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Critical Success Factors in Delivering PPP-Based Power Infrastructure Projects: Insights from the UAE Energy Sector

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A B S T R A C T

The research explores the effectiveness of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the implementation of power infrastructure projects in Abu Dhabi, which is appealing to the Abu Dhabi vision 2021 in terms of achieving sustainable energy and economic diversification. The study takes on a qualitative constructivist position to investigate the perceptions and lived experiences of stakeholders to solve the most important challenges in the area of funding, stakeholder coordination, regulatory framework, and technology integration. The study adopted purposive sampling through use of participants of 25-30 stakeholders, comprising of policymakers, employees of the private sector and community members through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Thematic analysis based on a framework facilitates recognition of the operational issues and opportunities that are peculiar to the socio-cultural and economic environment in Abu Dhabi. The study bridges the gap in the largely positivist literature contributing exclusively to the qualitative understanding of data governance and culture dynamics, which are hardly considered in the context of costs and efficiency. The results should report on funding instabilities, partnership mistakes and regulatory anomalies as major obstacles and an opportunity to utilize AI-driven solution and local expertise. The results of the study are directed to providing the agile policy frameworks to the sustainable energy objectives of the Abu Dhabi community and a transferable model to the Gulf Cooperation Council regarding the carbon zero achievement via the PPPs.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increased growth of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and especially in power projects in the form of increasing use of public- private partnerships (PPPs), indicates a strategic change of adopting a policy of engaging the expertise and input of the private sector to address the energy needs. In Abu Dhabi, where energy infrastructure forms a major pillar of the economic diversification of the emirate in the Vision 2021, PPPs are progressively sought in providing stable and efficient power solutions. Nevertheless, these projects have been successful due to some key issues whose full understanding and realization are not always attained, such as project finance, coordination of stakeholders, regulatory framework and integration of technology. Available literature is mostly of a positivist nature, measuring efficiency in terms of

costs and delivery schedules (Al Saadi et al., 2024), but fails to consider the qualitative aspects of the social system, input into the project outcomes (cultural dynamics, perception of the local stakeholders, adaptive practices of governance) (AlHamadi et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2024). Such disconnect is especially widespread in the scenario of the energy sector in Abu Dhabi, where various international collaborations and fast technological development raise different issues (AlMidfa et al., 2024; Naim et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2023).

An important issue is the unstable nature of PPP-based power projects, indicated by schedule or cost overruns, or other unacceptable operation, which may harm confidence and economic objectives. Such issues as insufficient risk management, wrong relations of public and private goals, and lack of data-driven decision-making are often mentioned (Al Saadi et al., 2024; Dinh et al., 2024),

This study seeks to understand and analyze the lived experience and perceptions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of PPP urban infrastructure development. The study, in turn, aims to co-construct knowledge with participants to offer a more informed view of the relationship between PPP and strategic goals driven by using a constructivist qualitative approach in a culturally attuned setting.

1.1. Objectives

- Research key issues such as funding, partnership between stakeholders, regulatory encouragement and technology advancement of PPP-based power projects within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- Understand issues affecting technical and organizational aspects using the knowledge of and about stakeholders to seek an exhaustive comprehension.
- Realign these factors to the vision of the city of Abu Dhabi 2021, which is squared on developing sustainable energy.
- Employ qualitative data to point at operational problems and opportunities peculiar to the conditions in the UAE.

1.2. Significance of the Research

This research is extremely important to both the academic and practical spheres due to the fact that it identifies essential concerns of the delivery of a public-private partnership (PPP) based power project in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The other central issues of concern in the study include restriction on funding, a relationship between stakeholders, regulatory promotion, and technological development, which are of central mechanism in the accomplishment of such initiatives (AlShawabkeh et al., 2023; Shwedeh et al., 2024; El Khatib et al., 2024). Through a constructivist qualitative prism, the study aims at determining the underlying technical and organizational elements that have bearing on the fate of the projects, and in which the lived experiences and knowledge of the stakeholders are used to gain an exhaustive understanding (Alshurideh et al., 2022; AlNajdawi et al., 2024; Ma'asor et al., 2023). Such a line of inquiry is a contrast to the more quantitative nature of the existing literature that is more concerned with measurable values of success, such as cost efficiency, without paying enough attention to the subtlety of thought processes that influence the way the government is run and executed (Biygautane & Clegg, 2024).

The discipline or area of PPP and energy infrastructure management is improved academically during the study through the consideration of stories that can be used to include them in analysis as part of the methodology or approach used in the study (Kabiraj et al., 2011; Joghee et al., 2021; Rosmadi et al., 2025). Its theoretical addition to the theory of data governance and project management lies in the manner it uses qualitative research methodologies to solve the gaps found in the research that tend to be inclined more towards economic modelling and not the human understanding of the reality, e.g., we can see it in the case of Dinh et al. (2024). The shift reflects the imperative of viewing the interpretive research outside the positivistic paradigms which indicate more information on the perception and management of the deficits in the financial resources, misalignment of the alliance, problems with regulations and being organizationally and technologically behind (Shwedeh et al., 2023; AlQassem, 2022; Kofinas et al., 2016).

In practice, stakeholders in the city of Abu Dhabi, including the policy makers, the private sector, and community stakeholders have direct implications on the findings (Alzoubi et al., 2024; El Khatib et al., 2023; Joghee et al., 2024). The vision of the emirate

of sustainability such as the development of energy in 2021 can hardly work without PPPs which helps the emirate reach its vision of diversifying its economy and preserving the environment (AlAmiri et al., 2024; Hanaysha et al., 2021; AlQassem et al., 2024). Nevertheless, inadequate funding, lack of coordination on the part of stakeholders as well as inefficient regulatory support can cause delays in the project schedule and conflicting priorities coupled with stifling innovation (Joghee et al., 2013; Habbal et al., 2019; Alshurideh et al., 2025). The technological growth especially with the application of AI and renewable energy systems is characterized by challenges such as data quality and readiness to adopt which this paper shall discuss in detail. Through qualitative data, the study identified both the operational issues faced at the UAE settings that are unique to the socio-cultural and economic environments; and the opportunities that can be availed such as utilization of the local expertise at the local setting (Razmak et al., 2018; Murtaza et al., 2024; Yasir et al., 2024). This facilitate coming up with unique approaches to improve the delivery of the project.

Additionally, by focusing the study on realigning all these factors to suit Vision 2021, a potential avenue that can bolster the resilience of Abu Dhabi energy infrastructures may be traced (Alshurideh et al., 2022; Joghee et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2024). The stakeholder outlooks on funding models, technology uptake, regulatory frameworks, and partnership patterns can be used to inform agile policies that reduce the risks and take advantage of opportunities. The information so gleaned concerning the evolution of these issues come out longitudinally and this gives a dynamic insight into how such issues may be transpiring; what cross-sectional studies do not (Akumu and Alhamoudi 2025). This especially applies to the situation in Abu Dhabi with its multicultural pool of workers and high rates of urbanization, as cultural peculiarities have a considerable impact on the successful acceptance and success of the projects.

Its relevance goes beyond Abu Dhabi that can provide a transferable model to the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries interested in pursuing sustainable energy in the form of PPPs (AlShawabkeh et al., 2016; AlKatheeri et al., 2025; Naim et al., 2025). With the increased pressure around the world to achieve carbon neutrality, the research results can be used to inform global best practices and mediate technical and human approaches (Alzoubi et al., 2024; Anifa et al., 2024; Shao et al., 2025). The factor analysis provided future project planning and implementation with evidence-based decisions to carry out effectively as well as act in accordance to strategic goals. Furthermore, the work improves the inclusion of marginalized stakeholders as it puts the voices of local communities underrepresented in data models into the sole positions of engagement, which is important in the sustainability of the projects over time (Almeile, et al., 2024). In an area which still crimes modernization with its tradition, the work can be described as a very welcome contribution to the balancing of innovation and local traditions, which makes the work a staple through which the energy policies of the future shall be shaped.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review strictly scrutinizes 15-20 peer-reviewed articles in order to shed light on relations between public-private partnerships (PPPs), development in the sphere of infrastructure, and AI-driven governance in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other developing environments. The given analysis fits the constructivist and qualitative approach, where the opinions of stakeholders and situational peculiarities of the environment are significant to determine the socio-cultural situation in these fields. Review integrates the literature in the rationale of strategic infrastructure investment, renewable energy policies, smart cities, and cybersecurity in smart grids, which are the main themes, as well as gaps in the literature forming the bodies of understanding, informing the theoretical framework of the study.

The most important of these topics is PPP use on financing infrastructure, discussed by Abdalsalam (2024) and Aboelazm et al. (2024), who addressed due accountability and integration of policies but implementation remains challenging in various locations. Such studies of renewable energy like AlSanad (2024) or Hamdi and Tonoyan (2024) highlight the importance of the policy innovation and the social acceptance nonetheless it shows the lack of insight into the issues of data quality (Alzoubi et al., 2025; El Khatib et al., 2024; Kanwal et al., 2023). According to the literature on smart city (Biygautane and Clegg 2024 and K A kumu and Alhamoudi 2025), adaptive governance

requirements are discussed, but on the other hand the work by Naiho et al. (2024) emphasize more on the technical resilience in the concept of cybersecurity and in many cases, they do not consider the human perception (Neyara Radwan et al., 2025; El Khatib et al., 2022; Joghee et al., 2020). The combination of these themes depicts how complicated it is to incorporate AI when it comes to governance, especially after focusing on the context of the Vision 2021 in the UAE (Alzoubi et al., 2024; Shwedeh, 2022; Ahmed et al., 2024).

Although, important gaps appear. Most of the literature is of positivist nature and is based on quantitative data and economic models (Al Saadi et al., 2024; Dinh et al., 2024), which does not consider subjective experience that are the hallmarks of constructivist paradigms (Shwedeh et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2024; El Khatib et al., 2023). There is hardly any study on how stakeholders view data quality (i.e. mistakes, staleness or biases) on the outcome of governance. Qualitative research that can be referred to as longitudinal is hard to find (Som et al., 2023; El Khatib et al., 2023; Shwedeh & F., 2022), unable to provide information on policy development over time (Ubaid & Gulrez, 2025). Also, the subject of cultural drive and minority stakeholder view is unexplored especially in the multicultural society of the UAE (Hussain & Rahi, 2024). This deficiency impedes the use of an in-depth level of understanding the influence of data governance on the formulation of strategic goals (Joghee et al., 2020; AlQassem, 2022; Karthika et al., 2024).

2.1. Strategic Infrastructure Investment and Public-Private Partnerships

In a developing economy, such as Libya, as proposed by Abdalsalam (2024), PPP model was identified to be used in terms of financing strategic infrastructure with a case study, where accountability and resource allocation have been identified as success factors. On the same note, Aboelazm et al. (2024) point out that PPPs improve the quality of services delivery through public utility services, citing the integration of policies, although they observe challenges in implementing it in different cultural environments (Al-Kassem et al., 2022; Kharbat et al., 2021; Shwedeh et al., 2024). In turn, documentation of critical success factor in PPP project briefs in UAE quantitatively presented by Al Saadi et al. (2024), the concept of stakeholder alignment and data reliability were found to be crucial, but their research is not supported by qualitative data on the local perception (Shwedeh & F., 2021; Shao et al., 2025; Kabiraj et al., 2009). Focusing on the PPP approach in Saudi Arabia in the context of Vision 2030, Hidalgo (2024) highlights how institutional policy gaps negate effective governance in the country. Biygautane and Clegg (2024) examine the development of a smart city in Dubai with the use of PPPs and emphasize the importance of flexible governance models, yet they only cover the issues of urban planning in their study and fail to address the concerns of rural infrastructure (Alshurideh et al., 2025; Sihag et al., 2024; El Khatib et al., 2022).

There arises a gap in the finite investigation into how cultural processes and the story of the stakeholders contribute to the effectiveness of PPPs (Joghee et al., 2018; Alzoubi et al., 2025; Som et al., 2023). Although the level of quantitative indicators is high, very few qualified works exist which examine the lived experience and perception of the policy, especially in the specifics of the socio-economic situation in the UAE (Sihag et al., 2024; Treacy et al., 2025; El Khatib et al., 2023).

2.2. Renewable Energy and Sustainable Infrastructure

The discussion of renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure in the Gulf region has been taking steps toward gaining momentum and this is against the background of the global shift towards cleaner systems of energy generation (Alzoubi et al., 2024; Razmak et al., 2018; El Khatib et al., 2022). This work of AlSanad (2024) focuses on renewable energy issues in Kuwait and promotes policy innovation as one of the mechanisms of dealing with technical and financial challenges (Al-Qassem et al., 2024; Naim et al., 2024; AlKurdi et al., 2023). The investigation illustrates the importance of the strong government involvement in providing subsidies and using the idea of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to enable the use of solar and wind technologies (Kharbat et al., 2017; Anifa et al., 2024; Salloum et al., 2024). Nevertheless, AlSanad points out that other challenges like the technical barriers like poor grid infrastructure and the financial barrier like the high cost of initial investment still exist (AlNajdawi et al., 2024; AlShawabkeh et al., 2013; Yas et al., 2024). According to the author, these gaps may be filled

with the creative financing schemes and the technological adaptation at a local level, but the study is not detailed enough to study the perception of the stakeholders and the implications on the adoption of the policy, which must be considered highly relevant in a culturally diverse region (Kumar et al., 2024; Ahmed et al., 2024; Alshurideh et al., 2024).

Hamdi and Tonoyan (2024) compare the two cases in the implementation of solar energy in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and it was found that the residents have a high level of social acceptance because of government incentives and awareness (Yas et al., 2024; El Khatib et al., 2024; Alblooshi et al., 2025). A series of inconsistent applications is recognized by them as a matter of concern, because it can be explained by the usage of outdated datasets which does not consider current trends in energy consumption, or changes in demographics (Al-Qassem et al., 2021; Rana et al., 2025; Halder et al., 2024). According to Almarri and Boussabaine, (2025). As an example, old census numbers can inaccurately represent the urban energy requirements and give incorrect policy goals (Khatib et al., 2024; Hanaysha et al., 2021; AlNajdawi et al., 2024). Although the paper offers highly qualified quantitative information on the effectiveness of certain policy, it demonstrates that real-time data consolidation process needs to be explored, which can be alleviated with the help of effective data governance frameworks (Kanwal et al., 2023; AlMidfa et al., 2024; El Khatib et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the empirical examination is not extended to the qualitative lives of societies that are at the receiving end of these disparities (Alshurideh et al., 2025; Khatib et al., 2024; AlKurdi et al., 2025).

Hussain and Rahi (2024) determine how residential solar systems can be incorporated into Abu Dhabi with substantial expectations regarding community involvement as a success factor. They imply that social legitimacy of renewable projects is promoted by active involvement of the residents, which creates the feeling of ownership and sustainability (Karthika et al., 2024; Naim et al., 2025; Murtaza et al., 2024). The study by Alhosani (2025), raises effective pilot programs interested in community response to guide the design of installations, but it does not go far enough into what minority stakeholders, including the expatriate communities or people in low income brackets, might experience as barriers to adoption (Alzoubi et al., 2024; Pande et al., 2024; AI-Nakeeb et al., 2024). This absence constrains the overall nature of the study since various voices are mandatory towards fair energy changes (Treacy et al., 2025; AlKatheeri et al., 2025; Shehab et al., 2023).

Jaber et al (2024) also describe gas storage reservoirs within the territory of Abu Dhabi in detail with references to the role of the enhancement of energy security and market stability. The study shows how it is strategic to ensure there is always energy in store that could cushion against a shortage in supply, which is a key issue in the oil-reliant economy in the region (AlShawabkeh et al., 2023; Shao et al., 2025; Ilyas et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the study fails to touch upon the possible benefit of artificial intelligence (AI) in optimising the storage activities, e.g. predictive maintenance or demand forecast that in turn would increase efficiency. This is an example of a general tendency in the literature that technical analyses tend to fail to recognize AI as a transformational agenda in the conventional energy industries (AlShawabkeh et al., 2014; Kanwal et al., 2023; Nazeer et al., 2025).

The model proposed by Naranje et al. (2024) features infrastructure development in wind and tidal energy mentioning technological feasibility as one of the pillars of renewable development (Khan et al., 2023; Rosmadi et al., 2025; Kukunuru et al., 2019). They represent engineering design diagrams and environmental impact assessment reports, proving that wind and tidal power solutions are the possible alternative to fossil fuels off the coast (Joghee et al., 2024; AlShawabkeh et al., 2021; Joghee et al., 2021). In line with this, Dinh et al. (2024) conduct an examination comparing the cost of the transmission of green hydrogen and ammonia with emphasis on economic feasibility along pipelines, on ships and high-voltage direct current (HVDC). It emerges in their examination that HVDC is cost-effective on long-distant transmission, but in the two studies, technical and economic aspects outweigh social or cultural reasons that inform adoption (Vij et al., 2025; Kharabsheh et al., 2024; Kabiraj et al., 2009).

One of the major gaps of this body of literature is the lack of qualitative data on the perception that people have towards renewable energy transitions, especially bias or outdated data and its influence

on policy adoption in the Gulf region (AlShawabkeh et al., 2021; El Khatib et al., 2023; Pande et al., 2024). This does not seem to be included in the call to policy innovation formulated by AlSanad (2024), the empirical reports provided by Hamdi and Tonoyan (2024) on stale data, and the experience of stakeholders in data quality, which include distrust in biased data and resistance to outdated policy despite high-quality data devoid, among others, of outdated data are not addressed (Alzoubi et al., 2025; Ma'asor et al., 2023; Nuseir et al., 2021). Hussain and Rahi (2024) are also concerned with the community engagement, which suggests the issue of social dynamics, and even though the voice of a minority is missing, this research has its limits (AlShawabkeh et al., 2021; El Khatib et al., 2023; Pande et al., 2024). The failure to mention AI (Jaber et al., 2024), going technical in nature (AIranje et al., 2024 and Dinh et al., 2024), all the studies also demonstrate a lack of connection to human-centered studies. Such a gap demands a constructivist methodology, as interviews and narrative analysis allow the researcher to represent how perceptions of the reliability of the data determine the acceptance considering the peculiarities of the cultural and socio-economic context of the region (AlQassem et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2024; Khadragy et al., 2022). This research may guide broader and successful plans touching renewable energy.

2.3. Smart Cities and AI-Driven Governance

K Akumu and Alhamoudi (2025) critically examine the concept of smart cities in Abu Dhabi and established a complete disjuncture between the strategic visions and the needs of the communities, indicating that participatory governance should exist. Dwivedi (2025) describes the successful case of AI integration with the outcome that the quality of data is crucial but fails to devise the case into a contextual view of development countries. The article by Naiho et al. (2024) touches on the issues of cybersecurity in smart grids, and there are implications of the same to the sustainable energy systems, but it is technical based as opposed to the socio-cultural based (AlShawabkeh et al., 2017; Maydybura et al., 2024; Karthika et al., 2024). Saeed and Siraj (2024) also present the global renewable energy scenarios with the support of AI to reach carbon neutrality, yet the research does not take into consideration regional differences (Alshurideh et al., 2024; Alblooshi et al., 2025; AlQassem et al., 2025).

As the literature has shown, there is a lack of knowledge on how the idea of AI-driven governance is viewed by various stakeholders and there is a paucity of qualitative work done on data biases and their influence on governance performance.

3. THEORETICAL GAPS

The studies reviewed are majorly positivist in nature as they use more of quantitative evidence and economic models to assess the outcome of infrastructure development and governance. Specifically, Al Saadi et al. (2024) statistical analysis is employed to determine the critical success factors in UAE based on the measurable variables such as costs and time performance of the projects of PPP (Anifa et al., 2022; Al-Kassem & A. H., 2021; Kurdi et al., 2025). The same can be said about Dinh et al. (2024) which compares transmission cost of green hydrogen and ammonia through economic modeling with an argument about the financial aspect rather than the social dimension (AlShawabkeh et al., 2018; Joghee et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2016). Although such approaches are useful in terms of giving objective observations, they can underestimate the subjectivity and interpretive aspects that are key elements of constructivist paradigms (Yasir et al., 2024; AlKatheeri et al., 2025; Rana et al., 2025). In comparison, a constructivist approach puts more emphasis on lived experiences, perceptions, and meanings attributable to the stakeholders involved in data governance and policy implementation as a way of providing a deeper insight into how such factors, when it comes to organizational and societal effects, come into play (Alhosani, et al., 2025).

Ubaid and Gulrez (2025) write about ambitious plans of renewable energy in Saudi Arabia and UAE, and they launch numerous initiatives by governments and a lot of technological changes (Tanveer et al., 2025; Kofinas et al., 2016; El Khatib et al., 2024). They however do not go into details regarding the institutional policy evolution that lies behind these ambitions. It is an overall description of the strategic aims of research; however, it does not indicate how policies have adjusted around over time responding to the developments or assessments by the stakeholders (Owojori and Erasmus, 2025). That facile treatment restricts the capacity to evaluate the

interacting nature of policy models and practice, a pivotal level to comprehend long-range sustainability in energy transformations (AlHamadi et al., 2024; El Khatib et al., 2023; Nuseir et al., 2019).

3.1. Synthesis and Research Gaps

The literature emphasizes the relevance of PPPs, renewable energy, and AI in advancing any infrastructure, which conforms to the strategic objectives of the UAE. Nonetheless, there exist several gaps including: (1) a paucity of qualitative research that identifies stakeholder perceptions of data governance, (2) not paying enough attention to the cultural and regional differences in implementing policies, (3) a scarce understanding of how data quality problems (inaccurate, outdated, biased) that influence AI-driven outcomes, and (4) lack of constructivist inquiries on co-constructive practices of the effectiveness of the governance itself (Samer Hamadneh et al., 2023; Alshurideh et al., 2022; Tangri et al., 2023). Such gaps do require a qualitative method, where interviews and narrative analysis can be used to obtain a wide range of observations, as suggested by the research question of how data governance influences the strategic goals with the given culturally rich environment in mind.

3.2. Research Questions / Hypotheses

- Which are the key success factors that the stakeholders note as crucial in the delivery of PPP based power infrastructures in the energy sector in Abu Dhabi, especially in regard to funding, stakeholder cooperation, regulatory goodwill, and technological application?
- What are the views of stakeholders on the efficacy of partnerships and regulatory framework in managing and provision of PPP based power projects in Abu Dhabi?
- What are the issues and suggestions the stakeholders are facing and suggesting integration of the advanced technologies and issues of funding in PPP based power projects in Abu Dhabi?

3.3. Rationale

The research questions assist in the in-depth interview, focus groups, and narrative analysis, which fits the constructivist research approach. They shun positivist hypotheses and are more oriented towards co-construction of knowledge in the form of voices of stakeholders. Adopting this lens covers the literature gaps as, to date, the quantitative research (e.g., Al Saadi et al., 2024; Dinh et al., 2024) dominates the field, whereas the qualitative investigations of the evolution of data governance are few (K K Akumu and Alhamoudi, 2025). The questions provide relevance to the UAE vision 2021 objectives because the research is centered on inaccurate, outdated, and biased data as independent variables and effectiveness of AI-driven governance as a dependent variable.

4. METHODOLOGY

The proposed study takes a qualitative approach to the study based on a constructivist paradigm of focusing on, framing, and explaining knowledge co-construction through lived experiences and the understanding and interpretation of the parties to the process. The research design is exploratory and interpretive as it tries to answer the affect the efficiency of PPP in the emergence of a city infrastructure.

4.1. Research Design

The proposed study is a case study with a heterogeneous city-case in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in which the PPP becomes the part of strategic objectives such as the improvement of digital infrastructure. The research design enabled development of a more in-depth analysis of contextual factors, cultural issues, stakeholder views; it is in line with constructivist focus on meaning-making (Aboelazm et al., 2024). The study is longitudinal and multi-point in data collection.

4.2. Tools

Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and a participant observation used upon data collection. Semi-structured interviews (each last 15-20 stakeholders i.e., policymakers, employees, community member) allow probing according to flexibility on perception of data quality and governance effectiveness. The use of focus groups aims at generating discussion to identify points of convergence and divergence among the seekers of 5-7 people in each session (3-4 sessions altogether). Participant observation at meetings of governance gives background information on the way decisions are made.

4.3. Sampling

Participants are also identified through a

purposive sampling technique that selects the participants with the relevant expertise or experience and is maintaining the diversity based on the roles (e.g., technical staff, administrators, citizens) and cultural backgrounds considered as the reflection of a multicultural population of the UAE. The amount of sample is between 25-30 people and this is just based on data saturation where new information stops coming, and this is a standard practice in qualitative research. The methodology helps to justify the subject of the study which centers on intermediated stories.

5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Data Collection

The data gathering follows the process of audio-tape interview (60-90 minutes) and use of a focus group (90-120 minutes) which also be transcribed verbatim. What is captured during both meetings is noted in observation notes, which would include non-verbal conversations and communication. There is informed consent on the part of the participants and the data are anonymous as a measure of ethics. It takes six months and involves cyclic changes depending on the themes that revealed themselves during the study, which makes it late and deep (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5.2. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis whereby the same underpinned by Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-step framework as familiarization, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting. Inductive coding of transcripts and notes is conducted to determine emerging patterns with respect to perceptions of data quality and influences of governance. Themes are developed based on repeated interaction with participants to have co-construction. To help organize the data, a set of software like NVivo can be used, and a degree of triangulation positively affects validity in terms of interview, focus group and observation data. This approach relates to goals of the study that aims to fill in the literature gap dictated by quantitative research (Al Saadi et al., 2024; Dinh et al., 2024).

5.3. Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent

One of the basic ethical issues is that the participants should give informed consent. The participants (the policymakers, employees, community members) informed transparently in a summary language concerning the purpose of the study, information on the methodology or procedures to be followed, possible risks, and right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Before the data collection, the consent forms written in both English and Arabic, considering that not all the UAE population speaks English, signed. The aspect of voluntary participation guaranteed by this method.

5.4. Anonymity and Confidentiality

The focus should be on privacy of the participants. All the data, such as interview transcripts, and focus group recordings, and observation notes, anonymized, but the identifiable information substituted by codes (e.g., P1, FG1). Information kept safely on passworded devices, which only the active research team can access, and wiped in five years according to the UAE data protection regulations. This prevents any possible professional or social consequences to participants.

5.5. Power and powerlessness

The research admits the existence of power imbalances, especially when dealing with hierarchically related stakeholders (e.g., policymakers and community members). Participation encouraged through mandatory options and neutral meeting places selected to conduct interviews and focus groups to avoid coercion. The culturally competent facilitation assist vulnerable groups members, including representatives of a minority community, to give their voices without undue influence.

5.6. Data Veracity and Reflection

Ethical integrity applies to the data handling. This study promised not to misrepresent or create bias when analyzing the participant stories during the thematic analysis of the study. Member checking (providing the findings with the participants to confirm that it is accurate) performed on the regular basis to address the trustworthiness and respectful the contribution of the participants in the co-constructive process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5.7. Practicing Local Laws

The research observes ethics in the United Arab Emirates, such as Federal Decree-Law No. 45 of 2021 with regard to Personal Data Protection, to comply with the regulatory framework in the region. This was maintained by getting an approval by an institutional review board in case of any unseen complications during the research work.

6. OUTCOMES & CONTRIBUTION

6.1. Findings

The research is anticipated to demonstrate the points of view of various stakeholders on influencing factors of successfulness of the entities of the power infrastructure of Abu Dhabi based on the PPP model. Interviews can reveal that government respondents perceive funding stability as an aspect that can be dealt with, with the response of the partners in the private sector being a partnership misalignment that is a major challenge in their way. Regulatory appetite may come out as strength, but irregular application may be viewed as a drag factor, according to stakeholders. The technological improvements, specifically, the combination of AI and green energy solutions are expected to be challenging but promising in terms of quality of data and the availability of adoption strategies. Issues like lack of funds, ineffective coordination of stakeholders, and loopholes in regulations would manifest, which affect the project schedules and efficiency.

6.2. Value to knowledge

The study theoretically support PPP and energy infrastructure theory, as it include stakeholder stories and go beyond the positivism concern of Dinh et al. (2024). It give a complex insight into the relationships between the funding mechanism, cooperation of stakeholders, regulatory frameworks, and level of technological innovation of reaching project success. In practice, the paper provide some solutions to manage Abu Dhabi sustainable energy vision 2021 recommendations on the development of new forms of financing, new forms of partnerships, simplified regulations and optimal integration of technology. Qualitative data positively draw certain special opportunities, such as utilizing local knowledge, and specific issues relating to the multicultural environment of the UAE, which is similar to the ideas promoted by Kumu and Alhamoudi (2025) regarding the participatory nature of the governing process.

6.3. Relevance

The results guided the planning of future PPP projects in Abu Dhabi, so they fit the priorities of Vision 2021, which are the sustainable energy. Other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries can reshape this model and use it in the sphere of world sustainability, which is gaining popularity due to carbon neutrality. The increased presence of voices of the marginalized stakeholders during the study created equity and trust, which are critical to the viability of projects in the long term. Such a combination of radicality and cultural authenticity makes the research an essential policy-making guide.

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