PROJECT FAILURES IN ENUGU STATE: PROBLEMS, PROSPECT AND PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT
Project failure in Enugu State has been on the increase in recent times. A project is considered a failure when it has not delivered what was required in line with client need and initial design expectations. To avoid project failure there must be a good relationship between the client and the project manager so as to have a clear objective, scope and what is required for successful completion of the project. The problems range from faulty design, negligence, incompetence, faulty construction, foundation failures, extraordinary loads, engagement of nonprofessionals and corruption. Forces of nature were also identified as part of causes of project failure. This study was able to highlight some key challenges contributing to project failures, proposed preferred solutions and perceived recommendations.

Keywords: Projects, Failure, Challenges, Solution.

1.0 INTRODUCTION
Most project collapse is due to negligence and other factors such as poor risk management, corrupt practices, incompetence and not following required or due process. To avoid building collapse, there are established rules and regulations guiding every project, listing the necessary requirement and making sure that those established rules are adhered to before commencing any project. Adoption of environment impact assessment and survey are not strictly followed which will also help minimize the effect of collapse. Incidences of project failure in Enugu State are posing serious challenges to all stakeholders in the industry - building consultants, governments, developers, landlords and users (Chendo and Obi, 2015). Even though there is no consistent agreement as to what a project is, there exist agreements about the characteristics of a project. These characteristics include the existence of clearly defined objectives/goals, existence of a series of activities and constraints (time, technological, human, capital, among others) (Malyor, 2005).

A project is considered a failure when it has not delivered what was required in line with expectation. Projects do fail due to non-professionalism of the project managers in relation to lack of detail in the project plans, inaccurate time and effort estimates, poorly defined project scope and inadequate risk management etc., resulting in loss of lives, property, material and so many other factors associated with the project. Project failure has affected both big and small projects in Enugu State and there is need to streamline the processes involved.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Jugdev and Mueller (2005), noted that projects have continued to fail in their efforts to achieve time, budget and deliverable criteria, for the past 50 years. Project failure results in wastage of huge amount of resources, negative reputation and service withdrawal of the people involved in the projects. There are evidence of high rate of failure for projects in both public and private sectors. Given the high rate of project failure, the impact of project failure and the emphasis on project management across different sectors, there is need to understand the

causes of project failure as a way of increasing success rate in the implementation of future projects. The purpose of an independent study was to provide a consolidated list of the major causes of project failure.
This study is expected to be useful to various stakeholders including:

- **Project managers:** The outcome of this study will provide project managers with a clear picture of the causes of project failure. Project managers will be better prepared to take remedial measures in order to prevent same problems from recurring when planning for new projects.
- **Top managements:** The outcomes of the study will provide top managers with information that may enable better management of project execution. The results of the study will provide information that may ensure high project success rates in the future.
- **Academicians and Researchers:** The study may act as a stimulus for further research in the area. This being an emerging area the findings of this study will add more knowledge in the area of project management.
- **Government and development partners:** This will in turn ensure optimal use of scarce resources, since the government and development partners are the major financers of projects in the public sector. Identifications of causes of project failure will provide information that could enhance project performance in the future.

Adebayo, 2010 looked at the causes of project failure as due to man's negligence in some vital areas in construction such as soil investigation, incorporating design for extra loads, stress from winds, earthquakes, uneven terrain, use of substandard materials, poor monitoring and overall poor workmanship.

Madu, 2005, identified causes of project failure as due to natural occurrences such as earthquakes, tornadoes, floods etc. other causes according to him include factors such as omission, carelessness, leading to use of deficient structural drawings, absence of proper supervision of projects, alteration of approved drawings, use of substandard materials, corruption in the system, building without approved drawings and translocation of building plans to different sites. Project failure incidences can be controlled or minimized if the client is ready to pay for high quality materials and for expert professional services (Adebayo, 2006). The spate of project failure in the country can always be traced to unsafe actions of parties involved in project process starting from clients to project consultants, contractors and users (Adebayo, 2006).

Accusing fingers were pointed at all parties in the building industry, clients, architects, engineers, town planners, the local authorities and contractors stating that they have contributed to project failures in various dimensions. It has been opined that efficiency in skill and experience is important in creating valuable workmanship in building construction, Ayinuola et al, (2004).

An investigation on the major factors that affect project failure was taken. The study identified poor communication, inadequate experience of the project manager, delayed procurement of equipment, ineffective monitoring and controlling systems, lack of personnel motivation, lack of training for project managers, engagement of non-professionals and slow project selection methods as the major factors affecting project success. In addition, lack of top management support was also identified as a critical factor., Mwadali, (1996).

Kibiku 1998, in a study revealed that there is in existence a relationship between project appraisal results and post implementation results. However, the relationship was not a prefect match due to a number of factors among which are: lack of planned operations and maintenance, lack of proper coordination and control, external environment and existence of bureaucratic procedures. The study found that in the majority of public building projects, no project characteristics are identified and hence in appropriate construction procurement systems (CPSs) are used. This leads to a situation where internal clients feel neglected and unimportant for project success. The study also identified the need to identify and understand the project clients as well as the selection of an appropriate CPs as a way of enhancing project success (Rwelamila, et al, 1999).

Several Studies have identified the issue of why good project fails. To ensure project success, they advocated for the need to inject into overall plan a series of mini-projects (rapid result initiatives) each staffed with a team responsible for a version of the hoped for overall result in miniature and each designed to deliver its results quickly. They found that, although managers use project plans, time lines, and budgets to reduce execution risk (the risk that designated activities will not be carried out properly), they inevitably neglect two other critical risks. These risks are the white space risk (that some required activities will not be identified in advance, leaving gaps in the project plan) and the integration risk (that the disparate activities will not come together at the end (Matta and Ashkenas, 2003).

Most articles written based on Houlden, 1979, experiences as team member, project leader and director of a large operation research group, observation on the performance of several operation research groups and as a user of operation research in the position of part-time director of several companies. He alluded that the success of operation research projects is dependent among others on clear project objectives, finding the right sponsor, understanding the sponsor, availability of management skill at the project leader level and good presentation of recommendations.

The issue of client and contractor perspectives on project success criteria was investigated. The main objective of the study was to find out whether differences exist in the emphasis placed on project, success criteria by respondents involved in projects as clients and those involved as contractor. The project success criteria considered in the study were minimizing project cost, satisfying the customer's needs minimizing the project duration, meeting the technical specification and satisfying the needs of stakeholders (other than the customer). The results of the study showed that there is a difference in the emphasis placed on project success criteria between the clients and contractor. However, there was no difference in project success criteria of satisfying the customer's needs and meeting the technical specifications within two groups. Outcomes of this study explain the divergent view that may exist concerning project outcome (Bryde and Robinson, 2005).

An iterative desk survey of literature on causes of project failure was conducted. This conceptual study paper is primarily a literature review in the area of project management with the objective of determining and evaluating the major causes of project failure. The iterative process allowed articles being reviewed to lead to other articles to be reviewed. Thus, each article built upon and added data enlightenment in a continuous process of data

gathering on the issue of project failure. Books on project management and other non-academic journals were reviewed since the issue of project failure cuts across various disciplines. Content analysis methodology was used on each article reviewed. For each article reviewed, causes of project failure were identified. The major causes of project failure were discussed. In addition, the study entailed the review of academic journals that touches on the area of project success and failure.

3.0 CAUSES OF PROJECT FAILURE

The study identified the major cause of project failure. Irrespective of project type, project failure can be attributed to lack of stakeholders' involvement, poor planning, poor communication, engagement of non-professionals, lack of executive support, engagement of ill equipped and incompetent contractors, non-adherence to approved project plans, corruption and absence of proper site and soil investigation. An explanation for each of the cause is as follows:-

3.1 Lack of Stakeholders' Involvement

Although the perceptions may not necessarily be logically based, the quality of the relationship between the project and its stakeholders is critical. Project success or failure is strongly related to the perceptions of each individual project stakeholder and their willingness and ability to act either for or against the project. For a project to succeed, stakeholders' involvement is important as they have an effect on projects objectives, resources, scope, success criteria and control.

3.2 Poor Planning

Most projects lack detailed plans. However, this may be attributed to the fact that some people view planning as a waste of time, which could be better spent on project execution. Project success is dependent on execution of a well thought-out plan. Poor plans affects communication between the various parties involved, availability of resources, flow and control of project activities, and overall coordination of the project. To ensure successful completion, detailed project plans must be prepared and followed throughout the project.

3.3 Poor Communication

There is need for a communication strategy that ensures effective internal and external communication. Projects sometimes fail due to poor communication. Since there are various parties involved in a project, effective communication will, among others, ensure effective flow of information regarding objectives, activities to be undertaken.

3.4 Lack of Executive Support

Senior management involvement ensures clarity of the project objectives, availability of resources and reduction of resistances during project execution. Projects are about change and like any other changes initiative, top executive support is necessary for a project to succeed. Thus, active involvement of the top executives increases the likelihood of the project success.

3.5 Engagement of Non-Professionals

Sometimes firms resort to use non-professionals to act as principals on construction sites in order to save cost. The consequence of this practice is that the non-professional may not be competent enough to detect fraudulent practices of smart contractors. This may lead to covering up of shoddy or defective works.

3.6 Engagement of Ill-Equipped, Incompetent Contractors

In Enugu, it is common that most projects are first awarded to businessmen who front for politicians. The practice is that the businessman gets the contract and sells it to incompetent contractors known to them without following the normal contract procedures and without investigating the competency of the contractor. The result is shoddy performance which can lead to project failure.

3.7 Non-Adherence to Approved Project Plans

This comes in form of illegal alteration to approved drawings. Sometimes, a project originally specified to undergo in-situ concreting is changed to pre-cast methods because the expatriate contractor tends to prefabricate the components overseas and ship to Nigeria. This practice if not properly controlled could spell danger years after the building are in use.

3.8 Corruption

Sometimes drawings are not read by officers of the approving authority to detect defects. They sometimes engage incorrupt practices by granting illegal approvals.

3.9 Absence of Proper Site and Soil Investigation

The avoidance of this to determine suitability of the terrain and soil's bearing capacity, which influences foundation types, spells danger.

3.10 Foundation Failures

A building structure can fail if founded on poor sub-soil, or if the building is not uniformly loaded or if suitable foundation was not specified according to soil nature or due to total or partial fail of the building.

4.0 CONSEQUENCES OF PROJECT FAILURE and RECOMMENDATIONS

- Loss of materials and capital investments. Components and materials are damaged beyond re-use
- Loss of reputation
- Loss of life and property
- Loss of new contracts.

Recommendations:

- Proper planning, supervision and monitoring of construction activities should be institutionalized by policy makers to ensure that all buildings are constructed according to design, specifications and planning regulations.
- Professionals in the building industry should maintain their integrity and professional and work in accordance to standard practice procedures laid down by the standard form of building contracts especially when they play in the hands of ignorant clients.
- Urban or Town development agencies at various levels of government (commission, Board, Authority) should enforce control of building works in their localities as laid down in urban and regional planning decree 88, of 1992 and as in section 13 of National Building Code 2006.
- There is need to organize periodic public awareness campaign through electronic and print media to sensitize the public on advantages of using professionals as the way of realizing safe buildings.
- Standard organization of Nigeria should be vigilant to ensure that building materials imported into the country conforms to standard requirements.

- All building professionals play key roles to actualize their respective obligations during building production, using the wrong professionals at any stage of the building process put the building in danger. It is the duty of the architect as the prime consultant to direct the client to use the right professionals. This he achieves by ensuring that the structural and services drawings brought to his office are stamped and signed by professionals registered by their respective professional bodies before proceeding to planning authority for "building permit".
- Soil investigation, material tests and environmental impact assessment (E.I.A) should be made compulsory for all institutional, industrial and commercial buildings.

All building plans tendered by any developer for approval must comply with the "Nigeria's new building code and local bye laws and regulations.

CONCLUSION

Project failure in Enugu State has occurred in different ways with failure either during construction or after construction. Some project failure occurs most often due to negligence, incompetency, poor supervision and negligence to due process. It has been observed that the main causes of project failure in Enugu State is due to man-made causes mainly due to use of substandard materials, poor supervision by required authority, poor remuneration for building workers, etc. and lack of professionalism. It is recommended that all existing building laws should be reviewed with guided standard code of practice to overhaul all grey areas in order to guarantee safety of buildings and constructions.

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