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INVESTIGATING FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSTRUCTION PROJECT SELECTION PROCESSES WITHIN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

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Globally, there is increasing interest in project management due to a shortage in infrastructure services supply capability. Hence, it is of utmost importance that organisations understand that choosing a particular project over another is an opportunity cost – tying up the organisation's resources. Devise constructive ways to bring direction, structure and oversight to the process of project selection has led to the development of tools and techniques by researchers and practitioners. However, despite the development of various frameworks to assist in the appraisal and selection of government projects, failures are still being recorded with government projects. In developing countries, where frameworks are rarely used, the problems are compounded. To improve the situation this study investigates the current practice of construction project selection processes within the Nigerian public sector in order to inform theories of decision making from the perspective of developing nations and project management practice. Unlike other research around construction projects in Nigeria this paper concentrates on factors influencing the selection process within the Nigeria public sector, which has received limited study. The authors report the findings of semi-structured interviews of top management in the Nigerian public sector and draw conclusions in terms of extant decision-making theory and current practice. Preliminary results from the data analysis show that groups make project selection decisions and this forces sub-optimal decision due to pressure on time, clashes of interest, lack of accountability and poor leadership.

Keywords: Construction, Project selection, Public sector, Factors.

Introduction

The current dynamic environment in Nigeria requires modification for the reciprocated objective of sustainability (African Development Bank Group (ADBG), 2015). In order to achieve this objective, legislative members of the Nigerian government must have a visualisation which integrates the planned and detailed strategies of the country. A number of studies have disclosed that governments focussing on carefully considering all factors in project selection usually out-perform those which do not (Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), 2014; Kelly, 2016). The greatest difficulty experienced by the Nigerian government in project selection is not how strategy is formulated but how it can be implemented. Alsudiri *et al.* (2013) point out that 30% of all project failures are a result of misalignment between projects and business strategy. Similarly, Too and Weaver (2014) argued that lack of support, conflicting objectives and other contextual issues in the domain of senior and executive management can

influence the progress and outcomes of projects negatively. In agreement scholar as Englund and Graham (1999); Bolat *et al*. (2014); Dutra *et al.* (2014); Globalization TrendLab (2015) established the significance of project selection by stating that a critical constituent for connecting strategy to immediate activities is selecting new edges.

The impact of the current Nigerian economic crisis has not only been invasive and far-reaching but has also led to the need for disproportionate funds for the progression of sustainability expansion in every sector (International Monetary Fund, 2014). Though the public sector has been significantly contributory towards the country's progress and has, consequently, had to modify itself concerning the goal of sustainable growth of Nigeria. Previously, the public sector has gradually expanded into a huge organisation with many rules, guidelines, and complex processes. As an alternative, public sector establishments have concentrated on compliance with fundamental guidelines rather than on consequences or meeting the needs of people (Inyang, 2008). These then unavoidably lead to unsuccessful budget application. Accordingly, a key core purpose of the prevailing management mechanisms which the Nigerian government needs to reform is budget management. This improvement should thus focus on improving the budget management system by highlighting outputs and outcomes that will lead to better quality public management procedures and will aid as a device to regulate and scrutinise the exploitation of assets for the general public. Such an arrangement directs organizations to contemplate the greater vision at the theoretical stage, highlight the planned reputation of developments at the proposal stage, and look far beyond set assignments to improve added value to the state at the final endorsement stage of construction developments.

A study of the several factors impelling project selection after such planned performance-based accounting by the Nigerian government would support enlightening this procedure. Several areas of government are selected due to the nature of development work conducted in multiple Nigerian states. With the intention of achieving optimum use of public funds, the budget needs to be efficiently applied not only in times of suffering (hostilities and unrests, etc.) but also in other periods. This is with distinct allusion to the budget assigned for military projects to reduce the threat of terror, for which the socio-economic importance can be observed as high, as national security. The construction project selection process in the Nigerian government takes a considerable amount of time, in some cases taking a minimum of 12 months from the submittal of applications up to the budget apportionment.

There is a huge workforce working in the parts of planning and budgeting and have an average of four committees included in the process such as Project Selection Committee and Resource Management Committee. Particularly differentiating factors are reflected along this process such as, the lack of a common vision with government and amongst the elite in Nigeria on future directions for the country according to (House of Commons Report, 2009), lack of widespread knowledge of the process, blatant refusal to comply by some and political interference (Muhammad *et al*. 2015). Moreover, under the public reform package, the Nigerian government expects to achieve maximum input in these projects. This leads to imposition of new factors for considering construction projects.

As highlighted by (Young et al., 2012; Ebrahimnejad et al., 2012; Hopkinson, 2007; Stahle-Le Cardinal and Merle, 2006) project selection is one important issue in a project lifecycle as such, without a well-established set of selection criteria or processes, no organization can effectively select and execute any project. To address this project management concern, this paper explores in relation to current development and practice, the notions of construction project selection processes within the Nigerian public sector. Unlike other research around construction projects in Nigeria this research concentrate on factors influencing the selection process within the Nigeria public sector, which has received limited study. The main objective of this study is to discover and achieve an in-depth appreciation of the factors impelling the construction project selection process namely conceptual stage, design stage, and final approval stage. It is anticipated that the output of this study can be applied as the foundation for refining the procedures and principles of construction project selection in the public sector in Nigeria.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To critically review literature on the influence of project selection models and related theory on project process
2. To explore the decision-making process involved in the selection of construction projects within the Nigerian public sector as it relates to models and theory;
3. To determine the role of factors influencing project selection processes in Nigerian context; and

In order to ensure that the above objectives are satisfied, the following research questions were designed and further modified from literature reviewed.

1. How does the current decision making style within Nigerian public sector affect the process of selecting construction projects? And what factors influence the process?
2. What selection process would be appropriate for a developing nation like Nigeria?

Literature Review

Concept of decision making

According to a definition provided by Ahmed and Bwisa (2014) decision making is the process which involves identifying opportunities and making a conscious choice between two or more alternatives based on already established set of goals or values. He states that, decision making is one major activity undertaken by humans which involves ranking alternatives with a view to facilitate choosing the best option. The success of any individual or organization lies at the choices they make. Although sometimes deciding on the best option could be a difficult task, confusing and nerve racking.

Decision making processes interests are shared by a number of scholars, however, a number of associated areas of operations research and management are in existence. Normative models or prescriptive models are models of decision making directed at offering a comprehensible foundation for choosing among substitute courses of action. Psychologist, sociologists and political scientists have on numerous occasions attempted to comprehend decisions and choices people make. March and Simon (1958) recommended the need to explore decisions making as they felt it could be essential to the full understanding of how huge organizations functioned.

This idea was further emphasized by Cyert and March (1963) who supported their behavioural theory on a broader perspective about the firm. In this convention, the target of understanding rather than progress and the models are descriptive rather than normative. The major constituent is a conception of decision making as an information dispensation action which takes place with a distinct administrator. The two representations stress on substitute decision making or problem solutions from which the selected is, or to be accomplished. As found above, normative models are grounded on the concerns of selections among these options, their descriptive on the factors of these selections.

Organizations most challenging task is decision making process that involves project selection in a bid to gaining competitive advantage. Owing to the financial support magnitude and complication surrounding a project environment, the choice of a project can be seen as a compound characteristic judgment that is generally made by a group of decision makers constituted by a government or an organization comprising scholars, practitioners, and officials of the government. However, even as it appear in theory that in order to achieve a rational solution, decisions should be made following an uninterrupted linear process. Whereas in actual practice this is far from been the case.

Thereby, prompting Vroom and Jago (1974) to conclude that, managers view decision making as a social process with the component of the process presented in terms of happenings between people, rather than events that occur within a person. Thus, in line with the objectives of this study, the following section explores the existing approaches to project selection within the Nigerian public sector with a view to highlight the various factors that may impact of decision-making process.

Concept of Project Selection

Numerous studies are available on project selection and every one of them focusing on examining project selection in varying perspectives. On the other hand, only a few studies have investigated the dynamics of project selection. A study completed by Bellos *et al.* (2010) developed a project selection procedure by the multiple-criteria choice making method. Characteristics selected by the writer include (1) being a practical proposal, (2) having a knowledgeable group and a well-structured group, (3) being a dependable source of funds and other funds, and (4) with a theoretically high ratio for stock. Nevertheless, the public sector usually prefers to choose developments that require minimum asset, require a low quantity of proficiency, can be accomplished in the undeviating period, and have the uppermost profit prospective. In actuality, model developments are difficult to find and thus, the most acceptable project is selected by comparing with other existing proposed projects in this paper.

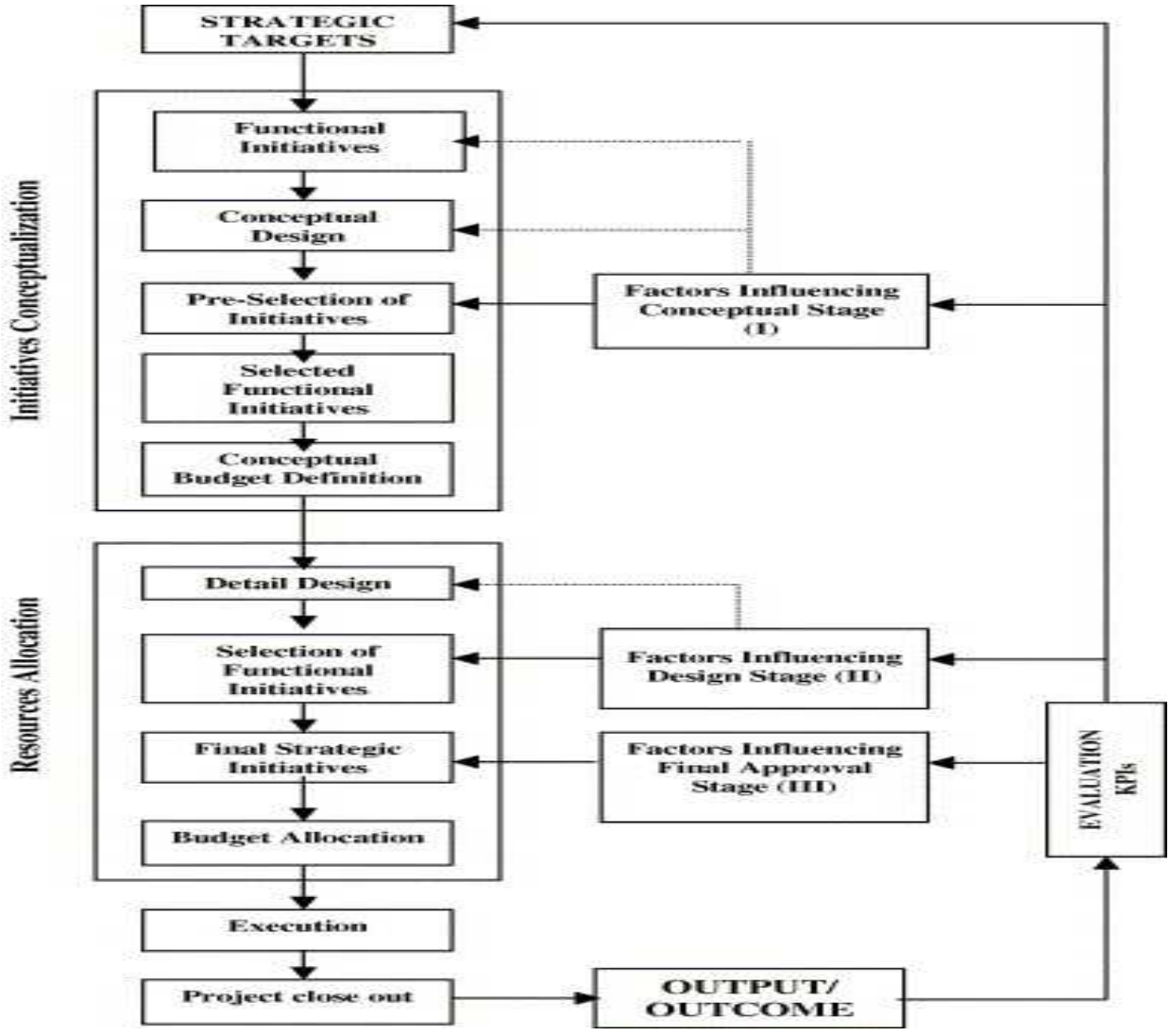

Figure 1. Framework for strategic project selection in the public sector

The process of translating strategic formulation into strategic operation using budget distribution as an instrument remains essential as a tool for the achievement of any large administration. Literature on strategic management and public management shows that the progression of interpreting strategic design into careful application using budget allocation as an instrument is essential for the success of a business. There are two significant stages in the development of choosing assignments for budget allocation: resourcefulness conceptualization phases and resource distribution stage, correspondingly (as named in this paper). These stages may be categorised into three additional sub-stages: theoretical phase, strategy stage, and concluding the final approval stage as shown in figure below (Puthamout and Charoenngam, 2007).

The inserted figure shows that, once the government has a recognised vision and thereafter progresses approaches, sets purposes, performance indicators, and considered targets, the theoretical stage commences with generating functional edges. Considered enterprises are produced from the various present efficient units as associated with planned change, which is applied top-down. There are a set of aspects impelling project selection at this abstract stage. On choosing projects at the conceptual stage, the conceptual financial plan is then acknowledged. Subsequently, all designated purposeful creativities are planned for additional evidence and all-inclusive appreciation of the projects.

Meredith and Mantel (2011) define project selection as the method of appraising single projects or group of projects and then selecting to execute a few of them in a bid to achieve the organization's set objectives. However, William and Samset, (2010) suggested that, in the project selection process, a project management leadership should be obliged to be involved. Furthermore, as organizations come to make a decision on which projects gain authorization and are given the financial support to proceed, the organization must decide whether there is a feasibility and viability study regarding that project, if it really is worth the spending of such a large amount on it. Rollins and Kendall, (2003) argued that what organizations plan to achieve can be measured in different ways, for instance; to increase turnover, to solve a problem that would have occurred over a long period of time; to produce a new product; to render a service; or it might be to improve or expand an old scheme.

Gray *et al.* (2010) while supporting the above claim opined that, project selection standards are more often than not documented as monetary and non-monetary. Furthermore, they noted that most administrators have a high preference for monetary return on investment as a decisive factor for appraising projects, and they assumed that decisive monetary factors are suitable when there exists a high level of assurance linked with evaluations of future cash flows. However, the financial return on investment while essential, does not always reveal planned significance; companies may provide backing to projects just to re-establish business image or heighten brand credit and they may use non-financial multi-criteria selection models, namely, checklist models and multi-weighted scoring models. Gray *et al.* (2010), however, further stated that irrespective of criterion variance among diverse types of projects, a project's fit to a company's policy is the most vital standard for selection. A project selection process offers worth to many organizations that embrace the needs of business and provides a method to determine if a project will have a strategic impact to improve business (William, 2009).

Kendrick and Saaty (2007) investigated how AHP can be used to aid companies in their project selection to match the tactical objective of the company. In other words, the result from this study shows that the project selection process seems to be the most important variable in determining the success of a project. Thus, project selection ought to be conducted in agreement with various dissimilar qualitative and quantitative criteria (subjective and pair-wise comparisons). However, Sauter (1997) claims that, decision making is a judgment that depends on the sufficiency of the accessible information, the value of the information, the quantity of alternatives, and the suitability of the modelling attempt accessible at the time of the judgment. Jennings and Wattam (1998) while supporting the above claim suggest that individuals, who believe that decision making is a process of acquiring precise records relating to the investigation, frequently do not recognise the variety of group and organizational activity that their decision making has involved. Dey (2006) maintained that, project portfolio management is a tie between tactics and

operations, which helps in facilitating the conversion of a company's vision into practicalities. Furthermore, Cleland (1999) claimed that, organizations embark on project as a means of attaining competitive advantage.

Wheelwright and Clark, (1992) while supporting the above claim acknowledged the significance of an organization ability to choose the right project in order to gain competitive advantage. In order for organization to detect a good project and to put them in a scale of preference, some criteria need to be observed. Based on the above, Archer and Ghasemzadeh (2000) and Cooper *et al.* (2000) suggested criteria's that should be harmonized for a successful selection process to be achieved for instance; decision makers, tools and techniques, and the procedures or context.

Construction project selection in Nigeria

In today's competitive environment the introduction of new projects is the most sustainable means of securing long-term existence of firms. The majority of studies on project selection focus on contractor and subcontractor selection, and on private sector project selection, whereas only a few studies have been carried out that involve the public sector

In Nigeria, because project management is yet to gain ground in the construction industry, most of the services rendered by practitioners are usually in the form of consultancy services to clients (Odusemi *et al.*, 2003). However, Aibinu and Jagboro (2002) opined that the inability of the construction industry to meet expectations can only be rectified by project management practitioners. A wide variety of inputs can be traceable to the construction industry, for instance: provision of infrastructure, as well as providing employment to a greater part of the population of a country, which will in turn make tangible input to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of any country. Going by the rate at which the construction industries in the western countries are growing, Nigeria is still far behind to be compared to developed nations of the world (Ayangade and Alake, 2009). Research shows that the reason behind the lagging behind of industry could be attributed to the reliance on the oil industry (Mbamali *et al.*, 2012). While supporting the above claim, Mbamali et al suggested that the only way out of this situation is for practitioners to live up to expectation then the problems facing the construction industry can be averted or reduced to the barest minimum.

The author opined that pblic sector projects differ from the private sector projects in four ways: firstly, public sector projects are strategic and long term; as a result, predictable returns on investment methods are possibly insufficient. Secondly, political factors and stakeholders constantly influence the distribution of funds in the public sector. Thirdly, the complexity in choosing construction projects is greater than before because of the uncertainty surrounding the process and the shortage in supply of the required expatriates. Fourthly, although project selection involves procedures, these are subject to government policies. According to Idonor Olusegun and Michael (2011), most projects in Nigeria fail as a result of non-existence of project management ability and poor selection design. Similarly, Bokor (2011) and Ofori (2013) asserts that a lot of projects have also failed in Ghana due to political influences.

Factors Affecting Project Selection

Table 1 shows project selection findings of researchers in Puthamont and Charoenngam (2007) summarises speculative factors that can be considered in advance while deciding on which project to select.

Table 1. Factors Influencing Different Types of Projects

Authors	Selection Criteria				Type of Project
Leinbach and Cromley (1983)	Road Project Selection Variables		2. Facilities served		Rural road projects in Indonesia
	1. Total population		3. Road length		
	4. Threshold population		5. Bridge costs		
	6. Total agricultural Land		7. Estate Land		
	8. Resources conversion requirement		9. Off season unemployment		
	10. Potential agricultural Land		11. Competing road		
	12. Higher order of connection		13. Distance of surface materials		
	14. Internal access		15. Project cost total		
	16. Daily market distance		17. Self-help level		
	18. Integrated development scheme		19. Project constructed		
Garret (1991)	1. Economic		2. Political	Road improvement investment by central government	
	3. Community		4. Organizational		
Okpala (1991)	1. Availability of capital		2. Management		Construction project selection in Nigerian
	3. Economic situation		4. Competitive activities		
	5. Profitability		6. Viability		
	7. Political situation		8. Uncertainty & risk level		
	9. Benefit		10. Project competitiveness		
Mohanty (1992)	**Intrinsic Criteria**		**Extrinsic Criteria**		General project selection
	1. Project identification ability		2. The risk return ratio		
	3. Resource requirement & Availabilities		4. The market environment		
	5. Past experiences of organisation in managing projects		6. Government policies & regulations		
	7. Management attitudes		8. The socio-economic climate		
	9. The time horizon of the project		10. Legal & technical implications		
Renegarajan and Jagannathan (1997)	1. Successful completion of project		2. Social objectives		Research & Development project selection
	3. Work related to existing products process		4. Image of organisation		
	5. Manufacturing plants association in selecting the research programs		6. Duration of project		
	7. Patenting		8. Cost of Project		
	9. Publishing of work done		10. Space availability		
	11. Availability of executive manpower		12. Availability of technical support staff		
Jiang and Klein (1999)	1. Financial related criteria		2. Organisational needs related criteria		Information systems project selection
	3. Technical related criteria		4. Risk related criteria		
	5. Management related criteria				
Ababutain (2002)	1. Promoters' qualification		2. Project evaluations		BOT Projects using AHP
	3. Financial feasibility		4. Implementation requirements		
	5. Social-economic effects				
World Bank Project Appraisal Document (2003	1. Project development objectives		2. Sustainability & risks		Infrastructure project selection
	3. Strategic context		4. Main conditions		
	5. Project description		6. Readiness for implementation		
	7. Project rationale		8. Project compliance with bank policies		
	9. Project analysis				

Continuation of table below

Authors	Selection Criteria		Type of Project
Lin and Chen (2004)	1. Competence and capitals	2. Reputation of organisation	Selection of construction project
	3. Undertaking of an organisation	4. Possibility of continuation	
	5. Project analysis		
Puthamont and Charoenngam (2007)	1. Factor related to national security	2. Factors related to benefits & evaluation	Ministry of Defence construction projects in Thailand
	3. Factors related to project rationale	4. Factors related to project impact	
	5. Factors related to project feasibility	6. Factors related to socio-economic & political environment	
	7. Factors related to investment analysis	8. Factors related to readiness to implementation	
Liang and Li (2008)	1. Benefits	2. Opportunities	Enterprise Information Systems using Monte Carlo & Analytical Process
	3. Costs	4. Risks	
Meredith and Mantel (2010)	**Administrative Factors**	**Production Factors**	General project selection
	1. Meet government safety standards	2. Time until ready to install	
	3. Meet government environmental standards	4. Length of disruption during installation	
	5. Impact on information system	6. Learning curve-time until operation as desired	
	7. Reaction of stockholders & securities markets	8. Effects on waste & rejects	
	9. Patent & trade secret protection	10. Energy requirements	
	11. Impact on image with customers, suppliers and competitors	12. Facility & other equipment	
	13. Degree to which we understand new technology	14. Safety of process	
	15. Managerial capacity to direct & control new process	16. Other application of technology	
	Financial Factors	18. Change in cost to produce a unit component	
	17. Profitability, net present value of the investment		
	19. Impact on cash flows	20. Change in raw material usage	
	21. Pay-out period	22. Availability of raw materials	
	23. Cash requirement	24. Required development time & cost	
	25. Time until break-even	26. Impact on current suppliers	
	27. Size of investment required	28. Change in quality of output	
	29. Impact of seasonal & cyclical fluctuation	**Market Factors**	
		30. Size of potential market for out-put	
	Personnel Factors	32. Probable market share out-put	
	31. Training requirements	33. Time until market share is acquired	
	34. Labour skill requirement	35. Impact on current product line	
	36. Availability of required labour skills	37. Consumer acceptance	
	38. Level of resistance from current workforce	39. Impact on consumer safety	
	40. Change in size of labour force	41. Estimated life of output	
	42. Inter & intra group communication requirements	43. Spin-off project possibilities	
	44. Impact on working conditions		
Putri (2011)	1. Condition of the road	2. Land use	Regional road project using ANP
	3. Traffic volume	4. Policy	
	5. Economic		

Mohanty (1992) categorizes the decisive factors influencing project selection into two groups: internal and external. Okpala (1991), however, named ten elements influencing construction project selection in Nigeria.

Similarly, Rengarajan and Jagannathan (1997) built up a scoring model for project selection in the Research & Development department of an electrical equipment manufacturer and found 13 elements influencing project selection. In addition, Jiang and Klein (1999) studied project selection criteria based on strategic orientation and pointed out six groups of factors influencing project selection. Furthermore, Lin and Chen (2004) identified competences and capitals, reputation of organisation, undertaking of an organisation, possibility of project continuation, danger and rivalry as key procedures for constructing judgment in the selection of construction project. In contrast, the World Bank (2003) appraised infrastructure projects based on nine subjects. Puthamont and Charoenngam (2007) began by identifying three phases involved in project selection process: conceptual, design and final approval. They argued

that different factors affect the different phases: for instance, conceptual phase – project objectives, project rationale and mission of Ministry of Defence (MOD); design phase – conformity to legislations, preparedness to implement and project budget; final approval phase – project objective, MOD action plan, and project rationale. Meredith and Mantel (2010) suggested principles for deciding on a selection model and further identified forty-four factors classified into: production, marketing, financial, personnel, and administrative factors believed to impact on a project selection process. These findings raise intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent of factors influencing construction project selection in Nigeria.

Methodology

Considering there is limited study on the subject in the unit of analysis being public sector construction projects selection process, and the questions and objectives of this research, the qualitative method is adopted (Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2008). Twenty semi-structured interviews ranging from forty-five minutes to ninety minutes (averaging 67.5 minutes) were conducted. This is to achieve in-depth analysis and hence to comprehend more deeply project selection practices within the Nigerian public sector (Saunders *et al.* 2009). Interviews were carried out with central actors of the Nigerian civil services including permanent secretaries, departmental directors, and high cadre officers involved in project selection. Here, purposeful and snowballing non-probability sampling techniques were adopted.

The justification is that purposeful sampling gives the researcher the flexibility to interview only those key actors that meet the criteria highlighted in the unit of analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This researcher employed two elements in the selection of interviewees: the interviewee must have a role in project evaluation and selection within the organisation and projects must be construction projects. Interview guide conformed to the guidelines prescribed in Saunders *et al.* (2012). This study takes a multiple case study approach (Farquhar, 2012). The case study technique ensures that a subject is looked at from a diversity of viewpoints as this allows for an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon to be uncovered (Hair *et al*., 2007; Fisher *et al.*, 2010). Content analysis was conducted on all twenty transcripts and coded into manageable categories; sentences and themes into a spread sheet as per the seven stages, proposed by (Berg 2007).

Results, Analysis and Discussion

Results from the data analysis show that Nigeria use groups to make decisions. Group decision-making process can result in effective decisions. However, some challenges plague the use of groups in making decisions, e.g. time consumed, clashes of interest, lack of accountability and poor leadership. Preliminary analysis reveals the unit of analysis has changed significantly. As seen in Appendix C, teams of decision makers are constituted to select projects: if they are not from the project's region, they may not support its approval; this is supported by Onikute (1988). Additionally, empirical findings reveal that many government projects lack the required information needed for project selection. More often than not, due to personal or sectional interest, initial cost appraisal of the chosen project is unreliable, anticipated completion date is unclear and these projects are constrained by resources.

> "Every administration comes into power in Nigeria with new philosophies and introduces a project that is not aligned with the strategic needs and direction of the state, once that tenure elapses, the project no longer continues. Because there is not enough time to gather the required information for the proposed project, there will be no proper feasibility study or due diligence analysis; their projects may not be completed before their tenure expires." (Interviewee 1)
>
> "Poor leadership – mono-rail project - The governor's ambition caused that project to fail. He insisted that the project must be built even when all stakeholders were not in support of the project… for fear of rejection made some decision makers to facially accept the project." (Interviewee 2)

Even though public sector organisations in Nigeria claim to follow due process in the ways projects are selected and implemented, political undertones have been acknowledged as one of the main reason why wrong projects are selected. This finding is consistent with the studies by Okpala (1991) and Olusegun and Michael (2011). Okpala, while mentioning the political factor among nine factors that influence project choice, fails to recognise that outside the clashes of interest that naturally emanate from the political factor, the differences in ambition and lack of true commitment to project execution, are often ignored in the public sector construction project selection process in Nigeria. The level to which politics have influence on the choice of construction projects in Nigeria in the democratic system of government since 1999 is far more complicated than under the military dictatorship government up to 1991. According to participants:

> "Project selection in Nigeria is fraught with lack of true intention and drive to achieve project objectives. Projects are either not objectively selected or when selected objectively, are not monitored by the relevant agencies to ensure value for money is received. Corrupt practices may also be responsible for failed and abandoned projects arising from the wrong intentions behind the project selection process as government officials' line their pockets with contract sums awarded via kickbacks from the winning contractors." (Interviewee 6)

This is in agreement to Yelin's claim 2005 that, project portfolio selection has always been biased as a result of influence from people who bribe decision makers to choose projects that will benefit them. From the pilot data collected, patterns were matched and new emerging themes found: security, planning, geographical and climatic factors, and administrative excesses. High importance is accorded to fund availability, availability of manpower, administrative excesses, security, feasibility and viability, economic situation, technological ability, geographical and climatic factors, expected return on investment, and competitiveness.

> "A project acceptable in one culture maybe seen as offensive in another or might be seen as a project capable of damaging their environment e.g. Boko Haram agitation on western education in the northern part of Nigeria and Niger-Delta." (A5)
>
> "There was this project we were to implement based on government agenda and we were delegated to do some needs assessment… we found that the community wanted project that best portray their culture but unfortunately because we were financially constrained we opted for a project in line with government agenda that could benefit two neighbouring committees…. So we requested both communities to recommend a location for the project - This led to serious conflict; at the end the project was never carried out." (Interviewee 3)

Research findings by Gutierrez and Magnusson (2014) also point out that, many project ideas are initially appraised by perception and are further built by circumventing the judgment gate. Nevertheless, once the idea gets to an assured stage of maturity, a recognised choice can then be completed via a realistic process. Moreover, they argued that, decision makers interviewed accepted the fact that though it is not the right way to select projects, many organisations influences the choice of a project in order to protect their interest. The authors further stated that, there exist both formal and informal systems in every organisation, with the formal allowing every decision to be made in an orderly manner, whereas the informal permits conflicting human needs. In agreement with the above claim, William and Samset (2010) maintained that, the normative model for decision-making proposes that judgment and scrutiny ought to follow an orderly and reasonable process will in the long run lead to the choice and approval of the favourite project, devoid of unexpected interference or clash.

Conclusion

Globally, there is greater interest in project and project management due to shortage in infrastructure services supply capability which underlines the importance of project selection. Hence, it is of utmost

importance that organisations understand that choosing a particular project over another is an opportunity cost – tying up the organisations resources.

Therefore, project management, as defined according to OGC (2010), is a special management method that is embraced to manage a project environment. One such way is the development of tools and techniques to assist organisations in the selection of which project(s) to implement.

Despite different frameworks and processes been proposed by literature, as in the developed world projects are still failing. In the Nigerian context where frameworks are rarely used, the problems are compounded. Many projects executed in Nigeria suffer delays, cost overruns or even abandonment as discussed by various authors (Olusegun and Michael, 2011; Odediran *et al.,* 2012; Zoufa and Ochieng, 2014) for which project selection has been acknowledged as the primary source. For instance, in the Nigerian context, project decision makers are usual drawn from different fields, ethnic groups and with different languages. The choice of a project by an individual will be greatly influenced by experience, their understanding of the desired outcome of the project, in other words, the individual's ideology and their level of fairness. This was why Maylor (2010) opined that, many decision makers come into a group with a solution in their mind rather than an analysis of the issue at hand.

Moreover, findings from interviews reveals that in actual practice this procedure is complex, less structured, and its possibility is usually affected and as a result investigation might be partial or insufficient. Preliminary analysis reveals that the unit of analysis has changed significantly. Just like the public procurement act 2007 which clearly specifies procedures to be followed when selecting and awarding contracts to contractors (Bukoye and Norrington, 2014), no documented evidence exist that specifically highlight processes that should be followed when selecting construction projects. Although, teams of decision makers are constituted to select projects and if they are not from the project's region, they may not support its approval; this is supported by Onikute (1988). Additionally, empirical findings reveal that many government projects lack the required information needed for project selection. More often than not, due to personal or sectional interest, initial cost appraisal of the chosen project is unreliable, anticipated completion date is unclear and these projects are constrained by resources. In order words, the choice of a project is influenced by political precedence rather than by realistic investigation.

In view of the above claim, the present author argues that, since there is no standard framework for selecting construction projects in the Nigerian public sector, the author hereby recommends further study on the best framework that will be suitable for selecting public sector construction projects in a developing nation like Nigeria.

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