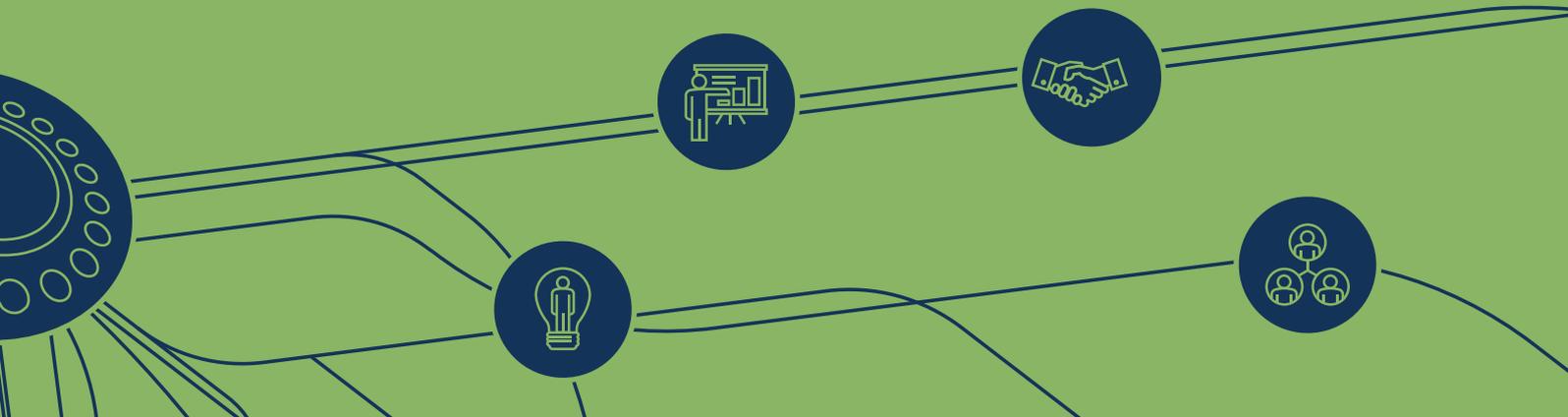
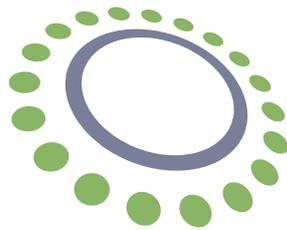




Perceptions of PPP in the Dubai Education Sector

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Abstract

Given the stark difference in purpose for PPP in education locally and globally, this paper compares Public Private Partnerships in the education sector of Dubai and other international contexts. It then reports the findings of research that gauged the perceptions of the public in Dubai about the role of PPPs and the changes they have influenced in the education sector. While there is a highly positive perception, the reports finds gaps that can still be filled by PPPs in order to help the government achieve its National Agenda Goals in education. The empirical evidence from this research can help policy makers respond appropriately to the use of PPPs in the education sector and to develop a strategic framework for future partnerships.

Keywords: Public Private Partnerships; Education; Perceptions of Public Private partnerships

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Introduction

The palpable sense of urgency being demonstrated by government in their efforts to address challenges they are facing in the education sector is encouraging. These various interventions in developed and developing countries reveal a concerted effort to make young people ready for the digital, post- industrial world they will inherit. Many countries are using the United Nation sustainable development goals as a measurement against which they can cascade local education policies and strategies, which have global resonance. In so doing, governments have increasingly turned to the private sector for advice, investment and expertise, in order to collaboratively address educational challenges. The mutual symbiosis is evident in these public private partnerships (PPPs) because the success of both sectors is predicated on a well- educated and highly skilled population. Globally, the main rationale for developing public private partnerships (PPPs) in education is to maximize the potential for expanding equitable access to schooling and for improving education outcomes, especially for marginalized groups. In the UAE because of the unique demographic distribution, public private partnerships in education primarily provides schooling for children of the large expatriate population, who make up the majority of the labor force. As early as 2003, the country took the an innovative step of inviting the private sector to invest in the education sector in order to fast track higher education, improve and modernize K-12 infrastructure, reduce bureaucracy, update curricula and take advantage of information technology. Of course, this innovation of using PPPs to advance national educational outcomes have policy implications and often there are challenges that have to be addressed.

In Dubai, this took shape in the form of many off shore branch campuses signing contracts with, and leasing property from h the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in the Emirate to provide tertiary education. In Abu Dhabi, a project called ‘Public-Private Partnership for Public School Management’ enabled leading local and regional private education providers to manage selected public schools in that Emirate with a view to improving the quality of public education. Some would argue that what has happened in the education sector is privatization rather than a partnership. However, the definition proffered by Wang (1999) suggests that privatization is a permanent transfer of control to a private entity. This has not been the case here in the UAE. Instead, the public private partnerships that are evident have aimed at promoting improved financing, increased access and service provision in the education sector

Definition and Scope of PPP in Dubai

The concept of a public-private partnership (PPP) recognizes the existence of alternative options for providing education services besides public finance and public delivery. Although there are many forms of PPPs, including partnerships where private organizations support the education sector through philanthropic activities and high engagement ventures, this study examines PPPs in which the government guides policies and regulations while the private sector provides financing and delivers education services to students. In particular, governments contract out private providers to supply a specified service of a defined quantity and quality at an agreed price for a specific period of time. These contracts contain rewards and sanctions for nonperformance and include situations in which the private sector bears the financial risk in the delivery of education. In Dubai so far these risk have been minimized due to the high demand for good quality education from the largely expatriate community.

In the Dubai, PPPs are defined as “partnerships that release benefits of private sector management systems, efficiencies and methodologies into the provision of public services, with specific benefits related to the cost, value, and quality of services provided” (Saleh, cited in Guide to PPP in UAE, 2016). In order to make way for national regional and international investments, in 2016 the Department of Finance developed the Guide to Public Private Partnerships in the UAE according to (5) of Article (9) of its mandate: “Develop a general guide covering rules and regulations to be followed when a government entity wishes to enter into a partnership contract”, under Law No. 22 for 2015 on regulating PPP in Dubai. The New PPP Law has numerous stated objectives, the most significant of which include:

- to transfer knowledge and expertise from the private sector to government agencies, to train and develop agency employees on the management and operation of projects and, more generally, to promote Emiratisation;
- to encourage private sector investment in development projects;
- to enable the Government to implement strategic projects more efficiently and effectively; and
- to ease the financial burden on the Government’s budget.

(Ahurst, 2015)

While many sectors in the UAE such as transportation, health, sustainable development, technology, real estate and education, have experienced successful Public Private Partnerships, some projects have not had the desired success. According to a research by Meed “Almost one in four public private partnership (PPP) projects launched in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) have been abandoned”(Meed, 2016) The scope of this research is to examine PPP in the field of education in the Emirate of Dubai and gauges the public perception of these partnerships in this sector. Admittedly, PPPs in education and applied sectors falls in an ambiguous category because of the diverse range of rationale and justification for establishing these partnerships as part of a policy framework. Some analysts describe PPPs in education as “a confusing policy approach” (Klijn, 2010)

Function of PPPs Education

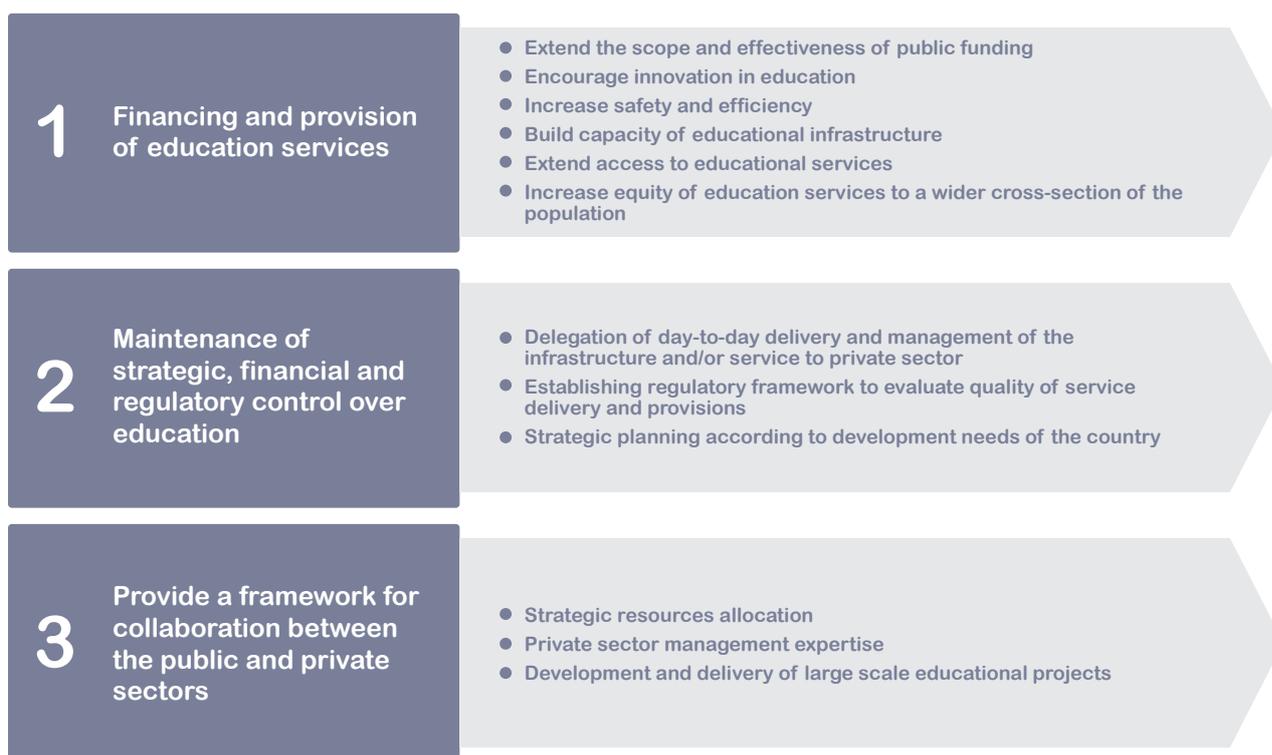


Figure 1 :Functions of PPP in Education

The 2030 Sustainable development goals outlined by the United Nation articulates a vision of full access to education from K-12, equity through affordable technical, vocational and tertiary education and improvement in the learning environment through investments in infrastructure and resources. In the developing world many governments have admitted a deficiency in the resources, leadership and skills to address this goals and have turned to the private sector for their expertise. The development of long- erm public private partnerships (PPPs) between government and the private sector for the delivery of complete or partial educational services has emerged as a mechanism through which the goals can be ieved. Globally public private partnerships in education have served three main functions as seen in figure 1 above.

Utility of PPPs in Education sector

The development of PPPs in education in Dubai has primarily been a technical and strategic choice for a number of reasons

1. To comply with the New Public Management Philosophy adopted by the government over the past decade. The central premise of the NPM-reform purports that more market orientation in the public sector will lead to greater cost-efficiency and accountability for government entities. When compared to other public management theories NPM is more oriented towards outcomes and efficiency through better management of public budget, increased rate of innovation through a focus on results rather than processes and increase competition NPM merges principles of business administration with the requirement of public administration in order to improve the quality of the services provided to the public.
2. To leverage private sector knowledge, skills and innovation in support of the growing need for skilled labor force as areas such as real estate, IT, construction, health, education, transport, sustainable development, tourism, manufacturing and commerce that have burgeoned since the beginning of the millennium
3. To offer private alternatives to public schools who by law, have a small allowance for expatriate students. The policy governing admission of expatriates in public school stipulates that expat students enrolled must demonstrate academic excellence in Arabic, math and English; and the number of expatriate students should not exceed 20% of the Emirati nationals in the institution.(MOE, 2015)
4. To improve public governance through greater transparency and stakeholder engagement.

In 2008, the Department of Economic Development (DED) published some recommendations about how PPPs could succeed in the education sector and some of the success factors were:

All upper or lower case for bullet points

1. innovative finance mechanism
2. collaborative policy development
3. Operational flexibility for education service providers
4. Long term contracts to education contractors
5. Use of independent consultants to assess performance of special education providers

Arguably, these factors have been achieved over the past decade to one degree or other by various vested parties. An entity in Dubai that has been critical in driving public private partnerships is the Knowledge and Human Development Authority which is a state government entity charged with the purpose of human capacity development in Dubai. In 2006, Law No. (30) established The Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai. This public sector entity can:

- own land and real property situated in the Emirate and which are allotted for educational purposes in order to achieve the objectives of the Authority,
- participate in the provision of infrastructure, buildings, administrations and any other services required for the realisation of the objectives of the Authority.
- enter into partnerships and agreements with institutions, persons, companies and authorities for projects inside or outside the Emirate in relation to fields of its responsibilities

(KHDA, 2006)

Between the establishment of the KHDA in 2006 and 2017, the growth in the education sector and related service sector has been remarkable. In 2006-2007, 60% or 132, 386 students in Dubai were enrolled at 136 private schools. (Private School landscape 2012/13 KHDA report, 2013 pp. 5 & 14). In 2015/16 Dubai School Inspection report 90% or 265,299

students were enrolled in 173 private school in the emirate. In 2015 the market size of private schools in Dubai, based on pupil enrolment multiplied by average tuition fee, was AED5.1 billion (International Private Schools Education Forum IPSEF, 2016).

Tenders and contracts in Dubai education sector spans four subsectors: education delivery, education services, education support services, and education infrastructure supporting education services have created a thriving diversity in the economy of Dubai. Interestingly, given the PPPs laws in Dubai, any private sector company wishing to bid for these contract must registered as a limited Liability Company (LLC). The business law in the UAE further mandates a 51% Emirati ownership of said company. This requirement has not deterred private investment in education . The MENA education report for 2013 suggests that private equity investment in education in the region is highest in the UAE, with 10 out of the 21 private equity deals being inked with UAE education sector. These deals have a value of USD\$141M (PwC MiddleEast.com , 2015). It can be anticipated that Public Private Partnerships in education sector will expand to enhance provisions such as distribution of textbook , catering, maintenance, information, communications, and technology networks (Strategyand.pwc.com, 2017)

The education landscape spans four main areas of education-related activity

Core education ↑ ↓ Ancillary	Education delivery	Pre-K education (and childcare)		K–12 education		Vocational education		Higher education	
	Education services	Professional development		Curriculum development		Development of education content		Student assessment	
		Student tutoring		Test preparation		School inspection		Education consulting	
	Education support services	Textbook distribution	Transportation	Housing facilities	Healthcare	Extracurricular activities	IT services ¹	Non-teaching HR management	
Career advisory		Remedial support	Libraries	Catering	Student counseling	Facilities management			
Education infrastructure	Infrastructure provision and ownership		Infrastructure maintenance		Infrastructure sales and rental		Infrastructure equipping		ICT infrastructure (including national school network)

Figure 2: Main areas for PPP in education related sectors

Source: Strategy&.com, 2017

Private schools and universities that operate in Dubai are not subsidized through direct financial support and grants or vouchers are not how the PPPs work . Instead, incentives through long term contracts and flexible terms are offered. This is very different from PPPs in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, where government subsidizes private partners by providing financial input for salaries, textbooks or student grants. Evidently, the scope of operation for PPPs in Dubai’s education sector knows no limits (fig 2) and is welcomed by the government because of the promise of quality and better outcomes.

Methodology

A strategic research tool used by organizations and governments is gauging public opinion in order to measure the pulse of initiatives or policies. Given what seems to be a lucrative PPP structure for government and private entities, it is critical to gauge the perception that the public who are the end users of the PPP provisions in education. Including citizens as stakeholders is one method of research that is employed through focus groups. In this context, participants are able to express opinions openly and reveal concerns and attitudes, about the wider PPP in education sector discourse that is taking place in the society. Research that is supported by focus group hard to ignore as it represents the voices of citizens themselves in the form of their narratives being used as hard evidence.

In October 2017 a series of focus group from the various entities in the education sector was convened over a two week period. In total, there were 26 participants (figure 3).

Education Sector	Participants
Academic	9
Education Technology	6
Education Investor	5
Education management	6

Figure 3: Focus Group participants from Education Sector

Results: Public perception of the role of PPP in education

Four themes were extracted from the content analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data related to the perceptions of PPP.

1. The features of PPP that the participants were aware of
2. Reasons why PPPs were necessary in education
3. Areas of PPP led reforms in the education sector
4. Future scope for PPP involvement in education

1. Features of Public Private Partnerships in Dubai Education Sector

It was reported by the participants that the most obvious feature of public private partnerships that they perceived in the education sector was outsourcing of support services to private contractors. From their observation, 40% of the engagement with private contractors was to supply services such as catering, IT services, maintenance and administrative support. Clearly this has not changed since the 2006 report on PPP in education when Department of Economic Development reported that “the contracting with private sector to provide supporting education services, (supplying students’ meals, and conducting schools maintenance), is used on a large scale, and had achieved positive results” (DED, 2008). In a CfBT Education Trust international review of public private partnerships conducted in 2008 by Norman LaRocque, support services delivery was not included as a provision that featured in the public private partnership. So while not a new concept in the UAE, internationally the provision of support services to the education sector as a PPP relationship was not noticed.

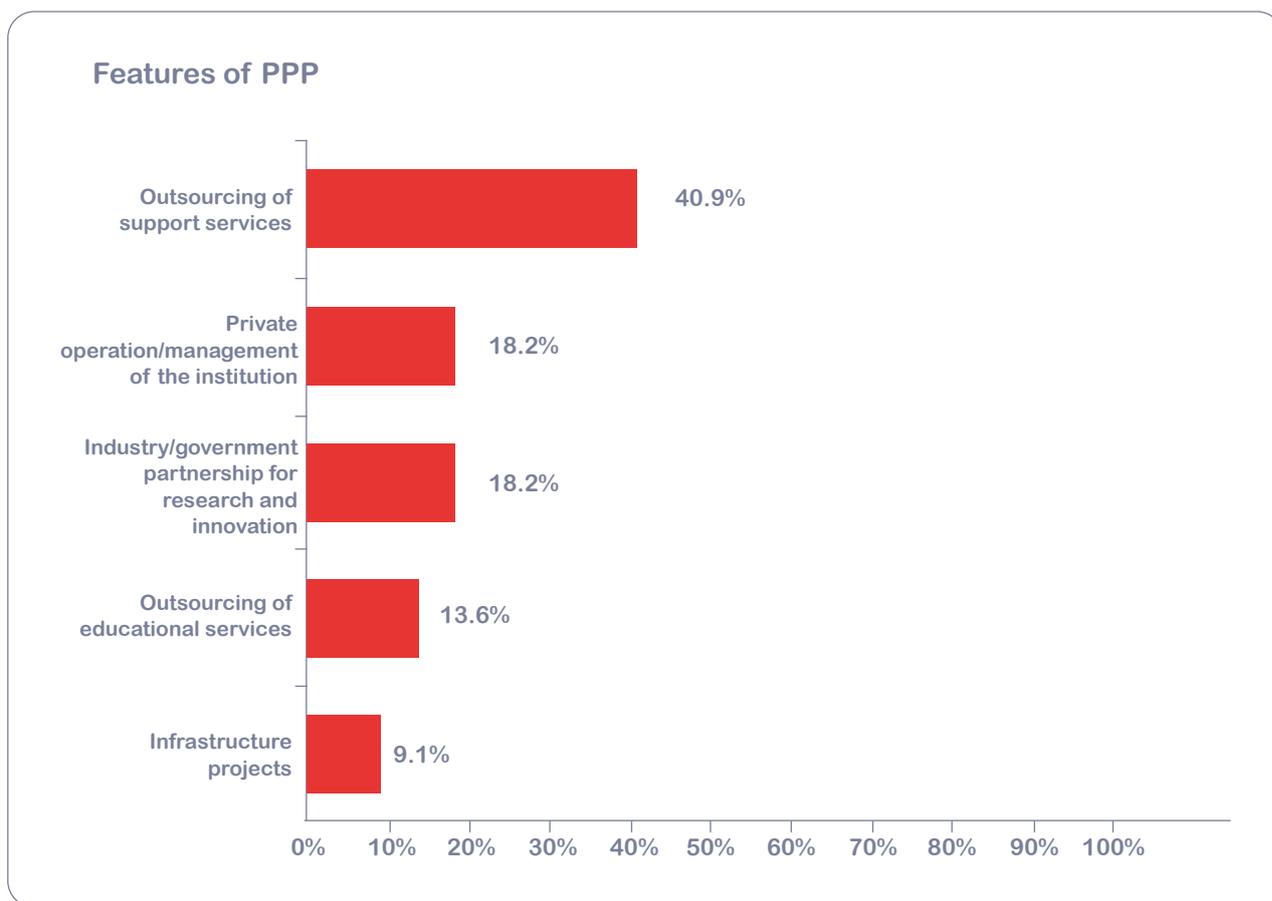


Figure 4 : Features of PPP in Education

The observable features of PPP in the CfBT report were Private Sector Philanthropic Initiatives, school management, purchase of educational services from private schools, adopt a school program, voucher and voucher like programs, capacity building initiatives and school infrastructure development. As seen from figure 4 some of these features were reported in the Dubai context to varying degrees. An interesting finding from the CfBT report that was anomalous in the Dubai context, was Government purchase of education services from private schools. Under these PPP agreements the government, in Uganda for example, would pay a subsidy for students enrolled in a private school. In the Philippines, the government offers contracts to private schools in areas where public school places are insufficient to offer education to high school students with the proviso that the fees should not exceed the cost of public school education. In New Zealand PPPs are used to provide educational service to kids who are at risk so they can eventually be re-introduced to mainstream school setting. The New Zealand Government funds the delivery of these programs. In the case of the Dubai and the wider UAE, the government does not purchase educational services, but offers a Build Own and Operate (BOO) contract to education investors. Major education investment and management companies like GEMS education,

Taleem, Innoventure and others like them, operate K-12 schools on contracts of this nature. Educational institutions in Academic City and Knowledge Village, lease, manage and operate universities as franchises or branch campuses. The government does not pay them to conduct business. Instead, in most cases these institutions pay the government for services rendered.

It could then be construed that the Dubai government has broken from the traditional PPP mechanisms in education and adopted a model that best suits the majority expatriate population. In essence, the government has adapted the known model of PPP to provide access to the large expatriate population and has found a way to gain financially from this model. This hybrid, market oriented version of PPPs in Dubai has transposed the traditional notion that it is private sector partner that gains financially. In such a profitable sector like education this is an example of a win-win implementation of PPP contracts where the government and the private partners realize benefit and the end users get a better education. In fact, this market oriented PPP model has increased, choice of schools/university for parents and competition among various providers, but unfortunately has not reduced the cost of the service. This is another point of departure for PPPs in the Dubai education context and those studied in major international context (LaRocque, 2008; Patrinos et al., 2009).

One obvious area of reform because of PPPs in the education sector is that of accountability. Even though many schools that have been established using the PPP model do not use the UAE national curriculum, they are still required to comply with nationally determined licensure and accreditation stipulations of the government in areas such as teacher qualification, class sizes, student/ teacher ratio, governance and admissions requirements. In Dubai, compliance is monitored by the KHDA through strong regulatory mechanism of inspections known as the Dubai School Inspection Board. This accountability relationship between the private and the public partners results in shared reward, decision making and risk (Schaeffer and Loveridge, 2002). Some PPP researchers argue that this horizontal accountability relationship is not appropriate for social services such as education for which governments has full obligation to the public (Verger, et al, 2017). Of course, this would be true in many jurisdictions but in Dubai with 95% of the population being expatriates, the government does not shoulder this obligation in the same way. So, if the partnership fails, the risk lies with the end users and the private partner.

2. Reasons why PPPs are necessary in education in Dubai

Internationally, PPPs in education are used to increase access to schools, financing education provisions and to manage existing schools. The data from the focus group shows concurrence with over 72% of participants saying one reason for PPP in Dubai's education sector was to increase access to finances that could develop the sector. 51% of the respondents felt PPPs were used to raise the management standards of education sector and 49% felt that PPPs improved access to education provisions in Dubai. However, as the public private partnerships have evolved in Dubai, it is evident that the cooperation between private and public sector entities in delivering education provisions is guided by shared social and economic objectives. For decades, the private sector has complained about the skills gap among graduates who leave school without being employable. In the UAE in general, and more specifically in Dubai, the government has long recognized the potential for knowledge and skills transfer from the private to the public sector, in order to address this skills gap. The local government created a conducive environment in the education sector where private K-12 and higher education institutions could work on closing the skills gap by delivering an alternative curriculum to the local based one and even though the debate about employability rages on, certainly the public private partnership in education sector is alleviating this situation. Many institutions now focus on critical thinking and soft skills development, which were most lacking in previous years. An additional reason for PPPs that was identified by the 63% of focus group respondents in the study was provision of innovation in education institutions. For Dubai this is a major benchmark for success. It could then be posited that reason the for PPPs in education have gone beyond operational requirements to fulfilling more strategic needs.

As seen in this infographic published by LinkedIn (Fig 5), the most popular field of study in the UAE are business management, computer science and civil engineering. Increasingly, private universities are now offering degrees in tourism, media , journalism, psychology and data science to meet the needs of industry in these sectors. According to the Workforce 2020 report by Oxford Economics and SAP SE, by 2020, 88% of UAE employers would require employees to have analytical skills. "Coding and analytics are particularly useful in rapidly digitizing industry verticals such as the government and public sector, banking and finance, healthcare, retail and sport (Oxford Economics, 2014). While federal universities such as UAEU and HCT offer these specializations, it is mainly private universities who are in contractual partnerships with public stakeholders, to provide these degrees in locations such as Knowledge Village and Academic city in Dubai. In the KHDA report on the education

landscape for 2016/17 there were 31 institutions in the freezones from 12 different countries (KHDA, 2017). The increase in PPPs in the education sector was also demand driven, as parents felt that privately operated schools offered better quality education, superior access to language development resources, better leadership and a greater range of extracurricular options. Hence, PPPs in the education sector have demonstrated the value that the private sector brings in increasing, quality, access and choices. On February 9, 2016 Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, announced the new cabinet and the new direction that the government will take which included a roadmap for collaborating with the private sector. In one sense, this is a validation of the bold steps that were already taken in the education sector to encourage PPPs.

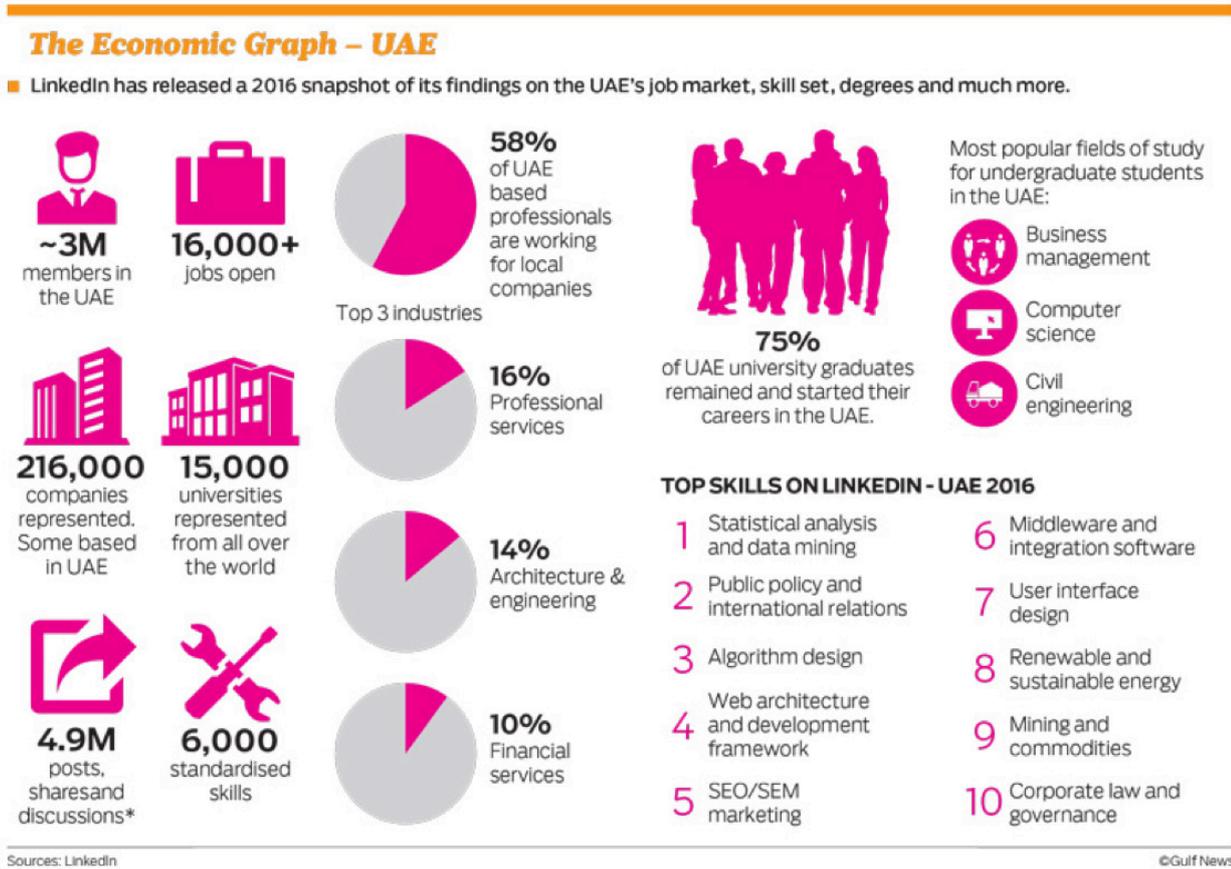


Figure 5 Skills required in UAE job market in 2016

3. Areas where PPPs have led to education reform in Dubai

The education landscape in Dubai has been characterized by reform since the 1970's. In the 70's the reforms were focused around establishing education provisions. In the 80's the reforms centred around embedding quality in the tertiary landscape. In the 90's reforms targeted vocational provisions. In the millennium, Emiratization agenda drove reforms that ensured the capacity development of the local population. It was at this juncture, that Dubai opened up education provisions across all levels to private partners. Between 2003 and 2008 there was a dramatic shift in the education landscape with the emergence of a number of private institutions that emerged in response to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) opening Dubai up to establishing international branch campuses and private schools to increase the number of seats available to the growing population. This was part of the attempt by the government to create a knowledge economy. Based on the perceptions of the focus group, it was felt that in the top 5 reforms that PPPs have caused are:

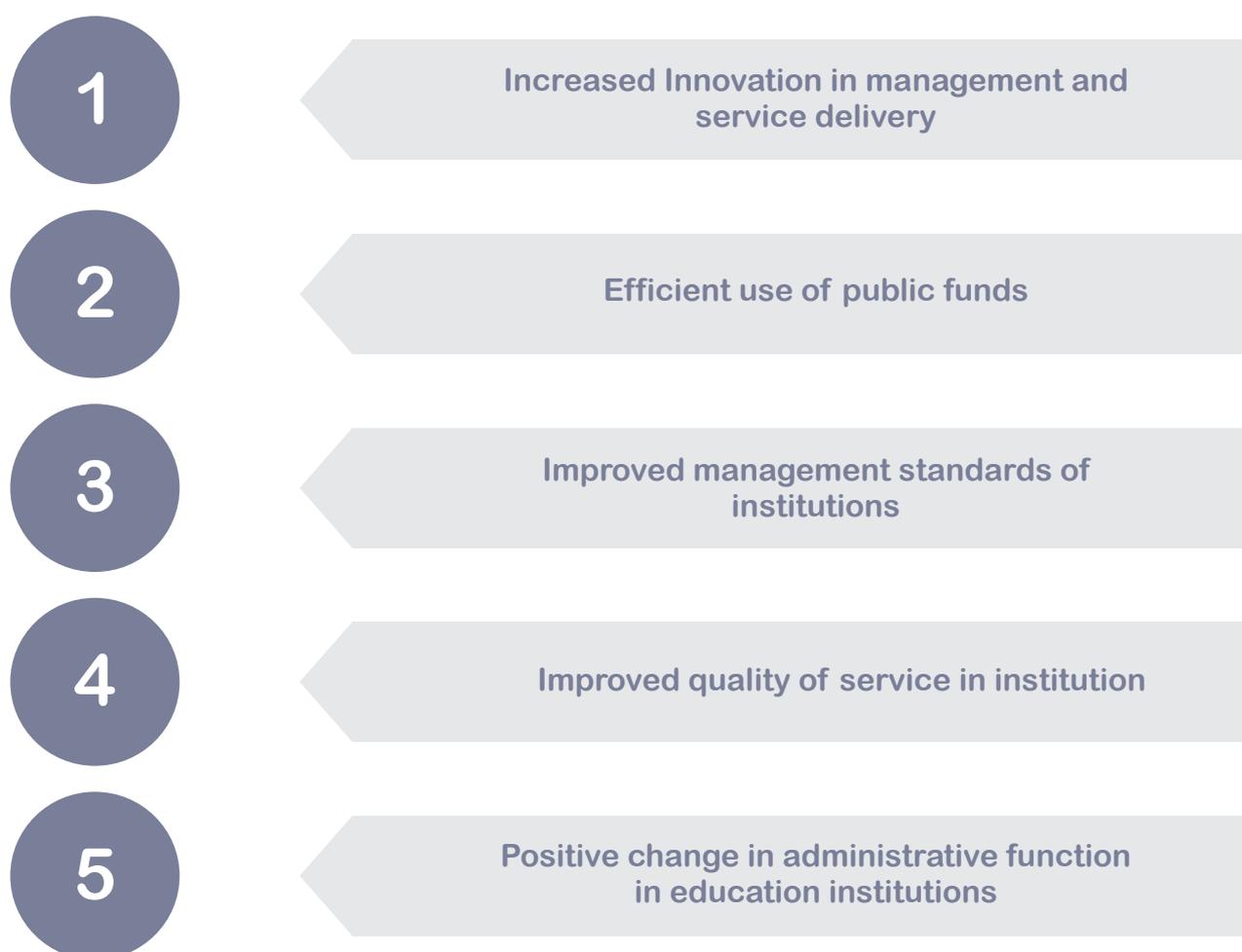


Figure 6: Top 5 reforms observed as a result of PPPs in Dubai education sector

The perception that PPPs bring innovation in management and services in Dubai is congruent with global perceptions. Traditionally, PPPs in education employ innovative promotional marketing and management practices. However, a major critique here is that there was no perception of PPPs in Dubai bringing pedagogical innovations. This finds resonance in research by Lubienski, which posits “private providers tend to favor traditional education approaches over experimentation” (2009). Looking further at the other four reforms that the focus group ranked, they are all operational in nature. It would seem then that PPPs in Dubai have not necessarily resulted in pedagogical reforms. Further, given the regulatory compliance to standardized test such as PSA, TIMMS and PIRILS, that is required by the KHDA, the curriculum is controlled to optimize the scores students get on these tests. Other changes reported by the focus group were greater transparency in procurement process, financial support for government reforms, and change in the role of administrators in the education sector.

In proposing the Dubai PPP guidelines one of the goals was the add efficiency to the spending of public funds and to optimize the value gained from government expenditure. PPPs in the education sector has achieved exactly that. In Dubai, most schools are state of the art and purpose built. This has happened through government contracts with private investors and developers who are using innovative building practices and procurement methods to provide this infrastructure. This is similar to the PPP model in infrastructure development of the education sector in the United Kingdom where the government contracts a private developer to build and maintain school infrastructure for contractual periods of up to 30 years. The Private partner assumes the risk and the responsibility for this build (The World Bank, 2009). In Dubai, the contract is of a similarly long term and renewable nature with the added benefit of the private partner operating the school and collecting revenue from its operations.

The KHDA rating system which was introduced as a regulatory mechanism to ensure quality among the public schools and numerous curricula offerings of private schools has not only improved the academic quality but has improved the leadership and administrative functions. According to the KHDA

“One of the key factors underpinning improvements in Dubai schools is the effectiveness of leaders. Inspection findings indicate 66% of all Dubai schools benefit from good or better quality of leadership. This is a significant increase from 2008, when 46% of private schools were judged to have good or better leadership (KHDA, 2017).

School leaders in public and private schools have collaborated under the guidance of the KHDA to share knowledge and transfer skills.

4. Future scope for PPP involvement in education

The future scope for PPPs in education in Dubai and perhaps the entire UAE is in the public school system. In response to the growing number of Emiratis who are opting for private education, the government has actively employed a number of strategies to improve public education sector. There is now increased accountability for producing education workforce in public schools. To support the required accountability the ministry of Education collaborated with a number of private entities to increase, ELT, STEM and vocational courses in schools and universities. Below are just a few of the headlines announcing some PPPs in the education sector.

UAE Ministry of Education and GE Sign Strategic Partnership To Strengthen Innovation And Skills For Emirati Youth

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed attends signing of partnership agreement with Insead

In addition, a new unified curriculum known as the Emirati School Model was rolled out in September 2017. All public schools and private schools that follow the new government curriculum that aims to improve standards and produce better results. The changes will create a single standardised education system for in institution using the curriculum. According to Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, the plan is “essential to achieve supportive and well-informed education system capable of keeping up with future changes and developments. The prime goal is to enable all schools across the country operate within a homogeneous framework to generate graduates as per best international standards and who can meet aspirations and expectations of the UAE people” (2017)

There is certainly scope in this new curriculum for private partners to be brought in to enhance the STEM provisions where there is a skills gap among providers. In support of this premise, the focus group responded that they were “very confident that the private sector can play a major role in better product delivery, quality of public education standards and monitoring the successes of any strategic, tactical and operational objectives”. A further sentiment to support the future role of PPPs in education was that they were “confident, educational technology is driving forward innovation in the education sphere and governments and institutions are beginning to take steps to capture and capitalize on this through government accelerators and university innovation centers”. Other responses from the participants about the future scope and role of PPS in the education sector stated that “PPPs were very promising and continuity of such partnerships would result in fruitful relationship and educational outcomes” and that they were “fairly confident that opportunities to deliver professional development training for staff will grow”. The area of capacity building through innovation in pedagogy is a starting point for PPPs to contribute in a sustainable way to the Dubai education sector.

According to the current trends in education, PPPs can be used to optimize learner experience in the sector. There are a number of private companies that are already working in partnership with public Higher Education institutions to develop more innovative and smarter Information Systems for Learners. “Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University (HBMSU) recently signed agreement with Ellucian Inc. to launch the first official Ellucian Banner training center in the Middle East. This partnership is of strategic importance as it lays a foundations for providing quality classroom based vocational training through the use of the Ellucian Products such as Banner, which is one of Student Information System (SIS) available to major universities in the UAE, KSA and other Gulf countries (HBMSU,2016))

With the increased focus on IoT and AI in the UAE, big data is now ubiquitous. This presents a future challenge if there is a skills gap in good analysis who can conduct robust analysis and mediate the information. This will result in a demand for data analysts in the UAE in order to support the numerous Smart initiatives that are generating big data. This is an area for PPPs to close the gap by offering training and development in these skills. In the same way that the banking and telecommunication sector has been reformed through rapid digitization using PPPs, the education sector needs a similar approach to meeting the needs to the fourth Industrial revolution.

High Cost of Education and PPPS

It would be myopic not to address the major counter argument against PPPs in education in Dubai which is the high cost of education. There have been efforts made by KHDA through the Dubai School inspections to ensure the quality of education in all school is aligned with the fees charged. Additionally, individual schools have started to respond positively in order to reduce the economic pressure high school fees have on parents' budget and two schools announced a 10% reduction in fees starting in September 2018. Additionally some K-12 schools will offer merit based scholarships from grade 5 to 10 (ArabianIndustry.com, 2017). Another example of responsiveness from schools to high fees was that 22 of the 159 private schools in Dubai announced that they would freeze their fees for the 2018 school year (Gulfnews.com, 2017). There has also been a 25% drop in the Education cost index (ECI) which is used by the KHDA to determine the rate of increase school are allowed. In 2016/17 the ECI was set at 3.2%, which meant that schools in Dubai were allowed to increase their fees by up to 6.4% for the 2016/17 academic year. The ECI for the 2017/18 school year was recently announced at 2.4 % so school fees should only be increased by 4.8% according to the Dubai Statistics Centre. This is yet another example of how public private partnerships can be used to respond to the needs within a particular sector. In Dubai there is a significant need for school fees alleviation and or reduction. The private partners with have come up with innovative ways of addressing this issue.

Conclusion

It is evident that in the context of the Dubai, public private partnerships in education have had a robust history and continue to have a promising future. Though all the features evident in Dubai do not fit into the traditional models of PPPs from international examples, the city state and the wider UAE are using PPPs as a driver for achievements of a “first rate education system” by 2020 in accordance with its national agenda . The government started off proactively by benchmarking against international standards. They then invited private partners to help to bridge the gaps that were revealed in teacher development, curriculum, innovation and infrastructure. There is still scope also for pedagogical innovation in order to build work force capacity in Dubai. The perceptions among the public as reflected by major stakeholder who participated in the focus group is one of confidence and validation for the strategies that the Ministry of Education, the KHDA and ADEK have employed. Ultimately, PPPS are meant to benefit the end users, and this is clearly the case in Dubai. Unwittingly though these end users also assume maximum risk if the partnership between the government and private education providers falter. This is a policy related gap that needs to be addressed as the city develops more equitable PPP laws. In the future, PPPs that can collaborate with the government to further embed AI into the curriculum and drive Dubai’s Smart City vision are going to be in demand. The government of Dubai , by framing the PPP law in 2016 has essentially issued an open invitation to the private sector that they continue to seek suitable private partners who share the vision for Dubai and who have the capacity to help the government achieve it’s goals.

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