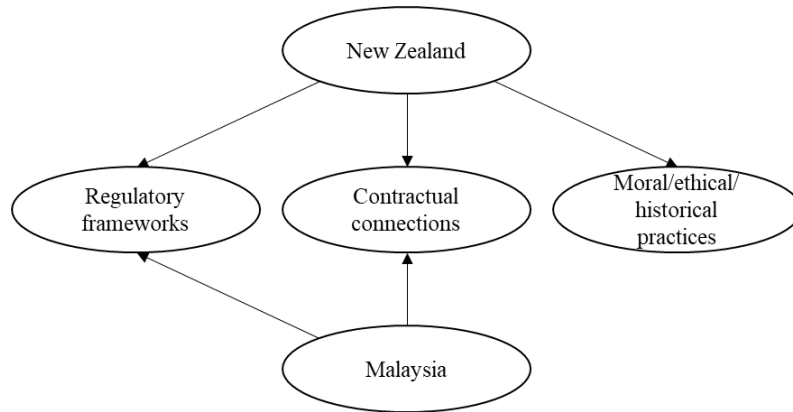


Figure 4.1. Considerations for stakeholder identification as reported by interviewees New Zealand and Malaysia

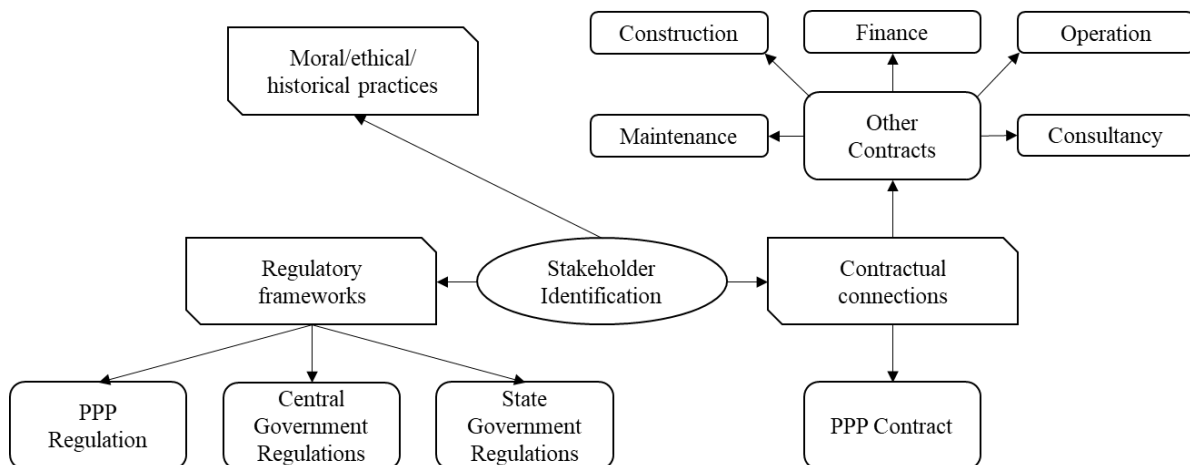


Figure 4.2. Conceptual model of stakeholder identification

Both figures, especially Figure 4.2, provide an understanding of the stakeholder identification requirements, which are important for effective stakeholder management. In addition, these findings are also important in addressing issues related to stakeholder marginalisation due to the differences in considerations for stakeholder identification between PPP and conventional projects.

4.4 Discussion

Gaining an in-depth understanding of the topic related to stakeholders in PPP has provided significant insights into the difference between stakeholders in PPP and conventional construction projects. In general, stakeholders in PPP are more diverse and fragmented due to the multi-faceted nature of PPP, which goes beyond the construction phase. As such, it is more complex than conventional construction projects, especially with the involvement of a regulatory body, such as the PPP unit that regulates the overall PPP policy and as one of the key decision-makers, which is often times considered as the ‘guardian’ in PPP.

As mentioned before, due to various drawbacks and inconsistencies in the adoption of the concept of stakeholder, especially within the context of PPP, this study has complemented the existing theory by providing a clear view of critical stakeholders in PPP and the identification process based on the lived experiences of PPP practitioners that are directly involved in the PPP process.

Overall, cross-cultural analysis between different jurisdictions helps expand and contribute to the discussion of stakeholders in PPP. Using New Zealand and Malaysia as examples, the results help inform international institutional investors of the cultural differences between these countries and help expand the knowledge of key stakeholders in PPP by highlighting their roles, general interests and influences.

4.5 Conclusion

The lived experiences of PPP practitioners interviewed from New Zealand and Malaysia have significantly contributed to the contextual understanding of the stakeholders involved. Whilst theory provided the foundation for stakeholder identification through broad or narrow perspectives, the findings presented a practical approach. By leveraging the experiences of PPP practitioners from both the public and private sectors involved, the findings provide a more nuanced understanding that is important to the betterment of effective stakeholder management for PPP. A detailed process for stakeholder identification for PPP is presented in Chapter 7 of the thesis, along with a detailed stakeholder management process. Overall, research questions 1 and 5 have been answered, and objectives 1 and 6 have been fulfilled (see Table 9.1, p 257).

CHAPTER FIVE

Evaluation of PPP Stakeholder Attitudes

5.1 Introduction

As indicated by Węgrzyn and Wojewnik-Filipkowska (2022), different stakeholders from different backgrounds may have different attitudes toward PPP. However, investigations of this research topic have not received significant traction within the stakeholder management space, regardless of whether it is within PPP or conventional construction projects. Based on the discussion presented in Chapter 2 (Section 2.9.2, p. 75), the advantages and disadvantages of PPP arrangements may influence the perceptions of stakeholders, especially project partners, toward PPP projects. As indicated by Henjeweles *et al.* (2013), it is important to assess the support and receptiveness of stakeholders to build and maintain the relationship established between the stakeholders. Additionally, these perceptions may also influence their intention to participate in future PPP projects. Furthermore, understanding stakeholder attitudes in PPP can be considered a cornerstone for an effective stakeholder management process, as it helps identify how certain stakeholders may perceive and contribute to the PPP project, which is crucial to the success of PPP and the project itself. Through cross-country analysis, this chapter explores the dimension that provides lessons learned that may contribute to the international best practice framework for PPP and incorporate it into the development of an effective stakeholder management framework for PPP.

5.2 Interpretations of Data from PPP Practitioners

5.2.1 PPP Stakeholder Attitudes

Interviews with PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia revealed extensive evidence of both positive and negative attitudes, which are based on the belief that PPP offers several advantages or disadvantages over other procurement routes. Analysis of the transcripts has found that various factors contribute to the perceived attitude of public and private sector stakeholders in these jurisdictions, which may affect the success of PPP projects and the overall PPP application, including stakeholder relationships. This chapter reports on the attitudes of public and private sector stakeholders in PPP, and Table 5.1 summarises stakeholder attitudes shared by PPP practitioners from both public and private sectors in New Zealand and Malaysia.

Table 5.1. Summary of positive and negative attitudes of stakeholders to engage in PPP project

| Factors | New Zealand (NZ) | | | | | Malaysia (MY) | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|----|----|----|----|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 |
| Public Sector | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Factors Contribute to Positive Attitudes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Better risk allocation</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| <i>Focus on core services/functions</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| <i>Innovative way to deliver public infrastructure</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| <i>Address the demand and urgency for public infrastructure</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| <i>International recognition</i> | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Factors Contribute to Negative Attitudes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Expensive and not worth paying the premium for PPP</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| <i>PPP has taken away the government's function</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PPP is complex and time-consuming</i> | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| <i>Requires long-term commitment with private sector leads to high financing cost and uncertainties</i> | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ |

Table 5.1. Summary of factors that motivate and demotivate stakeholders to engage in PPP project (*Cont'd*)

| Factors | New Zealand (NZ) | | | | | Malaysia (MY) | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|----|----|----|----|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 |
| Private Sector | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Factors Contribute to Positive Attitudes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Investment opportunities</i> | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| <i>Platform to showcase their innovative capabilities</i> | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Factors Contribute to Negative Attitudes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Other procurements are superior to PPP in terms of risk management</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PPP is not suitable to be adopted</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>No actual partnership between the public and private sectors in PPP</i> | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |

5.2.2 Public Sector Attitudes

5.2.2.1 Positive Attitudes

Interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand revealed that the former Labour government was not a fan of the PPP model, as they had not announced any PPP project since taking over the government. The perception of the interviewees is consistent with what has been highlighted in Chapter 2 of the thesis. Notwithstanding, despite New Zealand's central government's approach, an interpretation of the interview transcripts revealed a number of situations where the public sector, especially the procuring authorities, showed positive attitudes. The reason for this is due to the procuring authorities day-to-day experience; as such, they are more aware of the procurement model's benefits than the central government and believe that the model has been working extremely well. As indicated by NZ04 from the private sector:

"[...] generally, when we talked to various government agencies, there is great support for the model [...]"

The positive attitudes towards the use of PPP are exemplified by its recognition that PPP allows risks to be mitigated effectively from the public sector to the private sector, which reduces the government's burden. The ability of the private sector to manage the risks has also been identified as a significant driver for PPP adoption internationally (Cheung *et al.*, 2009). As expressed by NZ03 from the procuring authority, PPP is:

"[...] a way of moving the risk [...] from the ministry through to the contractor [...] benefits around reducing the amount of time [...] involved in property related issues [...] estimated sort of between 25% and 30% of their (the Board of Trustees) time (was used to maintained traditionally build asset) [...] (through PPP) we reduce its way down to about 5% [...]"

NZ03 noted that due to the risk transfer mechanisms in PPP, the ministry has received overwhelming responses from the School's Board of Trustees to not go back to the non-PPP model, whereas in non-PPP schools, the Board of Trustees will engage with the maintenance aspect of the school and:

“That (using PPP) was quite innovative and by itself for the ministry, because both schools have retained their identity at the at the new site [...]”

– NZ03

Another sign that shows the positive attitudes of the procuring authority is when the Corrections Department maintained that PPP as the ‘catalyst for change’, and giving the operational aspect to the private sector for prison projects allows the ministry to fully capture the benefits of PPP:

“We got a really good brand-new asset, fit for purpose to get great outcomes. But we did not change our method of our thinking, we did not do change management well [...] it therefore missed the benefit (of PPP) that enable the new asset to do things differently and realise to its full extent because we are still operating it, and we have not changed our thinking.” – NZ05

Interviewees from the Malaysian public sector also shared the same view with their New Zealand counterparts regarding the purpose of PPP: transferring risks to the private sector and allowing the public sector to focus on their core services. Furthermore, due to financial constraints, the public sector interviewees in Malaysia recognise the ability of PPP to alleviate the government’s financial constraints and simultaneously allow the government to deliver much-needed public infrastructure to achieve the national agenda:

“PPP have less financial impact on the government and the government does not have to struggle to find manpower and so on, as the private sector will provide (the manpower).” – MY04

The assertions by Malaysian PPP practitioners are in line with Ismail (2014). In addition, like their New Zealand counterparts, the public sector in Malaysia also revealed that using PPP is quite innovative and noted that PPP by itself is a great initiative and greatly appreciates the contribution of PPP and the private sector’s innovation, especially in expediting the delivery of public infrastructure:

“[...] in terms of design, it does not look like a conventional hospital because it (conventional hospital) is ‘design-build’, and it is a little different.” – MY03

“[...] if we look at history, the first 400km of the PLUS highway was built by the Highway Authority using the Direct Expenditure (DE) approach (conventional). However, constructing the initial 400km took almost 10 years, from 1980 to 1988. We proceeded with the construction in stages, meaning that when the government had funds, they would be allocated to LLM (Highway Authority) based on priorities. [...] (when) awarded it to private consortium to take over PLUS, including the 400km built by LLM earlier. So, in 1990, they started, and within four years, the entire project was completed. This means that in terms of financial capability, they did take loans, but to assist the government in expediting the development, we need PPP.” – MY07

Malaysia's public sector's positive attitude also contributed by the recognition that the model has received from international communities:

“Our PPP model is recognised as one of the best in the world. [...] we were referred to by countries in Africa, India, Brazil, and the Philippines [...] Certainly, the way they implement it may be different. But what we see is that the model they follow is still the Malaysian model, only the way they implement it is based on their own mould.” – MY07

Due to the success of PPP in delivering public infrastructure services, interviewees from the public sector in Malaysia pointed out that the recognition that they receive from international communities has made the central government more eager to utilise the PPP model more widely across different infrastructure sectors. Reflecting on the recognitions, the interviewees also informed that the use of PPP is now a policy to deliver public infrastructure services in Malaysia:

“[...] why the ministry chooses PPP? because it is now the government's policy of encouraging the ministries are to explore, if possible, PPP.” – MY02

Interviewees from the private sector argued that the support from the public sector is important, signalling the public sector's trust and confidence towards private sector capabilities in

delivering public infrastructure services under PPP. Moreover, positive perceptions lead to better project management.

5.2.2.2 Negative Attitudes

Although the public sector is responsible for the PPP programme, it does not mean that the public sector fully supports the programme. Akintoye *et al.* (2001) indicated that one of the problems associated with PPP is the government's negative attitudes, which can create complications within the PPP process. From interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand, it is evident that the central government has a negative mindset towards the use of PPP in delivering public infrastructure services. Whilst the government understands the cost difference between PPP and conventional assets, whereby PPP assets get more money spent than non-PPP, the government still believes that it is not worth paying the premium for PPP assets:

"[...] they (government) do not believe that risk transfer (in PPP) offers any value at all." – NZ01

NZ01 then lamented that:

"People always want cheap here, and actually, there is that old phrase, buy cheap buy twice."

This may be why no new PPP projects have been announced by the government in New Zealand. Apart from the PPP programmes in New Zealand that do not offer any value, the government also saw that the use of PPP has taken away their function in delivering public infrastructure services, as indicated by NZ04:

"[...] I think certainly under the current government, I think they (the government) have been quite clear that they do not see the private sector needing to be involved [...] they see that (delivering public infrastructure) as a government function."

NZ03 then noted that:

"I think they (government) just do not agree with public-private type relationship."

Interpreting the interview transcripts also revealed that most interviewees were not pleased with the perception of the public sector, especially the central government and contended that every procurement model, including PPP, should be prioritised, especially due to the ongoing infrastructure problem in New Zealand.

In comparison, Malaysian public sector interviewees noted that the use of PPP does not take away their function as a government, but without PPP, they cannot fulfil their role as a government. MY02 from the public sector in Malaysia noted that:

“Without cooperation with the private sector, we (public sector) cannot afford to do anything (deliver public infrastructure services).”

Further, due to the negative perception of PPP, interviewees from New Zealand also revealed that the former government decided to ‘turn off’ the PPP programme, which further shows the negative attitudes of the Labour-led government toward the PPP programme, as explained by NZ01:

“[...] the present (now former) government (Labour government) kind of turned everything off when they came into power [...] everything was switched off and it is only now beginning to switch on [...]”

Further, NZ01 lamented that the Labour government did not realise that:

“Turning things off is easy, turning on is hard, and they (the government) have never really managed to turn anything on. So that is kind of what is happened here.”

According to Willems *et al.* (2017), the continuous flow of PPP deals is vital to keep the private sector invested in financing public infrastructure, and the government must look at PPP as a long-term solution to fill the gap in public infrastructure development. An analysis of the interview transcripts also revealed that the reason to ‘turn off’ the PPP programme in New Zealand was mainly due to the bad reputation associated with the model, mainly after it was used to deliver the Transmission Gully highway, which infamously went over budget and over time, although it was caused by the public sector’s own decision that wanted it to be delivered at a lower price which did not reflect the risks that the private sector had to manage:

“[...] you (public sector) basically had a price which was not realistic, you have had a huge change to environmental conditions that no one foresaw. No builder is going to take that, period. That is not PPP, that is just a project that was not well specified, the risks were not well understood [...]” – NZ05

Interpreting interviews from New Zealand suggested that, as expected, since PPP is highly bureaucratic (Broadbent *et al.*, 2003), the change in government triggers negative sentiments surrounding PPP by ruling politicians through various government agencies (Flinders, 2005). The lack of political willingness to develop PPPs has also been identified as one of the barriers to the adoption of PPPs in India (Mahalingam, 2010). NZ01 frustratedly noted that PPP projects that went well did not get the limelight, despite the attention it should have gotten as a way to showcase the potential of PPP:

“[...] we have delivered three school projects, a prison project that was like 3/4 of the way through, a road. We are doing Waikeria prison like all of them have gone well and as a consequence we do not really get any press time because people only really want to write articles about stuff which go poorly.”

As highlighted by the New Zealand interviewees and in Chapter 2, interviewees from New Zealand were also concerned with the central government’s action despite strong support from various public sector personnel with first-hand experience in PPP. Interviews also noted that New Zealand has the resources and expertise around PPP; however, without any PPP projects coming to the market:

“[...] we are going to lose that resourcing [...] it is going to be very difficult to sort of re-engage.” – NZ04

Essentially, this supports the statement made by New Zealand’s Infrastructure Commission (Infracom) (2021), which will make it difficult to retain the knowledge of handling future PPP projects.

In Malaysia, several interviewees from the procuring authoring informed that the long-term commitment, which spans up to 30 years between them and the private sector, especially for projects based on availability payment, made some PPP models less attractive, leading to high

financing costs. The interviewees' statements concur with the findings in an earlier study by Ahmad *et al.* (2018). MY02 informed that long-term commitment feels like a 'forced marriage'. In addition, with the asset not maintained by the public sector, MY02 added that:

"[...] we are not sure of the condition of the asset in the future [...]"

Investigating deeper suggested that scepticism about the future conditions also arises due to their perception that the private sector is only interested in profit instead of the long-term sustainability of the assets delivered, supporting the statement of Som *et al.* (2020):

"[...] actually, they (private sector) are opportunists [...] our (public sector) views may be different from them [...] because they want profit. Like I said earlier, they are opportunists [...]" – MY02

Hence, the public sector is uncomfortable having a long-term relationship with the private sector. Another reason is that the public sector interviewees were aware that the government is more than capable of delivering public infrastructure without having to have a long-term partnership of up to 30 years with the private sector, especially when it comes to public assets that are less complicated, such as public hospitals and universities.

However, as indicated earlier, despite the public sector's negative perceptions, they are fully aware of the need for private sector involvement in delivering public infrastructure services. Apart from long-term commitment, several respondents from procuring authorities in Malaysia were also unsatisfied with the lengthy PPP process. Interviews explained that due to the complexity of PPP, there are various stages that need to go through, making it daunting to initiate:

"[...] the method (PPP process) is not the same as conventional [...]" – MY03

"[...] we cannot simply make decisions at the ministry level alone. The ministry can propose, but it needs to be lifted to the cabinet for approval of principles and so on. [...] PPP is not easy, it needs to start with RFP (request for proposal), and then have to find good partners." – MY02

MY02 then explained that one project that started in 2013 had to endure a long engagement and RFP process (with the PPP unit) and throughout the process:

“[...] we (public sector) also have risks in terms of change in government and so on, and things like that, previous government might has decided to go on with some of the projects [...]”

The risks in terms of a change in government are something that NZ05 experienced firsthand:

“[...] we certainly face that with Waikeria (prison PPP). So Waikeria started by National government, the Labour government came in and almost cancelled the project.”

Respondents interviewed also revealed that the complicated process of PPP made it difficult to predict when the asset could be operated, which led to scepticism about the practicality of engaging in a long-term partnership with the private sector through PPP. Sharing her experience with one of the PPP projects, MY01 noted that although one of the assets is ready in mid-2021, the asset could only be operated by a private consortium in late 2022.

“[...] the process of getting review from the ministry took 6 months, and so far, has only managed to bring one (project). Like Project A, it was ready in June 2021. Decide for the lease (operation) in March 2021, but for the tender to process, to complete the RFP and so on, and now we just finish tendering in May. And after the tender, it has to be assessed (by the ministry and cabinet) and it takes a lot of time, maybe later this year (2022) a private company can come in.”

The concerns regarding the long process are consistent with Ismail and Haris (2014b), who ranked the factor as one of the top constraints in adopting PPP in Malaysia. Nonetheless, as indicated earlier, since PPP is now a policy in Malaysia, the central government has conducted various initiatives such as workshops and seminars through the PPP unit. Overall, public sector interviewees from Malaysia are hopeful that other PPP models that are available globally but that are not currently widely used in Malaysia can be utilised for future PPP projects in the country, overcoming the limitation of existing models, such as long-term partnerships with the private sector.

“[...] we have done workshops and when we explore, there are various models, like overseas are more advanced [...]” – MY03

“It is good to explore other ‘business models’, not just BLMT, or older models.” – MY02

In conclusion, the negative attitudes highlighted in this section arose from their own concerns and/or their own experiences with the actions of others through various aspects associated with PPP.

5.2.3 Private Sector Attitudes

5.2.3.1 Positive Attitudes

Despite the New Zealand central government’s unfavoured approach towards PPP, the private sector, as the party responsible for the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of PPP projects throughout the project life cycle, was very supportive of the procurement model. Since PPP is an investment opportunity for the private sector, profit always be the main reason:

“Like everybody who builds infrastructure makes profit. And normally for PPPs, the complexity of asset being delivered is high. So, there is value in paying higher price [...]” – NZ01

Private sector perception that sees PPP as an investment opportunity despite PPP exposing them to higher risk than usual can be considered a positive attitude, which shows that they are optimistic about their ability (Chang and Chen, 2016). Furthermore, the private sector is also confident that:

“[...] the additional cost of borrowing by the private sector (government can borrow money cheaper) is offset in a PPP by better management and risk process.” – NZ02

Similarly, despite a study by Ismail and Haris (2014a) highlighting various constraints for PPP in Malaysia, such as a lack of guidelines and a lengthy negotiation process, the private sector in Malaysia also does not show any signs that they will stop participating in future PPP projects. The reason for this is that PPP is still worthy of investment. For instance, MY06 revealed that the private sector is one that convinced the government:

“[...] for three years where we had nothing, we sat down with the government and discussed what we could do, where we could do it. [...] they (government) have high standard [...] we all know is that the government has a specific budget for PPP. After we produced the ‘design concept,’ we presented it to the government, and after they were happy, it was presented at that time at ministry and PPP unit.”

The action by the private sector, actively seeking opportunities to invest in PPP projects, also shows their eagerness to display what they can offer, and it is not all just about profit. For example, some of them confidently stated that the assets delivered through PPP are better than traditionally built assets because PPP allows the private sector to be innovative. For example, MY06 stated that:

“If you have the opportunity to visit both conventional and PPP campuses, you will see the difference between the two. If you go to PPP campuses, you will see that it is clean, you will not see any litter, the buildings are well maintained and look brand new because there are things like painting, where every seven years they need to repaint and there is an allocation for that, and that is why it is well maintained. For conventional buildings, sometimes the toilets are not clean, so it is worth it for the government to spend money on PPP projects.”

With the status of PPP, the private sector interviewees mentioned that they need to be mindful of the assets and services provided throughout the PPP life cycle. MY05 from the private sector in Malaysia noted that they wanted:

“[...] to complete this project, if possible, on time, with no problem, and then within the stipulated cost given. We always look on the aspects of cost, time and quality of product. We do not want just the project to complete, but complete without problems during operations, so that is quality. And finally, last but not least the project must fulfil the aspect of safety and environment.”

In New Zealand, NZ01 pointed out the following:

“[...] we (private sector) wanted to do it properly [...] we can also make statements around the way the asset will perform over its life [...] But our offer is that we do not have an asset that quickly degrades, it is one which stays at the level of performance for a long time [...]”

NZ04 then explained:

“[...] this is where your (public) money is setting this is what we are providing and [...] so we have got to make sure that we are looking after the assets, so that we can hand them (the assets) back to the Crown [...] and make sure that there is no sort of surprises for anyone in the process.”

Overall, because of the private sector’s profit-driven mindset, they revealed that they had to agree with everything that the government proposed because they did not want to lose the opportunity to get involved in the government’s project, indicating that the private sector’s willingness to compromise to meet the needs of the PPP projects and public sector. Public sector interviewees argued that the willingness of the private sector to compromise reflects their willingness to cooperate, which is crucial in relationship building.

Some interviewees argue that getting into PPP helps establish their reputation and image, besides opening the door for them to get into other government contracts – non-PPP contracts, such as maintenance contracts and to get into that, it is important to build a strong relationship with the public sector. Although many positive attitudes were shown by the private sector in both jurisdictions, which suggests that the private sector is very supportive and committed to PPP, just like the public sector, not all of them welcome the use of PPP, which is discussed in the following section.

5.2.3.2 Negative Attitudes

New Zealand’s experience with PPP is relatively new. The first official PPP project in the country was completed in 2013 and is now operating. Hence, there were many hiccups with PPP adoption, as the country is still learning. Interview transcripts suggest that not every private sector in New Zealand is a fan of the PPP model. Negative attitudes from the private sector in New Zealand mainly come from their negative experiences due to the difference in

risk profiles between PPP and the conventional procurement model. NZ02, who was less optimistic about PPP, perceived that:

“The SPV and contractors in PPP sign up to a high-risk profile [...].”

Furthermore, NZ02 also stated the following:

“I have not witnessed superior management or risk process (in PPP). Example – even our most basic standard form contract (International Federation of Consulting Engineers – FIDIC and New Zealand Standard 3910 – NZS3910) both address risk ownership of pandemics.”

Due to the perceived high-risk profile associated with PPP, this may lead to a lack of private participation in future PPP projects in New Zealand, which may be happening as of now. For example, NZ04 pointed out that:

“I think most builders are sort of risk off at the moment, they (builders) are not taking on any more risk than they need to, so it will be just comparing the PPP risk allocation with whatever other projects that are going on at the time and seeing [...] which ones are more accepting [...] They are so busy doing other stuff that they do not want to sort of upskill in the team on PPPs.”

Due to the immense risks the private sector must manage in PPP, NZ02 suggested that PPP does not fit with New Zealand culture as PPP does not incentivise private sector to deliver, and New Zealand should consider using alliance instead:

“In alliance, there is a thing called pain share and gain share [...] Alliance encourages collaborative working.”

Some interviewees said that the problem's root cause is that the New Zealand construction industry is not skilled and ready enough to engage in PPP. For example, NZ05 from the public sector noted that:

“[...] you need a competitive construction market and that is the issue for New Zealand. There is only currently one player who will put his hand up for a billion-dollar gig in New Zealand.”

Furthermore, paired with how PPP is perceived, most local companies tend to avoid PPP, as indicated earlier. For this reason, interviewees in New Zealand indicated that PPP investors are now looking at expertise from overseas, mainly in Australia, to fill the gap; hence, the reason why some of the highly complex projects, such as highways and prisons, require international expertise.

Despite there being no major issues with PPP in Malaysia; however, the private sector in Malaysia also seems displeased with PPP, especially when it comes to the partnership with the public sector, despite the final 'P' in PPP is partnership. With the amount of risks the private sector must manage, the private sector felt that they were being left alone in PPP, which is a legitimate concern that needs to be addressed by the public sector as it creates negative sentiments surrounding PPP. For instance, MY06 lamented that:

“They (government) say it is a ‘partnership’, but what kind of ‘partnership’ are you talking about [...]”

Despite these negative perceptions, private sector interviewees in Malaysia noted that PPP is a good option for the government to deliver public infrastructure services, and several interviewees informed that they are the ones that engage the government and propose to the government.

In summary, the negative attitudes of some PPP stakeholders from the private sector led to negative experiences, which created negative perceptions among different partners. Moreover, with negative experiences, these contractors felt it better to be involved in traditional contracts or other alternative procurement rather than PPP.

5.2.4 Attitudes of External Stakeholders

Despite the nature of this study, which investigates the issues through the lens of PPP practitioners, this study also manages to interpret the attitudes of the external stakeholders (including when they are non-stakeholders, depending on project requirement) (Table 5.2), which consist of the general public/community, albeit the attitudes are not as detailed as the internal stakeholders.

Table 5.2. Summary of factors that contribute to external stakeholder’s attitudes

| Factors | New Zealand | | | | | Malaysia | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|----|----|----|----|----------|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|
| | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 01* | 02* | 03* | 04* | 05 | 06* | 07 | 08 |
| Factors Contribute to Positive Attitudes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Socioeconomic growth</i> | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Environmental preservation</i> | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Project deliver the needs and expectations</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Factors Contribute to Negative Attitudes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Disturbance/disruption</i> | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Neglected in decision-making process</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Undelivered expectations</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

*Considers general public as non-stakeholders in projects they involved.

Similar to internal stakeholders, external stakeholders also hold positive and negative attitudes, but only toward the projects and not the type of procurement model:

“Simple terms, someone is building something next to me. They (general public) do not care about the contractual structure; it is irrelevant to them.”
– NZ05

“[...] the general public does not know that the asset is PPP, for them, as long as the government services are provided [...] regardless of whether it is a conventional hospital or a PPP, there is no different. The public does not look very much of it (whether it is a PPP or not) [...] unless if they (general public) are really technical, they might see the differences.” – MY03

“I do not get that (positive or negative perception towards PPP). [...] when we are doing PPP schools and we talked to the principals and the communities, they love the schools.” – NZ04

“[...] as long as we provide them (general public/communities) and listen to what they want, they will have positive attitudes toward the project [...] regardless of PPP or not.” – MY08

The reason for this is that the attitudes of this group are not dictated by the type of procurement used to deliver the asset, but what is most important to them is the impact of the project, which relates to the findings of Boyer and Van Slyke (2018). The reason for the attitudes is that these groups may not have technical knowledge related to the procurement model compared to the internal stakeholders. Duffield *et al.* (2020) believe that the ‘unawareness’ of the general public between PPP and non-PPP can be considered as a ‘positive testament’ for PPP.

From the interviewees’ experiences, whilst there was a small sign of public opposition mainly due to what Moura and Teixeira (2010) called the ‘not in my backyard’ (NIMBY) syndrome during the early phase, especially for high-impact projects that disrupt the livelihood of the community, including environmental destruction. However, interviewees informed that as long as both the procuring authority and the SPV effectively address the concerns, needs and expectations raised through effective engagement strategies, especially those that are directly affected by the project and on the fence, the general public will be very supportive of the

development. Similarly, they are generally supportive when they see the benefit of the project, including the ability of the project to deliver its expectations to the community as a whole. In this regard, clear and early stakeholder engagement, such as community outreach programmes, town hall sessions, and focus group discussions, is critical for gaining the general public's trust. Overall, the findings support earlier statements of Boyer and Van Slyke (2018), suggesting that trust is key for general public support.

Although the attitudes of external stakeholders do not directly impact the future of PPP implementation, PPP practitioners indicated that their attitudes are still relevant to the decision-making process in PPP and to the success and progress of the PPP project. Hence, a strategic approach is needed to ensure that external stakeholders support the project.

5.3 Discussion of Factors Influencing Stakeholder Attitudes

The findings in this chapter recognise the influence and perspectives of different stakeholder groups, which is critical for effective stakeholder management. Reflecting on the interviewees' perceptions from New Zealand and Malaysia has revealed interesting and noteworthy details about the attitude of PPP stakeholders, especially contracting partners, which may affect the success of the project and the future of PPP as an alternative public procurement model.

Comparing the attitudes of the public sector in New Zealand and Malaysia shows that Malaysia's experiences with private participation programmes in delivering public infrastructure services made the government more open to the use of PPP to deliver public infrastructure services. Interviewees revealed that various workshops have been conducted, and overall, the interviewees from the public sector want to see improvements made to the model and hope that the government will be more open to utilising other modes of PPP, which may provide 'competition' to the existing models that are frequently used. Importantly, this action would also make the public sector in Malaysia more knowledgeable about PPP, which would make them more thoughtful towards PPP application.

The New Zealand government, on the other hand, is quite the opposite as strong political influences in PPP, due to the model being highly bureaucratic (Broadbent *et al.*, 2003), has made PPP look like it is a 'failed' procurement model, despite most of the interviewees regardless of public or private sectors disagreeing with the statement. Furthermore, despite the detailed PPP review by Infracom (2021) that suggested it has achieved its objective, it does not

have any implication at all to the perception of the central government. This also made it hard to retain PPP knowledge within the industry in New Zealand (Infracom, 2021). The majority of interviewees who supported the PPP programme indicated that the government's negative attitudes arose because the government chose to politicise the PPP model. Interviewees from New Zealand believed it is important to clearly convey to the central government the need to effectively deliver public infrastructure services, regardless of the procurement model, as government support ensures the continuity of the PPP programme.

Conversely, capturing the private sector's attitude via interview transcripts also revealed some interesting output. Whilst it is obvious that their support for PPP was driven by profit. However, the private sector in both jurisdictions was also positive in that PPP provides them with a platform to showcase their innovative capabilities. Moreover, with the positive attitudes of the private sector that were driven by profit, the government would not have a problem attracting private companies to participate in future PPP projects. The government should also not worry about the quality of assets being delivered through PPP, as findings suggested the private sector is willing to go to great lengths to meet some of the requirements set by the government, as they believe the success of the project will greatly improve their image and reputation in the industry.

Despite being driven by profit, negative attitudes among private sector stakeholders are still evident. In New Zealand, for instance, the private sector was doubtful of what PPP could offer, especially in terms of risk management, compared to other forms of contracts available in New Zealand. The negative attitudes of the private sector were further exemplified, indicating that PPPs do not fit the New Zealand market. Malaysia, on the other hand, although the private sector understands the risks that they must manage in PPP compared to conventional. Nevertheless, as the PPP name suggests, Malaysia's private sector perceives no actual partnership between the public and private sectors, especially when the public sector constantly ignores the private sector's requests. Hence, the private sector wants a more active engagement form of governance, similar to how Dutch professionals perceive governance in PPP (Warsen *et al.*, 2020), which is critical for relationship-building.

An important observation gathered from these interviews was that the attitudes of PPP stakeholders, especially the contracting partners, towards the use of PPP could also influence their future participation in PPP. This helps identify potential conflict areas for PPP stakeholders to develop relevant measures, find common ground, and improve the PPP

environment. Through root cause analysis (RCA), a cognitive map of PPP project stakeholder attitudes was developed (Figure 5.1), highlighting the aspects that influence the attitudes of PPP project stakeholders toward PPP. In other words, it highlights the ‘how’ and ‘why’ stakeholders behave the way they do in PPP.

From the analysis of interview transcripts and Figure 5.1, five components: nature of PPP, PPP outcomes, PPP opportunities, market/project conditions and experiences with non-PPP can be considered the core elements that significantly influence the attitudes of stakeholders in PPP, and all are derived from their lived experiences with PPP. Overall, whilst all these elements are interrelated and influential in shaping the stakeholders’ attitudes, they may not directly influence the actions of the stakeholders. For example, regardless of the attitudes of the public sector interviewees towards PPP, PPP is political and should be recognised as such (Hodge and Greve, 2013; Willems and Van Dooren, 2016); hence, PPP application is policy-centric.

For instance, whilst most public sector interviewees from Malaysia collectively agree that PPP is more expensive and the long-term nature of PPP feels like ‘forced marriage’ between the public and private sectors; however, since PPP is now a policy in Malaysia, as indicated by several interviewees, and with only two modes procurement available for the public sector in Malaysia to choose to deliver public infrastructure services: conventional (which is also known as DE), PPP (including privatisation) (UKAS, 2009; 2022), it has influenced the decision of the ministries in Malaysia to continue look at PPP for future projects.

Meanwhile, within the New Zealand context, despite Infracom (2021) and other interviewees informed that the use of PPP has achieved its objective, since the central government’s policy against PPP in New Zealand, they have rejected the use of PPP. More recently, a statement by the Minister of Health decided not to look at PPP as an alternative financing arrangement to build hospitals in New Zealand. NZ05 from the public sector criticised the decision and stated the following:

“[...] in paper you go ‘it is a billion plus development, complicated, still going to run by the Crown in terms of doctor’, it ticks all the boxes, on paper that has to be a prime candidate for PPP, it sorts of ruled out because the government did not like PPP [...]”

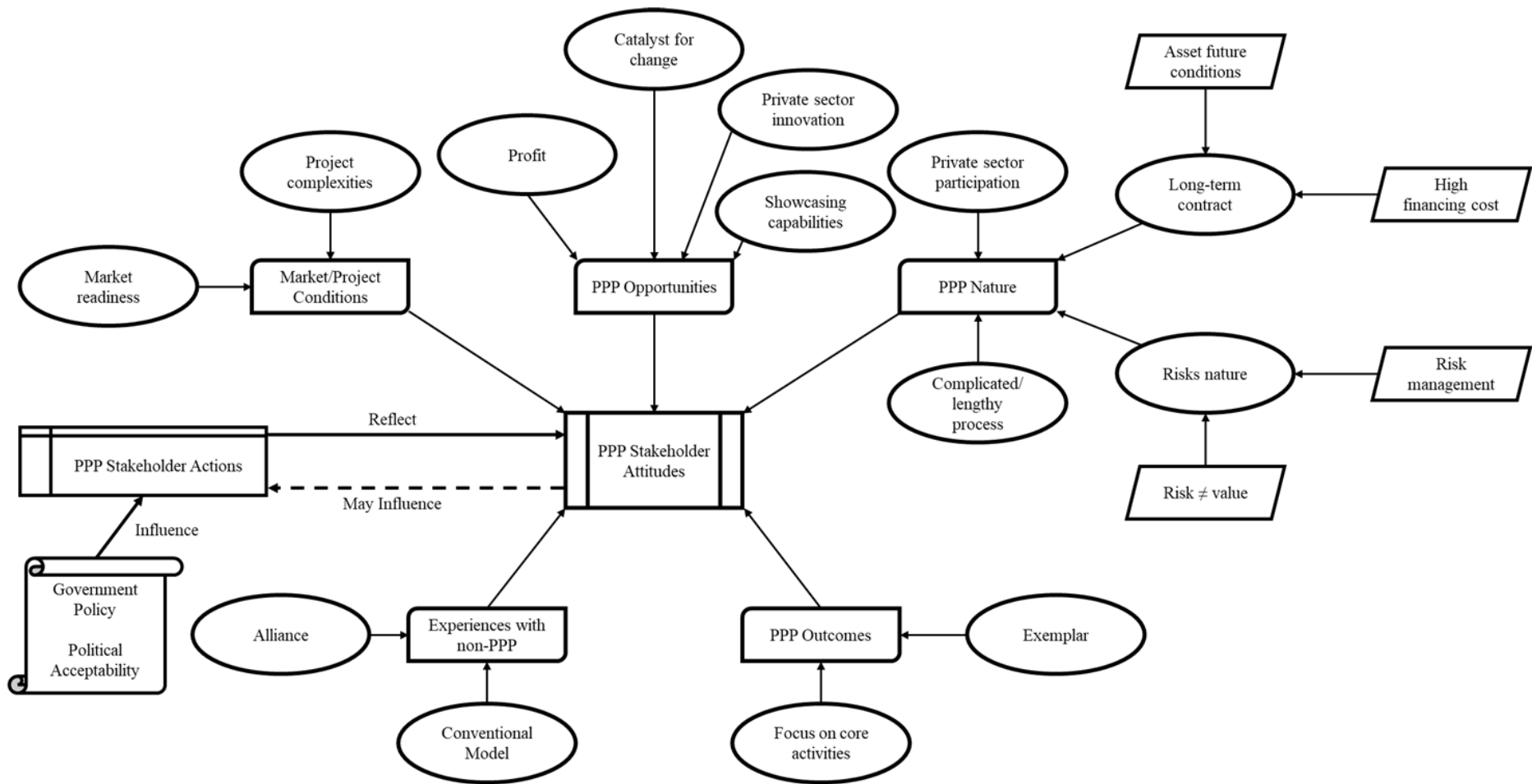


Figure 5.1. Cognitive mapping of PPP stakeholder attitudes

In conclusion, despite PPP being a homogenous concept worldwide, interpretations of the interview transcripts indicated that political support or acceptability is critical for the long-term continuity of PPP as an alternative to the conventional public procurement model. Hence, political alignment across institutional levels is important, as De Schepper *et al.* (2014) recommended.

5.4 Addressing the Negative Attitudes

From the findings in this chapter, most of the negative attitudes shown by the public and private sectors appear to arise from concerns or negative experiences that they had with the use of PPP. The experiences led to opposition, scepticism and pessimism (distrust). Given the various factors affecting PPP stakeholders' attitudes, it is important to transform the negative perceptions of stakeholders in PPP towards the procurement model, as it could influence their behaviours and affect the relationships. Analysing the findings, this section presents the proactive stakeholder engagement approaches for conflict prevention, ensuring the long-term continuity and sustainability of PPP as an alternative public procurement model and PPP project success. The strategies presented in this section have been recommended or employed in some of the PPP projects to address stakeholder conflict by interviewees (Table 5.3), which is highly consultative.

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter, the roles of public and private sectors are consistent throughout the PPP process and important to the overall success of PPP projects; as such, it is important to recognise the significance of addressing the non-supportive or negative attitudes of these stakeholders in PPP to establish a positive environment (building trust, gain support), especially since the negative attitudes presented are possible to address through targeted engagement strategies.

One of the most significant strategies highlighted by interviewees from both jurisdictions to address most of the negative attitudes, especially the public sector's attitude, is capacity building. Regardless of their side, interviewees noted that it is important to build awareness through education and stakeholder engagement for PPP to gain recognition and trust from the public sector, especially the central government, due to policy differences. Interviewees also suggested that the PPP unit should actively convey the message to the central government to clarify any misconception, especially when the new government is in power.

Table 5.3. List of strategies recommended or have been employed to address stakeholder attitudes.

| Stakeholder Management Strategies | New Zealand | | | | | Malaysia | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|----|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 |
| Solicit feedback from other stakeholders | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Capacity building workshops – targeted engagement | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Transparent, sophisticated and detailed guidelines | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Sharing PPP success stories | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

In the New Zealand context, it is difficult for PPP to sustain itself as an alternative public procurement platform without sufficient recognition from the central government. Infracom (2021) also noted in their report that it is challenging to retain PPP knowledge without any new PPP projects on the line. Additionally, the right knowledge might help ensure the long-term sustainability of PPP in New Zealand. Interviewees also posited that the public sector will be more competent through capacity building, allowing well-executed PPP projects in the future.

Through capacity building, this might allow the public sector to defocus itself from getting the lowest tender price for infrastructure and be thoughtful when managing and allocating risks to the private sector, as risks in PPP have underpinned various concerns with the procurement model, affecting the confidence level among PPP partners, which was also indicated by Moseley (2020), leading to a negative perception from the private sector. As such, it is critical for both sides to consult one another and solicit feedback during the contract negotiation stage to optimise the risk arrangements in PPP, as appropriate risk allocation is critical to the success of PPP (Mazher *et al.*, 2018), allowing the private sector to deliver. In New Zealand, capacity building is also critical to ensure that the private sector is well prepared to engage in PPP projects.

Meanwhile, in Malaysia, an analysis of interview transcripts indicates that the public sector's negative attitudes were developed because of their unfamiliarity with PPP, despite the central government, through the PPP unit, being very proactive in building capacity among the public and private sectors through workshops and seminars. For this reason, interviewees from the public sector recommended that the PPP unit conduct a targeted engagement with them, focusing on their concerns before the procuring authority embarks into PPP. This is because most of the workshops and seminars conducted after selecting the PPP project do not address complex issues associated with PPP.

For instance, communicating transparently by highlighting the detailed overview of the PPP process and the rationale behind the process. In addition, the engagement should also focus on addressing the value that complexity in PPP brings, as interviewees argued that the PPP process is more complicated than the conventional model, and they admit that they, as public sector personnel, are still unfamiliar with it. Furthermore, addressing the rationality behind project selection, including the rationality of long-term PPP contracts, is important to understand why insufficiently complex projects need to have a long-term PPP contract.

Targeting specific areas during capacity-building sessions is critical, not just for addressing the concerns but also to ensure transparency, which is important since interviewees noted that the guideline provided by the PPP unit is too simplistic, which is an ongoing issue (Beh, 2010; Ismail and Haris, 2014a). MY06 noted that the guideline only highlights the procedures that need to be followed for PPP without any detailed explanation, suggesting the need for a good stakeholder management process, addressing the issues that arise due to the deficiency of general PPP guidelines, which supports the statement by Kaharudin *et al.* (2021). Also, having sophisticated and detailed guidelines may streamline practices across different sectors.

In the case of sceptical attitudes by the public sector due to the concerns about the future conditions of PPP-delivered assets, it might be a rational strategy (Petersen, 2010) because of their unfamiliarity with PPP. Nevertheless, it is critical for both the private sector and the PPP unit to convince the procuring authority through knowledge and experience by sharing success stories by showcasing the condition of existing assets delivered through PPP that are long in operation if the government is serious about diversifying the use of PPP across different sectors.

Related to the unfamiliarity of the public sector with PPP in Malaysia, the PPP unit could use this opportunity to educate and inform the importance of continuous engagement in PPP due to the legitimate concern from the private sector, particularly SPVs that perceived there was no partnership in PPP despite PPP being a long-term partnership between the public and private sectors. The interviewees believe that the role of the PPP unit in addressing negative attitudes is significant, as they are the ones that recommend the procuring authority to deliver projects through PPP over conventional ones.

From the findings, it is evident that the negative attitudes shown by the private sector towards PPP in both jurisdictions are significantly influenced by governmental decisions, such as a lack of relationship-building/stakeholder management practices in PPP (e.g., active engagement by the government, feedback loop; capacity building). Hence, most targeted adaptive responses aim to build the public sector's capacity. Having recognised the diverse attitudes, the findings show the importance of developing appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) during the stakeholder management monitoring and evaluation stage to ensure that the engagement can be measured, and improvement can be made.

Following the responses provided by participants from New Zealand and Malaysia relating to stakeholder attitudes, this study affirms that the comparison between both jurisdictions and

across various PPP sectors can help inform how some of the negative attitudes of PPP stakeholders can be addressed and expand the international best practice framework for PPP. However, since the acceptability of PPP depends on the political landscape, political recognition is something that stakeholders should assess and be aware of, as some engagement or strategy requires a high level of political support, which means that some planned engagement might not come to reality without political support.

5.4.1 Behavioural Change Framework

In Section 5.3 (p. 142), the findings provided insights into the ‘how’ and ‘why’ stakeholders behave the way they do, which highlights the requirement for behaviour change. Section 5.4 (p. 146) highlights the ‘what’ aspects to address their attitudes. Henjewele *et al.* (2013) noted that it is important to achieve the target attitude for PPP project success. Overall, achieving the target attitudes of PPP stakeholders requires a strong understanding of PPP, effective communication, and transparent engagement between different parties, especially during the early stage of the PPP process, which is important in addressing concerns and misconceptions to foster a more positive PPP environment for both public and private sectors. Furthermore, it should help with the project planning (Amadi *et al.*, 2020).

In order to address the attitudes of PPP stakeholders, this thesis has developed a behaviour change framework (Figure 5.2), synthesised from the findings presented in Sections 5.3 and 5.4. This framework can be applied to achieve positive outcomes for stakeholders. To ensure that positive behaviour can be cultivated, having the right institution and policy/recognition is critical. The central government should facilitate or initiate it as the policy maker. Institution refers to the need to establish a governing body to oversee PPP development; however, having a governing body is insufficient to facilitate PPP uptake without having the right PPP policy or recognition from the central government that allows PPP to thrive as an alternative procurement model for the delivery of public infrastructure services.

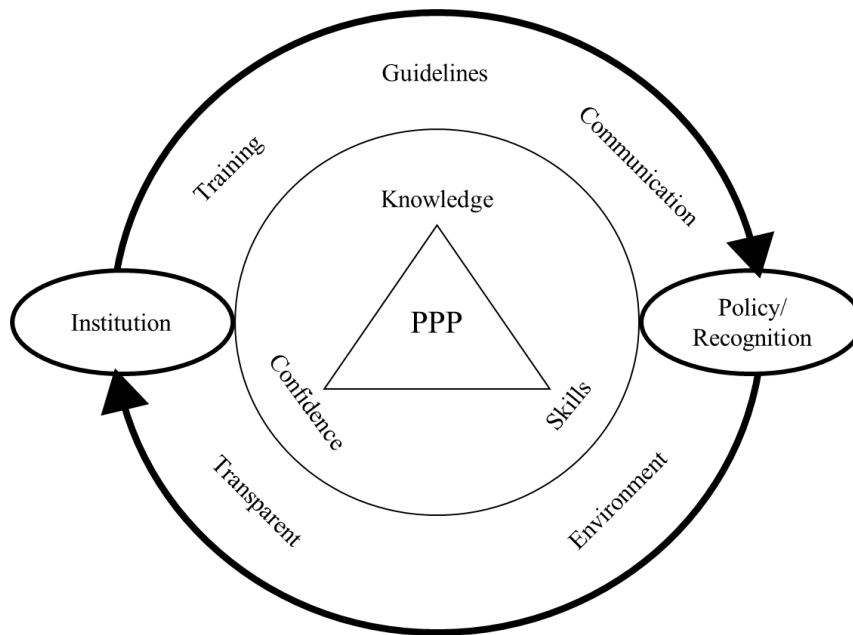


Figure 5.2. Behavioural change framework for PPP.

However, both aspects of institution and recognition alone cannot change the behaviour without proper types of intervention. Whilst there are various interventions available that could be effective, five possible intervention approaches known as GCTTE have been identified based on what has been recommended and adopted by interviewees; these are:

- Guidelines: develop comprehensive guidelines and enforce best practices for PPP projects.
- Communication: develop effective communication strategies to disseminate information.
- Training: develop and conduct training programmes for PPP stakeholders.
- Transparent: establish transparent practices.
- Environment: provide resources that facilitate the PPP environment.

Overall, the intervention approaches presented are producing the following outcomes. These include knowledge, skills, and confidence in PPP. By utilising the model, stakeholders will gain greater insights into PPP, helping them develop the skills needed, which enables them to be more confident to engage in PPP projects.

5.5 Conclusion

As expected, the interpretations of the interview transcripts indicated polarising attitudes between public and private sector stakeholders. Most importantly, the findings demonstrated

that various aspects could influence stakeholder attitudes, and most notably, their experiences or perceptions of PPP made them approach PPP with different attitudes, which oftentimes affects their relationships with other stakeholders who do not share the same view. In addition, these attitudes also influence their level of commitment.

An analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that assessing stakeholders' attitudes between internal stakeholders is not common in practice, which was also confirmed in an earlier study in the construction industry by Yang *et al.* (2014). From interviews, the reason for this is they believe that homogeneity between different parties already existed:

“Often what I see, we are always on the same page [...]” – MY04

However, interviewees responded that the assessment of attitudes started when they realised it is difficult to convey something to other stakeholders:

“[...] so again, the only times we see this (attitude assessment), generally now they are relevant when we are putting advice to the ministers [...] they may have very different attitudes, obviously politicians, they will change many times over the life of the project [...]” – NZ05

As such, understanding stakeholder attitudes in PPP is critical in formulating appropriate stakeholder management strategies, which should be one of the major components of stakeholder management. From the findings, PPP practitioners will be well-informed about the aspects they need to address to ensure a positive PPP project environment, as the information is valuable for conflict management (Musenero *et al.*, 2021). An important output from the findings is that with the model being highly bureaucratic (Broadbent *et al.*, 2003), political support for PPP is critical for the long-term continuity of PPP, especially within the context of New Zealand, where all PPP projects initiated since the introduction of PPP as an alternative procurement model in 2009 are all based on a ‘top-down’ approach.

Most PPP practitioners interviewed in New Zealand call for a stable PPP policy to maintain private sector interest, whilst Malaysia prefers more effective stakeholder management approaches, where *ex-ante* stakeholder inclusion in PPP should overcome the issue (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014). Notwithstanding, the findings in this chapter have provided valuable input to PPP practitioners in both New Zealand and Malaysia, especially through the

development of a comprehensive set of targeted strategies addressing specific negative attitudes of the stakeholders and the importance of understanding the experiences of other stakeholders in PPP. Overall, the findings presented in this chapter have answered research questions 2 and 5 and have fulfilled research objectives 2 and 6 (see Table 9.1, p 257).

CHAPTER SIX

Factors Shaping PPP Stakeholder Relationships

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is centred on understanding stakeholder relationships in PPP, especially between public and private sector stakeholders within the internal stakeholder environment. Previous studies have noted that good stakeholder relationships between contracting partners are crucial to the success of PPP projects (Tang and Shen, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 2020), and stakeholder management is all about managing stakeholder relationships and expectations (Das *et al.*, 2022), minimising the risks associated with the project (Turner, 2003; Yang and Shen, 2014). However, as indicated earlier, limited attempts have been made to explore stakeholder relationships fully or the factors affecting them. This study, therefore, seeks to uncover the research area, which may highlight the interests and expectations and, thus, expand the development of the international best practices framework for stakeholder management in PPP.

6.2 Interpretations of Data from PPP Practitioners

This section discusses the interpretation of data collected from New Zealand and Malaysian PPP practitioners related to stakeholder relationships in PPP, especially the factors affecting stakeholder relationships. Like the previous two chapters, several quotes from PPP practitioners were also included to further explain and highlight their expressions.

6.2.1 Stakeholder Relationships

Despite the relationship between internal and external stakeholders in PPP is evident, this section only investigates the relationship between stakeholders within the internal stakeholders' environment. The reason for this is that from interviews, managing the relationship between internal stakeholders is more complicated and requires significant attention due to various factors that are multifaceted, which was also highlighted in earlier studies (Tang and Shen, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 2020).

Interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia suggested that various factors, including management practices by PPP parties, can influence the quality of the relationship between different stakeholders. Table 6.1 highlights the factors identified from interview transcripts with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia.

Table 6.1. Factors influencing stakeholder relationships in PPP as identified by PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia

| Factors | New Zealand (NZ) | | | | | Malaysia (MY) | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|----|----|----|----|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 |
| Contract design | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Risk management and allocation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Collaboration | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Communication | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Knowledge and understanding | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Transparency | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Accountability | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Payment mechanism | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Commitment | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Policy due to unforeseen events | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Change in personnel | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Politics | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Nationality and/or culture | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

Overall, thirteen factors extracted from interview transcripts suggested that these factors are not country-specific. Importantly, these factors may also significantly reflect and influence PPP stakeholder relationships in other markets. In addition, the findings captured from the lived experiences of PPP practitioners in both jurisdictions indicated that the stakeholders' ability to manage these factors is crucial in building the relationship between stakeholders, reflecting effective stakeholder management. As suggested by Aaltonen (2011), poor stakeholder management leads to conflict and misunderstanding among stakeholders.

6.2.1.1 Contract Design

Contracts in PPP are the epitome of a partnership that defines the rights and responsibilities between parties. With the long contractual durations and complexity of PPP in delivering public infrastructure services, a comprehensive, clear, and well-designed contract is important in providing confidence for contracting parties (World Bank, 2017). As such, this indicates that the PPP contract itself is a tool for effective stakeholder management.

Interview transcripts with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia revealed that contract design significantly influences the relationship between stakeholders. For example, interviewees explain that since the contract is very 'outcome focused' based on output specification, allowing the private sector to interpret the contract using their expertise and experience, signalling trust from the public sector. In addition, this also provides room for the private sector to be innovative, which is important in adapting to potential challenges or uncertainty due to the long-term nature of the PPP contract (Viegas, 2010; Wang *et al.*, 2012; Demirel *et al.*, 2017; Nguyen and Garvin, 2019).

This is typical in PPP contracts, as the government chooses the "*obligation of results*" when executing a project through PPP (De Schepper *et al.*, 2014, p. 9), which differs from the descriptive specification in conventional delivery that focuses on how it should be delivered (Javed *et al.*, 2014; Lam and Javed, 2015). As such, this flexibility provides room for the private sector to make adjustments or responses to unforeseen changes (Wang *et al.*, 2017; Wu *et al.*, 2018a).

Although allowing the private sector to interpret the contract shows some degree of flexibility and reflects trustful relationships, which can be seen as a win-win situation for both sides. However, the contract is quite ambiguous:

“[...] there are other requirements that we do not see [...] – MY06

Moreover, due to the involvement of various parties in PPP, interviewed respondents from both jurisdictions confirmed that it creates a problem because different parties interpret the contract differently:

“[...] the disagreement or dispute typically takes long time to settle because talking about interpretation, other parties came out with their own interpretations.” – MY05

For this reason, respondents from the private sector noted that it leads to more work for them if they interpret the contract differently.

Supporting the statement, a report published by APMG International (2016, p. 44) indicated that issues in PPP *“have stemmed from the use of unclear or ill-defined specifications or scopes of work from the outset”* and evidence from Australia supports the effect of ‘interpretation’ in PPP contract (Hodge *et al.*, 2017). NZ04 from New Zealand explained that:

“[...] private sector needs to know what they need to deliver, if you start sort of interpreting differently or having other third parties coming and to say, ‘Oh I do not like that, you should do it like this’. The PPP is not well set up for that, they (PPP contract) are set up for meeting the requirements, all the works requirements [...]”

The findings also supported the assertions of Hart (1995) and Mansor and Rashid (2016) regarding the effect of contract ambiguity.

To overcome interpretation issues, interviewees from both jurisdictions noted that it is important that everyone understands the key criteria from the start. In doing so, interviewees were informed that it is important to have clear and early communications with all parties, seeking clarification to ensure that everyone involved agrees with the interpretations based on the brief output that is in the PPP contract, minimising any variation order (Demirel *et al.*, 2019). For example, after other private parties interpret the contract, the SPVs then:

“[...] check back with the Crown [...] make sure that know there is no issues with regards to that (contract) [...]” – NZ04

In other cases, a system is already in place which requires endorsement from the procuring authority, which is important to avoid any variation order:

“[...] the private sector will present, and we (procuring authority) leave a comment [...]” – MY01

“We have what is called a review board design, where they (SPV) submit a document, we get consult, send it back, back and forth before it gets endorsed. Until it is endorsed, they cannot move forward.” – NZ05

Evidently, clarity through early stakeholder engagement, especially during the contract negotiation stage, is critical, as it may help to facilitate smoother project delivery, avoid misunderstandings, and help develop trust, allowing for better partnership development (Runde *et al.*, 2010). According to Demirel *et al.* (2019), this form of engagement is a form of social mechanisms that complement the formal contract (PPP contract), as the latter is ineffective to solely deal with that arise because of the variations.

Besides having clear communications, having a clear set of guidelines also helps in understanding some of the requirements, as some must be delivered in accordance with the guidelines. For example, some requirements for hospital projects in Malaysia are outlined in the Medical Brief of Requirement (MBOR); hence:

“[...] the contractors must deliver it according to MBOR [...]” – MY03

In Malaysia, the public sector interviewees stated that the private sector’s creativity in interpreting the requirement is critical. As such, the private sector should understand what is needed by appointing the right advisors:

“As the contract that was put together requires interpretation [...] advisors help us to go through the contract [...] like lawyers, they understand the contract better than us.” – MY05

Nevertheless, NZ05 from the public sector noted that the PPP contract:

“[...] is a double-edge sword. You (public sector) have got to know what you want and prescribe it [...]”

In this regard, the contract should have a clear allocation of roles, responsibilities, liabilities, and risks. Hence, it is critical for the procuring authority to provide clear output specifications from the start to avoid any ambiguity that may lead to conflicting ideas between partners, which corroborates with the statement by Lam and Javed (2015).

Interviewees also noted that whilst clarity is important, it should not be too descriptive, which can discourage private partners from being innovative in PPP, as innovation is the key reason why procuring authorities choose to go for PPP instead of traditional procurement.

With flexibility, there are also strict requirements that must be followed, which are important for value-for-money achievement:

“[...] it is quite an obligation heavy document [...] standard PPP contract is quite onerous [...] – NZ01

With strict minimum requirements, PPP projects are likely to fail if the private sector is unable to meet the requirements. Past studies have noted that these requirements also tend to make PPP contracts seem rigid (Viegas, 2010; Parrado and Raynaers, 2020), despite being bound to be flexible and incomplete, allowing interpretations.

To maintain transparency and protect the interests of different parties and value-for-money achievement, interviewees informed that any changes in the contract require cabinet approval, despite being government-initiated. One of the most pronounced requirements within this context, which some interviewees considered as ‘features’ of PPP, is the ‘fixed price’ requirement:

“[...] every change to the contract, the ministry will bring to cabinet. So, we (public sector) present (the changes) [...] when cabinet agrees, then we can implement it [...] when it comes to cost, it will be taken to cabinet” – MY01

*“[...] there must be things that require additional provisions [...] it is necessary to amend it for additional provisions. So, the issue should be discussed at the implementing agency level, UKAS and so on, should be brought to the cabinet for approval. Because it requires a large allocation.”
– MY02*

“[...] the original concept all went to the government for agreement, ratification and sign-off by the cabinet. With all of the expansions, given the amount of money involved, again it is a cabinet decision to whether proceed with the expansions or not [...] business case is currently sitting with Minister Hipkins, and he will take that to cabinet next month.” – NZ03

Interviewees from both jurisdictions collectively agreed that the decision is subject to lengthy debate. As for the public sector, they retain the political risk. Unfortunately, the long waiting time exposes the public sector to changes in government policy, which could influence cabinet decisions, especially when a new government assumes office. Even worse, the process must start all over again because of it, leading to conflict and disputes between the public and private sectors. This assertion is in line with Osei-Kyei *et al.* (2019), who studied the main cause of conflict in PPP in Ghana.

Emphatically, with a long waiting time endured just to get approval from the cabinet, despite the private sector agreeing to bear all the costs, it poses a new risk to the private sector, besides increasing revenue and financial risks. For this reason, MY06 from Malaysia lamented that:

“[...] they (public sector) are still discussing it for almost two years, and it is still unresolved [...] we have not received it (the approval) yet. It is not easy actually [...]”

Several interviewees stated that they had missed several opportunities outside the PPP project. Some respondents from Malaysia noted that PPP is a form of domestic direct investment (DDI) which contributes to economic growth; hence, every process should be quickly finalised to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings between stakeholders, as PPP involves significant initial investment from the private sector. Therefore, interviewees from the private sector informed that the procuring authority should constantly follow up with the cabinet to ensure that changes can be made within a set of timeframes.

In summary, from how PPP contracts are designed in both New Zealand and Malaysia, it is evident that PPP contracts in both jurisdictions are rigid to change, as changes in the original contract consume a lot of resources, especially time and money, which can create adverse reactions among PPP partners. Notwithstanding, the opportunity for the private sector to

interpret the contract suggests that a trustful relationship was established between public and private stakeholders, which allows the latter to innovate in PPP.

Although Malaysia has extensive experience with PPP and PPP-type procurement in the past, the lived experiences of Malaysian interviewees resonate with their New Zealand counterparts, and in general, their experiences do not change how they perceive the PPP contract structure. NZ05 believes that despite the contract's rigidity, it would not be a problem if:

“[...] you can actually work through issues appropriately, where the parties are willing to engage in a meaningful manner. [...] the third P in the title around partnership, if you approach things with a partnership lens, then I think there is a way to get through things. If you are an adversarial [...] well the contract is going to kill you, and you are going to end up in litigation, because you will hit the roadblock pretty quickly.”

Apart from contract design, the risk management and allocation process in PPP was also observed from interview transcripts as one of the components that can influence the quality of the relationship between PPP stakeholders.

6.2.1.2 Risk Management and Allocation

Despite the plethora of risks associated with PPP (Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018b), effective risk management and allocation are significant to the success of PPP internationally (Chan *et al.*, 2011; Ameyaw and Chan, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2017; Almarri and Boussabaine, 2017; Osei-Kyei *et al.*, 2017; Muhammad and Johar, 2018; Ahmadabadi and Heravi, 2019). However, managing and allocating risks in PPP is a complex process (Valipour *et al.*, 2016), and it must be accurately identified and find the most appropriate ways to manage it before going forward (Yang *et al.*, 2020).

In a study by Burke and Demirag (2017), it was found that risk management and allocation can influence stakeholder relationships in some way or another and suggest that, whilst the factor may significantly affect stakeholder relationships during the construction phase of PPP projects, it may be more problematic in different phases of different types of PPP projects. The authors also added that if done correctly, it helps accommodate the expectations of different stakeholders in PPP.

On this note, an interpretation of interview transcripts suggested that improved risk management and allocation are needed in New Zealand through in-depth feasibility studies, as there is evidence suggesting that some risks were found to be unusual to be transferred and managed by the private sector in PPP in New Zealand and other parts of the world. Several interviewees indicated that for the Transmission Gully project, the government decided to transfer uncontrollable risks:

“[...] they transferred the risk around earthquake, believe it or not, and deaths on the road, which would be unusual in other jurisdictions [...]” – NZ01

Due to the disagreement of the risk components in the Transmission Gully project, in the recent news by Brett Kelly (2023) in RNZ, it was revealed that the project is already tense during the tendering process because the risks are not well specified. Despite different perspectives influencing the process of risk management (Razia *et al.*, 2019), the issue of improper risk allocation and management in New Zealand PPP has been highlighted by a few interviewees and addressed in the December edition of InfraRead by Infrastructure New Zealand (2021), affecting the New Zealand construction industry and increasing the likelihood of poor value-for-money as the risks not just limited to the SPV but spread to the subcontractors through various contracts between them. Interviewees, regardless of sides, argue that the decision to transfer unreasonable risk in the Transmission Gully project has made the project a disaster.

Since New Zealand is relatively new to the PPP space, interviewees noted that during the tendering/contract negotiation process, the public sector needs to understand the risk mechanism and should solicit feedback and incorporate input from others on the risks involved. This is to ensure that the risks are viable to manage, besides promoting transparency, accountability, and knowledge sharing. Besides transferring uncontrollable risks, interviewees noted that the government also unfairly compensates the private sector:

“[...] took the public sector comparator, which was the expected cost of the road, and then they just sliced arbitrarily [...] and said you have got to build this project with all of this risk transfer at this price, which is lower than the zero-risk transfer price and I have to admit that like the people are one kind of suffered from a ‘Winners Curse’.” – NZ01

Whilst it is true that in PPP, the private sector is willing to assume various risks given by the public sector, which would normally remain with the public sector in conventional procurement (Moseley, 2020), this does not mean that the public sector should transfer excessive risk and expect the private sector to make little to no profit at all.

Based on evidence from New Zealand's PPP practitioners, excessive risks can result in an increase in costs as the private sector is required to invest more to mitigate the risks allocated. Osei-Kyei *et al.* (2023) noted that this could affect the overall performance of the private sector. Sachs *et al.* (2007) indicated that the misallocation of risks is significant in causing disputes in China, leading to project failure.

It was also suggested that the government should fairly incentivise the private sector to deliver the assets based on the amount of risk allocated to the latter because the risks can be more extreme due to the complexities and uncertainties associated with PPP (Ahmad *et al.*, 2018). As indicated earlier, the government should also defocus itself on getting the cheapest tender price, and soliciting feedback from the stakeholders allows the facilitation of equitable risk allocation.

In comparison, all public sector interviewees from Malaysia revealed that there were no unusual risks transferred to the private sector, to which the latter agreed. Importantly, the pragmatic approach by the procuring authority in Malaysia to not transfer unreasonable risks to the private sector has resulted in less complicated contracts, suggesting that Malaysia's experience with private sector participation in infrastructure made the public sector more aware of the importance of proper risk management and allocation in PPP. The findings corroborate an earlier study by Chung *et al.* (2010), which suggested that the experience developed through PPP also contributes to the betterment of risk management and the allocation process between parties in PPP.

However, having experience alone is insufficient, as interviewees from Malaysia reported that early stakeholder engagement, such as workshops and seminars between the procuring authority and the SPV, monitored by the PPP unit, is influential in the process:

“[...] when we started this project, the motto or goal was roughly ‘Whatever we need to provide is only something that we really required, not something that is nice to have’, because University A wanted something beautiful, like gateways and so on. During the workshop, there were many requests from University A, but the PPP unit also involved in the workshops and many things were cut [...]” – MY06

Despite there being no unreasonable risk, some private sector interviewees stated that the risks transferred from the public to the private sector can be excessive; however, the interviewees argued that is the difference between PPP and conventional:

“[...] currently they allow us to build and manage (through PPP), compared to conventional projects where we only build, and once the construction is complete, we will leave.” – MY06

MY08 who was involved in highway projects in Malaysia, understood the situation very well, in his own words:

“For me, this is a common challenge (change in risk landscape) for industry players who want to get involved in PPP projects.”

The private sector interviewees have the same perception because of the early workshop sessions conducted, which showed the importance of capacity building in overcoming the issue related to the risk mechanism in PPP.

Despite unreasonable risk being transferred to the private sector in the case of Transmission Gully in New Zealand, risk-sharing between partners is still evident, which highlights goodwill in the relationship between both sides. For instance, this happens when the procuring authority wants new contractors to be involved in PPP projects and when:

“[...] they (government) seen financial benefit in there (PPP project) [...]”
– NZ04

Capturing the expression of the private sector regarding the willingness of the public sector’s side to take some of the risks in PPP suggested that the private sector appreciates the proactive approach by the public sector; hence, this helped develop a positive relationship between them,

which is important in PPP (Chung and Hensher, 2015; Wang *et al.*, 2019a), especially due to long-contractual durations in PPP. Other than the risk management and allocation process in PPP, collaboration between different partners was also perceived to be critical in influencing stakeholder relationships.

6.2.1.3 Collaboration

Collaboration refers to a situation where different PPP partners work in unison to deliver important PPP tasks to ensure smooth project delivery, and PPP itself is a platform for both public and private sectors to collaborate in achieving efficiency and innovation (Caloffi and Bambarotto, 2017). Interview transcripts revealed that collaboration is central to PPP. With various parties having different expectations and interests, it is important to establish working collaboration, especially in fulfilling contractual requirements and in delivering tasks that are not stated in the contract:

“I still remember that the reclamation is almost complete, suddenly, we found unexploded ordnances (UXO) or bombs form WW2. At that time, we do not have the expertise, somehow the Japanese have the expertise [...] because they have experience and like any project in Japan they have bomb scanning, whereas we do not have that kind of thing [...] we collaborate with them [...] we give Company A the responsibility to lead the way because of their knowledge.” – MY05

Interviewees from Malaysia indicated that collaboration between stakeholders is critical in developing positive relationships. For example, MY05 revealed that as an SPV, they are pleased that other partners are willing to collaborate despite having a different mindset:

“[...] we have another thing but not so much related to money but more to social obligation. Of course, we have dispute (with other partners related to social obligation) [...] they do not see it at all [...] as time goes on, they joined us to do our social obligation [...]”

Collaboration is also evident, providing win-win situations for all parties in New Zealand. For example, although it is not the primary goal of the PPP contract, the private parties recognise the importance of achieving sustainability with PPP assets, and to ensure that it can be

accomplished, all parties, including the ministry, are willing to collaborate and support the initiative, which brings relief to the private sector:

“[...] we (private sector) are fortunate that we [...] so as the Ministry of Education, taken a quite a green approach to both the designs and how these schools are operated.” – NZ04

Although collaboration is key in PPP, interview transcripts from both jurisdictions also revealed that the collaborative relationship in PPP is still lacking, indicating ineffective stakeholder management in PPP. In New Zealand, owing to the strict requirements and poor allocation of risks, some interviewees noted that the subcontractors are frustrated with how the SPV treated some of them, and instead of SPV collaborating with the subcontractors to deal with certain issues, the SPV uses commercial and force the subcontractors to deal with the issues, creating tension between the two parties.

Furthermore, coercion also erodes trust between partners, which leads to conflict that may not end well for all parties. Hence, several interviewees from the private sector expected fair contractual terms to ensure that no one is affected. Since New Zealand is still new to the PPP procurement model, the collaboration between partners should always be prioritised “*without misusing each other’s vulnerabilities*” (Warsen *et al.*, 2018, p. 1168).

In comparison with Malaysia, interviewees suggested that private partners in PPP constantly work hand in hand in dealing with issues that require other partners’ expertise. Based on the discussion of stakeholder attitudes, the private sector was displeased with the lack of effort by the public sector to collaborate, especially in dealing with certain issues that require collaboration from the government to ensure a smoother process. However, some interviewees from the private sector noted that this is something they should accept because it can be considered a risk for the private sector.

In summary, the collaboration between the public and private sectors in PPP allows different parties to work in unison to deliver key tasks in PPP, although said tasks were not stated in the contract. Interview transcripts from PPP practitioners in both jurisdictions also suggested that, as the cooperative relationship develops, understanding between partners becomes more evident, which helps develop trust among the stakeholders, especially due to the complexities and uncertainties associated with PPP. This supports the findings of De Schepper *et al.* (2014)

and Devkar *et al.* (2020), highlighting the importance of shared collaboration in PPP. Communication in PPP is another factor that can influence stakeholder relationships identified from the interview transcripts.

6.2.1.4 Communication

Communication is among the factors perceived to be significant in influencing the relationship conditions between different parties in PPP in both jurisdictions. Communication challenges are unique to the PPP environment (Kwofie *et al.*, 2019). Communication plays an important role in connecting different parties in PPP and helps develop trust (Huijser and Fitzgerald, 2020; Som *et al.*, 2020), which has been noted to be one of the critical success factors in PPP by numerous scholars (Jacobson and Ok, 2008; Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2017; Som *et al.*, 2020), and Meng (2015) suggested that the complexity of procurement model made it more difficult to share information between the parties involved, leading to a project not achieving its progress as planned (Tawalare and Reddy, 2018).

Interviewees from both jurisdictions acknowledged the importance of effective communication, and NZ01 from New Zealand explained that it allows other partners:

“[...] to be aware of their obligation, because for us as PPP investors and implementers, we always have to deliver our obligation [...] we need to understand what people’s obligations are to us.

In Malaysia, communication also helps partners to be aware of their role and ensure there is a check and balance in PPP:

“[...] the check and balance are important because sometimes when a did a certain process [...] we think what we did is right and other parties might think otherwise, that is why we need check and balance.” – MY05

Reflecting on the checks and balances in PPP that can be achieved through effective communication also helps to foster mutual understanding between partners, which is important because of the variety of partners with different backgrounds in PPP. In addition, interviewees posited that effective communication may allow better responses to unpredicted events and prevent serious disputes from occurring, supporting the statement of Domingues and Zlatkovic (2015).

Poor communication between parties was also highlighted by interviewees, resulting in a lack of information dissemination, which has also been observed in the construction literature (Fryer *et al.*, 2004; Atuahene *et al.*, 2017; Tawalare and Reddy, 2018), leading to inability of the project to progress as planned (Tawalare and Reddy, 2018). In Malaysia, ineffective communication creates tension within public sector departments. MY02 frustratedly revealed that sometimes they were unaware of what was happening on-site during construction, and they thought everything was fine until they took over the project:

“If any party (public agencies) on field can give a view at that time (the problem may be resolved/not prolonged). But such things have already happened, but nothing can be done.” – MY02

In New Zealand, poor communication is evident within the private sector environment, especially since the private companies involved had to sign a confidentiality agreement, which prevented them from responding freely about value-improving practices without consent from investors who led the private consortium in PPP. The need to sign the confidentiality agreement leads to the dissatisfaction of other private partners.

As the investor that led the private consortium, NZ01 explained that without the confidentiality agreement between different parties in New Zealand, the information between different parties in PPP can easily be exposed:

“[...] especially in New Zealand where everybody knows each other [...] that was a disaster [...]”

Evidently, this shows that effective communication with other parties on the need of confidentiality agreement is important, as lack of communication or information exchange between different partners can cause major issues, especially in construction projects (Yuan, 2021), which could be detrimental to the overall progress of the PPP projects.

Effective communication among partners in PPP is important, as it subsequently helps build trust and prevents any issues, such as misunderstandings, from arising in the long run. This creates an environment where stakeholders feel valued (Reissner and Pagan, 2013). Moreover, it is impossible to establish relationships with other partners without effective communication

(Atuahene *et al.* 2017), as communication can be considered as the epitome of stakeholder management.

6.2.1.5 Transparency

The lack of transparency in PPP has been an ongoing issue and has been highlighted by previous studies (Katusiimeh *et al.*, 2012; Bao *et al.*, 2018; Tariq and Leung, 2019; Abdullah and Khadaroo, 2020). As such, it is unsurprising that among the responses, transparency was identified as one factor influencing stakeholder relationships in PPP in New Zealand and Malaysia. Interpreting interview transcripts also noted that interviewees called for greater transparency among partners in PPP, especially from the public sector. Interviewees perceived that the public sector was the least transparent among PPP partners, leading to the private sector treating the former with ‘suspicion’. For example, in New Zealand, NZ01 noted that the government does not want to be transparent because:

“[...] no government has been willing to open its books to scrutiny [...]”

Private sector interviewees from New Zealand also pointed out that it is uncertain whether trust can be established with the public sector, especially the procuring authority and government as a whole throughout the contract durations with lack of transparency, especially with the public sector’s approach during the bidding process, where they refuse to be transparent concerning whether the bid is fairly evaluated because the public sector prefers getting the cheapest tender price:

“[...] their (public sector) setting was if you are not affordable, then we cannot buy that, so what is the point in assessing it. I would say ‘that person is unaffordable but let see what they have sent us because we might learn something’.” – NZ01

In this regard, interviewees noted that it is important to have a transparent budgetary process to ensure that PPP proposals reflect the project’s true value and do not just meet the affordability threshold set by the government. Enforcing transparency in the budgetary process is important to gain stakeholders’ confidence.

Meanwhile, the private sector in Malaysia wishes for a more transparent approach during the contract negotiations stage, as they are not allowed to seek clarification or have meaningful dialogue during the stage, leading to one-way negotiations:

“[...] before negotiation they (public sector) gave us an almost complete draft for us to fill with some small things. But during negotiation, there is not much thing happen, it is either take it or leave it, that is the thing. [...] I feel like it is a one-way negotiation [...]” – MY05

The lack of transparency shown by the public sector in Malaysian PPP procurement is in line with the argument of Ismail and Haris (2014b), which was also supported by Hashim *et al.* (2017b). Both contended that improvements in the policy must be made accordingly, which was also argued by MY06:

“I think it is necessary to have it (improved policy and guideline) that way because it is more transparent and can avoid disputes between parties.”

In a recent study by Som *et al.* (2020), the authors recognised power-balanced disparities as the reason for such issues as the public sector has the upper hand, which the private sector interviewees from Malaysia and New Zealand also expressed.

Despite the transparency issues evident within the public sector environment, this does not mean that the private sector is highly transparent. In New Zealand, interviewees also noted that various reports related to PPP have been published over the years, mainly by investors that lead the private consortium; however, NZ02 indicated that as partners within the private consortium, they expect the reports published to be more transparent because the current reports only:

“[...] focused on financial outcomes and not broader objectives like wellbeing and industry health.”

This is important, as smaller companies are forced to sustain much of the losses in PPP:

“There is also no review of the commercial behaviour of SPVs and construction joint ventures companies to make sure they are not forcing their losses, using commercial and legal pressure [...]” – NZ02

Overall, calls for greater transparency in PPP is also highly dependent on the institutional environment of PPP (Reynaers and Grimmelikhuijsen, 2015); hence, improving transparency in PPP is a challenging task for everyone in PPP, as it requires effective reforms to uphold integrity (Beh, 2010).

6.2.1.6 Accountability

Accountability can be seen as the responsibility of both public and private sectors in PPP and the willingness to take responsibility for one's actions (Milward and Provan, 2006), which is critical in delivering public infrastructure projects effectively (Siemiatycki, 2007). The use of PPP is believed to promote accountability in public procurement (Wang *et al.*, 2014), an analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that regardless of the different levels of PPP experiences between New Zealand and Malaysia, the respondents were unanimous in their opinion that it is important for every party in PPP to be responsible and accountable as PPP procurement involves taxpayers' money, which means that public interest must come first and be protected. Interviewees also argued that accountability is important in promoting positive relationships in PPP and developing confidence among partners.

Compared to the conventional procurement model, the use of PPP requires more accountability among partners as PPP involves long-term shared responsibilities and "*exercising accountability in PPPs ultimately depends on clarifying responsibilities in relationships*" (Forrer *et al.*, 2010, p. 478). A previous study by Demirag and Khadaroo (2008) suggested that accountability in PPP is complicated as stakeholders have different and conflicting expectations and interests, which was also reflected by interviews with PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions.

Interviewees suggested that everybody will suffer without accountability in a project, especially in a project that involves various parties like PPP. In addition, with the amount of investment in PPP, parties ought to be accountable:

“For conventional public projects, we define the scope of work as A-B-C, and the private sector will claim A-B-C. This means that when private sector completes the work, they claim the payment (from the government). For PPP projects, the private sector takes a loan from the bank and holds onto that money. Let say the project is worth RM1 billion, the money (from the bank) will be RM1 billion, so it (the money) needs to be managed properly. If mismanaged, the money will run out, and the infrastructure cannot be delivered. This is the difference between conventional and PPP [...]” – MY07

Interviewees also informed that since PPP is a turnkey project, lack of accountability may lead to delays, meaning that the private sector, more precisely, the SPV, will not get paid until the asset is available for the public sector to use:

“We had to appoint a third party to rectify it (defects from previous contractors), and if we did not rectify it at that time, we could not hand over the project to the government, and if we did not hand it over, we would not get the ‘certificate of acceptance’, and we would not get the maintenance charge (availability payment).” – MY06

Interviewees also revealed that everyone involved should be accountable and aware of their role despite being on the same side:

“They (public agency personnel) need to perform their role as government representative on the field [...] we (another public agency personnel) see a lot of problems after it is handed over [...] a long-lasting problem (a problem that should have been solved from start).” – MY02

Sharing the same view, NZ01 from New Zealand noted in his own words:

“[...] the problem is we normally write there is no accountability and there is like no one is held to account here. Everybody is kind of let off and people should not be killed for making bad decisions [...]”

The issues with accountability can lead to long-lasting problems; consequently, interviewees believe that if all parties were held to account, said issues in PPP would not have happened.

For instance, issues related to the Transmission Gully project in New Zealand. Private sector practitioners indicated that they were unhappy that the government did not want to be accountable for its own decisions, leading to conflict. NZ01 lamented that:

*“[...] they (the government) put it in a contract, and they hold that person to account. Perfect!!! [...] So, if they (public sector) put a contract in place that has accountability in it, and the person screws it up, they are great at kicking their *****!!!”*

Interviews with PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions pointed out that since PPP involves taxpayers' money, it is important that parties be accountable. NZ01 from New Zealand explained that:

“If you are unaccountable, if there is no consequence for getting it wrong, if all of the pain just sheets back to the insurer, the taxpayer who do not feel it either because they (taxpayers) do not know what their money is being spent on [...] then no one is learning anything, no one is getting better, everything staying the same. [...] it is quite nice to have somebody responsible to fixing it when it goes wrong.”

Interviews with PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions revealed that to ensure accountability, the output should be reasonable, and expectations must be aligned, especially if the use of PPP is accountable to the asset's performance (Koontz and Thomas, 2012). As such, early stakeholder engagement or consultation is important for understanding other partners' capabilities to ensure accountability:

“[...] the school has wanted to put synthetic turf down on their hard courts. The ministry looks at it, we have had our facilities management provider have a look at it [...] they (private sector) have come back and said, ‘Yes, that is OK. However, that will impact our ability to maintain the facility so, we want that area taken out of the contract’, so we do a change to the overall agreement to take that piece of the hardcourts out from contract.” – NZ03

Several interviewees, mainly from Malaysia, indicated that the involvement of the PPP unit as a mediator helps to ensure that all parties deliver their obligations, apart from conducting

workshops. Furthermore, establishing KPIs or commitment registers for stakeholders to follow and keep track of and regular reporting of their commitment has also been emphasised by interviewees to ensure everything is according to plan, ensuring that the asset is up to the standard and requirements set by the government until the end of the PPP life cycle, apart from appointing external auditors to ensure checks and balances:

“The moment the construction happens, every month we have EPC meeting on site, during the meeting we look at bigger picture such as overall project development. So, the EPC contractor always submits report to us every month and from the report we analysed the report in every aspect.” – MY05

“[...] report back to our investors that this is how these assets is going, and this is how assets of being managed.” – NZ04

“[...] there are KPIs that we need to achieve every month. [...] we achieve their KPIs, and they pay us, that is all.” – MY07

In addition, MY05 noted that apart from the above, as members of the SPV, they also offer subcontractors certain performance guarantees to ensure accountability. Apart from accountability, knowledge and understanding were also observed in the interview transcripts as being among the factors that can influence the quality of relationships in PPP.

6.2.1.7 Knowledge and Understanding

Given the complexity of PPP compared with the traditional public procurement model, it is important for the parties involved to be knowledgeable about the former (Chiang and Cheng, 2009; Ng *et al.*, 2010; Geng *et al.*, 2020). Whilst the private sector is expected to have proper PPP knowledge and understanding, interviewees also expect the public sector representatives to have the same level of knowledge and understanding. This is important, as most public sector personnel are accustomed to the conventional procurement model (Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018b), and a recent study by Umar *et al.* (2021) indicates poor public sector expertise in managing PPP projects.

Without proper knowledge and paired with the complexities associated with PPP, it is hard for partners to deliver their obligations, and respondents interviewed argued that the stakeholders

must be aware of their obligations and without the stakeholders aware of it, it will affect other partners which can create tension between the parties. NZ01 and MY06 noted that:

“[...] if you want to build something, you need to understand all of the tools.”
– NZ01

“[...] they (partners) need to understand the PPP concept itself, how PPP works [...] at least before we sign anything, we already know [...]” – MY06

Notably, interviewees from both New Zealand and Malaysia proposed that the PPP unit should play an integral part in continuously filling the knowledge gap between public and private sector practitioners throughout the duration of the PPP contract through tailored capacity-building initiatives. Several interviewees from Malaysia highlighted the importance of early and continuous engagement through workshops or seminars after the selection of SPV to ensure that knowledge and understanding can be maintained and to avoid any mistakes in the future.

Alternatively, with New Zealand relatively new to the PPP spectrum, proactive approaches such as encouraging others to learn more about PPP were evident to close the knowledge gap, leading to mutual understanding between partners in PPP. NZ01 illustrated that:

“[...] we as developers really encourage for the person that is going to maintain and operate the asset to kind of get into the design mechanism. Well, to ensure that the asset that gets built can be effectively maintained [...]”

This action is important for partners to understand the PPP asset as a whole. It is also important to continue evaluating engagement efforts and improving them to ensure that knowledge and understanding can be maintained. NZ04 then indicated that once all partners understand PPP:

“[...] it is a little bit easier (go through the contract) than perhaps it was a few years ago [...]”

Interviews also noted the involvement of international companies in New Zealand PPP, and these interviewees agreed that the experience and knowledge that these international companies have is important, and evidence suggested that local partners were impressed and appreciated the knowledge that they bring to the table:

“[...] they (international companies) are impressive and they are bringing stuff that they have seen in Canada or South America or Spain [...] So, they are bringing all this stuff that they have seen all over the world, and they bring it here (New Zealand) and then these people like me, the male, stale and pale guys [...] getting a crash course in international modern techniques of building, and it was magnificent.” – NZ01

In Malaysia, with sufficient knowledge and experience with PPP, interviewees, specifically from the procuring authority, were more aware that PPP is just another form of procurement model to deliver public infrastructure services and treated PPP equally to other models, especially when there was an issue:

“[...] we (public and private sectors) do not have any tension during board of directors seating, everything went smoothly even we have dispute and delay [...]” – MY05

In summary, having a sufficient skill set and knowledge is important in PPP, as studies have indicated that failed PPP projects are rooted in a lack of knowledge (Dulaimi *et al.*, 2010; Vijayabanu and Vignesh, 2018); as such, partners in PPP need to ensure that they have the relevant skills in PPP, including knowledge of the local business environment (Dulaimi *et al.*, 2010). This is because both knowledge and understanding among PPP practitioners are crucial for learning and problem-solving, which has also been highlighted by numerous scholars (Kumaraswamy and Morris, 2002; El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; Carrillo *et al.*, 2006; Macário, 2010; Iseki and Houtman, 2012). In addition, having sufficient knowledge and understanding by every partner in delivering their obligations reflects a sign of respect in the relationship, as a failure to deliver their obligations will affect other partners in PPP. Additionally, sufficient knowledge also leads to better decision-making, which helps preserve the relationship established between partners.

6.2.1.8 Payment Mechanism

The payment mechanism is central to PPP, and it refers to the way that the private sector is incentivised or disincentivised (penalised) based on their performance (United Nations, 2008; World Bank, 2017). NZ01 from New Zealand pointed out that, as the private sector:

“[...] it (payment mechanism) is obviously really important to me, and everybody is interested because it is how you get paid like having delivered the asset, how you get paid is like number one priority. [...] everybody kind of wants to make sure that there is no circumstance in which you would suffer a deduction [...]”

Interviewees from both jurisdictions suggested that since the payment mechanism is central to PPP, it is important for it to be designed with fairness and transparency, which helps build long-term trust between public and private partners, which is also highlighted in reports by EPEC (2014).

Through long-term trust, this will ensure collaboration between the parties. To further promote transparency, Malaysian interviewees also highlighted the importance of having shared responsibilities when assessing anything that may lead to a penalty, which is currently absent in the New Zealand context, based on the response from the interviewees:

“One good thing is that we (private sector) and the owner (public sector) are very detailed when it comes to handling complaints received through the e-complaint system. We will look at each complaint individually, and there are some complaints that we can reject, there are also overlapping complaints that we can reject, and there are unrelated complaints [...]”– MY06

A discussion of payment mechanisms also revealed that any penalties imposed as part of financial consequences in PPP should be well-structured so that it is enough to remind the private sector of its obligations and should not cost them any financial stress, which has also been highlighted in a report by the World Bank (2017).

Interviewees from both jurisdictions also highlighted the importance of flexibility if there is no urgency to address any issues leading to penalties. In addition, interviewees from Malaysia indicated that flexibility is needed to ensure that the private sector is not burdened by the penalty imposed, especially during the construction stage. MY01 indicated that when a project went over time:

“[...] we are just going to bring it into the ‘project monitoring committee’ (PMC) [...] it is the same as other projects and if they (private sector) have justification, we will add days (EOT) at the end of the concession period.”

“[...] it is rare for PPP projects to be completed within a set time frame and budget. What we all know is, for PPP, it should be 3 years of construction, but when there is delay, it does not affect us, because the ‘concession period’ will decrease, so the private sector loses.” – MY01

The statements from the interviewees from Malaysia certainly contradict with the statement by Som *et al.* (2020, p. 553), indicating that the public sector was “*more cautious about being flexible and were keener to hold on to the concession agreement as the basic principle of their partnership*”.

Interviewees from the public sector in Malaysia also remarked that the reason for EOT instead of a penalty is that the EOT itself is a form of indirect penalty because the private sector would not receive any form of payment, but at the same time, the private sector must still pay their financiers. Whilst the action by the public sector demonstrates empathy, the statement above also highlights the importance of communication in understanding other partners’ difficulties.

However, MY07 noted that flexibility given during construction is often time abused by the private sector:

“I give you one example, for highway AA, Company A commonly undertakes government projects, and they involved in many government projects, both domestic and international. When they undertake highway AA, the project was delayed for 10 years. [...] They always look for excuses, and they will request an EOT, after which they will request another EOT, and they give a lot of excuses for it.”

As a result, MY07 informed that for highway projects, the procuring authority has started to impose ‘liquidated ascertained damages’ (LAD) to push companies to deliver the asset within the relevant timeframe without government intervention.

Apart from the payment mechanism from the public to the private sector, the payment mechanism from the SPV to the subcontractors is also important and is mainly based on the

performance of the subcontractors in delivering their obligations. Interpretation from interview transcripts indicated that on-time payments are important in fostering a positive relationship between the giver and taker. MY05 shared his experience and revealed that their subcontractors have appreciated the action:

“[...] that (quick payments) never happens to them (subcontractors) elsewhere whereby when they submit their work, they able to get the payment within 30 days, means that the payment is very fast and efficient.”

Besides payment mechanisms, policy due to unforeseen events was also highlighted by interviewees.

6.2.1.9 Policy Due to Unforeseen Events

Over the last couple of years, the Covid-19 pandemic has put every economy on hold. Interpreting interviews from both New Zealand and Malaysia indicated that both governments acknowledged that the pandemic triggered the ‘force majeure’ clause in PPP, putting unprecedented pressure on PPP projects, which may cause project failures (Casady and Baxter, 2020). According to Augenblick and Rousseau (2012, p. 59), *“Force majeure means ‘superior force’. These clauses excuse a party from performance if some unforeseen event beyond its control prevents performance of its contractual obligations. Their purpose is to allocate risk and to provide notice of events that may delay or excuse performance.”*

In a typical PPP contract, the project company or SPV is given the right to claim compensation, time relief, or both due to force majeure events (Global Infrastructure Hub, 2018). Although the pandemic triggered the force majeure clause, interview transcripts from both countries perceived the approach taken by the government differently, specifically when a project is still in the construction phase.

In Malaysia, all interviewees revealed that no monetary compensation was given to the private sector, only EOT. The reason for giving EOT instead of compensation is that the public sector assumed that the delay due to the pandemic (lockdown) would not be that long; hence, monetary compensation to the private sector was unnecessary. Furthermore, MY06 from the private sector noted that another reason for only giving EOT because:

“[...] (the PPP contracts) are bound by costs, so there is no additional work cost that we (private sector) can claim from the government, even if we try [...] we have to bear the loss.”

This shows that the private sector, especially the SPV in Malaysia, accepted that the pandemic was a risk that they needed to absorb because of their understanding of the differences in risk mechanisms between PPP and conventional and how the contract is structured. This shows the importance of effective communication and early capacity building to avoid any conflict.

Meanwhile, in New Zealand, the pandemic was not a liability under the PPP contract; as such, the claims made by the private sector were instantaneously rejected by the public sector:

“[...] they (private sector) basically put a claim against the Crown for \$430 million and 550 days of time extension due to Covid. So, there was a Covid clause in the contract, they sought to claim masses of relief because of that, the Crown has rejected their claim in its entirety, and said ‘See me in court’.”
– NZ05

In some cases, interviewees from New Zealand indicated that the government allows the private sector to prove their losses. However, doing so in PPP is much more difficult than in other business areas. Hence, the private sector was unsatisfied with the unaccommodating procedure that they went through to prove that the companies were entitled to compensation:

“[...] it would have been fairer if the state had said ‘We the state, exercise the choice to shut down the economy for prolonged periods of time, and we will compensate you fully for that’. But that is not where we found ourselves. [...] what are they doing in other business areas other than PPP? They are compensating, so if they have made that choice over there, they should do it here.” – NZ01

Interviewees from the private sector in New Zealand criticised the action and revealed that the amount of delay and cost overrun that the private sector must manage due to the pandemic was massive and genuinely problematic. Furthermore, the action by the government put more pressure on the private sector in PPP, resulting in tension on both sides. Moreover, because of

the pandemic, the public sector also made changes to what can be considered as force majeure events:

“Given Covid is still alive, we also changed the definition of force majeure to remove Covid as being a force majeure event, so we could not get tripped in the future, and we gave them explicit clauses for future Covid events happening. And that is where the fights been [...]” – NZ05

EPEC (2014) suggested that it is important for the public sector to monitor the projects to deal with difficulties due to force majeure events. In the case of force majeure such as Covid-19, interviewees from both jurisdictions informed that it is vital to assess the fiscal impact of the pandemic and look into the aspect of shared responsibility between the public and private sectors, which has also been highlighted by Casady and Baxter (2020).

An example of shared responsibility can be seen in school PPP, whereby the ministry is willing to forward funds for the provision of building materials, although it was not their responsibility. The reason for this, according to NZ03, which is also a member of the procuring authority, is because:

“[...] we do not want our builders to go bust, there have been enough of those in New Zealand already [...]”

Besides policy due to unforeseen events, politics is also influential in shaping the relationship between different stakeholders through political decisions and ideologies.

6.2.1.10 Politics

Due to the nature of PPP, politics play a significant role in PPP implementation in New Zealand and Malaysia and influence the relationship between PPP project stakeholders. As indicated by Gawel (2017, p. 24), decisions in PPP are always *“taken in the political arena”* and have a powerful influence. Findings from New Zealand interviewees suggested that the relationship between the public and private sectors was not in the best shape due to the influence of politics, which created a lot of tension between both sides due to disagreements with PPP strategies. From interviews, the acceptability of PPP in New Zealand depends on the political spectrum:

“I think PPP is more acceptable to right-wing governments, because they are prepared to accept that the private sector has skills that the government does not have. Left-wing governments’ essential view of risk is that it is best communalised.” – NZ01

With it plagued by political issues, interviewees from both sides indicated that they did not want the procurement to be politicised by anyone, especially politicians. Interviewees pointed out that due to the model being politically tagged as a ‘bad procurement model’ in New Zealand, everything related to PPP has been negatively perceived, mainly by the central government. Interviews also noted that PPP should not be constrained by political beliefs. NZ04 noted that if:

“[...] we take the politics out of it (PPP) and it is just another procurement methodology [...]”

Interviewees from New Zealand were also found to be disappointed by the government’s negative view of the PPP model, as other infrastructure projects were also found to be late and over budget but did not receive the same level of treatment from the central government. Several interviewees explained that PPP should be treated as one of the tools among many, and the government should not obsess over PPP alone:

“[...] PPP is nothing, it is just a tool, so it is like having a toolbox and one of the tools is a screwdriver. So, it makes little sense to kind of obsess about your screwdriver, like you need to obsess about all of the things. [...]” – NZ01

Since infrastructure in New Zealand is a major issue, New Zealand interviewees also informed that, for the government to be effective at delivering infrastructure, every procurement model should be on the table every time the government wants to deliver public infrastructure services:

“You have got to look at the particular issues of that project in its own merits and what is best for that project [...] Look at what your issue you are trying to solve and respond to what are your risk and opportunities, and constraints. And then the procurement model is quite easy, but you actually got to understand the project and think one of the challenges people perhaps do not understand enough of the project [...] But all things should be on the table every time.” – NZ05

Interviewees from New Zealand also added that the Labour-led Government’s obsession with PPP was due to the fact that the previous National government introduced it to New Zealand. As such, the Labour government did not want to be associated with policies introduced by their predecessor and suggested that the Labour government was trying their best to show that past policies, including PPP, were a failure. NZ03 revealed that the Labour government said:

“PPP is the worst thing that could happen (in New Zealand) [...]”

Further, NZ01 then argued that:

“[...] it should not be political. It should be about what is the best tool and PPP will be the best tool.”

Interviewees also believed that it is difficult to do it right now because it is hard to send the message to the politicians because:

“[...] their (the politicians) whole business is selling ideas and stuff.” – NZ01

Despite the Labour-led Government’s approach towards PPP, the same cannot be said for public sector interviewees with direct hands-on PPP experience. NZ05 remarked that ruling something out because of differences in perspective is not the right thing:

“[...] I am an advocate for the model (PPP), I think done well, it has benefits, to rule things out philosophically, I do not think that is the right way [...] There are a lot of lessons learned that can be taken from experience in PPP, they can be adopted or adapted to resolve a few of the constraints.”

Smith and Gannon (2008) and Osei-Kyei and Chan (2017) stressed that political support and acceptability in PPP are important and frequently highlighted as critical success factors in PPP. However, the lack of political support, mainly from the former central government of New Zealand, made it difficult for the dedicated PPP unit, which is Infracom to maintain the knowledge of PPP in New Zealand (Infracom, 2021) and due to this reason, it will be problematic for future PPP projects. Currently, partners, mainly those from the private sector were not happy with the perception by the central government that labelled PPP as a ‘bad’ procurement model:

“[...] I just think unfortunately it is become a set of political policy decision, and hence is going to take a while to swing around.” – NZ04

Flinders (2005) states that the change in political control may “*create a critical tension if the incoming government does not share the values and import enshrined in the partnership contract*”. An earlier study by Liu and Wilkinson (2011) found that problems with the public sector and political risks are among the main obstacles to PPP being successfully adopted in New Zealand and revealed the same issue of the Labour government against PPP strategies; hence, it is not something new in New Zealand as the use of PPP depends on the political spectrum.

In comparison, interviewees from Malaysia, especially those in the private sector, praised the government for supporting the PPP programme in delivering public infrastructure services despite the change in government (from right to left wing) due to political instability over the last five years.

Moreover, some interviewees from New Zealand agree with the Malaysian government’s approach that perceives PPP as another form of procurement model and does not politicise the model when things go wrong. Doing so helps inspire confidence among private consortiums that are currently involved in PPP projects and is essential for good governance for PPP. In this regard, it is important to build a consensus, which can be achieved through continuous and open communication practices between various parties, most importantly between the procuring authority and policymakers.

From a broad perspective, this shows that a positive relationship has been developed between both public and private sectors in Malaysia; however, there were also signs of significant

tension between the sides, including within the public sector environment due to Malaysia's cronyism 'culture', allowing the contract to be given directly to companies with political connections:

"[...] if you have connections (with politicians), it is easy to get contracts, difficult for others to get the chance. That is the issue with PPP." – NZ06

Moreover, because of this, a PPP project can proceed despite:

"[...] the project did not provide needs for the people [...]" – NZ02

Additionally, the PPP project can be more expensive to procure, as the government do not get the best price because the projects are not well structured, skipping a few important steps in the PPP process that ensure transparency and accountability. This also creates distrust among stakeholders, particularly public sector officers and private partners, tarnishing the credibility of the private sector. NZ02 revealed that she was disappointed with the private sector for the action and explained that any decisions should be made based on facts and not political:

"[...] the private sector when they want to present it (PPP project) to the government, they need to look at the viability of the project, the real needs, and not just for profit. [...] due to pressure (from politician), the project must go on."

Whilst the project being announced or supported by politicians (typically from the ruling parties) must go on, as expected, little success has been recorded, damaging the credibility of PPP because politicians sometimes do not have knowledge of the PPP project life cost (Rahman *et al.*, 2014), which leads to issues such as poor value-for-money, not being able to meet expectations, and other issues, which have also been reported in previous studies such as by Hodge (2004) and Aziz and Nabavi (2014). Hence, from interviews, the political decision can overthrow the value-for-money aim of PPP, especially when private partners use their connections to push for a more favourable risk allocation, which corroborates with Halizahari and Faris (2020).

As a result, these interviewees argued that proper due diligence is needed through transparent and improved procurement guidelines and processes, ensuring integrity in the procurement process. For instance, minimum requirements to ensure the credibility of private sector

consortiums. Furthermore, the PPP unit should be more transparent, as all proposals are going through the PPP unit first, where they will conduct a financial analysis of the proposed projects before recommending it to the procuring authority:

“[...] based on a recommendation from UKAS. [...] If it is a Ministry of Health project, they (UKAS) inform the Ministry of Health and for other ministries will inform other ministries.” – MY04

Moreover, Malaysia’s rule-bending environment is also well known, as the Ministry of Finance frequently “disregards its own rules by engaging in direct negotiation with private sector organisations” despite every procurement that costs more than RM 200,000 having to go through tender (Beh, 2010, p. 78). Beh (2010) further revealed that whilst everything is clearly highlighted in various acts, including penalties for unethical conduct such as corruption, political will is needed to exercise it, which is something expressed by interviewees as well. Interviewees from Malaysia noted that for an unsolicited PPP proposal, it is normal for the contract to be given directly to the proposer, indicating that the practice becomes a norm, even though it is wrong.

Additionally, an index published by The Economist in 2023 has placed Malaysia third in the crony-capitalism index, which indicates that Malaysia is among the top spots for cronies to build their wealth through government contracts. According to an article written by Murugiah (2023) in The Edge Markets, these cronies “may form cartels to limit competition or lobby the government for cosy regulations. They bend rules, but do not typically break them”.

6.2.1.11 Commitment

The commitment of different partners to PPP is one of the perceived factors from interviews that can influence the relationship conditions between different partners. Importantly, commitment between different parties is essential in PPP due to the long-term contract durations (House, 2016), and commitments made by different parties signalling respectful and supportive relationships to their partners and their partners’ agenda. Additionally, a trustful relationship was evident in both jurisdictions due to commitment. MY02 from the public sector in Malaysia claimed the following:

“I think Company A is a very committed company. [...] Company A can be trusted. [...] I give them (private sector) 7/10 and I do not give it 9/10 because sometimes like the concession agreement, our views maybe different from them [...].”

The commitment of the private sector in Malaysia to ensure successful PPP delivery was further shown by their willingness to appoint a specialist consultant to deal with specific issues, which has been explained as one of the factors for successful PPP delivery (Ismail, 2013b; Rodrigues and Zucco, 2018). Additionally, Malaysia's private sector is willing to put in extra effort to ensure the public sector is satisfied with the private sector's services by taking additional responsibilities without charging anything because of the 'fixed price' feature of PPP. MY05 from the private sector noted that:

“[...] it was not something that they (procuring authority) needed at first, but we (private sector) try to accommodate [...] they requested a larger prayer hall that can accommodate 100 people. Sometimes they have large events and such [...] there is an additional cost, but we do not demand any maintenance charges [...] if there are any requirements that we can accommodate within our budget, we will do so [...].”

However, not all public sector interviewees were satisfied with the private sector's commitment. For instance, in a sector that is frequently associated with PPP in Malaysia, such as highway, one major issue that MY07 noted is that the private sector refuses to 'self-regulate' because of the 'profit-oriented' mindset and is not willing to compromise its profit to do something proactive such as frequent reporting. Since the private sector signed a long-term contract with the public sector and is in charge of the day-to-day maintenance and operational aspects (depending on the project) of the project, the procuring authority expects the private sector to self-regulate (self-monitor), as the procuring authority knows the capabilities of the private sector:

“The main issue for me is the lack of self-regulation. Supposedly, the procuring authority should only provide guidelines for companies to follow [...] However, in Malaysia, due to sensitivity and profit orientation, they (private sector) only do the minimum required, instead of striving for excellence. If there was self-regulation, we (procuring authority) would not need to do monthly supervision. For example, whatever issues they encounter, they should fix them without waiting for us to address them.” – MY07

By engaging in self-regulation, the private sector demonstrates its commitment towards the project. This also signifies a proactive approach and voluntary commitment by the private sector to self-improvement, growth, and maintaining high standards, even in the absence of external supervision by the procuring authority, which cultivates trust.

Similarly, not all private sector interviewees were satisfied with the level of commitment by the public sector. The findings indicated that commitment mainly by the public sector was insufficient, as the private sector expected the public sector to be a ‘competent partner’ in PPP. From New Zealand’s perspective, the public sector’s lack of commitment towards PPP policy due to politics made it difficult to get potential partners interested in investing in PPP when no projects were being announced. As explained by NZ01:

“[...] company A (international partners) would not keep sending their people here. If there is nothing innovative to do here, because if it is just a traditional cost-plus-contract, they (international partners) are not going to bid that because they cannot win it because they have got no unique selling proposition. So, they will just go, will go and do it somewhere else where they can win [...]”

It was illustrated further by stating that:

“[...] if you keep turning stuff on and off, and people would not see that as a secure career here. And you get people who start in it and then move out of it [...] then when you find yourself in a boom time like you did in 2012 or 2022, like you scratch your head and wonder, like, why nothing can be delivered because we are overwhelmed [...]” – NZ01

Due to this reason, interviews were also hopeful that the public sector would take a stronger approach towards PPP, and NZ04 noted that:

“[...] hopefully that (commitment towards PPP) will become the norm [...]”

However, with the three-year election cycle in New Zealand (Satherley *et al.*, 2021), it is difficult to maintain the same policies, especially when the new government assumes office. Interviews from New Zealand explained that it is important for the government to take a stronger approach, as interviewees saw that the government seemed to struggle to decide whether to utilise PPP or not as the government viewed how assets delivered through PPP are expensive to maintain, but in great condition, whilst conventional procurement is the opposite. In this sense, it is important to engage in capacity building, aiding their understanding of PPP.

In comparison, with only two types of procurement models available to deliver public infrastructure services in Malaysia: PPP (including privatisation) and conventional (UKAS, 2022), the commitment from the public sector towards PPP policies is not an issue for the private sector, and as previously highlighted in Chapter 5, the public sector in Malaysia is highly committed to improving PPP implementation in Malaysia by contributing sufficient effort; for instance, looking into different PPP models and learning from others, which interviewees from the private sector appreciated.

However, interviewees noted that due to political instability in recent years, which saw the change of five prime ministers in five years (2018 – 2023), the government constantly changed their policy surrounding project tendering for public procurement, affecting existing PPP projects:

“Every government has its own direction [...] we have already had five prime ministers [...] (typically) same administration takes about three to five months to finalise the policy, and for a new government, it takes about six to nine months to formulate a policy. So, theoretically, this project should have been completed by the year 2023/2024. However, at this point, we can see that the project is still awaiting a policy from the government.” – MY08

“[...] the most critical issue is the constant change of policy by the government, and it becomes a problem. At one point, they (government) say both ‘solicited’ and ‘unsolicited’ can be negotiated (directly) [...] then only ‘solicited’ can be negotiated, whilst ‘unsolicited’ cannot. Then, whether it is PPP or not [...] needs to go through open tender process.” – MY07

The interviewee noted that oftentimes, PPP projects that are still in the early stages must stop abruptly to ensure that they follow the current policy despite the negotiation having been underway for more than two years and having already received approval from the cabinet. Additionally, some interviewees involved in a highway project in Malaysia noted that whilst waiting for the government to firm up and implement their new policy, some developments from other developers have begun at the original site, which means that they must change the highway alignment which consumes significant resources from both the public and private sectors:

“The original alignment was a green area with no development, and during the process (waiting for government to firm up and implement their policy) [...] there will be developments that will have an impact on the original alignment and costs, such as land reclamation [...] there are risks for three parties: for the concessionaire, the cost of land reclamation will be high; for the government, they will have to deal with more parties because land reclamation needs to go through the government; and finally, for the users, the toll rates will be higher.” – MY08

As expected, some interviewees remarked that once a PPP project received approval from the cabinet, the PPP project should continue as planned to avoid further problems and conflicts, especially in projects that require the private sector to undergo several strict requirements before the PPP contract is effective; alternatively, there must be a timeframe when the project must be executed after receiving approval from the cabinet.

In this regard, the PPP unit and the procuring authority need to play an integral role in communicating with the central government to ensure stability and consistency for PPP projects that are already initiated, making sure that changes in government general policies would not affect projects that have already received cabinet approval. Several interviewees from the private sector noted that cancelling or restarting PPP projects at the last minute due to

changes in general government policy is a waste of taxpayers' money because these projects went through the proper process (e.g., feasibility studies). As indicated earlier, active listening and soliciting feedback and concerns from various parties are fundamental. As such, the interviewees did not expect much commitment from the government towards PPP but did expect the government to be more committed towards their general policy related to 'tendering' for public contracts.

In summary, although every partner in PPP must deliver their obligations, which is the bare minimum required in PPP, the commitment shown by PPP partners highlights their desire to ensure successful PPP implementation and project delivery. Importantly, the commitment shown by different partners also helps develop trust between the partners, and according to Vijayabanu and Vignesh (2018), commitment is the number two most important element for a successful PPP project environment. Apart from commitment, respondents have also observed that change in personnel is a factor that can influence relationships between stakeholders.

6.2.1.12 Change in Personnel

Organisational changes cannot be avoided, especially for a project involving a long-term commitment, such as PPP. In Malaysia, public sector personnel only serve for approximately five years before being transferred to a different department (in different ministries). According to public sector interviewees, this is something that frequently happens and cannot be avoided if you are a civil servant:

“Usually four, five years [...] Usually in government, especially procurement, (or) hot department usually always change (the personnel), and we are no exception.” – MY02

For this reason, some projects may have different public sector representatives when transitioning to a new phase.

Interpreting interview transcripts revealed that the frequent change in personnel could potentially create a bad outcome for an existing relationship between parties, especially when the new personnel do not share the same views and values as their predecessor, disrupting the continuity and consistency of the decision-making process. For example:

“[...] at the beginning of the phase, we are dealing with Officer A and in the middle of the phase, Officer A was replaced by Officer B and Officer B asked us ‘Why is it like this?’. Sometimes they ask us to make changes and the design of the building is not fixed, and the risk is on us because of the change, they want a different design, and we were forced to change (the design during mid-construction) and bear the cost. If we are dealing with our own side (private sector), there are no issues because everything is already fixed, we already have a contract, the cost is already there, everything is there [...]”
– MY06

MY03 from the procuring authority even noted that:

“[...] lucky if (we – the civil servant) replaced by someone who has done it (PPP in the past).”

Interestingly, the assertion by MY03 supports the findings by Umar *et al.* (2021), indicating the years of experience of civil servants with public infrastructure projects is insignificant when they engage in PPP; as explained earlier, understanding the procurement model is critical.

Nonetheless, organisational changes have no effect on the government; however, private sector interviewees indicated that since the government has the power, the advantage is on their side, and the only thing the private sector can do is accommodate the needs of the public sector.

Public sector interviewees from Malaysia noted that to ensure that the change in personnel does not affect the progress of PPP projects or become a serious issue between the public and private sectors, these public sector interviewees have come up with their own proactive measures to reorient themselves through capacity building to ensure that a positive relationship between the public and private sectors is maintained despite organisational changes.

From the interview transcripts, changes in personnel or organisational changes are not something that is common in New Zealand; however, when they do occur, they lead to issues within the parties. Within the New Zealand context, this is something that is frequently experienced by the private sector, which leads to a loss of knowledge among them:

“On the building side, they (private sector) have had seven design managers, seven project directors leading the project, so they keep losing all the key people, and you cannot afford it, you get a loss of knowledge through that process and that is part of the reason they have been struggled, is that they have not kept their core team. Often, they put great people to win a bid and then do not think about core delivery.” – NZ05

In addition to the change in personnel, interview transcripts also suggest that nationality and/or culture in PPP could also affect the relationship between different partners in PPP. The next section discusses the topic further and its impact on the quality of stakeholder relationships in PPP.

6.2.1.13 Nationality and/or Culture

An analysis of the interview transcripts indicated that the complexities of PPP often require expertise from different jurisdictions with different cultures. As a result, some interviewees involved in a project with international partners argue that the cultural differences between PPP partners can threaten the established relationship. Comparing partners from different cultures, MY05 explained the following:

“[...] people from the East and we know very well that they have honour and dignity, when they are wrong, they admit, very straightforward. [...] there is a lot of problems when some of the parties are from the West, not West alone, but China as well, really a headache. I give compliment to the Japanese company [...]”

Additionally, MY05 also revealed that disputes or arguments between parties take a lot of time to settle due to their cultural differences. NZ05 also faced a similar kind of situation and noted that cultural differences can be avoided by understanding the partner’s modus operandi:

“[...] their modus operandi is quite litigious [...] that is their culture in Australia, we knew that going into with these guys, that was how they would behave [...] so that has been a hard 9 months of negotiation [...] I have led it, ran it with our lawyers and commercial advisors and it has been a very much a commercial focus [...] we might not have been very good friends commercially [...]”

Overall, interviewees emphasise on the importance of understanding the different cultures and tailoring engagement strategies based on the culture of other partners, which is vital in maintaining a respectful environment whilst avoiding negative consequences (Gorski *et al.*, 2015; Osobajo *et al.*, 2021). Tailoring engagement was also found to be important for the development of trust (Flick *et al.*, 2020).

6.3 Discussion

The findings from this chapter identify various factors that can influence the relationship conditions/developments between stakeholders in PPP. These factors include contract design, risk management and allocation, collaboration, communication, knowledge and understanding, transparency, accountability, payment mechanisms, politics, commitment, policy due to unforeseen events and changes in personnel and nationality and/or culture. Importantly, some of these factors have not been previously documented in PPP research, such as nationality and/or culture, policy due to unforeseen events and changes in personnel. Furthermore, an analysis of the findings suggests that most factors are endogenous to PPP projects and influenced by stakeholder-specific decisions.

An analysis of the findings on factors affecting stakeholder relationships indicated that the ability and inability to manage these factors affects the level of trust, confidence and respect between partners. These three components can be categorised as the main foundation for relationship building. Trust refers to the perception that the stakeholders can rely on one another to fulfil their obligations, which includes being accountable and willing to be open and transparent when communicating and being committed.

Confidence is a belief that stakeholders are capable and competent, which develops through trust and evidence presented in front of them. From interviews, the PPP practitioners reported that they are more confident when partners showcase their knowledge and understanding. For example, one interviewee reported that they are willing to take responsibility for other partners based on their early experiences in dealing with certain issues. Respect involves actively recognising and valuing diverse interests, skills and contributions, including cultural differences of stakeholders. It promotes inclusivity by ensuring that other stakeholders can express their viewpoints before making a decision. For example, soliciting input from others before making any decision.

Overall, identifying stakeholder relationships in PPP provides a valuable understanding of stakeholder management strategies for managing diverse stakeholders in PPP, which is important to ensure long-term sustainable relationships between different stakeholders. The next section summarises the adaptive strategies for maintaining a positive PPP environment gathered from interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia.

6.3.1.1 Recommendations for Stakeholder Management

The responses provided by PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia related to stakeholder relationships revealed several issues that need to be addressed to establish a positive PPP environment. This section highlights several recommendations based on the stakeholders' expectations (necessary improvements) and best practice approaches in PPP. These recommendations should provide proactive mitigation strategies before concerns escalate into significant issues, resulting in the development of a positive PPP environment. The findings are ideal for contributing to the development of a comprehensive PPP stakeholder management, which can help the stakeholder to make an informed decision-making process. Table 6.2 summarises the recommendations or strategies adopted by interviewees for effective stakeholder management for PPP project, some of which were also highlighted in the previous two chapters.

Table 6.2. Recommended stakeholder management strategies

| Category | Recommendations/Strategies |
|-----------------|--|
| Contract design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and early communications to overcome interpretation issues (seeking clarification/avoiding variation order). • Contract should clearly define the of roles, responsibilities, liabilities and risks. • Clear output specification, avoiding ambiguity. • Clear set of guidelines to overcome ambiguity. • Public sector, through the procuring authority should constantly follow-up with the cabinet. |

Recommendations/strategies adopted by all interviewees.

Table 6.2. Recommended stakeholder management strategies (*Cont'd*)

| Category | Recommendations/Strategies |
|---|---|
| Risk management and allocation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partners should understand the risk mechanism in PPP.• Conduct proper feasibility studies of risks in PPP.• Do not transfer unnecessary risks to other partners.• Solicit feedback and incorporate input from other parties to ensure that other parties are capable in managing the risks or if the risks viable.• Fair compensation to private sector based on the amount of risk private sector should manage – incentive private sector to deliver.• Public sector should defocus from getting cheapest tender price.• Risk-sharing with other partners when necessary. |
| <i>Recommendations/strategies adopted by all interviewees.</i> | |
| Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritised collaboration in dealing with issues in delivering critical tasks.• Collaborate to deal with issues face by other partners. |
| <i>Recommendations/strategies adopted by NZ01, NZ03, NZ04, MY05 and MY06.</i> | |
| Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear line of communications between partners.• Effective and clear communications between partners throughout PPP project life cycle. |
| <i>Recommendations/strategies adopted by all interviewees.</i> | |
| Knowledge and understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PPP unit should play an integral role in filling the knowledge gap between different partners throughout the PPP contract duration.• Appointing proper PPP advisors to fill the knowledge gap.• Maintain knowledge and understanding through early capacity building (e.g., workshops and seminars).• Encouraging partners to learn from one another. |
| <i>Recommendations/strategies adopted by all interviewees.</i> | |

Table 6.2. Recommended stakeholder management strategies (*Cont'd*)

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Transparency | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public sector should be transparent during bidding process.• Transparent approach during contract negotiations stage.• Transparent dialogue between partners during every phase of PPP.• More transparent review of PPP project/environment. |
|--------------|---|

Recommendations/strategies adopted by NZ01, NZ02, NZ05, MY02, MY03 and MY06.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partners should be accountable throughout the project life cycle, including their decision.• Aligning expectations between partners.• Reasonable output to ensure accountability.• Conducting workshops/seminars addressing the importance of accountability.• PPP unit acts as a mediator to ensure accountability.• Establishing KPIs or commitment register for partners to follow and keep track.• Regular meetings and reporting between different partners.• Offer performance guarantees to subcontractors. |
|----------------|---|

Recommendations/strategies adopted by all interviewees.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Payment mechanism | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design payment mechanism with fairness and transparency.• Shared responsibility when managing complaints.• Partners should take flexible approach when there is no urgency.• Prioritise on-time payments to motivate partners. |
|-------------------|---|

Recommendations/strategies adopted by NZ01, NZ02, NZ05, MY05, MY06, MY07 and MY08.

Table 6.2. Recommended stakeholder management strategies (*Cont'd*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Commitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partners should be willing to go great length (e.g., appointing specialist consultant, self-regulate).• Public sector is advised to be committed with PPP policy to ensure private sector confidence.• Public sector is advised to be committed with PPP project that already received cabinet approval despite change in government policy. |
| <i>Recommendations/strategies adopted by NZ01, NZ03, NZ04, NZ05, MY01, MY02, MY06, MY07 and MY08.</i> | |
| Policy due to unforeseen events | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate and understand the fiscal impact due to unforeseen events before making any decision.• Clear definition of ‘force majeure’ to avoid conflict due to ambiguity.• Be thoughtful with the difficulties face by different partners. |
| <i>Recommendations/strategies adopted by NZ01, NZ03, NZ05, MY01, MY02, MY06, MY07 and MY08</i> | |
| Politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The government is advised to not politicised PPP.• Continuous and open communication practices between the procuring authority and policy makers.• Cronyism should be avoided by all means through strong political champion.• Minimum requirements that private sector need to follow to ensure credibility.• Proper due diligence through transparent and improved guidelines and process, ensuring integrity in the procurement process. |
| <i>Recommendations/strategies adopted by NZ01, NZ02, NZ03, NZ04, NZ05, MY01, MY02, MY03, MY06, MY07 and MY08.</i> | |

Table 6.2. Recommended stakeholder management strategies (*Cont'd*)

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Change in personnel | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constantly engage in capacity building with new personnel. |
|---------------------|--|

Recommendations/strategies adopted by NZ05, MY01, MY02, MY03, MY04, MY06 and MY07

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Nationality and/or culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise and accommodate diverse culture.• Tailor engagement based on the different cultural background. |
|----------------------------|--|

Recommendations/strategies adopted by NZ01, NZ05, MY05, MY07, MY08.

6.4 Conclusion

Comparing the lived experiences of PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, this chapter presented the findings related to stakeholder relationships in PPP. The findings revealed that various factors could influence the quality of relationships among the PPP stakeholders: contract design, risk management and allocation, collaboration, communication, knowledge and understanding, transparency, accountability, payment mechanisms, politics, commitment, and policy due to unforeseen events and change in personnel and nationality and/or culture. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that stakeholder management strategies in PPP are significant in mediating stakeholder relationships and promoting trust, confidence and respect. Ending this chapter, several recommendations for stakeholder management were highlighted by comparing the lived experiences of PPP practitioners in both jurisdictions, which are important in promoting a positive PPP environment. Overall, the findings presented in this chapter have answered research questions 3 and 5 and have fulfilled objectives 3 and 6 (see Table 9.1, p 257).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Stakeholder Management Practices

7.1 Introduction

The success of PPP projects hinges upon the supportive coexistence between different stakeholders. Chinyio and Akintoye (2008) argued the importance of identifying effective approaches and formulating a stakeholder management process. This chapter aims to highlight the practical stakeholder management approaches based on the lived experiences of PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia. The overall structure of the stakeholder management practices presented in this chapter is set out in Section 2.8.2 (p. 66) under the following categories: stakeholder integration, stakeholder identification, stakeholder assessment, stakeholder decision-making and stakeholder monitoring and evaluation.

7.2 Stakeholder Integration

Before discussing the stakeholder management processes, it is important to understand the integration between both procuring authority and SPV as focal organisations in managing stakeholders in PPP. An analysis of the interview transcripts from PPP practitioners in both jurisdictions revealed that stakeholder management responsibilities became a joint responsibility (integration) after the selection of SPV, specifically after the PPP contract was signed by both parties (procuring authority and SPV) and not necessarily after the contract was effective.

This is because some of the requirements before the contract can be effective require both sides to collaborate. An example that was already highlighted in the previous chapter, specifically Chapter 4 (Stakeholder Identification in PPP), is related to engagement with the general public. An understanding of the interview transcripts supports De Schepper *et al.* (2014) statement, which suggests that stakeholder management should be integrated after the presence of a private consortium.

Owing to the organisational differences between the public and private sectors, prior to integrating both public and private sectors, the PPP unit is responsible for building the capacity between both sides. Interviewees from Malaysia also noted that various other workshops were also conducted, facilitated by the PPP unit to integrate both public and private sectors' dimensions after the contract signing:

“[...] after the concession agreement was signed, we (SPV) sat down with the procuring authority and examined all the details [...] So there were many workshop sessions held with the procuring authority and the PPP unit, and that was the beginning.” – MY06

One of the first signs that signal the integration between these two focal organisations is when both sides started to identify/recognise the stakeholders within the PPP environment (apart from the PPP unit); instead of identifying/recognising the stakeholders that they need to engage, which is typical in traditional tender. The approach of the two focal organisations in PPP is critical to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are considered during the decision-making process. Figure 7.1 illustrates the integration between the focal organisations in PPP.

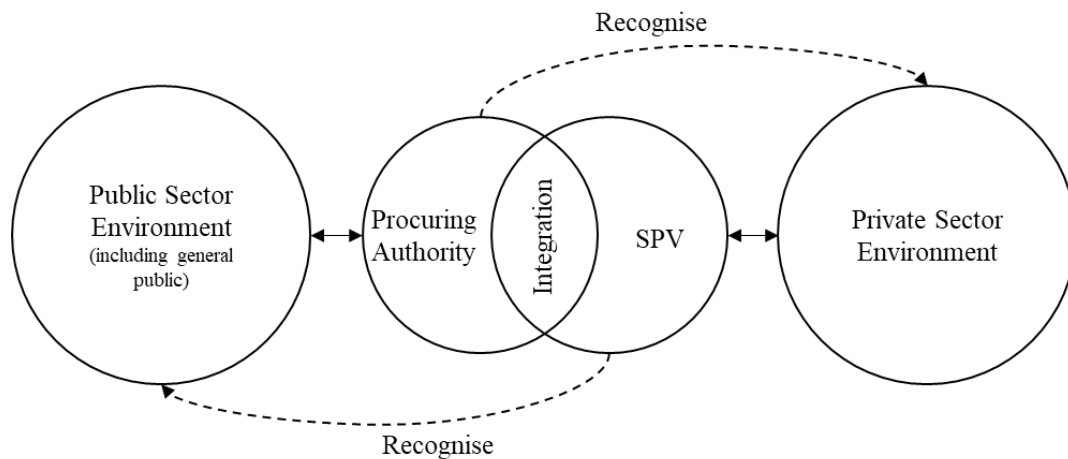


Figure 7.1. Integration between two focal organisations as reported by PPP practitioners

Public sector interviewees also informed that despite being aware of the involvement of other private sector partners (apart from the SPV) through various contractual relationships with the SPV, the SPV should take full responsibility when there are contractual or legal disputes within the private sector. Nevertheless, the procuring authority can act as a mediator, facilitating the dispute.

Between the two focal organisations, for effective stakeholder management, interviewees from both jurisdictions confirmed the establishment of a governance structure specific to the project in the form of a project monitoring committee or steering committee consisting of members of the public and private sectors (typically representative from the procuring authority and SPV – focal organisations) to integrate diverse perspectives and overseeing the PPP project throughout the project life cycle:

“[...] we have a Project Monitoring Committee (PMC) meeting at least once a year to discuss the company’s KPIs, whether they are doing the job. [...] For PMC, yes, the private sector will be involved [...]” – MY01

“[...] during the actual delivery of the project, construction and operations, there is a steering committee made up of both groups (public and private sectors) together.” – NZ01

Compared to conventional public infrastructure delivery, the governance structure ceases to exist once the project has been delivered. This means that the governance structure only exists to oversee the delivery or construction of public assets, which corroborates with the findings of Wilson *et al.* (2010).

Besides providing a platform for focal organisations to manage and engage with one another, the formation of a governance structure is important in ensuring stakeholder management accountability (delivering expectations), reconciling diverse interests and providing a foundation or platform for monitoring and evaluating stakeholder management.

In addition, interviewees informed that a clear allocation of responsibilities and transparency between both focal organisations are critical, especially for stakeholder engagement. Having a clear plan ensures the effectiveness of stakeholder management. Overall, with regard to stakeholder engagement, the responsibilities between the focal organisations can be allocated in three ways: public (procuring authority), private (SPV), and shared, depending on who the stakeholders are and the issues at stake.

Whilst shared responsibility reflects the collaborative stakeholder management approach (integration), nevertheless, due to the regulatory frameworks and legal boundaries, typically, the focal organisations can only engage with stakeholders within their respective environment. Due to this reason, shared responsibility is more suitable when engaging with external stakeholders, typically the general public and their representatives:

“In conjunction with the ministry (engagement with the general public), we sort of do that together with our designers and we get sort of different experts in all sorts of different areas and make sure that we can deliver something which the community very proud of [...] We are going to be neighbours for the next 25 years and we need the students to want to go there, so there was a lot of consultation process [...] The schools set up some sort of an establishment, Board of Trustees, there will be a few people assigned to it, who then we can engage with, as well as some of the wider community.” – NZ04

“[...] we can say we do it 50-50 (community engagement) [...] In terms of policy, the government agencies, such as state government do not allow private sector to directly engage with them [...] we have an agreement there (allocation of responsibilities) [...]” – MY07

From interviewees with Malaysian PPP practitioners, not all engagement with external stakeholders is shared between the procuring authority and SPV. Despite not being explicitly stated in the SIA guidelines, targeted engagement with specific representatives from schools, hospitals, houses of worship, heritage buildings, or crematories requires the procuring authority to lead the process because of sensitivity issues, including any government offices located within the zone of impact. Hence, the clear allocation of responsibilities is necessary in PPP to avoid overlapping responsibilities.

Furthermore, the allocation of responsibilities also depends on the reason for engaging external stakeholders. For engagement to understand the interests, needs and expectations of the stakeholders, such as focus group discussions, town hall sessions and public opinion surveys, which are part of the requirements before the contract is effective (before the construction stage), the responsibilities will be shared depending on the stakeholders that they need to engage with. This includes engagement after the construction stage (e.g., public announcement/newsletter).

Meanwhile, for engagement to address the interests, needs and expectations of the external stakeholders or engagement that some interviewees from the private sector refer to as their moral obligations (e.g., corporate social responsibility – CSR), the responsibilities can be either shared between the focal organisations, but typically led by the SPV. With how shared

responsibility operates, it may help address one of the issues highlighted by Jayasuriya (2017), who revealed that the government often time hides the actual situation of PPP projects from the private sector when the engagement with external stakeholders starts before the selection of an SPV, leading to stakeholder management issues. As highlighted by the World Bank (2017), it is important to enforce the parameters in which the partners operate.

Compared to conventional public procurement, managing external stakeholders falls to the public sector, and neither side has to share the responsibility. For example, NZ01 from the private sector in New Zealand noted that:

“[...] in traditional procurement, you (private sector) would not go out to the general public to ask them [...] like it just happens.” – NZ01

Other private sector interviewees also shared the same view with NZ01. For example, MY08 confirmed that engaging or identifying the general public as a stakeholder is not required in conventional public projects and is not part of their job scope. Interviewees argued that it is instrumental for PPP practitioners to be aware and acknowledge the importance of different stakeholder groups in PPP, as this helps create a focused effort on engaging with stakeholders that are significant to the PPP progress. Furthermore, this shows the importance of the general public for the public and private sector for PPP project success.

Overall, the findings presented have addressed one of the main issues raised in earlier studies with regard to general public marginalisation (Rwelamila *et al.*, 2014). The study by Rwelamila *et al.* (2014) posited that the general public was frequently marginalised in PPP due to the takeover of a delegated agent (private sector) in delivering public infrastructure services, which was previously under the responsibility of the public sector/procuring authority for conventional procurement models. Evidence from interviewees from both jurisdictions revealed that it is not the case, as despite the majority of the responsibilities or risks given to the private sector in PPP, in the context of stakeholder management, it is important to conduct proper planning of stakeholder management, ensuring the stakeholders, especially the general public are not marginalised in PPP, which corroborate with Teo and Loosemoore (2017). Furthermore, the findings also challenge the statement of Henjeweile *et al.* (2013) that the marginalisation of the general public was due to a narrow stakeholder perspective.

7.3 Identification of Stakeholders

The stakeholder identification process is the most critical process that directly influences the success of managing stakeholders in PPP (Eyiah-Botwe *et al.*, 2020). Interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia have allowed this research to identify the critical stakeholders to the success of PPP and highlighted the considerations for the stakeholder identification process for PPP projects (see Chapter 4).

In Malaysia, despite the inclusion of the general public as external stakeholders is subject to SIA requirements. The ‘non-stakeholders’ can still raise their concerns through proper government channels and were not ignored entirely, promoting inclusivity in PPP as indicated by several interviewees. Based on interviews, the public sector will take full responsibility for addressing the so-called ‘non-stakeholders’ concerns because they are the ones that set the requirements, suggesting that the ‘non-stakeholder’ still carries some risks if not appropriately managed, which aligns with the assumptions made by Mitchell *et al.* (1997) of the importance of recognising the claims and interests of ‘non-stakeholders’:

“They (public/community) are not stakeholders, but we (procuring authority) take into account their needs (if they address it to the proper channel). Perhaps the planning department (of the ministry) will do it.” – MY04

Nonetheless, during the stakeholder identification stage, it is important for the procuring authority and the SPV to collaborate and maintain open and transparent communication to ensure that everyone understands these requirements, avoiding any conflicts and effectively managing the risk framework associated with the general public, including the ‘non-stakeholders’. Hence, the findings highlight the importance of effectively communicating responsibilities between the focal organisations in stakeholder management.

Parallel to the process of stakeholder identification, a stakeholder map was developed to explain their relationships. In New Zealand, the public sector typically is the one that forms the general stakeholder map, which the SPV needs to respond to and manage in the best way possible:

“There is always a stakeholder partnership section in there that they (private sector) have to formally respond to that will look at how they partner us for 25 years [...] partner with local Iwi and what the general management approach will be [...] it is something that we do (stakeholder mapping). [...] it might have 10% in the marks that whole partnership section.” – NZ05

“[...] it is true on the government side that they do stakeholder mapping [...] especially when it comes to Iwi and Māori [...] the private sector side, we responding to the tender the best way we can [...]” – NZ01

According to Walker *et al.* (2008), stakeholder mapping is crucial in promoting transparency for an effective stakeholder management process by aiding stakeholder understanding, especially since several interviewees noted that transparency is important in PPP because of the complexity of the procurement. In addition, a clear mapping of stakeholders can help to visualise the interdependencies between stakeholders. As Roloff (2008) suggested, it helps to foster collaboration for a project with multi-stakeholder networks. With multiple processes in PPP, the mapping of stakeholders is often time extended to visualise relationships with the project timeline. For highway projects in Malaysia:

“[...] we have different map for different process [...] during value assessment, we have map showcasing the stakeholders that involved [...] during value engineering, the map is different.” – MY08

In the New Zealand context, the mapping is slightly different from that of Malaysia due to the unique cultural/historical practices in New Zealand. Hence, this made the mapping procedure more critical, and it is important that the right Iwi group is identified as one of the key stakeholders. In accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi, it permits the Iwi groups to claim compensation.

During the identification process, the stakeholders' information was also captured. Prior to the actual engagement, most information is collected based on previous projects, initiatives or official data (e.g., government publications/reports). This means that the information must be evidence-based information and the significance of this is that it allows the project management team to effectively assess the level of priority in the later stages of the stakeholder management process.

Overall, interviewees posited that capturing stakeholder information is important, as every stakeholder has unique interests and varying impacts on PPP projects. This corroborates with Xia *et al.* (2018), who state that different stakeholders carry different risks. Importantly, the information can be considered the foundation for an effective stakeholder management process, allowing the stakeholder management team to make informed decision. Besides, stakeholder information, especially related to the private sector, is important for the public sector to ensure that partners selected by the SPV are capable of delivering their obligations.

Most importantly, interpretations of interview transcripts from PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions also revealed that due to the long-term and dynamic nature of PPP, the stakeholder identification process is not a linear and one-off exercise, as significant changes in stakeholder composition may happen as the project progresses. One example given by interviewees from New Zealand is that:

“[...] the Māori nations, if that is what you would call them, like they have competing territorial claims. So not all of the Māori nations would agree who has ‘mana whenua’ (territorial claims) of any particular area, and so on. [...] out of nowhere, we received a letter from Māori grouping nation who claims to have ‘mana’ over a piece of land that we were building a road on, where we had already identified a stakeholder group [...] so that was kind of awkward, and we had to engage in good faith [...] if it is not a legitimate claim, like you are not going to deal with them [...]” – NZ01

Overall, due to the dynamic nature of PPP stakeholders, the process becomes a review process after actual engagement with various stakeholders, similar to the process highlighted by Henjewele *et al.* (2013).

7.4 Stakeholder Assessment

Interpretations of interview transcripts indicated that all identified stakeholders should be assessed for effective stakeholder management before engagement can occur. With various information collected, interpretation of interview transcripts suggests that the information acts as a precursor for stakeholder analysis to determine and identify the significance of each stakeholder, which is critical for the stakeholder prioritisation process.

Two sets of analyses are typically conducted based on the interpretation of interview transcripts from both jurisdictions. However, one is more common than another. The most common assessment is analysing stakeholder attributes. An analysis of interview transcripts suggests that the stakeholders' attributes are analysed based on power, urgency, and legitimacy, corresponding to the concept by Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (Figure 7.2). According to Mitchell *et al.* (1997), 'power' refers to the stakeholder's power to influence the project, 'legitimacy' is the legitimacy of the stakeholder's relationship with the project and 'urgency' is the urgency of the stakeholder's claim on the project, either it is time sensitive or critical.

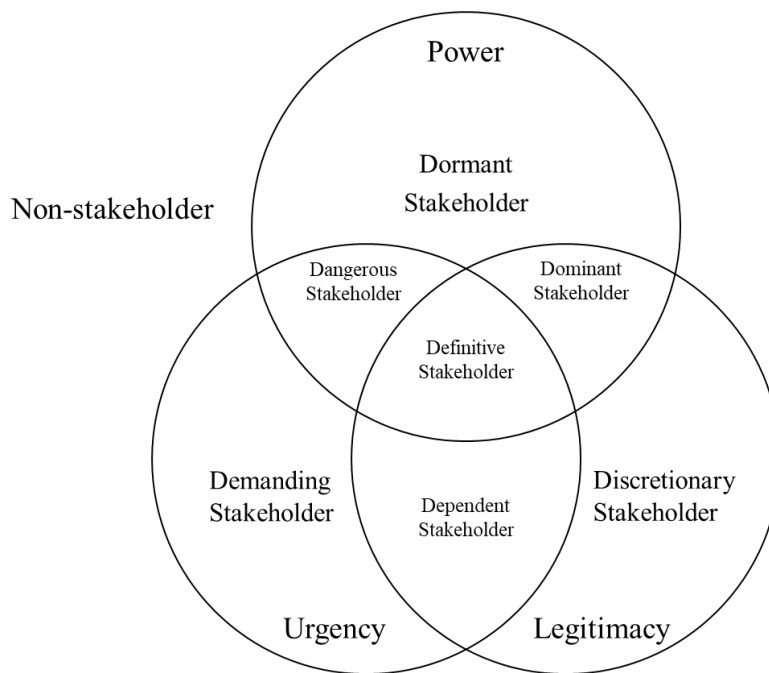


Figure 7.2. Stakeholder salience model (source: Mitchell *et al.*, 1997)

The second assessment procedure is attitude assessment. However, as indicated in Chapter 5, the interviewees rarely executed this assessment. Nonetheless, it still exists in practice, especially when it is difficult to convey something to other stakeholders, suggesting that the assessment is non-existent prior to the actual engagement with various stakeholders, specifically internal stakeholders.

As highlighted earlier, the outcome of stakeholder assessment informs the prioritisation. Nonetheless, effective assessment procedures help with the formulation of a targeted stakeholder engagement procedure, which corroborates the statement by Lim *et al.* (2005) indicating that stakeholders are fragmented and have conflicting attributes; hence, targeted

approaches are necessary, allowing the project management team to strategies on how to engage with each stakeholder effectively, as these stakeholders are interdependent.

However, interviewees from both jurisdictions indicated that due to the nature of PPP, it is critical to have shared viewpoints to avoid conflicts, especially when assessing the general public to ensure long-term success. Hence, maintaining open and transparent communication between both focal organisations is fundamental, simultaneously allowing for a feedback loop.

Like stakeholder identification, this procedure is also ongoing throughout the duration of the PPP contract, as the stakeholders are dynamic depending on the project phase. Hence, the project phase can be recognised as the main consideration that influences the level of priority:

“[...] that (ongoing procedure) is just de facto true. Like when you are planning to do something new, you spend a lot of time thinking about people who will be impacted once the main part, either building is complete.” – NZ01

In other words, the priority level is transitional, which is important for the project management team to allocate the right resources and attention at the right moment.

7.5 Stakeholder Decision-Making

Interviewees suggested that all identified stakeholders require attention in the form of engagement, and stakeholder decision-making is a stage in planning how the engagement will look. From the identification and prioritisation processes, the interviewees informed that they influence the decision-making process, such as engagement tools/approaches and frequency, which can be in the form of formal and informal engagement, typically ranging from newsletters to regular face-to-face meetings. Importantly, the engagement must be able to identify what is important to other stakeholders besides building relationships.

Interviewees from both jurisdictions also confirmed that engagement with the public leads to public support or buy-in, which is critical for project continuity. From interviews, engagement with the general public also follows the all-around accepted standard for public participation by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), which is also implicitly or explicitly highlighted in the guidelines provided by the government (e.g., SIA guideline from Malaysia, State Highway Social Impact Assessment Guide from New Zealand).

Evidence from New Zealand and Malaysia also suggests that the requirements set by the public sector, especially related to the general public, are also critical in ensuring that the engagement complies with ethical standards (including engagement protocols), despite the requirement not being specific to PPP. For instance, in Malaysia, the SIA guideline clearly states, “*Public engagement sessions should **not only be limited** during the preparation of the SIA Report*” (Malaysia’s Ministry of Local Government Development, 2023, p. 45). Moreover, the guideline also includes a sample SIA report checklist to ensure all highlighted elements are addressed in the report.

Within the context of New Zealand, owing to cultural/historical practices, the private sector needs to explain as part of the submission to the government how the engagement process of the Māori community will be conducted when they respond to the tender:

“[...] when we were delivering the Pūhoi to Warkworth motorway. [...] as part of the submission, we had to explain how we would communicate, deal [...] keep involved those groups (Māori community) [...]” – NZ01

Since 2019, the ‘Guidelines for Engagement with Māori’ by the Office for Māori Crown Relations/Te Arawhiti was in place, which can be used as a starting point to plan the engagement process with the Māori community for future projects.

For engagement with external stakeholders, newsletters, surveys, focus group discussions, town hall sessions, and meetings with group representatives have always been preferred methods. Furthermore, consultation with the general public through surveys, focus group discussions, town hall sessions, and meetings with group representatives is important when dealing with issues raised by external stakeholders. Importantly, this helps the internal stakeholders, specifically the procuring authority and the SPV, to understand something they overlook or understand different perspectives, which may influence how they engage with the external stakeholders throughout the PPP contract.

Regarding the engagement with the general public with high priority (directly affected), interviewees informed that focus group discussion is the most effective method to understand the specific concerns and needs of the directly affected (high priority) general public, especially the ones that are ‘on the fence’ about the project:

“The most effective one is the focus group discussion because we directly focus on the community [...] we carry out focus group discussion in groups, so they (general public/affected groups) can express their issues or concerns to us. [...] from feedback and by addressing it, it can help attract their support, and they believe with the project.” – MY08

Meanwhile, in a non-typical PPP project, such as housing redevelopment in Malaysia, engagement through a survey with the general public is the most effective, especially in dealing with issues related to the final design of the property. This shows that the selection of approaches must be tailored depending on situations, importantly, the stakeholders involved and the issues at stake.

Some PPP practitioners, especially from Malaysia, noted that since stakeholder management in PPP is an ongoing process, owing to the concerns raised by the general public from the initial engagement or consultation with the general public, engagement through CSR is one of the approaches that these interviewees utilise to ensure that the general public or communities are treated well to avoid stakeholder opposition in the long run, despite the approach not being explicitly highlighted in the SIA guideline:

“[...] we did certain corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects [...] on quarterly basis we provide monetary contribution to the affected public [...] this project is not just for profit because some people were affected, and we need to take care of them.” – MY05

The action can be seen as a form of the internal stakeholder’s moral obligation to the directly affected groups or communities. In addition, some PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions also noted that empowering this group through job creation is another form of engagement that some of them conducted to show their commitment and establish positive long-term relationships, especially with communities that are directly affected by the projects:

“[...] at the start of every working season we went and presented to the young folk and said, “do you want to come and do an apprenticeship and work?” like so much of that, it is not funny.” – NZ01

“[...] around 60 to 70% of the employees here are from local communities that previously affected by the project [...] it is something that we decided to do [...]” – MY05

In the case of external stakeholders, one of the most important decisions that need to be made before engaging in two-way communication (e.g., town hall session, focus group discussion) to capture relevant information that may ensure smooth project delivery is to determine the right sample size, as in reality, it is impossible to engage with every single external stakeholder, which often becomes an issue, especially for horizontal infrastructure (highway):

“[...] it is highly likely that not all of the general public will be approached, and these issues usually tend to arise.” – MY07

To avoid unintentional relegation of stakeholders to the periphery (Cappelen, 2004; Pacheco and Tovar, 2007), which can create negative sentiments surrounding the project, a more optimal sampling strategy is needed following the guidelines provided by the central government:

“[...] it (sample size and sampling of respondents) is based the SIA guideline from PLANMalaysia. For example, based on the calculation in the guideline, the sample size should be five thousand for that specific area [...]” – MY07

The significance of the optimal sampling strategy is to ensure that the sample is able to provide adequate input, representing the voices of different parties during the actual engagement stage, which is important to understand the actual interests, concerns and needs of the general public that were not captured based on the information from previous projects or initiatives. Overall, interviewees were informed that the guideline provided by the central government was their main point of reference when choosing the right sample size and participants. In choosing the sample size and sampling strategies, the following are the main considerations:

- Focus group/population characteristics.
- Time.
- Cost.
- Manpower.
- Equipment.

As for engagement with internal stakeholders, strategic meeting is a crucial approach to discuss the overall project development, including decision-making. However, every meeting is not the same because of various considerations, such as issues at stake and project progress:

“[...] we have monthly, quarterly meeting specifically to discuss on quality. At the end of 2018, when we have achieved several critical milestones, we conduct all the meeting that I mentioned before on a weekly basis, on top of that, we also have small meeting to address some concerns. If the meeting cannot solve any concerns at the working level, it will be elevated to big meeting, such as the EPC monthly progress meeting, if the issues are big, then we tabled it to the Board of Director’s meeting, that is how it works.” – MY05

In addition, workshops and seminars are another form of engagement approach that contributes to capacity-building. Some respondents from Malaysia noted that with the current era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, cloud-based engagement systems are very helpful and effective, especially for documentation:

“[...] contractor usually submit to us through the cloud and the submission will trigger through the email based on our communication system, because we create the system, it gives us notification and we just click the link from the email and if we want review the thing, we need to download the document, we put summary or comments and then submit it back [...] the contractor will review our comments, and if they agree with our comment or request, it becomes a new amendment.” – MY05

According to interviewees, one of the most important engagement tools, which is a form of formal written communication, is the contract itself. According to interviewees from both jurisdictions, the use of a contract can provide a more systematic approach to dealing with internal stakeholders as the contract outlines the terms, conditions and obligations of each party to follow, which is critical to successful project delivery. NZ05 noted that:

“It gives you positive discipline by being structured and typically when you go outside those norms, that is when it does not work.”

Despite various engagement tools available to engage various stakeholders, interviewees argued that it should be well-planned (including the timing of engagement), clear and transparent, which is important to avoid any issues that may lead to conflicts.

However, despite proper decision-making, this does not guarantee that issues will not arise. An analysis of the interview transcripts from PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions reveals that there are several engagement strategies in place when dealing with issues between stakeholders. Whilst consultation is the most appropriate strategy in dealing with issues raised by external stakeholders due to their non-contractual relationship with the PPP project. However, the relationship between internal stakeholders is much more complex. In dealing with issues with internal stakeholders, an analysis of the interview transcripts reveals that the process can be classified into a 4-step process (Figure 7.3), which is common in both jurisdictions. The most basic and common strategy that has been highlighted earlier, which can be considered as the foundation of every strategy in dealing with issues with internal stakeholders is negotiation, typically done through various strategic meetings throughout the PPP project life cycle without any third-party involvement. Interviewees argue that negotiation requires active communication, which helps develop a certain level of understanding between stakeholders, which is important before making any decision and addressing any misunderstandings.

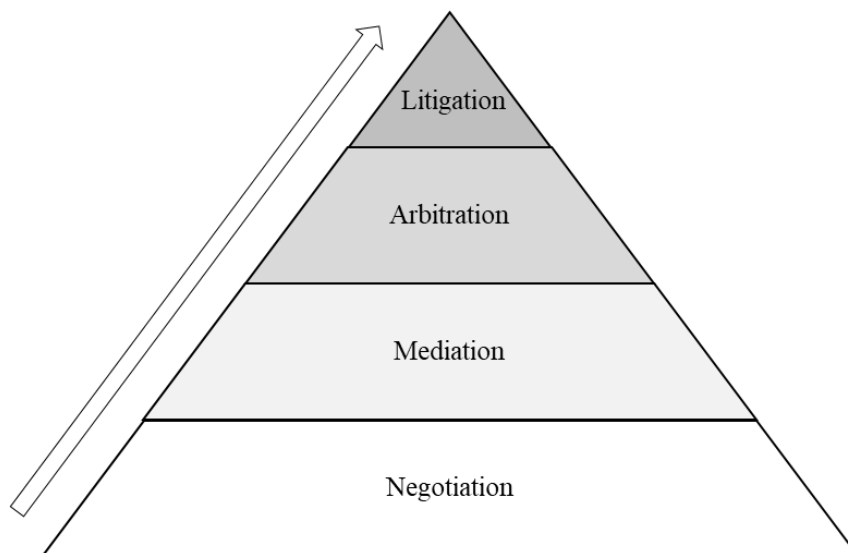


Figure 7.3. Processes in dealing with issues within internal stakeholder environment

Apart from negotiation, mediation is another strategy that was used to deal with issues after a failed negotiation. The use of mediation, according to interviewees, requires the PPP unit to

act as the mediator, especially when issues arise between the procuring authority and the SPV. The next strategy in dealing with issues is arbitration. Interviewees consider arbitration as their last resort in dealing with issues before going to court when both the use of negotiation and mediation fail to find a solution:

“If you look at the contract, the last part is arbitration. Whoever apply for arbitration needs to pay to the arbitrator [...] better if we manage to settle the dispute outside the court.” – MY05

The final resort in dealing with issues is litigation, which needs to go through the court system. Nonetheless, despite being the last resort, it rarely being executed by the interviewees as they perceive PPP as a marriage between the public and private sector due to long-term contract duration:

“It (PPP) is a marriage [...] it is a long, long marriage [...] – NZ05

Just like any marriage, bringing something to court has the potential to damage the relationship between stakeholders. The next section discusses the stakeholder management monitoring and evaluation stage.

7.6 Stakeholder Management Monitoring and Evaluation

As indicated in Section 7.2 (p. 200), the governance structure provides the foundation for stakeholder management monitoring and evaluation. From interviews, through the process of monitoring and evaluating, improvements can be made. For example, one of the practical approaches is the use of KPI, specifically in monitoring the level of support of the general public towards the PPP project, which is important when a project requires reaching certain thresholds (level of support) before moving forward.

Apart from using KPI, interviewees from Malaysia informed the appointment of third parties, such as advisors, to support the process due to their expertise related to SIA and to provide an unbiased view of stakeholder management. Furthermore, since the governance structure consists of both the procuring authority and SPV, it provides a platform for both sides to solicit feedback from one another, typically through strategic stakeholder meetings. In addition, the strategic stakeholder meetings also offer opportunities to monitor stakeholder relationships, specifically stakeholder satisfaction. Other practical approaches that some interviewees

implement, which have been highlighted by learning from past PPP projects or other PPP projects in different sectors:

“[...] we also in contact with other ministries to understand more about ‘what is the right way to do things’ as we are relatively new [...] it is a learning process for us [...] the Ministry of Education has been involved in a lot of PPP projects [...]” – MY02

“[...] there is a good transfer of knowledge across Crown projects [...] the people leading the negotiation at Transmission Gully were also my project director [...] there was a great sharing of knowledge [...]” – NZ05

The significance of learning from other PPP projects in other sectors allow the management team to extract any best practices for stakeholder management.

7.7 The Stakeholder Management Approaches

From interviews with PPP practitioners from both New Zealand and Malaysia, several approaches for stakeholder management were identified (Table 7.1). In terms of ‘stakeholder integration’, ‘integration of focal organisations’ and ‘allocation of responsibilities’ were the two steps the PPP practitioners took. ‘Integrate after the selection of SPV’ and ‘formation of governance structure’ were identified as the practical approaches taken to integrate the two focal organisations. After successful ‘integration’, ‘workshops/seminars’ and ‘strategic meetings’ play an important role in project management in allocating the responsibilities between the two focal organisations to avoid overlapping responsibilities.

Three management steps were identified during the ‘stakeholder identification’ stage: ‘identify stakeholders in the PPP environment’, ‘collect stakeholder information’ and ‘develop stakeholder map’. In identifying stakeholders in the PPP environment, ‘regulatory frameworks’, ‘contractual connections’ and ‘moral/ethical/cultural practices’ are some of the practical approaches to fulfil the process. The second step is to ‘collect stakeholder information’. Before the actual engagement with identified stakeholders, the information collected is based on ‘previous projects/initiatives’. Interviewees also explained that the previous projects/initiatives do not necessarily have to be construction projects. For example, any social programme by the government in the past. Another practical approach for collecting stakeholder information prior to actual engagement is through official data, especially

demographic information. The final step is to ‘develop a stakeholder map’, which was also highlighted in a previous PPP study (Henjeweale *et al.*, 2014). Two practical approaches, ‘map stakeholder interdependencies’ and ‘map stakeholder to project timeline’, were utilised to visualise the stakeholder relationships.

The third stakeholder management process is ‘stakeholder assessment’, which has been recognised as one of the important steps for stakeholder management in PPP (Henjeweale *et al.*, 2014; Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2020; Amadi *et al.*, 2020; Das *et al.*, 2022). ‘Analyse stakeholder attributes’ was identified as the step taken during the process. In analysing stakeholder attributes, power, urgency and legitimacy are the main attributes that the interviewees use despite not explicitly stating them, which is influenced by the information collected in the previous stage (stakeholder identification stage). Several interviewees argued that legitimacy is the most significant attribute, as all legitimate stakeholders have some sort of power and urgency at some point throughout the PPP project life cycle because of their legitimate claim to the project. Another step taken, as identified from the interpretation of interview transcripts, is to ‘analyse stakeholder attitudes’; however, as indicated before, this step is uncommon, except when it is difficult to convey something to their counterparts. The interviewees confirmed that successful assessment leads to stakeholder prioritisation, which is important for decision-making processes.

The fourth process is ‘stakeholder decision-making’. In ‘deciding the engagement approach’, prior to the actual engagement with stakeholders, it is based on the ‘level or priority’ and ‘stakeholder involved’. The engagement approaches may change after ‘actual engagement’ with different stakeholders. This is because after ‘actual engagement’, the unmet needs, concerns and interests can be identified and analysed. In addition, the ‘tools available’ also significant in deciding the engagement approach. For example, with the availability of a cloud-based system, PPP practitioners from Malaysia can use the system to engage with other parties effectively. Interviewees also argued that before actual engagement, specifically with the general public, can proceed, and it is important to decide on the right sample size to avoid general public marginalisation, especially when it is not possible to engage with every single general public or affected groups. In deciding sample size, the practical approach that the interviewees utilised was to follow the strategies recommended in the official regulations/guidelines by the government. A similar approach was also undertaken to ‘sample the respondents’.

Table 7.1. Practical approaches for stakeholder management

| Stakeholder Management Process | Management Steps | Practical Approaches |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Stakeholder Integration | Integration of focal organisations | Integrate after the contract signing Forming a governance structure |
| | Allocation of responsibilities | Workshops/seminars Strategic meetings |
| Stakeholder Identification | Identify stakeholders in the PPP environment | Regulatory frameworks Contractual connections Moral/ethical/cultural practices |
| | Collect stakeholder information | Previous projects/initiatives Official data Actual engagement |
| | Develop a stakeholder map | Map stakeholder interdependencies Map stakeholders to project timeline |

Table 7.1. Practical approaches for stakeholder management

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Stakeholder Assessment | Analyse stakeholder attributes | Stakeholder information |
| | | Power, urgency and legitimacy |
| | Analyse stakeholder attitudes | Actual engagement |
| | Prioritise stakeholders | Based on analysis of stakeholder attributes and attitudes |
| Stakeholder Decision-Making | Formulating suitable engagement strategies | Level of priority |
| | | Stakeholder involved |
| | | Actual engagement |
| | | Tools available |
| | Deciding sample size | Regulations/guidelines |
| | Sampling of respondents | Regulations/guidelines |
| Stakeholder Management Monitoring and Evaluation | Monitor and evaluate stakeholder management. | Establish KPI |
| | | Appointing third-party to evaluate |
| | | Soliciting feedback and incorporate input |
| | | Learn from other PPP projects |
| | | Monitor relationships |

The final process for stakeholder management is ‘stakeholder management monitoring and evaluation’. From interviews, ‘establishing KPI’, ‘appointing third party’, ‘monitor relationships’ and ‘soliciting feedback and incorporating input’ are the approaches identified as critical in adjusting future engagement. Despite these practical approaches were identified from interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, this by no means saying the findings will reflect the final stakeholder management framework for PPP, as this research will consolidate all the findings presented in this research and selectively integrate it to develop a comprehensive framework. The next section highlights the recommended strategies or best practices for effective stakeholder management and implementation extracted from the findings presented in this chapter.

7.7.1 Stakeholder Management Strategies and Recommendations

From the interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia discussed in this chapter, various strategies and best practices were extracted for effective stakeholder management. Additionally, the findings also contribute to the development of a stakeholder management framework for PPP.

- Stakeholder integration.
 - Developing a governance structure to ensure accountability.
 - The public and private sectors must collaborate to engage with the general public to avoid the issue of general public marginalisation.
 - Clear allocation of responsibilities between the public and private sectors for stakeholder management.
- Stakeholder identification.
 - Both the public and private sectors must identify stakeholders properly within the PPP environment.
 - A clear understanding of regulatory frameworks/guidelines/requirements is needed.
 - Be aware of historical/cultural practices in certain jurisdictions.
 - Be aware of the risks posed by ‘non-stakeholders’.
 - Collaborate and maintain open and transparent communication during stakeholder identification.
 - Develop a stakeholder map to understand stakeholder interdependencies.
 - Link map to the project timeline.
 - Collect stakeholder information.

- Optimise the collection of stakeholder information using evidence-based information.
- The public and private sectors should reach a consensus when prioritising the general public.
- Stakeholder assessment.
 - Use stakeholder information to support the stakeholder assessment process.
 - Analyse stakeholder attributes.
 - Analyse stakeholder attitudes.
 - Prioritise stakeholders effectively.
- Stakeholder decision-making.
 - Tailor engagement strategies based on the stakeholders involved, issues and level of priority.
 - Optimise data sampling methods to avoid general public marginalisation.
 - Engagement must comply with regulations.
 - Consider long-term engagement beyond the construction phase.
 - Address concerns raised by stakeholders effectively.
 - Building trust with stakeholders.
 - Giving authority to the general public to vote/choose if necessary (inclusiveness in decision-making).
 - Allowing and responding to feedback from stakeholders.
 - Taking advantage of technology for stakeholder engagement to better facilitate information sharing.
 - Develop a well-designed process for dealing with issues/conflicts.
- Stakeholder monitoring and evaluation.
 - Develop KPI to monitor and evaluate stakeholder management.
 - Appoint a third-party to provide unbiased perspective.
 - Solicit feedback from other stakeholders.
 - Monitor relationships with other stakeholders.
 - Learn from other PPP projects and extract best practices.
- General Recommendations – throughout PPP life cycle.
 - Responding to changes in stakeholder composition/project phase.
 - Continuous stakeholder management over the PPP life cycle.

7.8 Conclusion

The main focus of this chapter is to highlight the practical approaches for stakeholder management in PPP, which was structured based on the literature review presented in Section 2.8.2 (p. 66). Twelve stakeholder management steps and twenty-seven practical approaches were extracted from the analysis of the lived experiences of New Zealand and Malaysian PPP practitioners, where all these steps and approaches contribute to the understanding of the stakeholder management process.

Findings show that stakeholder management's success in PPP depends on these approaches. Nonetheless, the relative importance of these approaches in managing stakeholders in PPP contributes to the body of knowledge on stakeholder management by providing a contextual understanding of the stakeholder management process and practical approaches to fulfil the process, which is important for the development of a stakeholder management framework for PPP. In addition, various strategies and best practices were also extracted from the cross-cultural analysis between both New Zealand and Malaysia, contributing to the development of best practices in PPP. The findings presented in Chapters 4 to 7 provide sufficient information critical to the development of comprehensive stakeholder management. Overall, the findings presented in this chapter have answered research questions 4 and 5 and have fulfilled research objectives 4 to 6 (see Table 9.1, p 257).

CHAPTER EIGHT

PPP Stakeholder Management Framework

8.1 Introduction

An analysis of PPP literature published between 1997 and 2020 revealed that there is a dearth of literature exploring stakeholder management areas in PPP. Previous studies have indicated that poor stakeholder management is one of the main reasons behind poor PPP project performance (El-Gohary *et al.*, 2006; Smyth and Edkins, 2007; De Schepper *et al.*, 2014; Roehrich *et al.*, 2014). Hence, a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP consolidating practical stakeholder management approaches is needed, which has yet to be developed (Jayasuriya *et al.*, 2019).

To fill this gap in the literature, this chapter aims to develop a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework. An in-depth understanding of stakeholder management areas from the perspective of PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia has provided a significant understanding of stakeholder management in PPP. In addition, the diversity between these two jurisdictions has indeed expanded the international best practice framework for PPP, as various areas of improvement in PPP have been highlighted through this research. Nonetheless,

As such, by consolidating and selectively integrating relevant findings from interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia presented in Chapters 4 to 7, a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP was developed, which was validated by several interviewees from both public and private sectors (procuring authority and SPV).

8.2 The Significance of Stakeholder Management in PPP

The interviews were conducted by exploring the lived experiences of PPP practitioners. The vast majority of interviewees stated that the need for all parties to understand PPP and one another is the key to a successful PPP, especially given the long-term nature and complexity of PPP. Most interviewees also highlighted that everything in PPP is commercial, which means that the relationship between stakeholders is deeply contractual. As such, the PPP contract is all about delivering stakeholder expectations. Due to the fixed price 'feature' of PPP, failure to deliver the expectations may lead to legal disputes.

Whilst everything is deeply contractual in PPP, interviewees believe that all parties should play their role and give their best effort in managing stakeholders because they are interdependent and without considering other stakeholders, may cause spillover effects, affecting other stakeholders in the process. The reason for this is that PPP emphasises more on risk-sharing and long-term partnerships, including collaboration between different sides. Since every stakeholder is unique, an effective stakeholder management framework is essential for project success.

The major points based on the discussion with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, which suggested the need for effective stakeholder management for PPP for the following reasons:

- PPP involves multiple stakeholders with different interests and expectations:

“It (PPP) is very consultative. [...] wide-ranging stakeholder group that we have to work with.” – NZ01

“[...] each party has their own interests that they need to make sure they are fully aware of, and hence that does take a bit of time to negotiate through the various aspects [...].” -NZ04

“[...] addressing something is hard because you cannot just do it without talking to the SPV, to the subcontractors, to the banks and everyone’s got a view [...] it is complicated to try and resolve something else because so many parties are actually involved in it [...].” – NZ05

- PPP is more complex than the traditional construction approach:

“[...] it is a bit complicated; it is not something we need to decide now and get it now [...] it has to be assessed and it takes a lot of time [...].” – MY01

“[...] PPP is a very long process when the government is committed with the private sector, the contract negotiation process is quite long, and this is based on files and examples of projects that we have. [...] but the process to complete is long and there are in phases [...].” – MY02

“[...] when engaged in a PPP project, we need to present our findings and defend those findings. For conventional road projects, we only need to present the findings, as during each Value Analysis and Value Engineering workshop session, it is like a ‘grill session’ and there are questions like – ‘Why is it like this... why did not you do it like this...’ so when they have no experience, they only present their reports, hence problems arise.” – MY08

- PPP is a long-term contract between the public and private sectors, and the relationship should be maintained:

“PPP is a bit like rowing in one of those in eight-man sort of rowing [...] But basically, you need everybody to be on their best game.” – NZ01

“If we are dealing with our own side, there are no issues because everything is already fixed, we already have a contract, the cost is already there, everything is there, we just need to manage the people inside it.” – MY06

- Complex risk management and allocation mechanisms in PPP:

“[...] the main thing is probably the design risk. I think the design risk transfers are probably the key thing that is different in the PPP to the conventional. So, if we were to do a conventional NZ 3910 contract, we would go to the builder and ‘Here is my design, build me this’, and they will go ‘Yes, I built exactly as what you told me to build, and if you want to change that door, that is a variation. Oh, you want to change that wall to blue, that is a variation’.” – NZ05

“In terms of risks, for me there are many on the private sector, but after the project is implemented, there are many risks on the government side. Such as incomplete construction, inability to manage debt during operations, and the government needs to take over the risks.” – MY08

“[...] the complicating factor (in PPP) is the risk management [...] the reasons that there is no legal dispute on other types of contractual mechanism (conventional public procurement) is because those mechanisms, the risks sit with the government. So, when there is disagreement (in conventional public procurement), the price goes up. Whereas in PPP, where there is disagreement, before the price goes up, you (private sector) have to prove why the price goes up [...] if you cannot prove it, you go to court and prove it in front of the court.” – NZ01

According to some interviewees, every PPP project is unique, and no common stakeholder management practice exists. Whilst many PPP practitioners interviewed noted that they have successfully delivered the assets, it is still a painful process as many issues still arise between stakeholders. Despite the fact that PPP is deeply contractual, the human aspect is important, and this cannot be addressed in formal contracts. Thus, a PPP project should be conducted using a well-mannered or strategic approach for effective stakeholder management. Importantly, a specific stakeholder management framework for PPP is necessary to encapsulate the multi-stakeholder nature of PPP.

In response to this statement, it is important for all stakeholders in PPP to understand one another in creating a positive PPP environment, which could essentially influence the outcome of the PPP project. Yet, despite the complexities of PPP, interviewees understand that PPP should be treated differently compared to other procurement models, and often, PPP practitioners from the public sector realise that the experience involved in traditionally delivered public projects alone is insufficient, and problems usually arise when they start treating PPPs like conventional projects because they do not understand the importance of ‘integration’ in PPP. As a result, the PPP environment becomes unaccommodating for stakeholders; as such, effective stakeholder management in PPP is important in ensuring that not just the right outcome can be achieved but the right PPP environment as well.

8.3 The Development of Systematic PPP Stakeholder Management Framework

This section presents a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework. As indicated in Chapter 2, the development of this framework was built based on various stakeholder management concepts and PPP, which emphasise stakeholder integration, identification, assessment, decision-making, and monitoring and evaluation. As explained in Chapter 7, the

findings would not reflect the final stakeholder management framework for PPP despite several practical approaches being identified from interviews. Following the findings from Chapters 4 to 6, the stakeholder management process was reinforced with relevant procedures. The following section illustrates and discusses the PPP stakeholder management framework.

8.3.1 The Framework

The overall framework presented provides opportunities to inform and improve the PPP stakeholder management process. The procedures within the stakeholder management framework presented in this research are generated based on the best practices, recommendations by interviewees, and necessary improvements based on the management practices that these interviewees adopted.

Each procedure has been defined in logical sequences, whereby each procedure contributes to outcomes, and these outcomes drive the stakeholder management activities. Due to the dynamics of stakeholders in PPP, the PPP stakeholder management process presented is a continuous yet flexible activity throughout the PPP contract; as described by interviewees, stakeholder management is an iterative and not a straightforward process. This is consistent with the statement by Yang and Shen (2015), in which interviewees argue that it makes it difficult in a PPP environment, where both the public and private sectors with different cultures are under one team. The next section discusses the process involved within the PPP stakeholder management framework.

8.3.1.1 The Foundations and Pillars of PPP Stakeholder Management Framework

Several PPP practitioners involved in this research highlighted the importance of effective stakeholder management in PPP owing to the complexity of the procurement model. The stakeholder management framework seeks a common understanding and maintains positive relationships between stakeholders throughout the PPP project life cycle. For clarity, all of the processes or figures, from stakeholder identification to monitoring and evaluation, comprise pre- and post-engagement procedures.

- **Stakeholder Integration**

Stakeholder management is crucial because of PPP's long-term contractual nature. After the selection of SPV, the stakeholder management responsibilities should be managed from a dual

stakeholder perspective (procuring authority – representing the public sector, including the general public and SPVs – representing the private sector) to address the nature of PPP, where clear stakeholder management responsibilities and accountability should be clearly defined, which is important to address multi-stakeholder interests in PPP.

Furthermore, to ensure accountability and transparency, it is critical to establish a governance structure (e.g., project monitoring committee, steering committee) consisting of public and private sector representatives. Besides providing a platform for focal organisations to discuss throughout the project's life cycle, the governance structure also provides a platform for managing diverse stakeholders in PPP together and a platform for the focal organisations to manage one another. Importantly, to ensure that stakeholder management is a collective responsibility between the public and private sectors, the establishment of this entity is a must after the contract signing between the procuring authority and SPV, and not after the financial close or after the contract is effective.

Importantly, since the PPP unit regulates every PPP project, the agency should also be included in the governance structure and actively support the stakeholder management process. The significance of the PPP unit is that the agency has accumulated all the lessons learned from every PPP project, which could be useful for effective stakeholder management. Furthermore, since the PPP unit is the agency that recommends procuring authority to embark on PPP; hence, they should be responsible for providing stakeholder management support. However, this by no means says that the PPP unit should be the third focal organisation in managing stakeholder management in PPP but as an overseer because the organisation is not actively involved in the day-to-day management of the PPP project and only acts as a liaison between procuring authority and SPV, facilitating the relationship between both sides, besides ensuring the project follows the PPP policy. Furthermore, as the regulator, the PPP unit typically acts on its own without being part of any governance structure in any PPP projects.

Figure 8.1 illustrates the facilitative role of procuring authority, the SPV and the PPP unit in managing the multi-stakeholder environment in PPP. Overall, consolidating two different environments, the governance structure provides a platform to provide an understanding of the respective environment to other stakeholders. Additionally, this allows the recognition of different stakeholders within the PPP environment. This is where strategic stakeholder management planning should be conducted through the governance structure, ensuring accountability and transparency in decision-making. This includes relationship management

and capacity building. Importantly, the governance structure should be the platform used to monitor and evaluate stakeholder management practices.

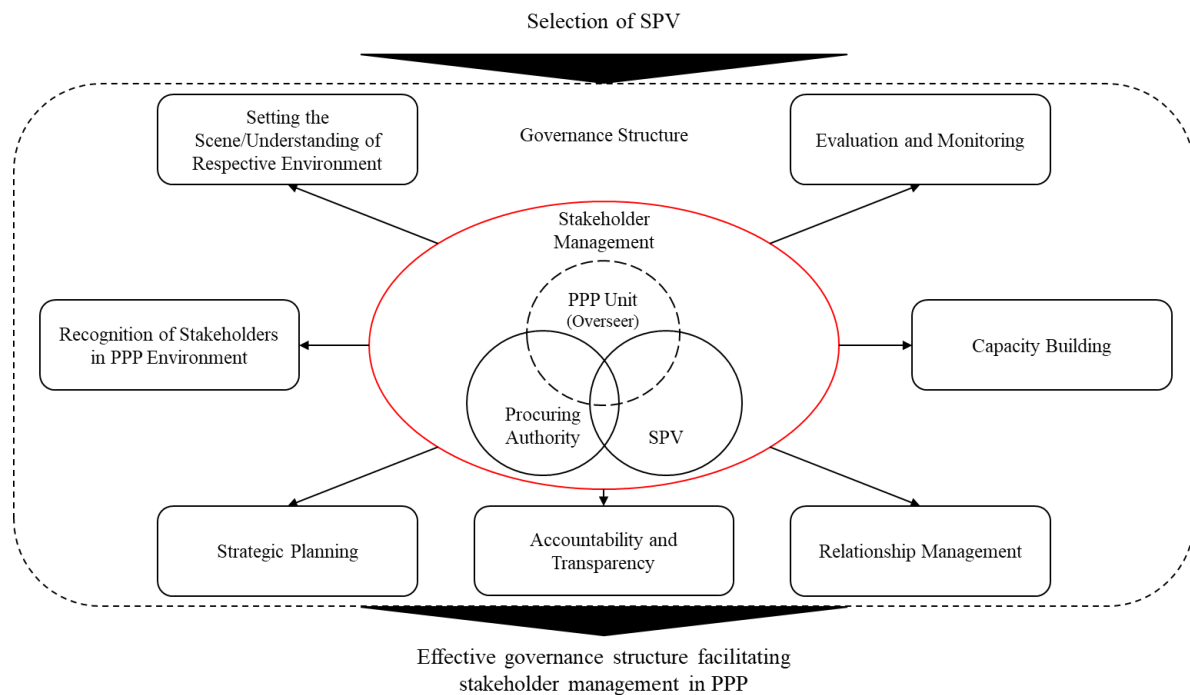
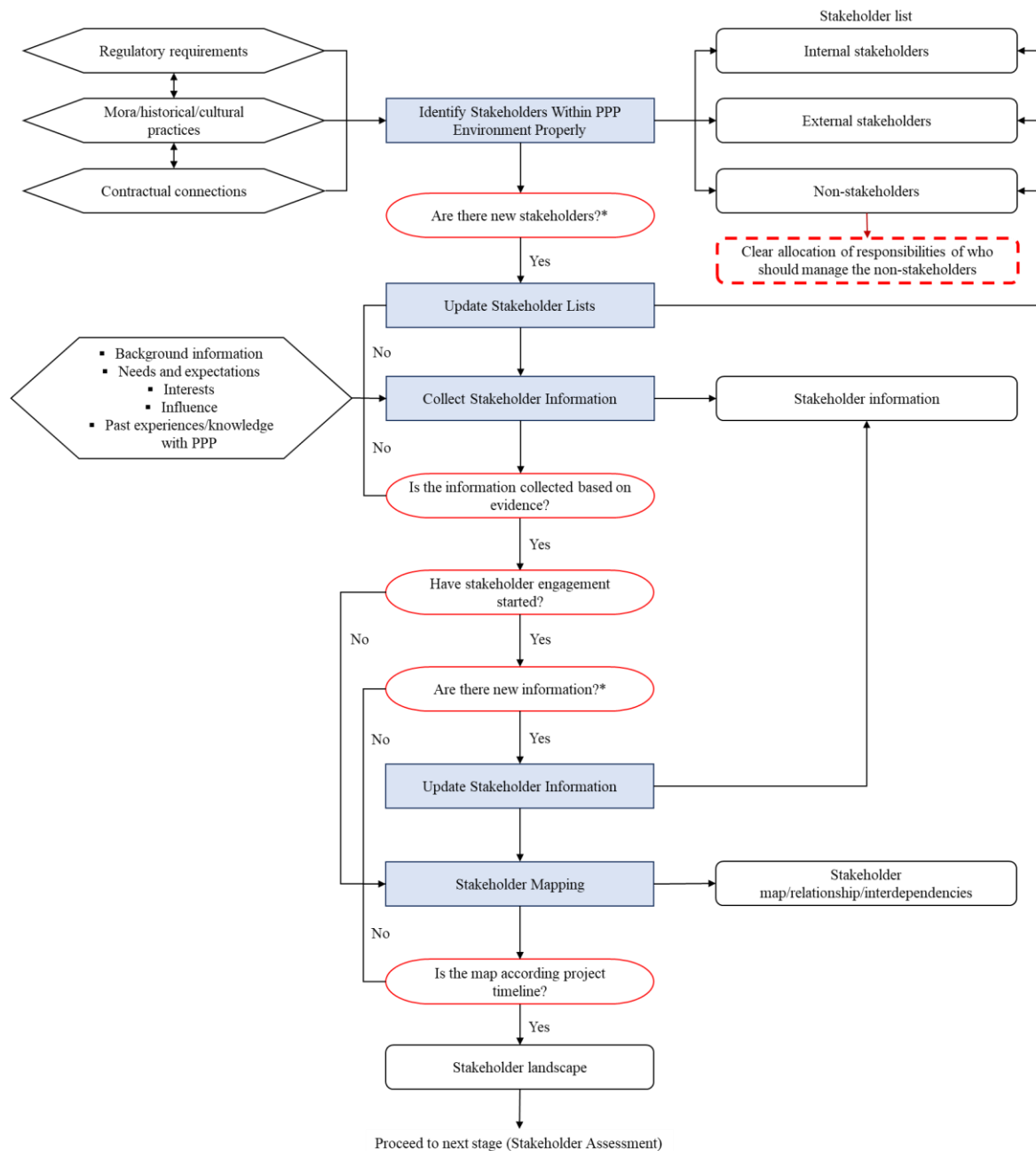


Figure 8.1. Facilitative role of procuring authority, SPV and PPP unit within the governance structure

- **Stakeholder Identification**

The first pillar is stakeholder identification, which is the starting point for every effective stakeholder management process. This stage consists of three activities, as shown in Figure 8.2: identifying stakeholders properly, collecting stakeholder information, and stakeholder mapping. Regulatory requirements, contractual connections and moral/ethical/historical practices should provide the platform to address the first activity and answer the question of ‘Who are the stakeholders in PPP?’ especially since these considerations help identify those who are likely to be impacted (including socio-economic and environmental impact) by the projects and directly involve behind the decision-making processes. Importantly, it is also critical to identify non-stakeholders due to the risks that they carry if not properly managed. In addition, a clear allocation of responsibilities should be set after identifying the stakeholders, including non-stakeholders.



*after stakeholder engagement

Figure 8.2. Stakeholder identification process

Next is ‘collecting stakeholder information’. With diverse stakeholders in PPP, it is critical to precisely collect stakeholder information before project moves forward, and this procedure should not be overlooked as it offers the stakeholder management team an opportunity to analyse the different views and address them to minimise any misunderstandings, besides highlighting the common interest between stakeholders. Some of the information that can be collected to support the stakeholder management process include but are not limited to:

- Background information (including distance from the project and demographic information – race, age, status, occupation).
- Needs and expectations.
- Interests.
- Influence.
- Past experiences/knowledge with PPP.

During this stage, it is vital to optimise data collection through evidence-based information (e.g., demographic information from the statistics/census department, previous projects/initiatives, and official reports), especially prior to stakeholder engagement. After stakeholder engagement, it is important to update the stakeholder information if new information is collected, as the updated information ensures effective stakeholder engagement through improved engagement strategies.

The final procedure in this stage is ‘stakeholder mapping’. Clear stakeholder relationships and interdependencies can be visualised by conducting the procedure, allowing for a better stakeholder management process. Furthermore, with various phases in PPP, stakeholder mapping could be extended by mapping it with the project timeline, providing a clear view of stakeholder transitions throughout the PPP life cycle. By following these procedures, a clear stakeholder landscape can be visualised, including the stakeholder register.

- **Stakeholder Assessment**

The second pillar of stakeholder management is stakeholder assessment. Figure 8.3 shows the process conducted before moving to the ‘stakeholder decision-making’. Since the stakeholder management process is interrelated, this management process is a continuation of the previous stage; however, the difference between stakeholder identification and stakeholder assessment is that this stage involves a more in-depth analysis of the stakeholders, which allows for a comprehensive understanding of stakeholders, especially in large and complex projects (Wu *et al.*, 2018b), such as PPP.

This stage is critical in prioritising the right stakeholders, and one of the main steps is the analysis of stakeholder attributes, which is important to be evaluated to inform the right engagement approach in the latter stage of stakeholder management. The use of stakeholder information is crucial for analysing stakeholder attributes. Based on interviews, the assessment

of stakeholder attributes follows the concept of Mitchell *et al.* (1997), indicating that the stakeholders should be assessed based on the level of power, urgency, and legitimacy, and vary from time to time.

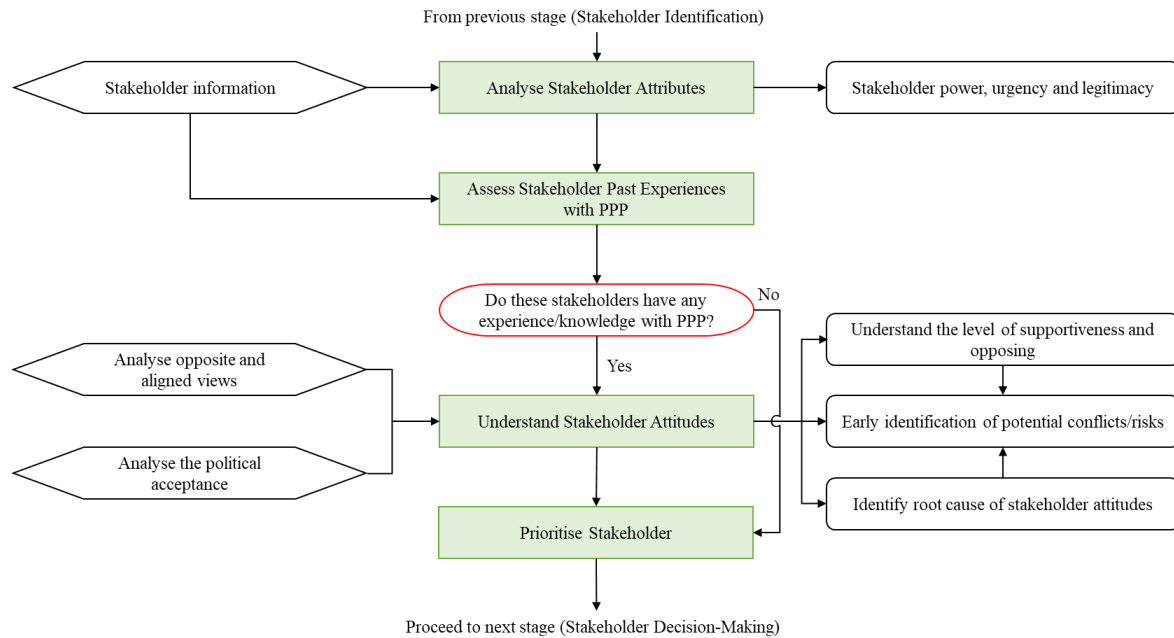


Figure 8.3. Stakeholder assessment process

The next step is assessing stakeholder experiences/knowledge with PPP. Besides informing the stakeholder management team to tailor their engagement differently compared with stakeholders who have zero experience with PPP in the latter stage, this also serves as an opportunity to understand stakeholder attitudes, which is important as the findings presented in this thesis (Chapter 5) suggested that experiences/knowledge may affect stakeholder attitudes. Through the assessment of stakeholder attitudes, the level of supportiveness and opposition of PPP stakeholders can be understood. In doing so, stakeholder management teams can analyse the opposite and align the views of different stakeholders.

Since PPP is highly bureaucratic, it is important to analyse the level of political acceptance, especially after a change in the government structure. As indicated by the interviewees, this allows them to tailor their engagement approach appropriately. Attitude assessment also allows the identification of the factors that influence stakeholder attitudes, and the outcome of the procedure is important in identifying the key areas that need improvements to change the opposing attitudes among PPP stakeholders. Overall, this stage of the assessment allows for

the early identification of potential conflicts and armed with the information, tailored approaches to deal with the conflicts can be developed.

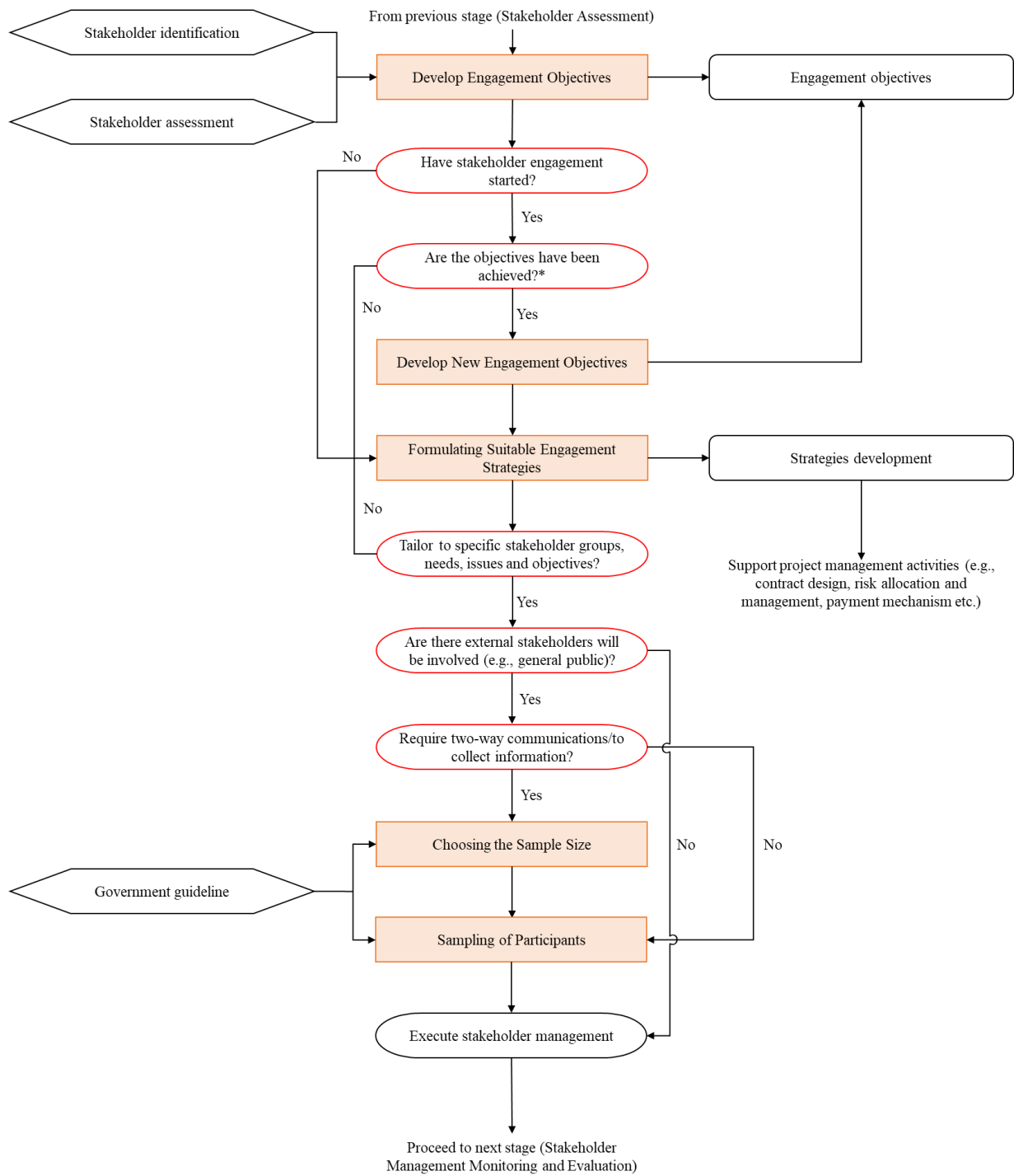
- **Stakeholder Decision-Making**

Stakeholder identification and assessment outcomes should feed the decision-making processes (Figure 8.4). The key purpose of stakeholder management is to ensure that the positive relationship between PPP stakeholders can be maintained through an effective engagement process. Based on all the findings presented in this thesis, before the engagement with stakeholders begins, it is important to decide the objectives of stakeholder engagement, which is essential for an effective stakeholder engagement process (Winch, 2000). In formulating engagement objectives, understanding the stakeholder is paramount and should be achieved prior to this stage. It is important to note that the objectives should be re-evaluated once they have been achieved. It is also worth noting that the objectives should not just to keep stakeholders informed, but based on the findings presented in Chapter 6, the objectives should be set to build trust, confidence and respect. The following are examples of objectives:

- Build confidence/trust.
- Build understanding/support.
- Ensuring smooth project continuity.
- Improve collaboration.
- Promote mutual respect
- Promote inclusivity.

Based on the interview transcripts, one of the most critical considerations is formulating stakeholder engagement procedures. From the interviews, seven key strategies were extracted that the project management team should consider when formulating the engagement procedures:

- Devise strategies to ensure inclusivity in decision-making.
- Plan to engage collaboratively.
- Developed detailed communication strategies.
- Plan for transparent practices.
- Plan for capacity building.
- Devise strategies to address concerns or negative attitudes.
- Develop strategies for smooth project continuity/crisis communication/engagement plan.



*after stakeholder engagement

Figure 8.4. Stakeholder decision-making process

As discussed before, various engagement tools have been adopted and recommended by PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, from regular meetings to focus group discussions to stakeholder empowerment through employment (only relevant to affected

communities). In addition, interviewees have highlighted capacity-building through workshops and the adoption of electronic systems as part of the engagement tools.

With various tools available, tailoring engagement specific to stakeholder groups, needs, and attitudes based on the findings of the previous stage is critical for a targeted engagement approach. The significance of selecting the right tools is to effectively connect different stakeholders and contribute to the betterment of stakeholder relationships in PPP, considering their level of influence, interests, and project phase. In addition, selecting the right tools also allows for clear and timely information distribution and permits stakeholders to raise their concerns early. The list of engagement tools that interviewed PPP practitioners commonly use to engage with different stakeholder groups in various PPP projects presented in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1. List of engagement tools

| Engagement Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Focus group discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide face-to-face interactions between stakeholders (allows for detailed collection of information – more specific). |
| Public opinion survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly gather inputs and opinions (suitable during the early stage, but not suitable in getting detailed information as respondents selected at random). |
| Newsletter/easy channel/email/public announcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep stakeholders updated. • Proper channels for the general public or non-stakeholders to address overlooked concerns. • Easy and convenient to communicate. |
| Forum/town hall session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform to disseminate project information to larger/various stakeholder groups. • Able to get detailed information that represent the voices of the stakeholders. • Quickly gather inputs and opinions from various stakeholder groups. |

Table 8.1. List of engagement tools (*Cont'd*)

| Engagement Tool | Description |
|---|--|
| Public display/information kit | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Platform to disseminate project information to larger/various stakeholder groups.• Efficient in disseminating information to stakeholders in remote/rural areas.• Capable of capturing specific issues raised by stakeholders at specific locations. |
| Contract/KPI | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form of communication that defines the services or terms and conditions that other parties are required to fulfil.• Formal/legally binding documents. |
| Meeting/interview with public/community representatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide face-to-face and in-depth interactions between stakeholders. |
| Stakeholder empowerment (employment opportunities) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term engagement.• Community development. |
| Corporate social responsibility (CSR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community engagement and development. |
| Regular meetings/reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress update.• Find common ground/interest.• Information sharing.• Ensuring accountability. |
| Workshops/seminars | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressing specific issues.• Suitable for capacity building. |
| Electronic/computerise/cloud-based system | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate information sharing and engagement.• More transparent. |

From interviews, it is evident that effective stakeholder engagement leads to effective project management activities (e.g., contract design, risk allocation and management). Hence, stakeholder management activities should not be overlooked in PPP. Furthermore, to avoid

conflict, everything should be well-planned, and engagement should be clear and transparent, which is important in building long-term relationships.

In the case of external stakeholders, such as general public. Suppose engagement with general public is needed because of regulation or guideline. In that case, another step that must be taken is ‘choosing the right sample size’ and ‘sampling of participants’ to be part of the sample size. Suppose the aim of the engagement is to collect information, which requires two-way communication. In that case, it is important to ensure that the sample size and respondents selected can represent the voices of external stakeholders, especially when the sample size is too big. This approach is important to provide accurate representation and avoid the general public's marginalisation. In choosing the right sample size and sampling strategy, guidelines provided by the central government should be the main point of reference. Nonetheless, the allocation of participants within the sample size should be based on the findings from the previous stage (stakeholder assessment). If the aim of the engagement is not to collect information but due to moral obligations (e.g., CSR), choosing the right sample size is not necessary.

After going through all the processes, the outcome is ‘process execution’; another critical process that the focal organisations that manage the stakeholders need to focus on is monitoring and evaluating the stakeholder management process throughout the duration of the PPP contract.

- **Stakeholder Management Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of stakeholder management strategies can be considered the most critical element throughout the stakeholder management process, and a proper monitoring and evaluation process helps to ensure that the partnership in PPP can achieve its intended goal by mitigating potential problems from escalating besides aligning different viewpoints and delivering values to all stakeholders. Given the long-term contractual nature of PPP projects, evaluating the entire process when projects enter a new phase after an actual engagement with stakeholders occurs is important.

This stage serves to understand whether the stakeholder management process has achieved its objectives or has been done accordingly. Feedback or findings gathered after initial engagement with different stakeholders may allow improvement. Soliciting feedback and

incorporating input from other stakeholders is fundamental in ensuring that all stakeholders are satisfied with the management strategies implemented in PPP projects. This allows the focal organisations to find common ground, which is important in an integrated procurement model, such as PPP.

KPIs have been widely utilised to keep track of stakeholders' commitment and the progress of PPP projects. However, the use of KPIs is also important for stakeholder management monitoring and evaluation. In the context of stakeholder engagement, this allows the evaluation of the effectiveness of the engagement strategies implemented, especially in understanding whether the engagement strategies help achieve the engagement objectives or desired outcomes and should not just be limited to assessing the level of stakeholder support. Furthermore, pairing KPIs with commitment registers may provide a more structured framework for monitoring and evaluation. This permits the stakeholder management team to keep track of their commitments to managing the stakeholders and fulfilling the stakeholder management expectations.

In addition, appointing a third party to run an audit alongside an internal auditor within the governance structure has also been emphasised and applied by several interviewees to provide different and unbiased perspectives of the stakeholder management approach. Interviewees also recommended learning from previous PPP projects, which is important in extracting any best practices from previous PPP projects. Since this framework emphasises the role of the PPP unit within the governance structure in providing support for both focal organisations in PPP through their experiences across different PPP projects/sectors, the PPP unit should be responsible for sharing the knowledge and best practices with the focal organisations in managing stakeholders either through strategic meetings, workshops, seminars or brainstorming sessions within the governance structure. Importantly, stakeholder management is an iterative process, and to ensure its effectiveness, continuously monitoring and evaluating the stakeholder management process is fundamental.

Given the long-term nature of PPP projects and the importance of stakeholder management processes, several key considerations or stakeholder management responsibilities have also been highlighted within the PPP stakeholder management framework, which was captured from interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia. For example, stakeholders should be aware of agile with the 'transitionary' of stakeholders throughout the PPP life cycle and respond to the change by tailoring their engagement activities to fit the

change. Furthermore, with multiple stakeholders in PPP, it is important that the project management team be thoughtful with their decisions to ensure that nobody will be affected. One of the most important recommendations mentioned before is the establishment of a governance structure that manages the stakeholder management process.

An effective stakeholder management process leads to a better understanding and satisfaction among stakeholders. Apart from contributing to PPP project success, the framework could also contribute to a positive PPP environment. Figure 8.5 illustrates the overview of the systematic PPP stakeholder management framework, which was conceptualised based on the findings of in-depth interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, which was covered in Chapters 4 to 7.

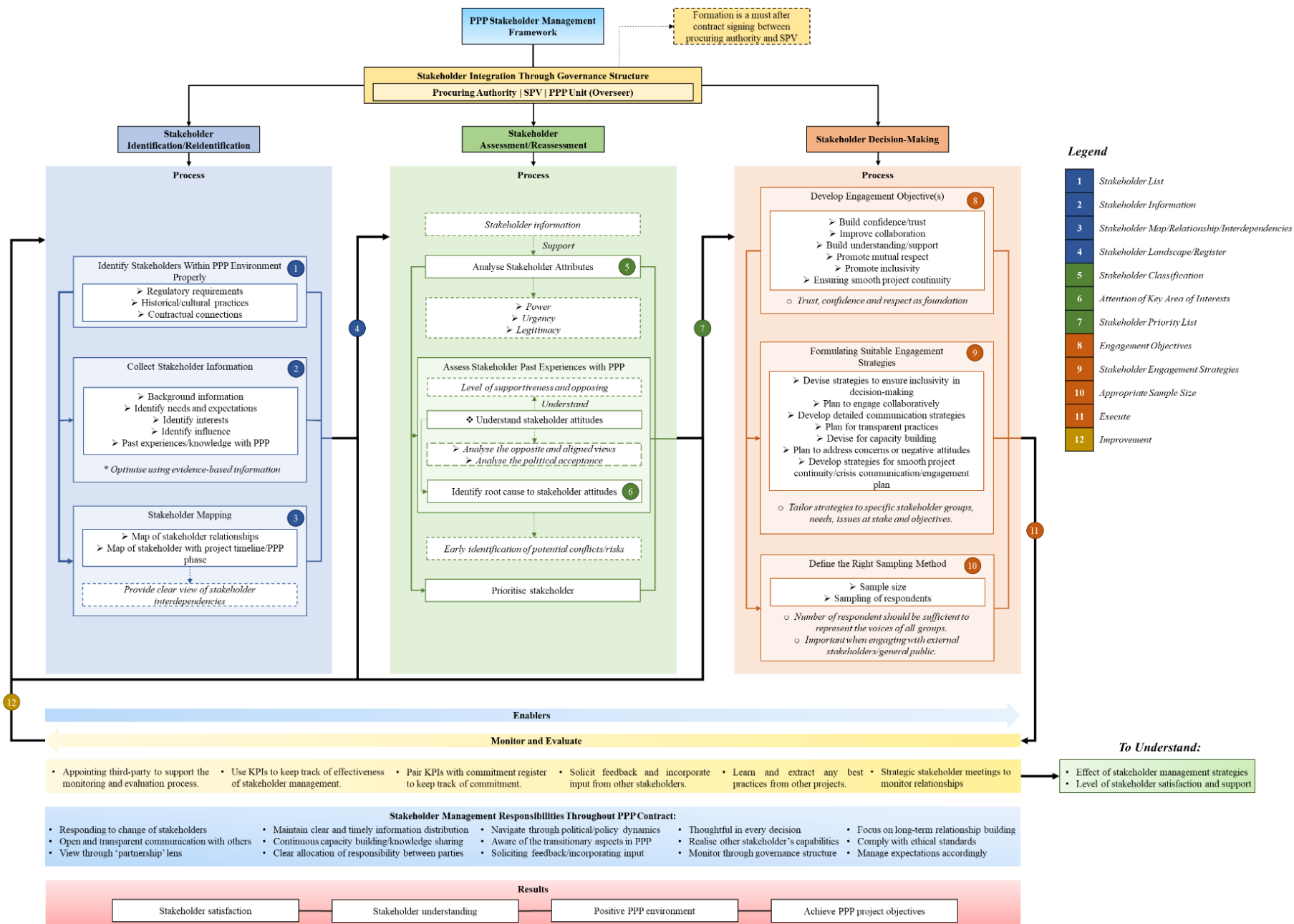


Figure 8.5. Proposed stakeholder management framework for PPP

8.4 Framework Discussion

Following the tenets of stakeholder theory, the stakeholder management framework in PPP is anchored on the following aspects: long-term partnerships, inclusivity, transparency, proactivity and practicality.

- **Long-term partnerships** The PPP stakeholder management framework developed in this study recognises the importance of long-term partnerships between stakeholders. As a result, the framework emphasises continuous stakeholder management by responding to the change of stakeholders throughout the PPP project life cycle, including changes in stakeholder composition.
- **Inclusivity** This framework is an all-inclusive stakeholder management framework for PPP that ensures all interested parties, including non-stakeholders, are considered in the PPP project. This is because all parties, regardless of their status, carry some risks into the project if they are not properly managed.
- **Transparency** Transparency is vital to the success of PPP, and transparency also influences how the framework is designed, such as the formation of governance structures consisting of procuring authority, SPV and PPP units to ensure transparency in decision-making related to stakeholder management.
- **Proactivity** This framework promotes proactivity from the focal organisations in managing the stakeholder management. This is to ensure that any decision can be made before an event unfolds. For example, the framework recommended the analysis of stakeholder attitudes based on the experiences/knowledge of stakeholders in identifying potential conflicts that may occur.

- Practicality

One of the most important elements when developing the framework is practicality. Owing to the experiences of PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, the framework reflects what is practical and realistic. For example, the framework highlights the need for appropriate sampling methodologies in managing the general public for effective stakeholder management. Another example is the exclusion of other stakeholders, such as the general public within the governance structure. From interviews, the general public has no technical expertise and their involvement in the governance structure, such as the project monitoring committee, might pose challenges in maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information related to the project.

8.5 Framework Applicability

The framework was developed based on findings from interviews with PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia and is applicable not just for focal organisations to manage other stakeholders but also for focal organisations to manage one another. Furthermore, all interviewed PPP practitioners have unique experiences with PPP across different sectors, with some involved in brownfield projects, which consist of expanding existing infrastructure via PPP. Hence, the framework is also applicable to both greenfield and brownfield projects. Furthermore, with the unsolicited proposal being ‘legal’ in delivering public infrastructure in Malaysia, the framework is also relevant to managing stakeholders for unsolicited proposals. Overall, the framework can be applied to different PPP projects and country contexts.

8.6 Framework Validation

Framework validation is important in confirming the research findings’ accuracy, reliability, and practicality. This might help resolve any problems in the development of a stakeholder management framework for PPP. As discussed in Section 3.6.3 (p. 100), some participants involved in the semi-structured interviews in New Zealand and Malaysia were invited back to validate the established framework. This ensures that the results are consistent and reflect what has been shared with the researcher, thus enhancing the credibility of the framework developed.

Furthermore, all PPP practitioners are experts in the subject matter of PPP and have been involved in multiple PPP projects for more than ten years. Table 8.2 highlights the background of the subject experts.

Table 8.2. Background of experts

| Country | Code | Sector | Position in PPP | Experience with PPP (Years) |
|-------------|----------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| New Zealand | E ^a | Private | Fund Manager | 26 |
| | E ^b | Public | PPP Director | 14 |
| Malaysia | E ^c | Public | Project Manager | 24 |
| | E ^d | Private | Project Manager | 14 |

In conducting the validation procedure, one-to-one interviews were conducted, ensuring detailed responses from the experts whilst ensuring confidentiality from interviews that were conducted before. One-to-one interviews are important to ensure that the experts are comfortable sharing their personal views, which is difficult in a group setting. This is important since the research interviewees informed the researcher that the topic related to stakeholder management is very sensitive, and even the word ‘stakeholder’ itself is very sensitive.

Taking the same interview approach as highlighted in Chapter 3, the validation was also conducted through semi-structured interviews approximately between 60 to 90 minutes. All experts were invited to comment on the overall proposed PPP stakeholder management framework. For the validation exercise, four main aspects are discussed: the overall PPP stakeholder management framework (clarity/practicality/reliability), the relationship between different processes, including monitoring and evaluation, the procedures in each stakeholder management process, and the key considerations highlighted in the stakeholder management framework for PPP. Overall, all subject matter experts are transparent and unbiased in providing feedback, which further enhances the credibility of the framework. Table 8.3 presents the feedback on the proposed PPP stakeholder management framework.

Table 8.3. Feedback on the proposed stakeholder management framework for PPP

| | E^a | E^b | E^c | E^d |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Do you find the framework well-organised and easy to follow? | I think it is well organised and very well captured. | Yes | Yes, it is well organised. | Yes, the structure of the framework is well organised. |
| Does the framework comprise all important stakeholder management activities for PPP? | Yes, it comprises all important activities. | Yes, but for stakeholder attitudes, it is not something that we often do. However, it is still important due to the political landscape here in New Zealand. | Yes, there is something that we use. | Yes |
| Are the activities grouped and defined appropriately? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Are the relationships between activities reliable? | Yes | Yes | Yes, the relationship is well-organised and makes sense. | Yes, the framework is cohesive. |

Table 8.3. Feedback on the proposed stakeholder management framework for PPP (*Cont'd*)

| | E^a | E^b | E^c | E^d |
|---|--|----------------------|---|--|
| Can the framework be used as a baseline for effective stakeholder management for PPP? | If you were to describe to somebody what they ought to do, and you presented them with that flow chart, I think that would probably help them. | Yes | Yes, this can be used as a baseline, but with a variety of PPP projects, the management team could incorporate something that is relevant to the project. | Yes, the framework is also flexible, which I think is important due to the dynamic nature of PPP. |
| Is the framework practical to be used in real situations? | Yes | Yes | Yes, I think it can be used in the real world, but changes need to be made to tailor specific project requirements. | Yes, it is practical, and changes should be made based on the situation. The framework should be proposed to the PPP unit. |

8.6.1 Discussion on the Validation of Stakeholder Management Framework for PPP

In general, the feedback received from the experts was very positive, with each agreeing that the framework is well organised, comprises all important activities, and is practical for the PPP project management team to plan their stakeholder management process. Regarding the formation of a governance structure, the experts agree that the overall responsibility of managing diverse stakeholders in PPP should be a collective responsibility between the procuring authority and the SPV via a governance structure, with the PPP unit supporting the process through various lessons learned across different sectors.

Experts agree that the stakeholder identification stage covers all aspects that are important to properly identify the stakeholders in PPP. Notably, it is important for stakeholders to understand the regulatory requirements, especially being a fixed-price contract. This allows the resources to be allocated appropriately based on the requirements.

Experts value the importance of the stakeholder assessment process in ensuring that the right stakeholders can be prioritised and aware of early potential conflicts. For instance, with the nature of PPP requiring strong political support, understanding the political dynamics and tailoring the engagement strategies are critical, and including ‘attitude assessment’ in the framework may provide insights into the key areas that the management team can focus on during engagement.

Finally, there is stakeholder decision-making. The experts stated that stakeholder identification and assessment are enablers of the decision-making process. Paired with the right objectives, experts agree that it may help with the formulation of the right engagement approach. With multiple stages of stakeholder management, experts agree to the flexibility elements incorporated into the framework, making the process more efficient.

With the multi-stakeholder nature of PPP, the experts support the importance of the framework addressing different stakeholders and agree that the framework presented is an integrated stakeholder management framework, which is suitable to be adopted for PPP without ignoring external stakeholders in the process, enhancing the inclusivity of the framework presented. Experts commented that this framework would help them effectively reduce the time taken for the public and private sectors to integrate their respective stakeholder management activities because there was no specific procedure for PPP, and they refer to a variety of processes. This

corroborates with Karlsen (2002), highlighting the uncoordinated nature of stakeholder management. Finally, all experts agree that the framework will lead to stakeholder satisfaction, stakeholder understanding, and a positive PPP environment, which eventually leads to PPP project success.

8.6.2 Consideration of PPP Life Cycle and Stakeholder Management

Whilst the stakeholder management process is ongoing, interviews with the experts confirmed that for successful stakeholder management for PPP, a robust and detailed stakeholder management process should start from the beginning, especially after the formation of the governance structure. As PPP projects progress, the management team should be aware of the change in stakeholder interests and change their engagement approaches to facilitate engagement objectives. The experts argued that every step presented in the framework is important throughout the PPP life cycle, and proper monitoring helps with the development of improved stakeholder management approaches. Furthermore, the framework provides a coordinated process, which is helpful for effective stakeholder management for PPP. Accordingly, the stakeholders should also understand how PPP works; continuous capacity building among internal stakeholders, especially the focal organisations, is necessary for long-term continuity.

8.7 Validation of Overall Research Findings

As highlighted in Chapter 3, several figures and tables that were highlighted in the research findings between Chapters 4 to 7 were also presented for validation. This section summarises the comments of the experts.

- **E^a (New Zealand)**

E^a commented that the findings are good and interesting, even though some of them are difficult to swallow. He agreed that the research managed to capture the positive and negative aspects of PPP in New Zealand and truly reflected his views as a PPP practitioner. He agreed that the recommendations suggested in this research are needed to overcome the current issues plaguing PPP in New Zealand. He submitted the outlook for PPP in New Zealand and agreed that Infracom should lead the way in New Zealand as the main player. He also agreed with the action of the government that instead of learning from mistakes, New Zealand decided to shut down everything, and political influence could overcome value-for-money in PPP and the long-

term continuity of PPP. He also provides his thoughts on certain aspects, such as compensation because of COVID and an unsolicited proposal for PPP, which New Zealand should adopt to address infrastructure challenges in the country.

- **E^b (New Zealand)**

According to E^b, these findings truly reflect the nature of PPP in New Zealand. He underscored the importance of understanding stakeholders in PPP. He constantly emphasised the importance for internal stakeholders, especially the focal organisations in managing the stakeholders of looking at PPP through a ‘partnership’ lens. In his own words:

“It (PPP) is like a marriage [...] you have got to work it out [...] the key part, which I think people miss is that ‘partnership’.”

Critically, he commented that with the political situation in New Zealand, the former Labour government may see positive attitudes as negative, and he agreed that political support is necessary for the continuity of PPP in New Zealand. Some of the findings surprised him, for instance, the negative attitudes of the private sector that do not agree with PPP. He argued that New Zealand needs to learn a lot because of the complexities of PPP.

- **E^c (Malaysia)**

E^c found the cross-country analysis between New Zealand and Malaysia interesting, as it helped him understand the difference between these two jurisdictions, especially the need to consider cultural/historical practices during stakeholder identification. Despite agreeing that PPP in Malaysia can be considered mature, improvement is needed, as the development of PPP in Malaysia can be considered stagnant since its inception. From the findings presented, he posited that stakeholder behaviours/attitudes and practices, such as management-building practices, are highly influenced by stakeholders’ knowledge and understanding. This is because if the stakeholders truly understand the essence of PPP, it will be reflected through their attitudes and stakeholder management practices.

- **E^d (Malaysia)**

E^d reviewed the findings and agreed that they truly reflected his perceptions. He agreed that the requirement set by the government is critical for an effective stakeholder management

process. From the findings presented to him, he argued that government commitment is the most critical consideration for PPP continuity and effective stakeholder management. As a member of an SPV, he informed that the private sector should be prepared to accept any risk when engaging in PPP, including the lack of collaboration/partnership from the public sector. E^d gave his thoughts on stakeholder relationships and argued that the elements upon which the relationship is built, such as trust, confidence, and respect, are not just exclusive to internal stakeholders but can be used to build a positive relationship with external stakeholders.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the stakeholder management framework in PPP, which was developed through the consolidation of relevant strategies and findings gathered from the lived experiences with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia. The framework was structured based on earlier discussions on stakeholder management presented in Chapter 2 (Section 2.8.2, p. 66), consisting of stakeholder integration, stakeholder identification, stakeholder assessment, stakeholder decision-making, and stakeholder monitoring and evaluation. This chapter also presents the process needed for each stage or component of stakeholder management. Importantly, framing the framework according to the theoretical foundation of stakeholder theory, the framework presented is anchored based on the following criteria: long-term partnerships, inclusivity, transparency, proactivity, and practicality. Anchoring the framework according to the following criteria is significant because it reflects the complexities of PPP projects.

The second section of this chapter presents the validation of the framework. The validation process aims to understand the overall PPP stakeholder management framework (clarity/practicality/reliability), the relationship between different processes, including monitoring and evaluation, the procedures in each stakeholder management process, and the key considerations highlighted in the stakeholder management framework for PPP. The overall feedback from PPP practitioners was positive in terms of information flow, clarity, and practicality. Furthermore, the framework has also provided a clear output which could inform the stakeholder management process. Overall, this chapter has answered and fulfilled the following research questions and objectives:

CHAPTER NINE

Research Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study and provides an overall summary of the research. The primary objective of this research, as outlined in Chapter 1, was to develop a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP through a comprehensive analysis of stakeholders drawn from the lived experiences of PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia. This chapter begins by offering a summary from each jurisdiction, followed by a summary of each research chapter and a review of the research objectives. Next, the significance of this research is presented, which showcases the research contributions that emerged from the research findings and aims to address the existing gap in knowledge and practice surrounding PPP. This chapter also highlights the research limitations and provides recommendations for future PPP research.

9.2 Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 of the research started by providing the background of the research. It highlighted the importance of PPP in delivering public infrastructure services and simultaneously pointed out that the main issues surrounding PPP are rooted in poor stakeholder management. However, limited attempts have been made to investigate stakeholder management in PPP in more depth, and comprehensive stakeholder management frameworks for PPP are yet to be developed, especially from the context of cross-country analyses. The chapter also highlights the research question and objectives. Essentially, the chapter focuses on providing the essence that drives the research.

Chapter 2 comprised a review of literature relevant to the research. This chapter provided an insightful outlook on PPP, including stakeholder management, and highlighted the need for a stakeholder management framework for PPP. In supporting the research direction, the chapter presented the analysis of PPP literature from 1997 to 2023. To support the development of a stakeholder management framework for PPP, three research areas have been selected: stakeholder identification in PPP, stakeholder attitudes and stakeholder relationships. These three research areas are significant to the development of tailored engagement strategies and best practices for stakeholder management.

The research methodology was set out in Chapter 3. The overall premise of this research was to propose and develop a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework through an in-depth understanding from the perspectives of New Zealand and Malaysian PPP practitioners. This has influenced the methodological approach used for data collection and analysis. Based on the research philosophy, the constructionism approach was selected as different individuals viewed the same thing differently, which helped inform the research's underlying issues. The interpretivism approach was determined to be the theoretical perspective that influenced the research methodology guided by the aim of this thesis, which was to develop a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP through an in-depth understanding of stakeholders. Moreover, since a limited attempt has been made to investigate the stakeholder research areas, the exploratory nature also influences the selected theoretical perspective.

Considering the aforementioned selection research philosophy and theoretical perspective, the use of qualitative methodology was adopted, and in-depth semi-structured interviews were selected as they fulfilled the requirement of the exploratory nature of the research. Overall, thirteen PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia were interviewed. Interviewing the public and private sector participants is important as some scholars indicated that these two stakeholders are the focal points in PPP; hence, examining their perceptions provides a more holistic view of the research. The interviews with PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions were transcribed and analysed using NVivo, and the richness of information provided through in-depth interviews helps uncover various issues that need to be addressed.

The in-depth interview process with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia was carried out, and the findings were presented in Chapters 4 to 7. The interviews were transcribed, and the findings were interpreted. In Chapter 4, the research focused on understanding the stakeholders in PPP and from the findings, the key stakeholders in PPP were identified. Importantly, the findings also revealed the considerations for stakeholder identification, consisting of regulatory frameworks, contractual connections and moral/cult/historical practices.

Chapter 5 highlighted stakeholder attitudes in PPP, which is another cornerstone for effective stakeholder management and is important in developing a stakeholder management framework for PPP. The findings of stakeholder attitudes have also contributed to the development of the cognitive mapping of stakeholder attitudes in PPP, highlighting the root cause of their attitudes. The chapter also highlighted several adaptive responses, addressing the negative attitudes of

PPP stakeholders. Despite the procuring authority and the SPV leading the stakeholder management exercise, the findings highlighted the significance of the PPP unit in providing support to both focal organisations in dealing with stakeholder attitudes. The chapter provided a comprehensive set of targeted strategies for effective stakeholder management in PPP, especially in addressing stakeholder attitudes.

Chapter 6 explored stakeholder relationships in PPP. The epistemology governing the chapter assumes that stakeholder relationships are crucial in mediating the success of PPP projects, and stakeholder management is about managing relationships. The findings revealed that thirteen factors influenced stakeholder relationships in PPP. The results also showed that relationship-building practices contribute to stakeholder management in PPP. Additionally, the interpretation of the data also permitted the development of best practices important for effective stakeholder management.

Chapter 7 highlighted the practical approaches of stakeholder management from interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, which was structured accordingly based on the stakeholder management process highlighted in Section 2.8.2 (p. 66). Overall, the chapter provided an important outlook into the stakeholder management process in PPP. The findings also highlighted the integration of stakeholder management frameworks between public and private sectors, reflecting dual-stakeholder management responsibilities.

Based on the lived experiences of interviewees from both New Zealand and Malaysia, evidence drawn from the interview transcripts and quotes supported and verified the arguments of each respondent. Following the detailed analysis of information from PPP practitioners from both countries, discussions based on their experiences were showcased in Chapter 8 of the thesis through the development of the proposed systematic PPP stakeholder management framework. The chapter also provides validation from PPP practitioners concerning the research findings' accuracy, reliability, and practicality. Chapter 8 presents an overview of the comparative analysis and the outlooks for PPP in New Zealand and Malaysia.

9.3 Achievement of Research Objectives

The main premise of this research is to develop a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework through an in-depth understanding of stakeholders in PPP procurement from the

perspective of New Zealand and Malaysian PPP practitioners. To achieve the research aim, seven research objectives were formulated, which are presented in Chapter 1 of the thesis:

- RO1.** To identify stakeholders involved in PPP, with the aim to understand the criteria used for stakeholder identification in PPP.
- RO2.** To investigate PPP stakeholder attitudes with the goal of identifying key influencing factors that contribute to their attitudes.
- RO3.** To examine the factors shaping stakeholder relationships in PPP projects.
- RO4.** To investigate the integration and allocation of responsibilities between two focal organisations in PPP projects.
- RO5.** To document and analyse the stakeholder management process employed by PPP practitioners through comparative analysis of best practices.
- RO6.** To synthesis the research findings and develop evidence-based recommendations for effective stakeholder management in PPP.
- RO7.** To consolidate relevant approaches and insights from the research findings with PPP practitioners into the development of a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP projects

All these objectives were achieved using semi-structured interviews with PPP practitioners from both jurisdictions. Importantly, the interpretivism approach allows the researcher to interpret and justify the findings to develop a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP based on the lived experiences shared by the interview respondents. Table 9.1 highlights the contributions of the chapters to the research questions and objectives. The following discussions revisit and address each objective:

- RO1.** To identify stakeholders involved in PPP, with the aim to understand the criteria used for stakeholder identification in PPP.

Chapter 4 of the thesis discusses the stakeholders and identification process of stakeholders in PPP. Through interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, the findings confirmed the involvement of various parties that are significant to the success of PPP procurement. These parties include the public sector (procuring authority and relevant

government agencies), the private sector (SPV, subcontractors, financiers, and advisors), and the general public.

The findings also reveal the considerations for stakeholder identification, which is critical in identifying stakeholders properly. The results from interviews showed that ‘regulatory frameworks’, ‘contractual connections’ and ‘moral/ethical/historical practices’ influence the stakeholder identification process for PPP. ‘regulatory frameworks’ refers to the stakeholders involved because of the PPP framework itself and other regulatory frameworks that are not specific to PPP and need to be adhered to when delivering infrastructure. As for ‘contractual connections’, as the name suggests, it refers to the stakeholders that are involved because of their contractual relationship with the project. As for ‘moral/ethical/historical practices’, they were based on common practices specific to certain jurisdictions, such as the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand.

RO2. To investigate PPP stakeholder attitudes with the goal of identifying key influencing factors that contribute to their attitudes.

In Chapter 5, stakeholder attitudes toward PPP were investigated, which is critical due to its significance on stakeholder management and the future of PPP as an alternative public procurement model. Overall, the findings from the interviews with PPP practitioners from both New Zealand and Malaysia revealed polarising attitudes between different stakeholders. These polarising attitudes were based on their experiences or knowledge of PPP. Interestingly, the attitudes of the private sector were highly influenced by the governmental decisions, and importantly, it shows the connection between stakeholder relationships and attitudes.

Nonetheless, from the findings, a cognitive map of PPP stakeholder attitudes was developed (Figure 5.1), highlighting the factors that influence stakeholder attitudes, categorised under five elements: PPP nature, PPP outcomes, PPP opportunities, market/project conditions, and experiences with non-PPP.

As for the external stakeholders, interviewees from both jurisdictions agree that external stakeholders such as the general public also held polarising attitudes, but not towards the procurement model, but towards the project, as the type of procurement model used to deliver the project is irrelevant to them. Importantly, addressing the attitudes of external stakeholders is critical to gaining their support towards the PPP project, as some projects require to achieve

a certain approval rate before the projects can proceed into the next phase. Furthermore, with the bureaucratic nature of PPP, interviewees posited the importance of gaining recognition from the central government to ensure the continuity of PPP as an alternative public procurement model. Understanding stakeholder attitudes is critical in mitigating potential conflicts through targeted engagement approaches/strategies.

RO3. To examine the factors shaping stakeholder relationships in PPP projects.

In Chapter 6, the results of semi-structured interviews identified various factors that can influence the quality of stakeholder relationships in PPP, which have not been previously documented. These factors include contract design, risk management and allocation, collaboration, communication, knowledge and understanding, transparency, accountability, payment mechanism, commitment, policy due to unforeseen events, change in personnel, politics, and nationality and/or culture. The findings suggested that stakeholder relationships are built upon trust, confidence and respect. Finally, various recommendations have been made to address specific issues, which should inform the stakeholders with proactive mitigation strategies, and overall, the objective has been fulfilled.

RO4. To investigate the integration and allocation of responsibilities between two focal organisations in PPP projects.

An understanding of PPP as an integration between public and private sectors managing single public projects has raised the question of the allocation of responsibilities between the focal organisations in managing stakeholders. Based on interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, the integration between the focal organisations started after the contract signing between them. To ensure the effectiveness of stakeholder management and transparency, forming a governance structure overseeing the project throughout the project life cycle is necessary after selecting SPV with a clear allocation of responsibilities between both sides.

RO5. To document and analyse the stakeholder management process employed by PPP practitioners through comparative analysis of best practices.

Chapter 7 highlighted the practical approaches of stakeholder management from interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, which was structured accordingly

based on the stakeholder management process highlighted in Section 2.8.2 (p. 66). Overall, the chapter provided an important outlook into the stakeholder management process in PPP. Twelve management steps, including the practical approaches to support the management steps across five stakeholder management processes for PPP, were extracted. The findings also highlighted the integration between public and private sectors in managing stakeholders in PPP, reflecting dual-stakeholder management responsibilities. Notwithstanding, despite the integration through the establishment of a governance structure throughout the PPP project life cycle, a clear allocation of responsibilities is critical.

RO6. To synthesis the research findings and develop evidence-based recommendations for effective stakeholder management in PPP.

Based on the lived experience of the PPP practitioners interviewed, several recommendations and best practices have been identified and highlighted, which provide an insightful outlook for managing diverse stakeholders in PPP and addressing specific issues related to stakeholder management. All of these strategies and best practices for stakeholder management have been highlighted in Chapters 4 to 7 of the thesis. Importantly, the strategies and best practices presented are applicable not only for focal stakeholders to manage other stakeholders but also to manage themselves.

RO7. To consolidate relevant approaches and insights from the research findings with PPP practitioners into the development of a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP projects.

The result of semi-structured interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia helps in the development of a strategic PPP stakeholder management framework, which was presented in Chapter 8. Whilst all the recommended strategies and best practices presented in Chapters 4 to 7 are important in addressing stakeholder management issues, to ensure the practicality of the framework, all the findings were consolidated into a general yet practical approach for PPP practitioners to adopt. Through semi-structured interviews, several PPP practitioners then validated the practical validity of the proposed stakeholder management framework in PPP. The validation results demonstrated the practicality, reliability and overall structure/process of the proposed stakeholder management framework for PPP. Notwithstanding, some adjustments need to be made depending on issues/situations.

Table 9.1. Chapter contributions to research questions and objectives

| | Chapter 4 | Chapter 5 | Chapter 6 | Chapter 7 | Chapter 8 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Research Question(s) | | | | | |
| Who are the key stakeholders in PPP, and what are the criteria used for stakeholder identification? | ✓ | | | | |
| What are the attitudes and factors influencing the attitudes of PPP stakeholders? | | ✓ | | | |
| What are the factors that influence the relationships between stakeholders in PPP? | | | ✓ | | |
| How are the two focal organisations responsible for managing stakeholders in PPP work, and how are the responsibilities allocated? | | | | ✓ | |
| What are the strategies and processes for effective stakeholder management? | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| How can a systematic stakeholder management framework for PPP be developed from the lived experiences of PPP practitioners managing stakeholder management issues? | | | | | ✓ |

Table 9.1. Chapter contributions to research questions and objectives (*Cont 'd*)

| | Chapter 4 | Chapter 5 | Chapter 6 | Chapter 7 | Chapter 8 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Research Objective(s) | | | | | |
| To identify stakeholders involved in PPP, with the aim to understand the criteria used for stakeholder identification in PPP. | ✓ | | | | |
| To investigate PPP stakeholder attitudes with the goal of identifying key influencing factors that contribute to their attitudes. | | ✓ | | | |
| To examine the factors shaping stakeholder relationships in PPP projects. | | | ✓ | | |
| To investigate the integration and allocation of responsibilities between two focal organisations in PPP projects. | | | | ✓ | |
| To document and analyse the stakeholder management process employed by PPP practitioners through comparative analysis of best practices. | | | | ✓ | |
| To synthesis the research findings and develop evidence-based recommendations for effective stakeholder management in PPP. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| To consolidate relevant approaches and insights from the research findings with PPP practitioners into the development of a comprehensive stakeholder management framework for PPP projects. | | | | | ✓ |

9.4 Original Contributions and Significance of the Research

9.4.1 Contributions to Knowledge

This research has made several contributions to the growth of PPP literature, especially PPP stakeholder management research dimensions. In the context of the PPP literature, the findings of the literature analysis revealed the trend of PPP research themes from 1997 to 2023. Adopting timeline mapping contributes to the identification of the changes in PPP research themes, which provides an understanding of the current trends in PPP research that are important for future researchers interested in contributing further to the least studied research areas. Investigating the topic adds to the growing body of knowledge and expands the understanding of stakeholder management in PPP.

The existing literature on stakeholder management in PPP revealed limited empirical research conducted through cross-country analyses, especially between developed and developing countries. Using New Zealand and Malaysia as a ‘case study’, this research adds to the existing bundle of knowledge on PPP, which can be considered as another form of contribution to the PPP body of knowledge, critical to the development of the international best practice framework for PPP and systematic PPP stakeholder management framework. Moreover, the findings from the cross-country analysis provide further opportunities to expand the comparative analysis between New Zealand and Malaysia to other markets.

With little attention has been given to New Zealand compared to other developed markets such as Australia, the UK, and Canada. The findings from this research also expand the PPP literature in New Zealand. In addition, this research fills the gap in relation to stakeholder management in New Zealand PPP, which has not been covered prior to this study. This opens room for debate among future researchers. Similarly, the findings also fill the gap in PPP literature in Malaysia, as past PPP studies in Malaysia tend to focus on more traditional research areas such as PPP application, value-for-money, procurement, and risk management and allocation. Through the lived experiences of PPP practitioners in New Zealand and Malaysia, various lessons learned contributed to the development of a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework and international best practices for PPP.

Developing a stakeholder management framework for PPP in this study is not straightforward. A review of stakeholder management literature in PPP, especially concerning the stakeholder management framework for PPP, revealed the need to understand a variety of stakeholder

management issues in developing a comprehensive framework. Therefore, this research has explored three stakeholder management research areas: stakeholder identification in PPP, stakeholder attitudes, and stakeholder relationships. Apart from contributing to the development of a stakeholder management framework for PPP, exploring these research areas also helps fill the literature gaps, especially since there is limited attention to stakeholder management research areas compared to other research areas by PPP researchers.

The findings from Chapter 4, focusing on stakeholders in PPP, show the dynamics of the stakeholder management process for PPP. This provides clarity and significance to the development of a stakeholder management framework for PPP, which was not emphasised in previous literature. Furthermore, the findings also highlight the source of stakeholder identification, contextualising the stakeholder in practice, which is another form of novel contribution to the theoretical understanding of stakeholders in PPP and the construction industry at large.

In Chapter 5, the findings highlighted the polarising attitudes of PPP stakeholders. Utilising root cause analysis (RCA), the root causes of stakeholder attitudes were also identified and presented in the form of a cognitive map, contributing to the theoretical understanding of stakeholder attitudes in PPP. Chapter 6, reflecting stakeholder relationships and factors affecting stakeholder relationships, has highlighted another contribution to the growth of PPP literature, as studies that covered the topic of stakeholder relationships in the past tend to observe the management side of the topic and do not investigate the wider context such as the factors that can influence the quality of stakeholder relationships.

Furthermore, based on the lived experiences of PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, the findings revealed that building stakeholder relationships requires more than trust and confidence. Another element that can be identified from interviews is respect, expanding what has been highlighted in previous studies (Teicher *et al.*, 2006; Smyth and Edkins, 2007), which is another contribution to the theory.

Besides these three stakeholder management research areas, this research explores the practical stakeholder management approaches or processes in PPP. Firstly, the findings revealed the integration between public and private sectors, specifically the procuring authority and SPV, in managing the stakeholders in PPP via a governance structure throughout the PPP project life cycle. Secondly, the findings suggested that there must be clear stakeholder management

responsibilities, with shared responsibility in managing external stakeholders to avoid stakeholder marginalisation. Overall, the findings on stakeholder integration provide significant scholarly contributions to PPP research as it has never been explicitly discussed or investigated in previous literature.

Furthermore, to avoid general public marginalisation, proper planning (sampling strategy) was also emphasised by interviewees, and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this has never been highlighted in any existing stakeholder management framework for PPP, which is another novel contribution of this research. Finally, exploring the practical stakeholder management approaches also revealed that the stakeholders in PPP are time-dependent in terms of their level of influence, which affects their level of priority and engagement approach, meaning that the management of stakeholders in PPP is highly dynamic.

In summary, adopting a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews successfully fulfilled the aim of this thesis. Subsequently, it also expanded the knowledge surrounding the topic of stakeholder management in PPP, which is currently limited despite the important role of stakeholders in determining the success and failure of PPP projects.

9.4.2 Contributions to Practice

With multiple stakeholders from different backgrounds with different interests and expectations, the findings from this research provided significant implications for PPP practice. As revealed in Chapters 4 to 7, stakeholders' experiences in PPP have provided a more nuanced understanding of stakeholder management practices in PPP and revealed several areas of improvement which are significant to practice.

Reflecting on stakeholder identification in PPP (Chapter 4), this study's findings highlight stakeholders' varying perspectives in different countries. This information can be used to raise awareness among international institutional investors about the differences between these jurisdictions. Polarising attitudes among stakeholders from the public and private sectors can also be observed from this study (Chapter 5); arguably, these attitudes may affect PPP adoption and participation in the future. Since PPP is a working collaboration between the public and private sectors, this study also highlighted the importance of addressing negative attitudes through various adaptive responses, such as capacity building among partners for effective stakeholder management, especially public sector partners, as the negative attitudes of private

sector partners were underpinned by governmental decisions. The findings also recognise the importance of the PPP unit in addressing attitudes. Critically, this research suggested that it is important to observe political conditions before making any planned stakeholder engagement.

In addition to stakeholder attitudes, this study also examined stakeholder relationships in PPP from the perspective of PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia (Chapter 6). To capture a holistic view of the topic, interviews were conducted with PPP practitioners from both the public and private sectors. The findings from this study suggested that various factors can influence the quality of the relationship between stakeholders, including management practices adopted by the stakeholders, informing the factors that the stakeholders might overlook. Apart from informing PPP stakeholders of the factors affecting stakeholder relationships and the quality of stakeholder relationships, importantly, this study also makes a novel contribution by enlightening PPP stakeholders in making informed decisions for future PPP projects by adopting the best practice framework for PPP to preserve positive relationships by avoiding conflict and dispute between the partners throughout the contract durations.

In addition, exploring the stakeholder management practices provided a better understanding of the process involved for effective stakeholder management for PPP (Chapter 7). The findings highlight how the two focal organisations read their external stakeholder environment for effective stakeholder management. The findings also suggested the importance of public sector authorities and shared responsibility with the private sector in managing external stakeholders in PPP, avoiding external stakeholder marginalisation. Furthermore, the findings also highlighted the need for a governance structure within PPP to oversee the stakeholder management process, which may be helpful for PPP practitioners to adopt.

The qualitative methodology implemented through semi-structured interviews was designed to explore and provide a deeper understanding of stakeholder research topics within PPP based on the lived experiences of research participants. By adopting this approach, the findings may only be limited to the experiences of stakeholders in New Zealand and Malaysia; however, since this study adopts a cross-country analysis between these two jurisdictions, it enhances the external validity of the results, which improves the applicability of the research findings to a wider context.

In developing a stakeholder management framework for PPPs (Chapter 8, Section 8.3, p. 226), empirical findings (presented in Chapters 4 to 7) from interviews with PPP practitioners in

New Zealand and Malaysia were compiled. Insights from these PPP practitioners provided a nuanced understanding that supplements international best practices for PPP and construction projects as a whole. For instance, the interviews highlighted practical approaches to monitoring and evaluating stakeholder management, such as appointing third parties and using KPIs, which were not explicitly covered by the likes of the Project Management Institute (2021).

These empirical findings also align with international best practices. The proposed framework includes principles such as adaptability and prioritising the right stakeholder groups, reflecting the need to respond flexibly to changes in stakeholder composition. This adaptability aligns with the World Bank's (2017) recommendations. Additionally, the framework suggests tailoring strategies to effectively engage different stakeholders, an approach that, while sometimes ad hoc, aligns with RICS's (2014) best practices, despite these best practices are not specific to PPP projects.

Importantly, the framework has resulted in a greater understanding of the stakeholder management process in PPP and provides a practical approach to inform PPP practitioners in managing the myriads of stakeholders in PPP projects. Specifically, it addresses the dynamic nature of the stakeholder management process. The framework also highlights the criticality of stakeholder identification and assessment for effective stakeholder management decision-making.

Validating the framework further showcases the importance of integrating the different viewpoints between the public and private sectors as the focal organisations managing stakeholders in PPP. An analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that much of the time during the early stages of PPP projects was spent integrating the different frameworks due to organisational differences between both sides. As such, the framework presented according to the experts, can address 'real' issues and is a form of integrated stakeholder management framework. Overall, the development of the framework in this study successfully fulfilled the aim of this research.

9.5 Research Limitations

The findings contribute significantly to PPP practice; however, as with all studies, the research is without limitations. These limitations are discussed below:

1. Regarding the development of PPP research agenda. Although the use of content analysis helps to identify PPP research themes, it is based on the subjective judgment of the researcher. Furthermore, as Gusenbauer and Haddaway (2019) indicated, various search engines can provide valuable research information; however, this research only analysed the data collected from Scopus and WoS. Hence, PPP publications published in other primary search engines were omitted. This study also only analysed journal publications written in English; as such, book chapters, conference papers, and reviews were excluded from this study, which may not highlight the full development of PPP research.
2. Various government agencies across various jurisdictions started to adopt PPP to deliver public infrastructure services; however, despite this study only investigates the lived experiences of interviewees that involve the following PPP projects: highway (toll and toll-free), school, university, accommodation/housing, power station, prison and hospital, the stakeholder management framework developed in this study is not specific to the following sectors, which is another limitation of this study.
3. This study concentrates on the lived experiences of public and private sector PPP practitioners, mainly the procuring authority and SPV/private consortium, which are the focal organisations in managing stakeholders in PPP. Despite the study proposing that the PPP unit should be the overseer within the governance structure throughout the PPP life cycle, potential participants from the PPP unit declined to participate due to other commitments and due to their non-involvement in the stakeholder management process throughout the PPP project life cycle. Notwithstanding, the findings presented in this thesis are still relevant due to the experiences of PPP practitioners from both procuring authority and the SPV in managing diverse stakeholders in PPP.
4. This study only explores the lived experiences of PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia, and despite cross-country analysis helps contribute to the applicability of the findings in different contexts, both jurisdictions are not as mature in terms of PPP compared to the UK, Australia, and Canada.
5. The interviewees that partake in this research are involved in a typical/traditional PPP arrangement, where every task (design, build, finance, operate and maintain) is bundled into one PPP contract, depending on functions transferred to the private sector. As such,

the framework may not be suitable for PPP projects that are under different arrangements.

6. The nature of the interpretivist standpoint through the qualitative methodology adopted in this research can only explain the lived experiences of selected individuals who are directly involved in PPP. Despite the participants in this research being directly involved with infrastructure procurement through PPP and having significant knowledge of the procurement model renders genuineness in the findings; however, it may not provide a whole view of the general PPP practitioners.

9.6 Recommendations for Future Research

The previous section highlighted the limitations of the study, which provide a number of opportunities for future research:

1. Regarding the PPP literature review, future research could utilise various search engines available for data collection, which may provide a more holistic view of PPP research development. In addition, extending the data to non-English publications, book chapters, conference papers, etc., should also be undertaken for future studies. Further, it would also be useful to conduct the literature analysis using bibliometric software (CiteSpace, Bibliometrix R-package, and Bibexcel), and with the development of various artificial intelligence-based website/software for literature review, it would add another dimension to the discussion. Furthermore, it could also be beneficial for future studies to expand the timeline mapping of PPP research, and instead of looking at whole PPP research development, future studies could observe the development of a specific research stream or PPP research in a specific region/country.
2. Following a similar approach adopted in this research, future studies could further extend the research by focusing on specific sectors or projects in developing a stakeholder management framework for PPP. This will help develop a framework that fits into the specific sector and project. Furthermore, the framework could be refined to suit unconventional PPP arrangements such as operation and maintenance contracts and ROT.

3. Interviewing PPP practitioners from the PPP unit should be undertaken for future research due to their role as PPP regulators or ‘guardians’, which may provide different insights into the research area.
4. Although comparative analysis between New Zealand and Malaysia promotes the practicality of the research findings in different contexts; however, comparing these jurisdictions with more or less advanced PPP markets would be advantageous as it may provide the best findings in both worlds.
5. In terms of the three stakeholder management research areas investigated in this research. Future studies could explore these three topics more in-depth. For example, future studies could assess the dynamics of stakeholders in PPP and map the dynamics based on the concept of stakeholder salience by Mitchell *et al.* (1997). In addition, future studies could adopt social network analysis to map the interdependencies of stakeholders throughout the PPP project life cycle.
6. In terms of stakeholder attitudes, opportunities exist to investigate the impact of stakeholder attitudes on project outcomes, which has not been thoroughly investigated within the context of PPP and this research, including the short- and long-term impacts of stakeholder attitudes on stakeholder relationships.
7. From the findings of factors affecting stakeholder relationships, scholars could use this opportunity to further investigate the significance of the factors to stakeholder interactions and organisational performance.
8. With the nature of interpretivist standpoint adopted in this research, opportunities exist to further extend and analyse the findings from the positivist standpoint. Techniques such as surveys may be practical to analyse the relevancy of the findings presented, including the relevancy of stakeholder management steps within the stakeholder management framework.

In summary, from the research gap identified in the previous section, this section indicated several potentials for future research which can contribute to the body of knowledge on PPP, especially within the stakeholder management research areas. From the discussion presented in this section, opportunities clearly exist to expand the knowledge surrounding stakeholder

management, which is currently limited within the PPP research space compared to other research areas in PPP.

9.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter presents an overview of the research, along with its academic and practical contributions, limitations, and recommendations for future PPP research. The qualitative methodology utilised through semi-structured interviews with PPP practitioners from New Zealand and Malaysia has expanded the understanding of stakeholders within the context of PPP through the lived experiences of participants in this study. The findings in this research have provided valuable information on the challenges faced by stakeholders in New Zealand and Malaysian contexts, which can inform stakeholders to proactively address any potential challenges and develop suitable mitigation approaches to maintain a positive PPP environment between different stakeholders. Additionally, the findings have contributed to the development of a systematic PPP stakeholder management framework (see Chapter 8, Section 8.3, p. 226) that has received positive feedback from PPP practitioners.

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APPENDIX A – Interview Guide

Participants Background Information

Can you tell u about yourself and your involvement in PPP?

Probe questions:

1. How long have you been working with the organisation?
2. What is your role in the organisation and in the PPP project?
3. How long have you been involved in PPP?
4. How many projects have you been involved in?

Individual Interview Questions

Q1: What are your thoughts on PPP as a model for delivering public infrastructure services?

Probe questions:

1. What do you see as the main advantages of using PPP for public infrastructure delivery?
2. Can you share any specific experiences you've had with PPP projects?
3. In your opinion, how effective are PPPs in improving the efficiency and quality of public infrastructure services?
 - 3.1. Do you think PPPs are sustainable in the long term for public infrastructure projects?
Why or why not?
4. Do you think the perceptions of other stakeholders will affect the project and the general PPP model as a whole?
5. What is your outlook on the future of PPPs in public infrastructure delivery?
6. Are you going to participate in a future PPP project, if there is any?

Q2: Can you describe who are the stakeholders in PPP projects?

Probe questions:

1. What informs your decision?
 - 1.1. Do regulations play a role in your decision?
2. How frequently do you engage with these stakeholders?

- 2.1. Which stakeholders do you engage the most?
- 2.2. Do you maintain the same level of engagement throughout the project lifecycle?
- 2.3. Can you explain how does it change throughout the project lifecycle? (If not)
- 2.4. How do you engage with them? (Monthly meeting etc.)
 - 2.4.1. Is it the same with other stakeholders?
3. Do you consider the public as part of the stakeholders? Why?
 - 3.1. Do they influence any decision in the project?
 - 3.2. Why are they not part of the stakeholders? (If no)

Q3: How do you perceive your relationships with other stakeholders?

Probe questions:

1. Do you think you have built good quality relationships with other stakeholders? Why?
2. Do you think it should be improved?
 - 2.1. What do you think are the things that other stakeholders should consider in order to improve or maintain the relationships that are already built?
3. Do you think trust has already been established between you and other stakeholders? Why?
4. Do you think the relationships you have built will help in minimising future conflict or dispute?
5. Are there any guidelines/policies related to management strategies that you refer when dealing with other stakeholders?
 - 5.1. Can you share your management strategies? How do you perceive them?
 - 5.2. Do these strategies change over time? Why?
 - 5.3. Do the management strategies apply to every stakeholder, or do you have a set of strategies specifically for every stakeholder?
6. Do you incorporate the views of other stakeholders when implementing the strategies? Why?
 - 6.1. Was it difficult to incorporate the views of other stakeholders? Why?
 - 6.2. Do different needs and expectations among stakeholders made it difficult?
 - 6.3. Was it difficult to assess the needs and expectations of other stakeholders?
 - 6.4. The views from which stakeholders do you consider the most?
 - 6.5. Do you think by incorporating the views of others effectively helps in developing better management strategies?

Q4: How does PPP integrate public and private sectors under one project?

Probe questions:

1. Is it the same with typical construction projects?
 - 1.1. If not, what makes it different?
 - 1.2. How do you allocate the responsibilities between the public and private sectors?
2. What is the significance of having both sectors under a single project?
3. What are the dos and don'ts when both sides are involved in one single project?
 - 3.1. Does the regulatory framework influence the decision?

Improvement Measures and Conclusion

Q5: Is there anything you would like to add or share? Maybe something that you think is important and needs to be addressed? (e.g., improvement, recommendation)

APPENDIX B – Unconditional UAHPEC Approval Letter



The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand
Level 3, 49 Symonds Street
Auckland, New Zealand
Telephone 86356
Facsimile +64 9 373 7432

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

11/03/2022

Prof Deborah Levy

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. UAHPEC23276): Approved

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for the study entitled "**Understanding Stakeholders' Relationships in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Procurement for Infrastructure Development: A Case Study of New Zealand and Malaysia**".

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval has been granted for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is **11/03/2025**.

Completion of the project: In order that up-to-date records are maintained, you must notify the Committee once your project is completed.

Amendments to the approved project: Should you need to make any changes to the approved project, please follow the steps below:

- Send a request to the UAHPEC Administrators to unlock the application form (using the Notification tab in the Ethics RM form).
- Make all changes to the relevant sections of the application form and attach revised documents (as appropriate).
- Change the Application Type to "Amendment request" in Section 13 ("Submissions and Sign off").
- Add a summary of the changes requested in the text box.
- Submit the amendment request (PI/Supervisors only to submit the form).

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application.

Funded projects: If you received funding for this project, please provide this approval letter to your local Faculty Research Project Coordinator (RPC) or Research Project Manager (RPM) so that the approval can be notified via a Service Request to the Research Operations Centre (ROC) for activation of the grant.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Additional information:

- Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the PISs, CFs and/or advertisements, using the date of this approval and the reference number, before you use the documents or send them out to your participants.

All communications with the UAHPEC regarding this application should indicate this reference number: **UAHPEC23276**.

UAHPEC Administrators

University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Dr Abdul-Rasheed Amidu, Mr Muzzammil Zekri