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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIO-POLITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING PROJECT PLANNING, MANAGEMENT THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA

*** Agu Justina Chioma**

Department of Business Management and Administration, Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu State, Nigeria. **Corresponding author:* justinachikk@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

This paper has identified projects as the 'cutting edge" of development and they represent important and tangible symbols of sustainable change and modernization in an economy. The objectives of this paper include to: explore the concept "project" and it's cycle; identify the socio-political factors that negatively affects project planning through implementation in Nigeria; highlight tools that facilitates effective project planning, management and implementation; and proffer general recommendations for the effective and efficient planning and implementation of projects in Nigeria. This study employed exploratory and qualitative research methods as we did not test any model in a statistical sense. Data was gathered from multiple sources, including formal interviews, public documents, and the internet. However, there is a strong reliance on interviews because rich insights and contextual information was sought from the key informants. The findings revealed that numerous factors which include poor or no project appraisal; top management lapses; defective contract agreements and awards; and gross failure to apply project management techniques; contracts for projects are awarded without adequate project planning which includes the costing and scheduling as well as the method for successful implementation; a mismatch often exists between project design and objectives on the one hand, and the implementation capacity of the agency or organization or ministry on the other; existence of defective control system, and in some cases, the system of monitoring and evaluation may be completely lacking; where projects are awarded on political considerations little or no attention is given to the recommendations of project appraisals, assuming that such specific studies were undertaken; budgetary constraints occur frequently given the short tenure of governments, reordering of priorities or diversion of fund as time progresses have been identified to impact negatively on project planning through execution in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of development has assumed varying dimensions and colorations over time. Development has become a necessity objective with a movement away from growth to more humane spheres of ensuring redistribution consistent with addressing issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality. A major and justifiable area of development discourse concerns the appropriate instrument of implementation. The quantum of projects required to provide needed and demanded amenities and services for the prosperity and happiness of the people has fallen short of expectations so much so people are left wondering what would have been otherwise. As Gittinger (1980) observes, projects are the 'cutting edge" of development and they represent important and tangible symbols of change and modernization. The experience with Government projects in Nigeria is that rather than act as vehicles for the sustained development of rural areas, they only exist more or less as glossary in the annual rituals called budgets that serve merely as public relations cliché. A greater level of development and enduring progress can be achieved in Nigeria if suitable projects are formulated, prepared and implemented through the instrumentality of government machinery. Projects which are chosen should be of high priority and widespread acceptability in the national development plan. Several perspectives can be brought to bear on the definition of projects. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (1971) thinks of projects in the production sense, Lewis (1966) sees projects as words, drawings and figures on paper and King (1966) defines it as a capital investment. Benjamin (1985) posits project as an instrument of change in the dynamic context and defines it as a coordinated series of actions resulting from a policy decision to change resource combinations and levels so as to contribute to the realization of a country's development objectives. In simple terms therefore, a project is an investment activity on which resources are expended in expectation of a stream of benefits over an extended period of time in the realization of specific objectives. It is a specific activity with a specific starting point and a specific ending point intended to accomplish a specific objective. Normally, a project will have some geographical location or a rather clearly understood area of geographical concentration as well as a clientele group it intends to reach. As simple as this definition appears to be, we are reminded of the very complex array of activities entailed in putting in place a successful project. To put this mildly, the process involves effective planning and implementation.

Project planning begins with the setting of goals and objectives which represent the broad rationalization for the existence of an establishment. The benchmark of progress achieved is usually measured by the degree of attainment of stated goals and objectives. Usually, the goals and objectives are concretized and translated into programmes and projects which represent tangible and measurable parameters of success or failure. This is often a very difficult process but represents a very important stage in the planning process. If programmes and projects describe and capture the essence of goals and objectives, then progress would have been recorded in the determination of the extent to which the set goals and objectives can be accomplished. Resources are the essential ingredients required for the implementation of projects. Whether tangible, intangible, human, material or financial, the main characteristic of resources is their scarcity or inadequacy in juxtaposition with needs which are often multifarious and insatiable. The element of scarcity of resources constitutes a serious limitation to the attainment of goals and objectives. The first lesson to be learned from this reality therefore is that projects have to be properly planned through careful selection and implementation of programmes and projects in such an efficient and effective manner to facilitate the realization or achievement of goals and objectives. The effective and efficient performance of the planning task requires that project planners revert to the adoption of technical tools such as the project cycle (Baum, 1972) and other implementation and evaluation techniques. It is not the intention of this paper to engage in the treatise of these tools, suffice it to say that the capacity to prepare and analyze projects is lagging in Nigeria and even the few in planning positions continually underestimate the time and effort needed to prepare suitable projects. Institutionalizing the concept Government and the various attempts at reforming it in Nigeria have aimed at making the system more responsive and responsible to the needs of the people at all level especially at the grassroots for those living in the rural areas. It derives its relevance and importance from the fact that it presents a local point of impact on which plans for social and economic development can stand or fall.

The objectives of this paper are:

1. To explore the concept "project" and it's cycle.
2. To identify the socio-political factors that negatively affects project planning through implementation in Nigeria.
3. To highlight tools that facilitates effective project planning, management and implementation.
4. To proffer general recommendations for the effective and efficient planning and implementation of projects in Nigeria.

This paper is organized as follows. We begin with the specificity of project planning and implementation; a review of the relevant literature, followed by a description of the research methodology. We then present the project success and project management tools. We conclude with a discussion of the study's findings.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

The Project Cycle Concept

The tremendous variety of activities subsumed under the term "project" has resulted in several and different definitions of the term by various contributors to the literature. A project has been "defined as a discrete package of investments, policies, and institutional and other actions designed to achieve a specific development objective (or set of objectives) within a designated period" (Baum and Tolbert, 1985:333). These contributors refer to another definition of the term as "an investment activity in which financial resources are expended to create capital assets that produce benefits over an extended period of time" and also "an activity for which money will be spent in expectation of returns and which logically seems to lend itself to planning financing and implementing as a unit" (Gittinger, 1982). A project is commonly characterized by most (and in some cases all) of the following five elements:

1. "The brick and mortar" of the project" a common description of capital investment in civil works, equipment or both;
2. Professional services for design (planning) and engineering, supervision of the construction of the civil work and operations and maintenance improvement;
3. Local institutions building (sometimes institutional adjustment or change) as a means of facilitating project implementation, operation as well as capacity building aimed at creating a corps of project managers and staff for successful management of the project in the local-region;
4. Policy improvement or change: This could take the form of price adjustments, subsidising essential goods and services, and application of cost recovery measures as means of facilitating aspects that determine the performance or other wise of the project as well as influencing relationship among the project and the specific sector (in which the project is classified) and also to the wider national (multi-sectoral, economic, social and environmental) development objectives and aspirations.
5. Implementation planning designed to achieve the targets and objectives of activities and the project within specific time lines (Baum and Tolbert, 1985: 333). Specialists in the field of development investment suggest that the project strategy has become a requirement expected by most external lenders/donors, which appreciated that development investment should be packaged into separate projects. However, agencies of government have been hesitant about adopting the project strategy in managing the delivery of services in various sectors such as education (e.g. schools rehabilitation) and infrastructural improvement (e.g. roads construction).

The project strategy has been recommended for managing a multiplicity of relative small investments in development undertaken frequently by ministries, departments and agencies of governments (Baum and Tolbert 1985:333-4). Issues pertaining to development institutions, processes, structures, and attitudes and the project strategy offer some relationships and conflicts. While there is agreement between development practitioners at the World Bank with the views of Todaro and Smith (2005) concerning the need for institutional strengthening which seems to be an euphemism for institutional change, in developing nations as part of development investments based on the project strategy, this has faced challenges due to the unwillingness of public officials of developing nations in subscribing to such changes. This has also been the experience of World Bank Staff with regards to the incorporation of policy (change) issues in projects that are packaged distinctly for such things as irrigation, public works and the introduction of cost recovery and appropriate pricing of

services (e.g. water, electricity and so forth). While external lenders have insisted on these changes (in institutions, processes, structures and attitudes), public officials of developing nations have been rather resistant (Baum and Tolbert, 1985: 334). The relevance of the project cycle concept in this article is based on the fact that most responses by governments and organizations to development challenges have taken the form of applying the project cycle. The project cycle comprises several stages including: identification, preparation, implementation and ex-post evaluation of projects, which are usually conceived as a concerted response to the challenges of development. Other aspects of the project cycle include the analysis of various dimensions of the project (technical, economic, financial, social, institutional, and environmental). The careful management of issues pertaining to procurement and use of consultants is a significant part of successful application of the project cycle. The project cycle describes the several district stages into which the work of a project is frequently divided and operationalised. It facilitates logical linkages of each of the stages to other subsequent ones in a progressive way such that the latter stages facilitate the work by providing the foundation for renewing the project cycle by the instrumentality of subsequent project work. The various stages of the project cycle include the following:

Project identification: This pioneering phase focuses on finding ideas that are representative of the high premium placed on resource utilization of the region or country as a way of achieving development objectives. The technical and institutional aspects, benefit-cost analysis and policy proposals are undertaken at this stage under a group of activities called feasibility analysis study.

Project preparation: This second stage involves refinement of the project design in all ramifications including technical, economic, financial, social, institutional and so forth these progressive refinements are necessary to facilitate the firm decision on continuing or discontinuing the project.

Project appraisal: This third stage is concerned with assessing the general viability of the project and its qualification for implementation. This stage forms the basis for approval or provision of funds for the implementation of the project. The degree of thoroughness of appraisals of projects differs among countries (depending on their systems of managing development, finances and so on) and also varies between projects funded either by eternal sources/organizations (World Bank) or national/regional governments. External funders usually devise a system of project appraisal that meets their expectations.

Project implementation: This fourth stage involves actual construction (development) of the project until it becomes operational monitoring of works, progression of activities, supervision including "oversight" departments and agencies of national/regional governments or foreign lenders are key components of project implementation.

Project evaluation: This describes ex-post assessment of a project that has been developed (completely). The purpose of evaluating projects is to determine if the objectives have been accomplished and to identify lessons derivable from experiences with the project for use in the same or other project henceforth. Unlike lending organizations (e.g. the World Bank), which insists that ex-post evaluation is a prerequisite for project they financially support, evaluation is yet to be institutionalised in the project cycle of developing countries. It has been suggested that if applied correctly, the project cycle is capable of improving optimal utilization of a nation's scarce resources thereby causing positive impact on the national/regional development system (Baum and Tolbert, 1985: 334-5). The significance of resources is frequently downplayed in the literature on project management. However, the value of resources (defined generally) has been elaborated in the literature on sustainable development. The importance of cost in effectively managing scarce resources in investing in development has been stressed by several scholars (e.g Baum and Tolbert, 1985; Omuta and Onokerhoraye, 1986; among others). These score resources include: human skills, materials, funds.

Project Management System

This subsystem is responsible for the overall management of the project from inception to commissioning. A project manager may be appointed by the client to oversee the overall implementation process. The project manager manages the interfaces between project subsystems. The project manager makes use of the life cycle concept as a valuable tool for better understanding of the stages of a project and likely resources required for its successful implementation. The life cycle is used to pictorially explain the rise and demise of organizational phases in building of structures, production line and sales life cycle of a product. It is also one of the instruments that help managers conceptualize the work and budgetary requirements of the project. The basic life cycle concept holds for all projects and systems. Life cycle management is heeded because the life cycle reflects every different management requirements at its various stages. In the beginning, for example, in terms of manpower- human resources-research personnel predominate, subsequently, their role diminishes at the planning stage. The execution which is more of concrete work features more of engineers and finally marketing and sales personnel become more important. In a product development, for example, performance would be assessed by the degree to which the product meets the specification or goal set for it. The detailed explanation of the activities of the four phases is reflected in Table 1.0 below.

Another important aspect of this subsystem is the utilisation of project management techniques (critical path method, project evaluation and review techniques, bar chart, etc.) for planning and execution of the projects. These techniques are very important in project planning and control. Project management constrains include: competent project manager appointed early enough with adequate authority to match responsibility, effective and efficient use of project techniques for overall project performance planning and control, motivation of project team members by the project manager, use of modern project management techniques for cost control, use of modern project management techniques for time control, e.g. CPM, bar chart, line of balance etc, use of modern project management techniques for quality control, total quality assurance, total quality control, robust/unambiguous specification, efficient and effective use of management information systems especially the computer for effective project management, project manager's development of sense of mission and commitment

Table 1. Life Cycle Activities

Conception Phase	Planning Phase	Execution Phase	Termination
* Identify need *Establish feasibility *Identify alternatives *Prepare proposal *Develop basic budget and schedule *Identify project team	*Implement schedule * Conduct studies and analyses * Design systems *Build and test prototypes *Analyze results * Obtain approval forconstruction	* procure materials * Build and test tooling *Develop support requirements * Produce system * verify performance * Modify as required	* Train functional personnel * Transfer materials *Transfer responsibility *Release resources *reassign project team members

Source: Project Management Handbook

Table 2. The Project Time Environment-Four Distinct Project Phases

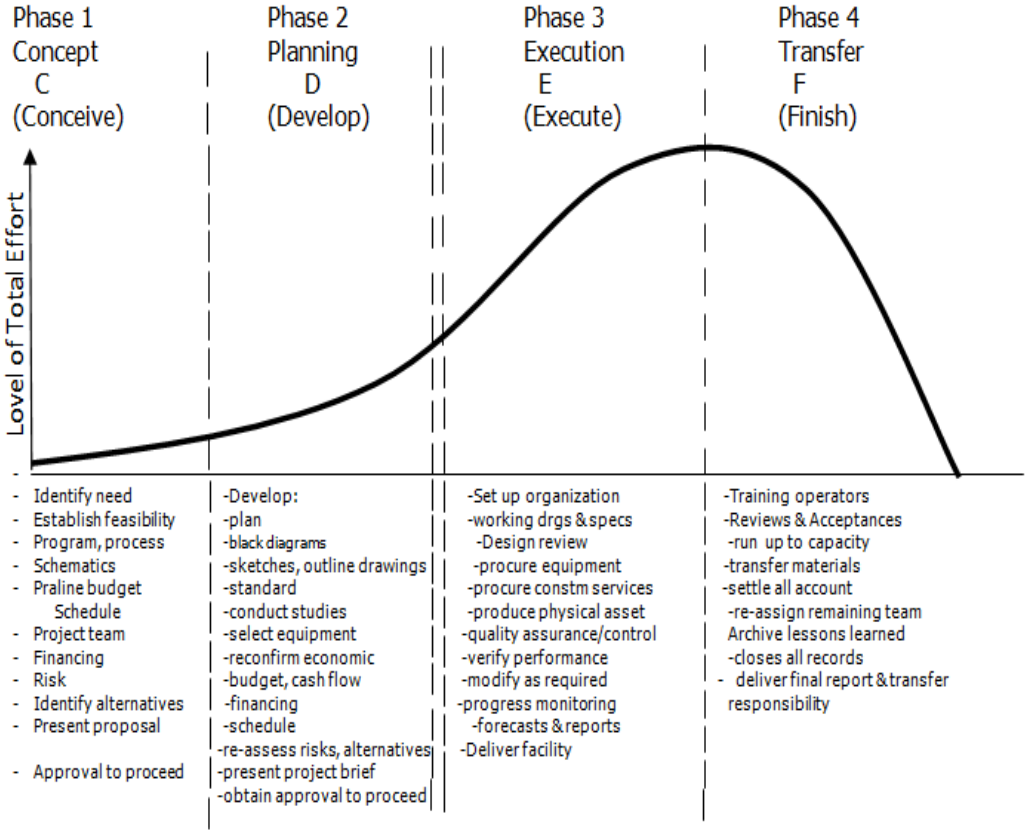

Figure 1 Project Life Cycle-Four Basic Phases.
Source: Wideman, (1989:3).

among project team members from onset, project manager's co-ordination and maintenance of good relationship with the client design and construction team, keeping changes under strict control and stressing the importance of meeting cost, time and quality goals and developing realistic cost, time and quality estimates and goals. This aspect provides empirical evidence in an annalistic framework of public and private sectors project management success constrains of the construction industry in Nigeria. The process involves the computation of the Relative Relevance Indices (RRIs) for each system and subsystems in both the private and public sector construction in Nigeria.

To find out how many of the respondents in both sectors consider the factors relevant or irrelevant to construction project management success, the RRIs of relevant regions were identified and computed. The attributes contained in the construction project management success interactive model were ordered hierarchically with a view to determining the magnitude of their contribution to success or failure of construction project management in the two sectors.

The Role of Budget in Project Planning, Management and Implementation

Once managers or heads of departments at each level have been given a goal or target to achieve, the next step in developing an output control system is to establish operating budgets that regulate how managers or heads of departments and workers attain their goals (Ayatse, 2012). An operating budget is a blueprint that states how managers intend to use organizational goals efficiently. According to Gareth and George (2006) a budget is a statement, usually expressed in financial terms, of the desired performance of an organization in the pursuit of its objectives in the short-term (one year). It is an action plan for the immediate future, representing the operational and tactical end of the organization planning chain. Budgetary control takes the targets of desired performance (usually on a monthly or four-weekly period basis) and identifies the variances between target and actual performance. Thus, whereas budgets in themselves are primarily tools of planning, the process of budgetary control is both a planning device and a control device. To Cole (1996) the primary aims of a budgetary control system are to: Establish short-term plans; determine progress towards the achievement of short-

term plans; ensure coordination between key areas of the organization; delegate measurable responsibilities to managers, without loss of control; provide a controlled flexibility for meeting, and change in the short-term. Budget processes in Nigeria cover four distinct stages (Nwachukwu, 2006). These are: Budget conception and preparation; budget approval; budget implementation; and budget monitoring and auditing. Based on the provisions of the 1999 constitution, it is the executive arm of government that is fixed with the responsibility of preparing government budgets in Nigeria. The responsibility is usually delegated to a specific department. In order to collate the local government's revenue and expenditure estimates, the lead department or unit issues call circulars to other departments. In their responses, the departments or units will submit their revenue and expenditure estimates having taken into account the government policy direction. These submissions are consolidated by the lead department or unit. However, the draft budget will not be finalized until all the departments or units have been given an opportunity to defend their submissions. Once this has been accomplished, the next step is to forward the draft budget for approval. On the revenue side, the main components are: Statutory allocations as provided for under the 1999 Constitution; internally generated revenue from taxes, fines, fees, licenses, rent on government properties and other earnings from investment; and capital receipts, which are derived from loans, grants and the share of value added tax (VAT). On the expenditure side, the main components are: Recurrent costs such as personnel and overhead costs; and capital cost for infrastructure development. If the revenue estimates exceed expenditure, the budget is said to be in surplus but if the converse is the case, that is, the expenditure exceeds the revenue, the budget is said to be in deficit. In the latter case, the government or institution in question may be compelled to borrow money in order to make up the shortfall.

Dimension of Project Environment

Wideman (1990:2) maintain that, for convenience, and working outward, the project environment may be thought of in terms of the project time environment, the internal project culture, the original cooperate culture, and external social surroundings. For those who have not had experience of a construction project "in the trenches" so to speak, it is sometimes difficult to capture the feeling of pressure, stress and ultimate satisfaction of project well accomplished, which the construction project management process offers. For the first timers, many experience bewilderment as to what is really happening around them. Yet, most projects, if they are well run, exhibit some very typical but distinqishing features as they run their course. From the figure it will be seen that there are, or should be four district project periods which make up the typical life span of a well-run project.

These phases according to Wideman (1990:3-5), are shown as:

- Concept
- Planning
- Execution
- Transfer

As an aid to memory, these phases may be readily recalled by the letters C-D-E F standing for: conceive Develop, Execute, and finish. Figure 1 also shows typical activities which are required within each phase for building, say, a process facility of course, within each phase a number of sub-phases or stages can be identified, which relate to the typical construction project. But for our purposes, the four phase's shows are generic to any type of typical construction project. But for our purpose the four phases shown are generic to any type of construction project, and serve to underline the vital importance of progression from concept to planning, if the project is to be successfully implemented. This, first two phases, often referred to as the feasibility and engineering phases are the opportunity to "build the project on paper", while the third and fourth phases, which include preparing detailed drawings and specifications, and encompass the physical implementation of the project. Note particularly that submission approvals are called for at the end of each of the first two phases and commissioning and completion approvals are typically required towards the ends of the latter two phases. Thus, each phase is like a mini-project with its own objectives and consonants. And so it should be seen to be, and conducted accordingly. The successful conclusion of each of the phases are major milestones, which are really like "gates" between the phases, and which perform the function of major "Executive control points". Some projects somehow manage to slip through these gates without being in full compliance with project requirements to that point. Inevitable, such projects find themselves being re-cycled back to the earlier phase-to the detriment of the final project cost and schedule.

Importance of Project Management Tools and Techniques in Project Planning and Implementation

The importance of tools and techniques in PM cannot be over-emphasized. Project Management the art and science of transforming vision into reality as well as the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to bring about the successful completion of specific project goals and objectives. As such, it involves planning, organizing, monitoring, and controlling the project and requires its own tools and techniques (Belassi and Tukel, 1996). There is no doubt that PM in general and PM tools and techniques, in particular, play an important role in project success (Munns and Bjeirmi, 1996). With the preparation of formal design and planning documents (be it at the initiation or the planning level), the project manager can solidify the project in the minds of its stakeholders and provides them with the opportunity for adjustment before any work is done and throughout project implementation. Analysis, design reviews, reports, communication, quality, time, and cost schedules are, therefore, essential (Thomsett, 2002, pp. 175, 189, 211). Project mission, schedule, budget, scope, plan or scope changes, goal changes, progress measurement, quality of project monitoring, and reporting are well-known factors in project success and failure (Slevin and Pinto, 1986; Dvir and Lechler, 2004). So far, the overwhelming majority of PM scholars seem to encourage project managers to do more planning and monitoring if they wish to succeed (Dvir and Lechler, 2004). In addition, more and more companies recognize the benefits of using PM tools, techniques, methodologies and processes in a shifting, complex and unpredictable environment for change management effectiveness purposes (Clarke, 1999). Furthermore, it is a PM reality that using PM tools and techniques can significantly

help the project to succeed although it does not guarantee its success (Mingus, 2002, pp. 3-4).

Impact of Fiscal Federalism and Project Planning and Implementation in Nigeria

The principles that guide the implementation of intergovernmental fiscal relations is facing several challenges tormenting intergovernmental fiscal relations in Nigeria and affects the development of the country. Some of these challenges include:

Non-Correspondence Problem

Ideally, each level of government should be given adequate resources to allow it discharge its responsibilities. Because this is not possible, there is usually a lack of correspondence between the spending responsibilities and the tax powers/revenue sources assigned to different levels of government. It is this incongruence that is often referred to as the non-correspondence problem. In Nigeria, most of the major sources of revenue come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government yet lower levels of government are supposed to generate internal revenue. There is, therefore, the need to resolve the imbalance between assigned functions and tax powers.

Fiscal Autonomy and Independence

The issue of relative fiscal autonomy and independence of the State and Local Governments in a true federal structure goes with the corollary issue of the correspondence of governmental functions and revenue sources. Since the creation of the twelve - state structure in 1967, States and Local Governments have been excessively dependent on the Federation Account. This dependence must be reduced if the federating units are to be free to pursue their own developmental goals without being hampered by the unpredictable fluctuations in their shares of the Federation Account. It is important that revenue sources should be re-allocated and made compatible with the fluctuations stated for each tier of government to enhance steady and proper funding of administrative and developmental activities instead of the often experienced unexpected financial constrictions at the two lower tiers of government.

Federation Account and the Derivation Fund

It is important to define what constitutes the Federation Account - to which the various vertical revenue allocation formulae have been applied and what should be directly financed from it. Up to 1990, the amount accruing yearly to the Federation Account was still over 96% of totally federally collected revenue; but since 1991, when it first dropped to about 75% and nose-dived to around 35% by 1997, it showed no sign of recovery (Olowononi, 1999). It is therefore clear that in such a situation, whatever the vertical formula applicable, there must still be a serious fiscal imbalance between the federal government and the two lower tiers of government. It is crucial to redress this revenue imbalance in the spirit of balanced true federalism. What appears to account for this imbalance is the assertion of the self-claimed right by federal government to finance various first-line charges from the Federation Account before the application of the vertical formula. These first-line charges include funding for external debt service, national priority projects, NNPC priority projects, Special reserve account, and excess proceeds of crude oil sales account, and in addition , the joint venture cash calls account. These deductions are made from the proceeds of crude oil sales before the derivation fund in the Federation Account is arrived at, and after which further deductions for special funds and the funding of the Federal Capital Territory are made. It will seem more logical, with the exception of joint venture cash calls, that these various charges which are federal government obligations be financed solely from the federal government's revenue proper, that is, from its share of the Federation Account or from its revenue from other sources. Therefore, in order to determine what constitutes the derivation fund, resolving the issue of the Federation Account is crucial. Thereafter, the derivation formula to be utilized can be arrived at.

Oil-Producing Areas and the Derivation Principle

That crude oil production has been the most important economic activity in the Nigerian economy since the early 1970s is not subject to debate. Its impact is not limited to its contributing almost 90% of Nigeria's total foreign exchange earnings but also to the fact that the national budgets are predicated on the expected annual production and price of crude oil. Thus, crude oil is the primary engine for national economic growth and development. It is, therefore, quite reasonable to expect that the areas producing the nation's crude oil would be very highly developed as compensation for what is taken away as well as for the devastation on the land engendered by the exploration process. There should have been development of physical and social infrastructures, human capital creation, and economic empowerment of the general citizenry in those areas.

Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations and the Economy

It is expected that fiscal decentralization would stimulate growth and development. There is the need to ascertain whether this has taken place in the country particularly as large amount of resources have been transferred from the center to both State and Local Governments.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Lavagnon, Amadou and Denis (2009) analyzed the empirical relationship between project management (PM) efforts (the extent towhich national project coordinators (NPCs) – the project managers in the aid industry sector – make use of available PM tools), project success, and success criteria. Data were collected by way of questionnaires delivered by mail to 600 recipients in 26 different countries in Africa. The research results suggest that project success is insensitive to the level of project planning efforts but a significant correlation does exist between the use of monitoring and evaluation tools and project "profile," a success criterion which is an early pointer of project long-term impact. Ayatse (2012) noted that the quest to survive competitive environment leads to reformations and changes in budget conception and implementation in the local government system in Nigeria. It is obvious that for local government to attain or gain competitive edge over other local government there should be total comparison with each other. The comparison of local governments with one another in order to gain competitive edge and superiority in budget

conception and implementation is an aspect of the focus of this study. The findings for the study reveals that, local government in Benue state that successfully apply benchmarking tool have tremendously reaped enormous benefits of budget conception and superior budget implementation in the local government system. They are rated as the best-in-class in terms of performance and efficiency. Oladipo (2008) pointed Events of the second war and its aftermath have succeeded not only in making the concept of development a necessity objective but also in identifying the appropriate investment for implementing development projects. The advocacy for decentralization measures as an all check against concentrating power in any one particular organization finds relevance in the instrumentality of local governments in planning and implementing projects to address the issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality. For developing countries such as Nigeria, however, targeted outcomes have remained largely unachieved as projects at the local level have shown profound incapability in contributing to development of local areas. The problem of corruption, social instability and ethnic divisions has continued to increasingly rear its ugly head.

The author's 26 years' experience as a technocrat in public project planning has therefore come in handy in looking back at all activities relating to project planning and implementation under three major areas viz: 1. chronicling the process 2. examining all institutional and administrative apparatus put in place and 3. Identifying problems and constraints hampering effectiveness in project planning and implementation. Although several factors were discovered to contribute to the failure of local government projects in making appreciable impacts, the most serious ones have to do with institutional instability and policies working at cross purposes. The paper identifies six policy areas in rectifying the failings. Nwachukwu, Ibeabuchi and Okoli (2010) aimed at identifying and analyzing project management factors constraining project management success of private and public sector construction in Nigeria as a developing economy. A five point-Likert scale format was used in the questionnaire design to obtain data. Factor analysis was used to collapse the variables to fewer but interrelated variables; the ANOVA was used to confirm the differences in the level of relevance of these factors constraining project success.

Findings from the research suggests that the factors that constraint success in project management implementation process, which include time, Cost, Quality and Material as direct factors and indirect factors of Environment, Client, Project management, Design and Construction seems not to have been addressed holistically using systems approach. The end result is huge capital expenditure with few or no successful projects to show for it. Adnan, Sherif and Saleh (2009) identified the factors affecting the performance of local construction projects; and to elicit perceptions of their relative importance. A comprehensive literature review was deployed to generate a set of factors believed to affect project performance. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to 3 key groups of project participants; namely owners, consultants and contractors. The survey findings indicate that all 3 groups agree that the most important factors affecting project performance are: delays because of borders/roads closure leading to materials shortage; unavailability of resources; low level of project leadership skills; escalation of material prices; unavailability of highly experienced and qualified personnel; and poor quality of available equipment and raw materials. Murali and Yau Wen (2007) engaged to identify the delay factors and their impact (effect) on project completion. They undertake an integrated approach and attempts to analyze the impact of specific causes on specific effects. A questionnaire survey was conducted to solicit the causes and effects of delay from clients, consultants, and contractors. About 150 respondents participated in the survey. This study identified 10 most important causes of delay from a list of 28 different causes and 6 different effects of delay. Ten most important causes were: (1) contractor's improper planning, (2) contractor's poor site management, (3) inadequate contractor experience, (4) inadequate client's finance and payments for completed work, (5) problems with subcontractors, (6) shortage in material, (7) labor supply, (8) equipment availability and failure, (9) lack of communication between parties, and (10) mistakes during the construction stage. Six main effects of delay were: (1) time over-run, (2) cost overrun, (3) disputes, (4) arbitration, (5) litigation, and (6) total abandonment. This study has also established an empirical relationship between each cause and effect.

Research Methodology

This research employed the qualitative research methods. We have adopted an exploratory case study approach in line with the work of (Md Mahbubur, 2008) for three reasons. First, this research is a theory building exercise. We do not develop a research model and a set of propositions drawn from that model. Furthermore, we do not intend to test such a model in a statistical sense. Our intention is to explore the various types of factors (social, economic, political, technological and institutional) that may affect project (public or private) planning and implementation in Nigeria. We thus refer to Table 1 as a guide only to help our exploration of the relationships among factors affecting projects from planning, implementation and evaluation in Nigeria irrespective of whether private or public project. We are also open to the idea of discovering new factors for successful implementation of conceived projects. Second, the purpose of this research is to explore the factors affecting projects implementation in Nigeria. Third, project planning and implementation is a complex term which requires organisational adaptation and execution. Hence, contextual information is necessary to interpret how such adaptation and execution can bring about development when religiously practiced. Case studies are particularly suitable for understanding phenomena which requires knowledge of organisational context (Yin, 2003).

Our intention is not to test a model of project planning and implementation in a statistical sense rather to discover the importance of factors that impede and enhance project preparation and implementation and to identify how such factors affect infrastructural development in Nigeria. As a result, we have relied on the use of key informants approach. Several key informants include senior managers who were intimately involved with the process of project planning and implementation. In addition, we have also carefully chosen some key informants who are believed to be a representative sample (not in the statistical sense) of the construction industry. All key informants satisfy the criteria suggested by Campbell (1955) in the following manner: a) they occupy roles that make them knowledgeable about project planning and

implementation and b) they are willing to communicate and share their views with the researchers. We have analysed and compared their opinions which are expected to represent the views of the construction industry employees concerning issues surrounding their projects planning and implementation. Data was gathered from multiple sources, including formal interviews, internal documents, and the internet. However, there is a strong reliance on interviews because rich insights and contextual information was sought from the key informants. In-depth interviews were sought from several key informants who include project managers and site workers. Based on the suggestions of Yin (2003), reliability was addressed by developing a protocol and a summary of definitions concerning the factors which may affect project planning through implementation. On the other hand, validity was addressed using data collected from multiple sources and having interviewees review their interview transcripts. Data collected from the key informants were analysed using the pattern matching logic described by Yin (2003). This technique compares an empirically derived pattern with the predicted one.

Findings

Reasons for Project Abandonment

Various reasons were given for the abandonment of the projects. They include: escalation of project cost due to inflation; difficulty in payment to contractors due to government bureaucracy; contractors performing below expectation; frequent changes in government; inability of sub-contractors to adhere to schedule; increase in the scope of project; change in pre-contract consultants such as architects; poor or ineffective projects finance arrangement; change in the original design; indiscriminate award of contracts without reference to funds availability; appropriate location; projects and contracts determined on political considerations; projects completed but technically unsound and unable to function; materials scarcity; poor planning or shoddy work by architects, consultants, etc; specification of costly imported materials; increase in contract sums; poor project definition in terms of project requirements for materials, equipment, personnel, finance and other resources, correlates of effective project management; insufficient working capital; the ailing economy and general inflation; and the father of all is the embezzlement and diversion of project funds into private pockets. The above reasons adduced for project failure and abandonment can be traced to a number of factors including poor or no project appraisal, top management lapses, defective contract agreements and awards, and gross failure to apply project management techniques as discussed above.

Contracts for projects are awarded without adequate project planning which includes the costing and scheduling as well as the method for successful implementation. A mismatch often exists between project design and objectives on the one hand, and the implementation capacity of the agency or organization or ministry on the other. There is often a defective control system, and in some cases, the system of monitoring and evaluation may be completely lacking. Where projects are awarded on political considerations little or no attention is given to the recommendations of project appraisals, assuming that such specific studies are undertaken. Budgetary constraints occur frequently given the short tenure of governments, reordering of priorities or diversion of fund as time progresses. Project abandonment or failure is the inevitable outcome of the scenario. Should the project be included in the new set of priorities, tremendous cost and schedule over-runs are highly probable because of likely changes in resource requirements, escalation in input prices and changes in the organization or implementing unit. This is aggravated by the fact that the contractor may have to deal with different 'owners' or officials at different times during different stages of the project life cycle. Often, projects are completed not within budget, time, and technical specifications and within customer or client satisfaction. The projects are "completed" but cannot function.

Problems and Constraints to Effective Project Planning and Implementation

The successful planning and implementation of government projects and programmes has been hampered by a number of factors, notable among which are

(a) Lack of Qualified Manpower

Manpower shortages have remained the bane of effective project planning and implementation in the government sectors. Professional and trained planners are virtually non-existent while administrative officers performing planning functions lack any form of training and experience. This is occasioned by the lack of the application of merit in employment as tribalism and nepotism takes the order of the day in employment. The double jeopardy here is that not only is plan formulation poor but also that continuity is not ensured.

(b) Paucity of Data

Although inadequacies in the quality and scope of data for planning purposes is a general phenomenon in the country, it is more pronounced at some level of government such as the state and local government level. Yet adequate and reliable data is indispensable to effective project planning and implementation. Data is required for analyzing situation on ground and in determining areas to be served to engender equity and even development.

(c) Inadequate Funding for Capital Projects

Capital projects have continued to experience inadequate funding in spite of the fact that capital projects execution brings about the needed development in the economy. This is attributable to increasing recurrent expenditure outlays especially for public office holders, additional responsibilities, high inflation rates, erratic economy all acting in concert to increase the cost of governance. Added to this is the inability of planners to forecast accurately the estimated cost of projects which have commonly resulted in outrageous cost of projects.

(d) Lack of Effective Project Monitoring

As in planning a project, government officials charged with the responsibility of supervising and monitoring projects lack the exposure, focus and the prerequisites of a tough task. This is compounded by lack of collaboration and cooperation due to differences in orientation and training. In addition, field officers are known to compromise roles and standards due to lack of motivation and logistic supports. The result is that

projects have collapsed shortly after handover, boreholes have been drilled without water (Oladipo, 2004), contractors get paid for not doing or doing shoddy jobs and incidence of abandoned/uncompleted/white elephant projects adorns the landscape.

(e) Ethno-religious and rebellious groups' violence

Nigeria has been challenged in recent years by outbreaks of ethno-religious violence that have led to loss of lots of life as well as the displacement of thousands of people. Ethno-religious crises originating between mainly Christian local farmers and predominantly Muslim settler herdsmen have taken place in the middle-belt Plateau State predominantly. Probably the most serious challenge to the Government's authority has come from rebellious groups in the oil-producing Niger Delta and the current escalating Boko Haram insurgency in the north.

(f) Corruption and project implementation abandonment in Nigeria

The corruption perception index of Nigeria published annually since the 1990s by Transparency International (TI), the global anticorruption monitoring organization, revealed that Nigeria was rated at the top ten most corrupt nations from mid 1990s to the early 2000s. It has been reported that about 80 percent of nearly US $600 Billion earned from export of crude oil since production started in 1958 (more recently natural gas in the late 1990s) has been stolen by the elite (about less than one percent of the total population: over 140 million in 2006) in Nigeria. A concrete example of the perpetration of stealing was given that the late General Abacha and the "Kitchen cabinet" of his dictatorship (1993-1997) stole over US$5 Billion (Omojola, 2007: 20-2). The foregoing constrains project planning, management and implementation in Nigeria.

Identified Project Management Tools and Their Importance in the Project Cycle

Project management tools are mainly planning and implementation tools at various stages of the project life cycle which is expected to foster success in the implementation process. At the conception stage, an effective and efficient appraisal is a very strategic and significant tool used in establishing the feasibility and viability of a project proposal. It helps to determine investment alternatives, how much to invest, how to invest, where to invest. Appraisal is an instrument used in processing social and economic dreams to a tangible and realizable aims and objective which must be unique in nature. Some of the tools as we know include: The Net Present Value (NPV), Internal Rate of Return (IRR), The Net Terminal Value, The Annual Charge, The Annual Sinking Fund and Cost Benefit Analysis. Cost benefit analyses of economic and social proposals, spillover advantages and disadvantages of project proposals, the rate at which a prudent investor could make profit with time, determine time value of present financial expenditure against future expected income and the environmental impact assessment of project proposal etc. Network planning is one of the most significant project management techniques used in planning, scheduling, and controlling a project. Planning technique is vital at all the stages of a project life cycle. It is a continuous process because of the prevailing need to keep track of progress changes, delays or changes in technical conditions. Delays and changes in project implementation are controlled by the application of critical path methods. They enable management to cope with the complexities, messes of data and tight deadlines characteristic of many industries and their environment that is highly competitive. It is important to know at this stage that Planning and Scheduling are not synonymous. Planning is the establishment of objectives, definition of the content of the project and the determination of the relationships between the jobs or activities. On the other hand, Scheduling is the development of a time table that puts time estimates next to the plan and indicates when activities are to be accomplished. That is, time estimates, timing calculations and job scheduling are involved. Programs Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) and the Critical Path Method (CPM), The Bar and Gantt charts used in scheduling, tracking, resource smoothing and performing time and cost-tradeoffs at the execution and termination stages are the best tools for project planning and control. The PERT and CPM techniques help to determine cost-effectiveness as a way to expedite a project knowing that certain projects can be rushed for a price. This method has been successfully and advantageously used in developed economies for planning large scale and complex projects and we strongly believe that it can be an antidote to transform the building development sector if project management is given a policy thrust status in Nigeria. PERT was first used in the 1950s to manage the Polaris Missile Program. Since then the technique has been successfully used by private and public industries and sectors such as; construction of complex building structures, shopping, office and subways, major maintenance efforts, pilot production runs and the introduction of new products.

The two types of PERT are the Deterministic and the Stochastic. Deterministic PERT assumes that all tasks that make up a project are sufficiently routine in the sense that the time needed to complete each tasks is known with reasonable certainty. Stochastic PERT on the other hand is often used to plan either research or one-of-a-kind development project because of the valuable insights gained by the very act of identifying intermediate milestones and establishing logical process among them. Adoption of benchmarking: Madu (2001) held the view that the goal of benchmarking is to provide key personnel in charge of processes with an external standard for measuring the quality and cost of internal activities and thus helps to identify where opportunities for improvement might be found. In other words, benchmarking helps organizations to focus on the external environment and to improve process efficiency. Several numbers of benefits can be attracted by an organization that have applied benchmarking concept. The benefits of benchmarking include; it opens organizations to new methods, ideas and tools to improve their effectiveness; it helps organization to crack through resistance to change by demonstrating other methods of solving problems than the one currently employed, and demonstrating that they work, because they are being used by others; it helps to boost product quality by adopting superior methods and process in production. This enhances the ultimate product quality; It also helps in shortening delivery lead-time. These by its very nature, benchmarking becomes an essential element in the ongoing product auditing process. Adoption of Cost-constraint analysis in project preparation and implementation. The cost-constraint analysis (CCA) was formulated to respond to the problem of selecting projects/programmes under imperfect situations. It

facilitates understanding of issues pertaining to project cost funds and also various constraints (in this case corruption, attitude towards implementation, inadequacy of skills, bureaucratic red tape and so forth). It can also clarify cost variations under circumstances of near perfection (lack of constraints) and circumstances where constraints exist, thereby assisting to highlight type of project / programme that can be selected or adopted. When projects are analysed using the cost-constraint technique, projects could be better understood by their implementers in terms of differences between the unconstrained and constrained options. The results inform decision on reduction or elimination of the constraints and perhaps how they can be surmounted or avoided. The results improve communication between project managers, funding agencies and decision makers. The results also highlight the resource requirements of projects.

Summary of Findings

In this section we compare our findings with our stated objectives. Starting with objective which is to explore the concept "project" and it's cycle. This objective has been achieved as we are able to define in simple terms as an investment activity on which resources are expended in expectation of a stream of benefits (financial or non-financial) over an extended period of time in the realization of specific objectives. Any project passes through four or five distinctive phases known as the project life cycle. This life cycle is in four or five phases: Conception Phase; planning phase; execution phase; termination and evaluation. Objective two is to identify the socio-political factors that negatively affect project planning through implementation in Nigeria. This objective has also been achieved as factors such as poor or no project appraisal; top management lapses; defective contract agreements and awards; and gross failure to apply project management techniques as discussed above; contracts for projects are awarded without adequate project planning which includes the costing and scheduling as well as the method for successful implementation; a mismatch often exists between project design and objectives on the one hand, and the implementation capacity of the agency or organization or ministry on the other; existence of defective control system, and in some cases, the system of monitoring and evaluation may be completely lacking; where projects are awarded on political considerations little or no attention is given to the recommendations of project appraisals, assuming that such specific studies are undertaken; budgetary constraints occur frequently given the short tenure of governments, reordering of priorities or diversion of fund as time progresses have been identified to impact negatively on project planning through execution.

Objective three is to highlight tools that facilitate effective project planning, management and implementation. This objective have also been accepted as project management tools such as an effective and efficient appraisal; a cost benefit analysis; adoption of network planning; adoption of Programs Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) and the Critical Path Method (CPM), The Bar and Gantt charts used in scheduling, tracking, resource smoothing and performing time and cost-tradeoffs at the execution and termination stages are the best tools for project planning and control; adoption of benchmarking; and the application of cost-constraint analysis (CCA) which was formulated to respond to the problem of selecting projects/programmes under imperfect situations. Objective four which is to proffer general recommendations for the effective and efficient project planning and implementation in Nigeria has also been achieved as the numerous recommendations spelt out in 5.3 can be applied to project planning and implementation to ensure effective and efficient project planning through implementation in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the socio-political factors affecting project preparation, approval and implementation in Nigeria. This research employed the qualitative research methods as we did not test any model in a statistical sense. Data was gathered from multiple sources, including formal interviews, internal documents, and the internet. However, there is a strong reliance on interviews because rich insights and contextual information was sought from the key informants. Conclusively, numerous factors that include poor or no project appraisal; top management lapses; defective contract agreements and awards; and gross failure to apply project management techniques as discussed above; contracts for projects are awarded without adequate project planning which includes the costing and scheduling as well as the method for successful implementation; a mismatch often exists between project design and objectives on the one hand, and the implementation capacity of the agency or organization or ministry on the other; existence of defective control system, and in some cases, the system of monitoring and evaluation may be completely lacking; where projects are awarded on political considerations little or no attention is given to the recommendations of project appraisals, assuming that such specific studies are undertaken; budgetary constraints occur frequently given the short tenure of governments, reordering of priorities or diversion of fund as time progresses have been identified to impact negatively on project planning through execution in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the paper recommends as follows:

1. That project owners must work collaboratively with contractors and facilitate regular payments in order to overcome delays, disputes and claims.
2. That project participants should actively have their input in the process of decision- making.
3. That continuous coordination and relationship between project participants are required through the project life cycle in order to solve problems and develop project performance.
4. Appointment of a professional as a substantive project manager that will employ the basic project management tools to ensure the success of any project.
5. Adoption of project management tools in project planning and implementation.
6. Adoption of bench-marking in project budgeting.
7. Adoption of Cost-constraint analysis in project preparation and implementation.

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