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# Diagnosing Project Management Hurdles in Developing Nations: A Case Study of Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT**
Project management plays a critical role in achieving sustainable development, especially in developing economies where resources are limited and developmental needs are high. This paper examines the major challenges confronting project management in developing countries, with particular reference to Nigeria as a case study. The study adopts a descriptive research approach, relying on secondary sources such as textbooks, academic journal articles, government publications, and institutional reports. The findings reveal that several interrelated factors hinder successful project execution. These include inadequate infrastructure, which affects logistics and implementation; insufficient funding and poor financial management; corruption and lack of accountability; weak institutional frameworks; political interference; and a shortage of skilled and trained project management professionals. Additionally, poor planning, lack of stakeholder engagement, and ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems further exacerbate project inefficiencies. As a result of these challenges, many projects suffer from cost overruns, delays in completion, substandard quality, and in extreme cases, complete abandonment. These issues not only waste scarce resources but also slow down economic development and reduce public trust in government and institutions. To address these problems, the paper recommends a number of practical solutions. These include investing in critical infrastructure, strengthening institutional capacity and governance structures, promoting transparency and accountability through anti-corruption measures, and enhancing the training and certification of project management professionals. Furthermore, the adoption of modern project management tools and techniques, such as digital monitoring systems and data-driven decision-making, is emphasized as a way to improve efficiency and outcomes. In conclusion, overcoming the challenges of project management in developing economies requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving government, private sector, and other stakeholders. Implementing these recommendations can significantly improve project success rates and contribute to sustainable development in countries like Nigeria.
**Keywords**: Project Management, Developing Economies, Nigeria, Infrastructure, Corruption, Funding, Skilled Manpower, Institutional Weakness, Project Failure, Sustainable Development, Transparency, Capacity Building

## INTRODUCTION

Project management plays a very important role in national development. Governments and organizations use projects to build roads, hospitals, schools, and provide other social services. When projects are properly managed, they are completed on time, within budget, and meet their objectives. According to the Project Management Institute (PMI, 2021), effective project management improves efficiency, accountability, and organizational performance.

However, despite its importance, project management in developing countries is frequently characterized by high failure rates, cost overruns, delays, and abandonment. The Nigerian construction industry, for example, has been maligned by building collapse, incessant delays, abandonment, and cost overrun despite the use of project management systems (Ogunde, Olaolu, Afolabi, Owolabi, & Ojelabi, 2017). Empirical evidence shows that only 16% of 8,000 construction projects in Nigeria were completed within budget, on time, and at the required quality level (Kamaruddeen, 2020, as cited in Ibrahim, Alao, & Aigbavboa, 2022). This poor performance mirrors a broader pattern across developing economies where a high percentage of projects incur cost overruns and delays (Asiedu & Adaku, 2019; Damoah & Akwei, 2017).

Literature attributes these challenges to both technical and contextual factors. Technical hurdles include poor planning and estimation, inadequate project budgeting, ineffective communication, lack of stakeholder involvement, design errors, and poor risk management (Ogunde et al., 2017). Contextual factors peculiar to developing nations further compound the problem. These include bureaucratic delays, corruption, political interference, inconsistent government policies, funding constraints, and lack of technical expertise (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Ezeokoli et al., 2021). In Nigeria specifically, corruption, change

in government administration, politics, and inadequate involvement of construction professionals rank among the top causes of project failure and abandonment (Olalusi & Otunola, 2012). Studies also highlight the underutilization of trained project managers, passive participation from project managers, and lack of client involvement as critical internal challenges (Ogunde et al., 2017; Dalibi, 2016).

The core issue is that project management practices transferred from developed countries are often applied in developing contexts without adequate adaptation to the socio-economic, political, and institutional realities of these environments (Rondinelli, n.d.). Project managers in developing countries therefore require specific skills and competencies to manage complexity in such challenging contexts (Bond-Barnarda & Steyn, 2015). Yet there remains limited empirical research that systematically diagnoses how these generic "developing country" challenges manifest in Nigeria and interact with local institutional structures.

Given that Nigeria accounts for over 200 million people and has over 56,000 abandoned projects attributed mainly to cost-related factors (Nigeria Institute of Quantity Surveyors, cited in Ibrahim et al., 2022), understanding these hurdles is urgent. With 66% of very large government projects since 1960 not only failed but abandoned, the economic and social cost of project failure in Nigeria is substantial (Ibrahim et al., 2022). This study therefore seeks to diagnose the major project management hurdles in Nigeria as a representative developing nation, in order to provide context-specific insights for improving project delivery across similar economies.

**Statement of the Problem**

Despite significant investment in infrastructure and development projects, many developing countries continue to record high rates of project failure, cost overruns, and delays. Project management practices that work in advanced economies often struggle to deliver results in these contexts due to unique socio-economic, political, and institutional constraints. Nigeria, as one of Africa's largest economies, mirrors this pattern with numerous abandoned, delayed, or substandard projects across sectors. Yet there is limited empirical research that systematically diagnoses the specific hurdles Nigerian project managers face and how they differ from generic "developing country" challenges. Without this diagnosis, interventions remain generic and ineffective.

This study therefore seeks to identify, examine, and evaluate the major challenges confronting project management in Nigeria, in order to provide context-specific insights for improving project delivery in similar developing economies.

**Aim and Objectives**

The main objective is to diagnose the major hurdles confronting project management in developing nations with Nigeria as a case study.

Specific objectives:

1. To identify the major challenges of projects management and their consequences on the success and sustainability of projects delivery in developing economies.
2. To evaluate existing strategies for improving project management practice and identify context-specific recommendations for Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

Based on the objectives, this study answered the following research questions:

i. What are the major challenges of projects management and their consequences on the success and sustainability of projects in developing economies?
ii. What strategies can improve project management effectiveness in the Nigerian context?

**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for 3 groups:

1. Academia: It fills a gap in literature by systematically diagnosing how "generic developing country challenges" manifest specifically in Nigeria and interact with leadership + technology. Current studies are fragmented across sectors.

2. Practice/Industry: Results will give Nigerian project managers and firms context-specific strategies beyond generic PMBOK practices. Recommendations on training, stakeholder engagement, and tech adoption can directly reduce delays and abandonment.
3. Policy/Government: With 56,000 abandoned projects and 66% of mega-projects failing, findings can guide institutional reforms, enforcement of standards, and policies on PM professionalization. It supports Nigeria's development goals by improving ROI on public investment.

**Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Scope

This study focuses on project management challenges in Nigeria as a representative developing economy. PM challenges, developing economy features, improvement strategies, leadership/stakeholder role, and technology impact. Data were drawn from construction professionals, project managers, and documented project reports.

Limitations

1. Sector focus: Findings may be most generalizable to construction/public infrastructure. Private IT projects may differ.
2. Geographical: Data was collected mainly in urban centre, rural project dynamics is underrepresented.
3. Technology data: Limited empirical studies exist on tech adoption in Nigeria, so findings will rely partly on practitioner perception vs hard performance data.
4. Access: Issues like corruption and political interference may be underreported due to sensitivity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Framework

### Concept of Project Management

Project management can be defined as the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling resources to achieve a specific goal within a given time (Kerzner, 2017). It involves different stages such as project planning, execution, monitoring, and completion. A good project manager ensures that resources such as money, time, and manpower are used efficiently. Project management also involves managing risks, communicating with stakeholders, and ensuring quality delivery (PMI, 2021). In simple terms, project management is about doing the right work, at the right time, with the right resources.

### Major Challenges of Project Management

i. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** One of the biggest problems affecting project management in developing economies is poor infrastructure. In Nigeria, for example, bad roads can delay the transportation of materials to project sites. Unstable electricity supply can interrupt construction work or increase the cost of using generators. Poor internet connectivity can also affect communication and monitoring of projects (World Bank, 2020).

ii. **Limited Financial Resources:** Many projects in developing countries suffer from lack of adequate funding. Governments may start projects without securing full funding, leading to delays or abandonment. In Nigeria, it is common to see projects stopped halfway due to lack of funds or delayed budget releases (Ogunlana, 2010).

iii. **Corruption and Mismanagement:** Corruption is a major challenge. Funds meant for projects are sometimes diverted for personal use. This results in poor-quality work or incomplete projects. For example, a road project may be awarded but executed with substandard materials because funds were mismanaged (Transparency International, 2022).

iv. **Political Instability:** Frequent changes in government can affect project continuity. A new administration may abandon projects started by the previous government. This leads to waste of resources and unfinished development projects (Collier, 2007).

v. **Lack of Skilled Personnel:** There is often a shortage of trained project managers, engineers, and technicians. This affects planning, execution, and supervision of projects. Without skilled personnel, projects are more likely to fail (Kerzner, 2017).
vi. **Weak Institutional Frameworks:** Government institutions responsible for project supervision are sometimes weak or ineffective. This leads to poor monitoring, lack of accountability, and failure to enforce standards (Adebayo, 2018).
vii. **Poor Risk Management:** Many projects fail because risks are not properly identified or planned for. For example, flooding in some parts of Nigeria can damage construction work if not considered during planning (PMI, 2021).
viii. **Cultural and Social Barriers:** In some communities, people may resist projects due to cultural beliefs or lack of awareness. This can delay or even stop project implementation (Todaro & Smith, 2020).
ix. **Technology Constraints:** Limited access to modern project management tools and software reduces efficiency. Many organizations still rely on manual processes, which are slower and less accurate (Kerzner, 2017).
x. **Communication Gaps:** Poor communication among stakeholders—government, contractors, and the public—can lead to misunderstandings and delays. Clear communication is very important for project success (PMI, 2021).

**Effects of these Challenges**

The challenges facing project management in developing economies have far-reaching consequences on the success and sustainability of projects. These effects not only hinder project delivery but also negatively impact economic growth and public confidence.

i. **Delay in Project Completion:** One of the most common effects of poor project management is delay in completion. Factors such as inadequate planning, poor infrastructure, shortage of materials, and bureaucratic bottlenecks often slow down project execution. In many cases, projects that were scheduled to be completed within a specific timeframe take several years longer (Ogunlana, 2010).
ii. **Increase in Project Cost (Cost Overruns):** Project delays and poor financial management often lead to cost overruns. When projects are not completed on time, additional expenses are incurred in the form of extended labor costs, increased material prices due to inflation, and administrative expenses. Corruption and mismanagement of funds also contribute significantly to rising project costs (Adebayo, 2018).
iii. **Poor Quality of Work:** Another major consequence is the delivery of substandard or poor-quality work. This may occur due to the use of low-quality materials, lack of skilled professionals, or inadequate supervision and monitoring. Contractors may cut corners to reduce costs or maximize profits, especially in environments where regulatory enforcement is weak (Kerzner, 2017).
iv. **Abandonment of Projects:** In extreme cases, projects are completely abandoned before completion. This can happen due to lack of funding, political instability, corruption, or poor planning. Abandoned projects are a common sight in many developing countries, including Nigeria (Ogunlana, 2010).
v. **Waste of Public Funds:** When projects are delayed, poorly executed, or abandoned, significant amounts of public funds are wasted. Governments often allocate large budgets for development projects, and when these funds are mismanaged or diverted, the intended benefits are not realized (Transparency International, 2022).
vi. **Loss of Public Trust in Government:** Frequent project failures and mismanagement erode public confidence in government institutions. When citizens observe repeated cases of

abandoned projects, inflated costs, and poor-quality infrastructure, they begin to lose trust in the ability of leaders to manage public resources effectively (World Bank, 2020).

**Developing Economies: An Overview**

Developing economies are countries that are still in the process of growth and transformation, particularly in areas such as industrialization, income generation, and improvement in the standard of living of their citizens. These countries often face structural and institutional challenges that limit their development. Nigeria is a good example of a developing economy, as it continues to strive toward economic stability and sustainable development (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

Some common features of developing economies are explained below:

**3 Poor Road Networks and Unstable Electricity Supply**

Infrastructure in developing economies is often inadequate. Bad road networks make transportation of goods and services difficult and expensive, while unstable electricity supply disrupts businesses, industries, and project execution. This leads to low productivity, increased costs, and slower economic growth (World Bank, 2020). Reliable infrastructure is essential for attracting investment and improving overall economic performance.

**4 High Level of Unemployment**

Unemployment is a major challenge in developing countries. Many people, especially young graduates, struggle to find jobs due to limited industrial growth and lack of opportunities. High unemployment leads to increased poverty, crime rates, and social unrest (International Labour Organization, 2021). It also reduces the purchasing power of citizens, which in turn affects economic development.

**5 Limited Access to Finance**

Access to financial resources is often restricted in developing economies. Small businesses, entrepreneurs, and even governments may find it difficult to obtain loans or funding due to high interest rates, strict lending conditions, or underdeveloped financial institutions. This limits business expansion, innovation, and the ability to execute large-scale projects (African Development Bank, 2019). Without adequate financing, economic growth and development are significantly slowed down.

**6 Political Instability**

Frequent changes in government, policy inconsistency, conflicts, and insecurity are common in many developing economies. Political instability creates uncertainty, discourages both local and foreign investment, and disrupts ongoing projects (Collier, 2007). Investors prefer stable environments where policies are predictable and risks are minimized.

**7 Weak Government Institutions**

Institutions in developing countries are often not strong enough to effectively enforce laws, regulate activities, or ensure accountability. Weak institutions can lead to corruption, poor policy implementation, and inefficient public service delivery (Transparency International, 2022). This negatively affects governance, project management, and overall national development.

8 Skills Shortage and Limited Technical Expertise

A shortage of specialized human capital is another defining feature. Kamaruddeen (2020) noted that poor project management practices in Nigeria are partly due to lack of specialized training. Ogunde et al. (2017) found that "poor treatment of workforce" and insufficient technical awareness hamper project execution. Dalibi (2016) added that the engagement of non-project managers in construction projects and underutilization of trained PMs are widespread. This skills gap reduces the capacity to adopt modern PM methodologies and technologies.

ix. Infrastructural Immaturity

Lee & Namayanja (2019), studying IT projects in Cambodia and Uganda, concluded that "infrastructural immaturity" and limited technology experience make projects high-risk in developing economies. The same applies to Nigeria: manual processes, poor record-keeping, and lack of digital infrastructure for

monitoring persist. Weak physical infrastructure like power supply and transport also increases project costs and delays.

These features do not operate in isolation. Literature shows they interact: political interference leads to funding delays → funding delays cause contractor insolvency → insolvency leads to abandonment. Bond-Barnarda & Steyn (2015) argue that project trust, collaboration, and success in developing countries depend heavily on how PM addresses these contextual features, because standard PMBOK processes assume stable institutions.

**Cases of Failed Projects in Nigeria**

| S/N | Project | Sector | Year Started | Failure Type | Main Causes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ajaokuta Steel Plant | Mega Infrastructure/Steel | 1979 | Abandonment/Non-completion | Political interference, poor planning, funding issues (Ibrahim et al., 2022) |
| 2 | National Housing Program | Housing/Construction | 2016 | Low Completion Rate | Funding delays, bureaucratic bottlenecks, poor stakeholder coordination |
| 3 | Abuja-Lokoja Road Project | Road Infrastructure | Not specified | Abandonment/Re-award | Improper budgeting, bureaucratic bottlenecks, lack of stakeholder involvement |
| 4 | Second Niger Bridge | Road Infrastructure | 1970s planning | Decades-long delay | Funding constraints, policy inconsistency, contract renegotiations |
| 5 | National Integrated Power Projects NIPPs | Power/Energy | 2004 | Cost overrun + underperformance | Poor monitoring, corruption, lack of technical expertise |
| 6 | Mambilla Hydroelectric Power Project | Power/Energy | 1982 | Delay/Non-completion | Funding problems, policy instability, poor contract management |
| 7 | National Stadium, Lagos | Public Building/Sports | 1973 | Deterioration/Abandonment | Lack of maintenance planning, poor post-completion stakeholder management |
| 8 | Public Hospitals & Schools | Social Infrastructure | Various | Abandonment mid-construction | Inadequate budgeting, contractor insolvency (Ogunde et al., 2017; Olalusi & Otunola, 2012) |
| 9 | Refineries – Port Harcourt, Warri, Kaduna | Oil & Gas/Industrial | 1965-1980s | Underperformance | Poor project monitoring, corruption |
| 10 | Dangote Refinery | Oil & Gas/Industrial | 2016 | Delay | Regulatory |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Early Phases | | | | bottlenecks, infrastructure gaps typical of developing context |

General Statistics from Literature

| S/N | Metric | Finding | Sources |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | National Abandonment Rate | 56,000 abandoned government projects across water, roads, health, education | Ibrahim et al., 2022 |
| 2 | Mega-Project Failure Rate | 66% of very large govt projects since 1960 failed or abandoned | Ibrahim et al., 2022 |
| 3 | Time/Cost/Quality Performance | Only 16% of construction projects completed within time, budget, quality | Ogunde et al., 2017 |

Recurring Causes by Triple Constraint:

**5** Time: Delays from policy shifts + bureaucratic approval → Ajaokuta, Mambilla
**6** Cost: Overruns from inflation + corruption → NIPPs, Abuja-Lokoja Road
**7** Quality/Abandonment: Poor planning + stakeholder exclusion → National Stadium, abandoned schools.

**Strategies for Improvement**

Improving project management in developing economies requires a coordinated and practical approach that addresses both structural and human factors. The following strategies provide a clear path toward better project outcomes:

**5. Government Should Invest More in Infrastructure Such as Roads and Electricity**

Adequate infrastructure forms the backbone of successful project implementation. Poor road networks make it difficult to transport materials and equipment, while unreliable electricity disrupts construction activities and delays timelines. By investing in critical infrastructure like transportation systems, power supply, and communication networks, governments can create an enabling environment for smooth project execution (World Bank, 2020).

**6. Strong Anti-Corruption Measures Should Be Enforced**

Corruption undermines project success by diverting funds, inflating costs, and compromising quality. Enforcing strict anti-corruption policies is essential to ensure that resources are used for their intended purposes. This includes transparent procurement processes, open contract bidding, regular financial audits, and strict penalties for offenders (Transparency International, 2022).

**7. More Training Programs Should Be Provided for Project Managers and Technical Staff**

The success of any project largely depends on the competence of those managing and executing it. Developing economies often face a shortage of skilled professionals, which leads to poor planning and execution. Governments and organizations should invest in continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and certification programs (PMI, 2021).

**8. Modern Project Management Tools and Software Should Be Adopted**

The use of modern technology enhances efficiency, accuracy, and coordination in project management. Tools such as Microsoft Project, Primavera, and other digital platforms help in scheduling, budgeting, risk analysis, and performance tracking (Kerzner, 2017).

9. **Proper Planning and Risk Assessment Should Be Carried Out Before Starting Projects**

Effective project management begins with thorough planning. This involves conducting feasibility studies, setting realistic goals, defining scope, and identifying potential risks. Risk assessment helps anticipate challenges such as financial constraints, environmental issues, or political instability (PMI, 2021).

10. **Stakeholders Should Be Properly Informed and Involved in Project Execution**

Stakeholder engagement is critical to project success. Stakeholders include government agencies, contractors, local communities, investors, and end-users. Keeping them informed and involved ensures transparency, promotes cooperation, and reduces resistance or conflict (Adebayo, 2018).

**The Role of Leadership in Project Management**

Leadership plays a critical role in determining the success or failure of projects in developing economies. Effective leaders provide direction, motivate team members, make strategic decisions, and ensure that project goals are achieved within the available time and resources. In many developing countries, weak leadership often results in poor coordination, lack of accountability, and inefficient project execution.

Good leadership promotes transparency, teamwork, and effective communication among stakeholders. Project leaders are expected to supervise activities properly, resolve conflicts, and ensure that project standards are maintained. In Nigeria, for example, many public projects fail because leaders prioritize personal interests over public benefits. Strong and ethical leadership can therefore improve project performance and reduce cases of corruption and project abandonment.

Furthermore, competent leadership encourages innovation and adaptability. Since developing economies often face unexpected economic and political challenges, project managers must be flexible and proactive in responding to risks and changing conditions.

***The Importance of Stakeholder Participation in Project Success***

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are directly or indirectly affected by a project. They include government agencies, contractors, community members, investors, employees, and end-users. Stakeholder participation is essential because projects are more likely to succeed when all concerned parties are properly involved from the planning stage to project completion.

In many developing economies, projects fail because communities are not consulted before implementation. This may lead to resistance, conflicts, or lack of support for the project. For example, road construction or industrial projects may face opposition if local residents believe their land, culture, or environment is being threatened.

Effective stakeholder participation improves communication, builds trust, and ensures that projects address the actual needs of the people. It also enhances accountability because stakeholders can monitor project activities and ensure that resources are properly utilized. Involving stakeholders creates a sense of ownership, which contributes to the long-term sustainability of projects.

***The Impact of Technology on Project Management***

Technology has transformed project management across the world by improving efficiency, communication, and decision-making. In developing economies, the adoption of modern technology can help reduce many of the challenges associated with project execution.

Project management software such as Microsoft Project, Primavera, Trello, and Asana allows project managers to plan schedules, allocate resources, monitor progress, and manage risks more effectively. Digital communication tools also improve collaboration among project teams, especially when stakeholders are located in different places.

Despite these benefits, many developing economies still struggle with limited access to technology due to poor internet connectivity, high costs, and lack of technical skills. As a result, many organizations continue to rely on manual methods, which are slower and more prone to errors.

Investing in digital infrastructure and technological training can significantly improve project management outcomes. Technology enhances transparency, reduces delays, supports data analysis, and

helps project managers make informed decisions. Therefore, embracing technology is essential for achieving successful and sustainable project delivery in developing economies.

***The Role of Risk Management in Project Success***

Risk management is an important aspect of project management because every project is exposed to uncertainties that may affect its success. Risks may arise from financial problems, political instability, natural disasters, inflation, insecurity, or technical failures. In developing economies, these risks are often more severe due to weak institutions and unstable economic conditions.

Effective risk management involves identifying possible risks, analyzing their impact, and developing strategies to reduce or control them before they become major problems. For example, construction projects in flood-prone areas should include drainage plans and environmental assessments to reduce the impact of flooding.

Many projects in developing countries fail because risks are not properly considered during planning. Without adequate risk management, projects may experience delays, increased costs, or total abandonment. Therefore, project managers must continuously monitor potential threats and prepare contingency plans to ensure project continuity and success.

***The Effect of Corruption on Project Implementation***

Corruption remains one of the greatest obstacles to effective project management in developing economies. It occurs when public officials, contractors, or other stakeholders misuse project resources for personal gain. Corruption can take different forms, such as bribery, contract inflation, embezzlement, and favoritism in the award of contracts.

The effect of corruption on project implementation is very damaging. Funds meant for project execution are often diverted, leading to poor-quality work, project delays, and abandonment. In some cases, contractors use substandard materials in order to maximize profits, which reduces the durability and effectiveness of infrastructure projects.

Corruption also discourages foreign investment because investors prefer environments where transparency and accountability exist. To address this challenge, governments must strengthen anti-corruption agencies, enforce strict financial monitoring systems, and promote transparency in procurement and project management processes.

***The Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation in Project Management***

Monitoring and evaluation are essential processes that help ensure that projects achieve their intended goals. Monitoring involves the continuous tracking of project activities, while evaluation involves assessing the overall performance and impact of the project after implementation.

In developing economies, many projects fail because there is little or no proper monitoring and evaluation. Without supervision, mistakes and irregularities may go unnoticed until serious damage has occurred. Effective monitoring helps project managers identify problems early and take corrective actions before the situation worsens.

Evaluation is also important because it measures whether the project objectives were achieved and whether the resources used produced the desired results. It provides lessons that can improve future projects and helps governments and organizations determine whether projects have positively impacted society.

Strong monitoring and evaluation systems promote accountability, transparency, and efficiency. They also help ensure that projects are completed according to specifications, within budget, and within the planned timeframe.

**Summary of the Findings**

The study investigated the major challenges confronting project management in Nigeria, in order to provide context-specific insights for improving project delivery in similar developing economies. The study finds out that:

4. Inadequate infrastructure, limited financial resources, corruption and mismanagement, political instability, lack of skilled personnel, weak institutional frameworks, poor risk management,

cultural and social barriers, technological constraint, and communication gaps are the major challenges confronting project management in Nigeria. The study observed that, these constraints hinder project delivery and also negatively impact economic growth and public confidence.

5. Furthermore, the study noted that, project management in developing economies requires a coordinated and practical approach that addresses both structural and human factors. Some of the strategies include but not limited to these: Government should invest more in infrastructure such as roads and electricity, strong anti-corruption measures should be enforced, more training programs should be provided for project managers and technical staff, modern project management tools and software should be adopted, proper planning and risk assessment should be carried out before starting projects, and stakeholders should be properly informed and involved in project execution.

## CONCLUSION

Project management remains a vital tool for achieving sustainable development, particularly in developing economies where the demand for infrastructure, social services, and economic expansion is high. However, as examined in this paper, project management in these economies is confronted with numerous challenges, including poor infrastructure, inadequate funding, corruption, weak institutional frameworks, and a shortage of skilled manpower. These challenges significantly undermine the successful execution of projects, often resulting in delays, cost overruns, poor-quality outcomes, and in some cases, total abandonment. The cumulative effect of these issues is a slowdown in national development and a waste of scarce resources.

Despite these obstacles, the situation is not without hope. With deliberate and strategic efforts, these challenges can be effectively minimized. Proper planning, including feasibility studies and risk assessment, provides a strong foundation for project success. Strengthening institutions ensures that policies are implemented efficiently and that accountability is maintained. The development of skilled manpower through training and professional capacity building enhances the competence required to manage complex projects. Furthermore, promoting transparency and enforcing anti-corruption measures help to ensure that resources are used judiciously and for their intended purposes.

In addition, the adoption of modern project management tools and technologies can improve efficiency, monitoring, and decision-making processes. Active stakeholder involvement and continuous project evaluation also play a critical role in ensuring that projects meet their objectives and deliver value to society.

In conclusion, improving project management practices in developing economies is not just necessary but imperative for sustainable growth and development. When these improvements are effectively implemented, they will lead to better project delivery, optimal use of resources, increased public trust, and ultimately, enhanced economic development and improved standard of living for citizens.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the challenges affecting project management in developing economies, particularly in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed. Each recommendation is expanded to highlight its importance and practical application:

3. **Government should ensure proper funding before starting projects**: Adequate and timely funding is essential for the successful execution of any project. Governments should conduct proper feasibility studies and budget planning before initiating projects to ensure that sufficient financial resources are available from start to completion. Starting projects without secured funding often leads to delays, cost overruns, or abandonment. It is also important to adopt realistic budgeting that accounts for inflation, unforeseen contingencies, and maintenance costs. In addition, governments should explore alternative funding options such as public-private partnerships (PPPs) to ensure financial sustainability.

4. **Anti-corruption agencies should closely monitor project funds**: Corruption remains a major obstacle to effective project management. Agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) should be strengthened and empowered to monitor the allocation and utilization of project funds. Transparent procurement processes, regular audits, and strict enforcement of penalties for financial misconduct are necessary to curb corruption. The use of digital financial tracking systems can also enhance accountability and reduce opportunities for fund diversion.
5. **Training and development of skilled personnel should be prioritized**: A shortage of qualified and competent project management professionals contributes significantly to project failure. Governments, private organizations, and educational institutions should invest in continuous training and capacity building for project managers, engineers, and other relevant personnel. This includes organizing workshops, seminars, and certification programs aligned with global best practices. Institutions can also collaborate with professional bodies such as the Project Management Institute (PMI) to enhance standards and professionalism. Skilled personnel are better equipped to plan, execute, and manage projects efficiently.
6. **Modern technology should be used in project planning and monitoring**: The adoption of modern technologies can significantly improve project performance. Tools such as project management software (e.g., Microsoft Project), data analytics, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and digital monitoring platforms help in planning, scheduling, budgeting, and tracking project progress in real time. These technologies enhance accuracy, reduce human error, and improve communication among stakeholders. Additionally, the use of digital reporting systems increases transparency and accountability in project execution.
7. **Projects should be continuously monitored and evaluated**: Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are critical to ensuring that projects are implemented according to plan and objectives. Regular supervision helps identify potential problems early and allows for timely corrective actions. Governments should establish independent monitoring teams and develop clear performance indicators to assess project progress. Periodic evaluation also ensures that projects meet quality standards and deliver intended benefits. Continuous monitoring reduces the risk of failure, improves efficiency, and ensures accountability throughout the project lifecycle.

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