Reviewer’s report

Title: An Evaluation of South Africa's Public-Private Partnership for the Localisation of Vaccine Research, Manufacture and Distribution

Version: 0 Date: 24 Jan 2018

Reviewer: Jens K. Roehrich

Reviewer’s report:

The paper addresses an interesting and important research area, investigating public-private partnerships. The authors draw on some prior studies, but a much more critical literature analysis is needed to strengthen the paper's argument and draw out the gaps they seek to address. Also, the paper needs to be present much stronger discussion and conclusion sections in order to offer value to the reader. Overall, the manuscript makes some interesting points and I realize that a lot of work went into this study. Nevertheless, I see significant room for improvement which will help to enhance clarity, readability, practical and theoretical contributions. The following paragraphs address each section of the paper in more detail and provide suggestions on how to revise the paper.

Introduction:

While the authors establish some links to extant literature and argue for the importance of this piece of research, authors need to establish a more coherent framework for the overall paper. That means, the introduction should clearly indicate the need for this paper in relation to extant research studies, but also the importance of the research with regards to a practitioner/policy perspective. Which gap(s) are the authors trying to address here? Here you need to clearly link to extant PPP literature (e.g. please see the work by Barlow, Caldwell Mahoney and Kivleniece). Vaccines and the use of PPP will then give you a very interesting research context in which to ground your study.

Conceptual background & Theoretical development:

The authors need to establish some clearer links to extant literature (e.g. the author(s) may find works by Barlow, Caldwell and Zheng relevant - please see suggested references below). The author(s) should clearly draw out the benefits and limitations (e.g. Zheng et al. (2008) discusses the importance and interplay of contracts and trust in long-term PPP arrangements) of PPPs and issues around the management of such long-term relationships. This should then be linked to discussions around value for money, and risks (e.g. Roehrich et al., 2014 and similar). Then, the author(s) can follow up by discussing key extant studies around evaluation of partnerships. This would then help to draw out the gaps in prior studies this study seeks to address.
Methods and Analysis:

Overall, this section is well written and addresses key methodological implications and key findings. Please clearly describe how interviewees were sampled and data were coded.

What were the key differences with regards to your key concepts across the different research methods? You need to further motivate the need to not only use one research methods but to combine multiple methods.

Discussions and Conclusions:

Derived from a conceptual background section which did not clearly draw out the gaps the paper seeks to address, the discussion and conclusion sections do offer only some additional value to the reader as it stands. The authors need to offer more fine-grained results here and discuss what they intended to find out in the introduction section (link to research question; overall aim of the paper). Overall, the authors need to clearly draw out what the theoretical contributions are and how they add to the existing body of knowledge. This section also needs to clear link back to extant studies (PPP, value, evaluation) to offer some clear value to the reader. Please also offer some clear policy implications derived from your study.

Good luck with your revisions.

Useful references:


Level of interest
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Quality of written English
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