

PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN BAYELSA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Project management is believed to be justified as a means of avoiding the ills inherent in the construction and production sectors of the economy and for which reasons most projects fail and or abandoned. The project managers role arises from the need for a technical expert to take charge, control of events on the project implementation process, someone who understands the intricacies of co-coordinating, controlling, organizing and directing the efforts and activities of the professional team and the physical problems of implementation process with the needs in the decision making process. The success of any project implementation process in the construction industry in the public and private sectors depend largely on the project manager's concept on staff appointments and control, strict monitoring of time, cost, material, quality and environmental constraints. However, developing countries still suffer project failures traceable to project management factors. This study is aimed at identifying and analyzing project management constraining factors to the expected success in the construction industry using Bayelsa as a model in the study of a developing economy

Keywords: Project, management, issues, challenges

Introduction

According to Cleland et al (1988), a project is termed successful if it passes four success test criteria either time criterion – completed on time; the cost or budget criterion completed within budget; the effectiveness criterion completed in accordance with the original set performance and quality standards; and client's satisfaction criterion accepted by the intended users or clients whether the client is internal or from outside the organization.

Project execution often involves substantial funds, the loss through failure or abandonment, has a crippling effect on the capabilities of the investors and the financiers because once a decision is taken to execute a project, scarce resources are tied down for a long time. The project may be the only future hope of the client; therefore he may expect nothing but success. Efficient project

management is very important especially in the Construction industry which if ranked among other economic sectors may not fall above fourth in terms of inter-sector linkages. The importance of this sector as an agent of development is enhanced by its ability to provide gainful employment for the world's teeming population. According to Roy (2005) "it is evidenced that noticeable development and the aesthetic transformation of the environment is bound up with and predicated on the construction industry".

Construction industry is a major index as a factor in the social and political integration of the society and ranks as one of the major budgetary areas of developing economies (Nwachukwu, 2008). The construction industry is proven to be the corner stone and bedrock of rapid economic growth of any nation (Bhavesh, 2006). The products of

construction industry are desired mainly for the services which they help to create as most business; social, religious, economic, industrial activities etc operate on her structural base (Nwachukwu, 2008). According to Eric, 2003, “the industry is likely to remain a major area of development activity as the need for the provision and replacement of infrastructure become more important in the years ahead”. This research is limited to the project management factors as part of the indirect factors constraining project management success of public and private sector construction in Nigeria. The study is aimed at identifying and analyzing project management factors constraining project management success of private and public sector construction in Nigeria as a developing economy. The analysis will reflect the strength of each factor and the rate at which it influences failure, abandonment and collapse of construction projects in Nigeria.

Methodology

The population of the study consists of higher officers in Bayelsa State ministry and local government department of works and housing. A sample of 50 higher executive staffs of Bayelsa state ministry of works and housing and 50 higher executive staffs was selected from all the local government area of the state. In total 100 respondents was selected using convenience, a non probability sampling technique.

The instrument use for the gathering of data is the questionnaire. It contains 10 items question. Some are measured nominally while others are measured on 5 point likert scale. To give the data meaning and achieve the desire objective sought in the study the data gathered through the questionnaire personally administered will be presented and analyze using SPSS version 16.

Data presentation

Below are the frequency distributions of the variable under investigation

Table 1: Does Bayelsa State government employ the services of experts in project design, costing and bid evaluation? * What is the project failure rate in Bayelsa state?
Cross tabulation

Count	what is the project failure rate in Bayelsa State					total
	very high	High	not sure	low	very low	
Do Bayelsa State government employ the yes services of experts in project design, costing and bid evaluation?	7	20	0	6	25	58
no	8	7	22	1	0	38
Total	15	27	22	7	25	96

Source: SPSS output 2011

The cross tabulation above indicate that 7 of the respondent who agree that indeed Bayelsa state government employ the services of experts in project design, costing and bid evaluation , rated project failure to be very high, 20 rated project failure to be high while only 6 rated project failure to be low. however

8 of the respondent who opined that Bayelsa state government do not employ the services of experts in project design, costing and bid evaluation , rated project failure to be very high, 7 rated opined it is high while 22 of the respondent are not sure of their rating.

Table 2
chi-square tests

	Value	df	asympt. sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	55.123 ^a	4	.000
likelihood ratio	71.514	4	.000
linear-by-linear association	10.323	1	.001
n of valid cases	96		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. the minimum expected count is 2.77.

Source: SPSS output 2011

Test of hypothesis

The chi square table displayed in table 7 above shows the result of the test. The Pearson chi square value is 55.123 and it is significant at the .000 level. since this level of significance is much higher than our critical criterion of .05, the null hypothesis which state that “project failure rate in Bayelsa state does not have depended relationship with the level of experts involvement in project design, costing and bid evaluation “ is rejected with a high degree of confidence.

From the study 38 representing 39.2% of the respondent are of the view that contractors handling government projects in Bayelsa state use effective project management tools, 21.6% opined they do to a little extent while 16.5%, and 21.6% opined to a large extent and to a little extent. it is also obvious from the findings that majority of the respondent representing 28.9% agree that project failure rate in Bayelsa State is indeed high, 15.5% opined it is very high, 22.7% not sure while 25.8 asserts it is very low.

Discussion of findings

Responses to structured questionnaires from the recipients of the projects revealed lack of clear definition of the project, and deliberate exclusion of local professionals during the tendering, ordering, procurement, installation and commissioning stages of projects. Other problems were appointment of persons who were technically ill equipped to manage such projects poor tender documentation, and poor evaluation of the tenders. Procurement and location of projects on political consideration only and the non-committal attitude of government functionaries to the implementation of its own budget plans, unpatriotic attitude of some policy makers who for the purpose of handsome kickbacks encourage over-invoicing and absence of built in planned maintenance affected the project a great deal. The Nigerian preference for imported machinery, equipment and even foreign expertise and the unpatriotic habits of many Nigerians who hold the view that what belongs to the government is nobody’s property and therefore deserves no special care led to major failure. It was found generally

that most project beneficiaries and managers lacked the understanding of project management, that is, the procedure for its initiation, costing and execution. It is for this reason that we found it expedient to give some explanation on the term ‘project’ and the procedure for its management.

Conclusion

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Projects are designed to achieve a goal. All projects no matter the size must be planned. To avoid project failure deliberate efforts must be made to ensure that only persons who have the professional expertise and experience are saddled with its planning, costing and execution.

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