



Public-private partnership in preschool education: foreign experience and its implications

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Annotation

Public-private partnerships are playing an increasingly important role in preschool education. Studying foreign experience on the economic effectiveness of PPPs help us build better PPP frameworks. In this study we gathered data on the economic effectiveness of PPPs in developed and developing countries. According to our study, PPPs appear to yield mixed results in terms of economic effectiveness.

Keywords: PPPs, public private partnership, preschool education, developing country

Introduction

Preschool education is the first stage of education where social and interpersonal skills are expected to develop (A. Saeed et al. 2022). As a part of children's education cycle, preschool education has sizable social and economic implications. In their research, B. R. Delalibera and P. C. Ferreira (2018) found that allocating budgets to preschool education leads to long-term economic betterment. As compared to formal education, preschools are established in diverse formats, such as state preschool establishments, private nurseries, or chain preschool institutions. There is also an ongoing interest among scientists and policy-makers about public-private partnerships or PPPs in preschool education. Given that Uzbekistan is still a developing country, encouraging private stakeholders into preschool education may alleviate the state budget and serve to diversify the preschool education landscape. The current article aims to examine foreign experience with PPPs from the perspective of viable economic



benefit in the long term and discusses how PPPs can be effectively implemented in Uzbekistan.

Literature review

In Encyclopedia Britannica (2024) public-private partnership is defined as “partnership between an agency of the government and the private sector in the delivery of goods or services to the public. Areas of public policy in which public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been implemented include a wide range of [social services](#), [public transportation](#), and environmental and waste-disposal services.” Generally, both parties – state and private stakeholders have respective economic interests contingent on investing in PPPs. Government interests lay in the quick realization of important social projects, alleviation of burden on the government budget, less financial risks, and reduced bureaucratic burdens, while private stakeholders benefit mostly from fewer risks due to government backing, the opportunity for expansion of businesses, boosting company brand (UNICEF. 2018). Theoretically, this must lay the ideal ground for economic benefit for both parties. Yet, in the intricate world of economy, there are almost always some strings attached. Both the government and private parties cannot foresee future changes in the variables, such as quality standards. Canada has initiated PPPs in the preschool education sector. However, the viability of this project is under question by private stakeholders due to the enforcement of strict quality standards (UNICEF. 2018). The economic implication of such changes can be more sensitive in developing countries than in developed one. In Liberia, a developing country, PPPs have led to poor outcomes for the primary recipients of education – children. After the implementation of PPPs in the country’s preschool education, there was little to no positive change in children’s learning. In addition to the fact that consumers began paying for their education for practically zero quality change, this case of PPP in preschool education can amount to policy failure



and blatant ineffectiveness of PPPs in Liberian preschool education (Education International. 2019).

Materials and methods

We will examine 10 research publications about PPPs in preschool education. Publications are divided according to their conclusion about the economic effectiveness of PPPs and also according to the type of country studied: developed and developing. We will also perform Fisher's Exact test to find out whether there is an association between the status of the country and the effectiveness of PPPs in preschool education.

Results and discussion

20 publications are as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. Publications on the effectiveness of PPPs in preschool education			
№	Title of article	Country status	Economic effectiveness
1.	The Impact of Private Schools, School Chains and PPPs in Developing Countries (Crawford et al. 2024)	Developing	not effective
2.	Exploring Public-Private Partnership in Preschool Education Provision as a Contributor to Socio-Economic	Developing	effective



	Development (A. Nabyeva et al. 2013)		
3.	Adding value to public education: an examination of the possibilities for public private partnerships (A. Caldwell. 2004)	Developing	effective
4.	The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education (H. Patrinos et al. 2009)	Developing	effective
5.	Public Private partnerships in education and health in the global South: a literature review (S. Languille. 2017)	Developing	not effective
6.	Early Education for All: Is there a Role for the Private Sector? (M. Woodhead & N. Streuli. 2013)	Developing	not effective



7.	Universal Preschool Education: The Case of Public Funding with Private Provision (J. Blanden et al. 2015)	Developed	not effective
8.	The impact of Public Private Partnerships on education: A case study of Sewell Group Plc and Victoria Dock Primary School (H. Gibson & B. Davies. 2008)	Developed	effective
9.	Exploring public private partnerships in health and education: a critique (J. Gideon & E. Unterhalter)	Developed	not effective
10.	Exploring Public-Private Partnership in Preschool Education Provision: Potential for Socio-Economic Development (Radskiy et al. 2012)	Developing	effective



Out of ten studies, 5 publications generally concluded PPPs in preschool education as effective, while the other half considered it to be economically not effective. Seven studies focused on developing countries, while 3 of them focused on developed ones. We performed Fisher's exact test and found no association between country status and the effectiveness of PPPs.

Column and Row Totals			
	effective	not effective	<i>Marginal Row Totals</i>
Developed country	1	2	3
Developing country	4	3	7
<i>Marginal Column Totals</i>	5	5	10 (Grand Total)

Our study suggests that the effectiveness of PPPs doesn't differ across developed and developing countries, yet remain far from scientific consensus. Policy-makers are advised to develop robust frameworks to ensure the economic viability of such projects.

Conclusion

According to our study, the economic effectiveness of PPPs didn't reach scientific consensus. It appears the success of PPPs does not depend on the status of the country, but, more on framework and contexts. More studies are needed to research on this topic.



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