ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (A CASE STUDY OF GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA)

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Abstract- The main objective of the study is to find out whether or not management and evaluation skills and techniques are used in projects evaluation in the public sector using Gombe State of Nigeria as a case study. A survey method was adopted and questionnaire waw used to collect data for the study. Mean average and simple percentage was used to analyze the data collected. The study found that monitoring and evaluation unit is lacking in the ministry and pre-execution audit of projects is not being practiced in the ministry of works Gombe State. The paper recommends that special monitoring and evaluating unit should be set in the ministry of works Gombe State of Nigeria to help in the operational process of project execution, also pre-execution audit should be given a priority to ensure that all the procedures governing the awards of project are duly complied with.

Keywords- Project, Project Evaluation, Project Management And Public Sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nations and Organizations all over the globe invest a lot of money in the development execution and delivery of project annually despite being capital or operational. These projects are diverse in nature in terms of location, desired outcome and the circumstances that led to their implementation. (5) defined project as a system involving the coordination of a number of separate department entities throughout the organization and which must be completed within prescribed schedules and time constraints. Encyclopedia of management in (6) defines project as 'an organized unit dedicated to the attainment of goal, the successful completion of a development project on time, within budget, in conformance with predetermined program specification.' However, project management is a specialized technique to plan and control projects.

It is worthy to note that, project management is conducted throughout all the phases in the project life cycle and covers all the knowledge areas identified in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) produced by the Project Management Institute. Evaluation on the other hand is an assessment of something in order to judge its value, quality, importance, extent or condition. (1) views project evaluation as the application of rigorous methods to assess the extent to which a development programme has achieved its defined impact objectives. It is a process which attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact (both intentional and unintentional) of the programme in the context of its stated objectives.

However, the term public sector is said to be the part of the economy concerned with providing basic government services. The composition of public sector varies by country, but in most countries the public sector includes such services as the police, military, public roads, public transit, primary education and healthcare for the poor. The public sector might provide services that non-payer cannot be excluded from (such as street lighting), services which benefit all society rather than just the individuals who use the services (such as public education), and services that encourage equal opportunity. Also, (3) sees public sector as, part of national economy providing basic goods or services that are either not, or cannot be, provided by the private sector. It comprises of national and local governments, public corporation, and quasi non-government organizations and public sector is one of the largest sectors of any economy.

This paper examines the impact of project management and evaluation in the public sector with particular reference to Gombe State. However to achieve this objective, the paper is divided into five sections: introduction, literature review, methodology, result and discussions, and lastly conclusion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of Project

Projects in developing countries face a plethora of problems. Prominent among these problems are shortage of capital, lack of adequate managerial ability and technical skill and infrastructural constraints. However, it has been said that successful project management is made up of 2% hard work, 1% luck, and 97% Planning (2). Basic project planning requires a careful articulation of available resources and desired goals in a feasibility Study. In the words of (6), feasibility study must of necessity contain three main parts. The first part should clearly identify

the technical requirements of the project. What machines and what productions technology are required? What are the sources and how guaranteed are those sources? What are the nature and sources of the materials needed? What are the skilled personnel needed for the project? What of the buildings and other spatial arrangements needed for proper installation? The second part, should attach financial figures to the technical estimates. What is the capital requirement for take-off? Are sources of working capital assured? What are the projections regarding the profitability or otherwise of the project? Will the investment actually pay its way? The third part, concerns the social desirability of the project. This involves a form of impact evaluation to measure the intended and unintended outcomes of the project, and its effect on its host community. A feasibility study enables an entrepreneur to think through a project, and to convince himself that it is a worthwhile venture.

2.2. Project Management

(8) sees project management as a procedure for checking the effectiveness and efficiency in implementation of a project by identifying strengths and shortcomings and recommending corrective measures to optimize the intended outcomes. Project Management is a social process concerned with the planning and regulation of the resources of an organization for the accomplishment of group goals, (6).

Management is a cyclical process containing at least three elements: planning, operations and control. The planning phase defined the goals to be accomplished, examining ways to accomplish the goals, and deciding on the best methods to adopt. The operations phase involves all the transactions and operations necessarily incidental to the accomplishment of established plans, to ensure that corporate goals are achieved. This is the performance and implementation phase of the project management process, and may include organizing the task along multi-disciplinary and/or functional lines, staffing and team building, and directing aspects of the job. The control phase involves reviewing the work performed, comparing it with original plans, recording and interpreting results, and feeding back information to correct or improve future plans, (6).

2.3. Stages of Project Management

Every good project consist of seven stages and which if followed carefully, the objectives of the project will be potentially achieved (2). The stages are as follows: first, the objectives or goals of the organization must be determined and the targets of achievement established. Second, this involves a creative search for investment opportunities. Third, this requires data collection about the possible future environments (states of economy) which may affect the outcomes of the projects, for example, economic boom, high inflation, recession and so on. Fourth, here we list the possible outcomes for each state of economy, and measure the pay-off of each possible outcome in terms of the objective of the organization. Fift, select the investment projects which will give the maximum pay-off, and include them in the organization's long-term plan. Sixth, authorization is obtained for the implementation of the project, provided that funds are available, the budget ceiling has not been reached, and no market constraint on investable funds exists within the time period. Seventh, there should be periodic review of project investment decisions in two main areas: controlling capital expenditure before the project is operational, and a post-completion audit of the operating cash inflows and outflows.

2.4. Project Evaluation

Evaluation is the process which assesses the progress made in implementing a project efficiently and makes judgments on the effectiveness of the project's outputs in solving the development for which it was formulated (3). Monitoring and evaluation help all stakeholders involved in the management of development: project managers, project staff, the executing agency, the government department, the recipients and so on. The process enables those managing a project to control what is going on, take timely action to deal with problems that arise, and adjust work-plans to improve the efficient effectiveness and relevance of the programme.

Evaluation is concerned with determining the effectiveness and impact of the project outputs. The evaluator (whether a member of the project team [internal evaluation] or an independent person [external evaluation]) has to stand back from the project and question what is being done, why and how well. Is the project still relevant to the problem it was designed to solve? If not, what should be done? Are the project outputs still high priority? Evaluation is thus concerned more with the results of a programme than with the inputs or with administrative and financial aspects. It is also concerned with the efficiency with which projects are implemented (e.g. audits) and with their effectiveness and relevance (7).

There is a natural tendency to see evaluation as something that is done at the end of a project. A formal evaluation at the end of a project is certainly important, but by then it is too late to make any adjustments. Regardless of any requirements for formal external evaluations, a project manager should be continually evaluating the relevance of a project from the startup date through to the final completion. If changes need to be made to make the project outputs more relevant to solving the developmental problem, action should be initiated at once. It is never too soon to start adjusting project plans to adapt them to changing circumstance.

2.3.1. Project Preparation /Formulation

Having identified a project to be a worthwhile project, the project promoter has to further analyze the project to ensure that it has the potential and the investment and it would not go waste, but would yield attractive returns. (4) opined that project preparations may include pre-feasibility study and feasibility study.

2.3.2. Pre-feasibility study

This usually arrives at major parameters like location of project, production capacity, raw material and other inputs etc. It also provides rough estimates of project cost, means of financing, cost of production, sales revenue, financial profitability, social benefits etc. If the pre-feasibility study indicates that the project is a worthwhile proposition, a feasibility study is taken up. If the pre-feasibility indicates certain areas of project that aced a detailed study, such studies are taken up before taking up feasibility study.

Such studies are also known as support studies or functional studies. Pre-feasibility study might arrive at a conclusion that the success of the venture depends upon successfully marketing the product in view of the stiff competition prevailing. In such a case, the need for a detailed market study arises. If the detailed market study reveals that marketing the proposed product successfully would be a difficult proposition, there is no point in taking up feasibility study and the project can be better shelved.

Plant size study is undertaken when there are several technologies available, each with a different economic plant size. The study should also take into account the cost of production with each technology, the extent of market that is available for the finished product etc. Equipment selection study is undertaken when the sources of supply of equipments and the costs vary very much. The capital cost of the equipments, the operational cost, and the after-sales support.

The operational efficiency of the plant is one of the factors that are studied under equipment selection study. (4) opined that support studies can also be undertaken even before the pre-feasibility study when a basic input is a decisive factor in deciding the viability of a project, support studies can also be done simultaneously with a pre-feasibility study or a feasibility study.

2.3.3. Feasibility Study

Before making a final decision to take up a project, the technical, economic, commercial and financial justification of the chosen project shall be ascertained on concrete terms. Feasibility study is also known by the term 'techno-economic feasibility studies'.

i. ***Technical feasibility*:** It is normally seen that while most of the projects get a fine screening on their financial prospects, the technical feasibility does not get the required attention. For projects concerning manufacturing activities, the technology proposed to be adapted needs careful consideration.
ii. ***Economic viability:*** In simple terms, economic viability is a cursory examination as to whether the investment made on the project will give a satisfactory return to the economy.
iii. ***Financial feasibility:*** The financial feasibility examines the workability of project proposal in respect of raising finance to meet the investment required for the project, be it equity, (by way of public issue of shares or by other means) or debt, (by way of term loans from financial institutions or by other means).

III. METHODOLOGY

This research was mainly based on primary collection of data through the use of questionnaire designed and administrated on the respondents involved in the study. However, due to the nature of the study Gombe State Ministry of Works was selected being the unit shouldered with the responsibility of executing projects in the state. A simple random sampling technique was used to distribute the questionnaire designed for the staff of the three (3) departments in the ministry involved in the study (Audit department, Works department and Accounts department). Sixty (60) copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents (20 each to every department). The questionnaire were designed using likert scale (Always =5, Usually =4, Sometimes =3, Rarely =2, Never =1). The results were interpreted using the mean average and simple percentages. The mean average is calculated as the sum of all scores divided by the total number of respondents (5+4+3+2+1/5). This implies that any research question/item with mean score less than 3 will said to be disagreed by the respondents and mean score above 3 will said to be agreed by the respondents.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fifty-three (53) copies of the questionnaire were retrieved, i.e. seventeen from the audit department and eighteen each from both works and accounts departments. Data collected from the questionnaire distributed were presented and analyzed as follows:

4.1 On whether governmental organizations make proper planning of their projects, Table 4.1 presents the results.

Table 4.1: On Whether Governmental Organizations Make Proper Planning of their Projects

S/N	Questionnaire item	Always		Usually		Sometime		Rarely		Never		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
i.	Governmental organizations often plan for projects before implementation.	49	92	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.9
ii.	Governmental organizations projects are always streamlined towards achieving goals and objectives of the organization.	51	96	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.7
iii.	Projects in governmental organizations accommodate resources constraints.	53	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
iv.	Projects are targeted towards investment opportunities in governmental organizations.	53	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
v.	Governmental organization review project investment decisions periodically.	30	57	6	11	12	23	5	9	-	-	4.2
vi.	Governmental organization carries out feasibility study on projects before executing the projects.	-	-	-	-	22	42	16	30	15	28	2.1
vii.	Projects pre-execution audit is practiced in governmental organizations.	-	-	-	-	9	17	6	11	38	72	1.5

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 4.1 shows responses on whether governmental organizations often plan for projects before implementation, 49 (92%) and 4 (8%) of the respondents goes for Always and usually respectively, also the mean score of the item is 4.9, this implies that the respondents agreed with the opinion that governmental organizations often plan for projects before implementation and the mean score proved it.

Table 4.1 also present the responses on whether governmental organizations projects are always streamlined towards achieving goals and objectives of the organization and 51 (96%) and 2 (4%) of the respondents goes for always and usually, the mean score is 4.7. This indicates that all of the respondents agreed with the opinion. In addition, Table 4.1 present responses on whether projects in governmental organizations accommodate resources constraints, the result indicates that all of the respondents agreed that projects in governmental organization accommodate resources constraints for the fact that the means sores is 5.0 and the percentage 100. This shows that governmental organization always accommodates resources constraints in executing their project.

Table 4.1 further shows responses on whether project are targeted towards investment opportunities in governmental organization and all the respondents (100 %) of the respondents goes for the option 'sometimes' and the mean score is 3.0 .This means that not all projects in governmental organizations are targeted toward investment opportunities rather some are targeted toward providing social amenities to the citizens. Table 4.1 also reveals the responses on whether governmental organizations review project investment decisions periodically, 30 (57%) and 6 (11%) of the respondents goes for always and usually respectively, while 12 (23%) and 5 (9%) goes for sometimes and rarely respectively .The mean score is 4.2 and this indicates that governmental organizations review projects investments decisions periodically.

Moreover, Table 4.1 shows the responses in respect of the item on whether governmental organizations carries out feasibility study on projects before executing them or not, and 22 (42%), 16 (30%) and 15 (28%) of the respondents goes for sometimes, rarely and never respectively. The mean score of the item is 2.1 which is below the decision rule region, therefore this shows that governmental organizations don't usually carried out feasibility study before executing projects. Lastly, Table 4.1 present responses on whether projects pre-execution audit is practiced in governmental organizations and the results shows that 9 (17%), 6 (11%) and 38 (72%) of the respondents choose sometimes, rarely and never respectively. The mean score indicates 1.5 which means that projects pre-execution audit is not practiced in governmental organizations.

4.2 On the operational processes used in governmental organizations for the accomplishment of projects, Table 4.2 presents the results.

Table 4.2: On the Operational Processes Used in Governmental Organizations for the Accomplishment of Projects

S/N	Questionnaire item	Always		Usually		Sometime		Rarely		Never		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
i.	Authorization is granted before execution of projects in governmental organizations.	48	91	5	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.9
ii.	Governmental organizations have a special Monitoring and Evaluation Unit for projects.	-	-	-	-	-	-	39	74	14	26	1.7
iii.	Governmental organizations often used project management tools related to implementing projects.	-	-	-	-	11	21	10	19	32	60	1.6
iv.	The management of the governmental organizations often gives support for the success of projects.	8	15	11	21	22	42	12	23	-	-	3.3
v.	Projects are often awarded to the most competent companies (contractors) in governmental organization.	14	26	19	36	20	38	-	-	-	-	3.9

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 4.2 presents the responses on whether authorization is granted before execution of projects in governmental organizations. The result indicates that 48 (91%) and 5 (9%) of the respondents choose always and usually respectively. The mean score indicates 4.9, hence authorization is often granted before project execution in governmental organizations. So also, Table 4.2 shows whether governmental organizations has a special monitoring and evaluation units for projects, the results indicates that 39 (74%) and 14 (26%) of the respondents choose rarely and never respectively and the mean score is 1.7. This means that special monitoring and evaluation unit is not available in governmental organizations.

Moreover, Table 4.2 indicates the result on whether governmental organizations uses project management tools related to implementation of projects. The result indicates that 11 (21%), 10 (19%) and 32 (60%) of the respondents goes for sometimes, rarely and never respectively, and the mean score shows 1.6. Hence it is concluded that project management tools are not used in governmental organizations.

In addition, Table 4.2 indicates the results on whether management of the governmental organizations often gives support for the success of projects and the result shows (15%), 11 (21%), 22 (42%) and 12 (23%) of the respondents choose always, usually, sometimes and rarely respectively. The mean score of indicates 3.3, therefore it is concluded that management of governmental organization supports the success of projects. Lastly, Table 4.2 shows the results on whether projects are often awarded to the most competent companies (contractors) in governmental organization. 14 (26%), 19 (36%) and 20 (38%) of the respondents goes for always, usually and sometimes respectively, the mean score is 3.9. Hence it is concluded that projects are often awarded to most competent contractors in governmental organizations.

4.3 On the parameters used by governmental organizations to evaluate projects, Table 4.3 presents the results.

Table 4.3: On the Parameters Used by Governmental Organizations to Evaluate Projects

S/N	Questionnaire item	Always		Usually		Sometime		Rarely		Never		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
i.	Projects post-completion audit of operating cash inflows and outflows is done in governmental organization.	50	94	-	-	3	6	-	-	-	-	4.9
ii.	Projects outputs (actual) are always in line with the plan (standard) in governmental organization.	20	38	15	28	18	34	-	-	-	-	4.0
iii.	Governmental organization normally prepares project completion reports (post-execution reports).	53	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
iv.	Projects are often relevant to the problems it was designed to solve in governmental organization.	40	75	12	23	1	2	-	-	-	-	4.7
v.	Projects are evaluated in governmental organization during execution (on-going evaluation) and after execution (post-completion evaluation).	42	79	-	-	8	15	2	4	1	2	4.6

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 4.3 reveals the results on whether projects post-completion audit of operating cash inflows and outflows is done in governmental organizations, 50 (94%) and 3 (6%) of the respondents choose always and sometimes respectively, and the mean score is 4.9. Therefore, it is concluded that projects post-completion audit of operating cash inflows and outflows is practiced in governmental organizations.

Furthermore, Table 4.3 present the results on whether governmental organizations normally prepares project completion reports (post completion reports), 20 (38%), 15 (28%) and 18 (34%) of the respondents choose always, usually and sometimes respectively and the mean score indicates 4.0. Hence it is concluded that governmental organizations normally prepares project completion reports.

Similarly, Table 4.3 present the results on whether projects outputs (actual) are always in line with the plan (standard) in governmental organizations. All the respondents agreed with the assertion, the mean score is 5.0 and hence it is concluded that projects output are always in line with standard in governmental organizations. Also, Table 4.3 shows the responses on whether Projects are often relevant to the problems it was designed to solve in governmental organization and 40 (70%), 12 (23%) 1 (2%) of the respondents chose always, usually and sometimes respectively, and the mean score is 4.7. This indicates that projects are often designed to solve problems it was meant for in governmental organizations. Lastly, Table 4.3 presents responses on whether projects are evaluated in governmental organization during execution (on-going evaluation) and after execution (post-completion evaluation). The results indicates that they do because 42 (79%), 8 (15%), 2 (4%) and 1(2%) goes for always, sometimes, rarely and never respectively and the mean score is 4.6. Hence this implies that governmental organizations often evaluate their projects during the work and after completion.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussions of the result, the following were found:

Firtly, management in public sector (Ministries of Works in Gombe State) are found to be lacking in some of the management skills and or techniques in the process of project planning, execution, control and evaluation as proved by the study. Secondly, special monitoring and evaluation unit is lacking in the ministry as found by the study and as such this will hamper project planning, execution and control which will turn out to affect the desired outcome of the project. Thirdly, project management tools are not found in the Ministry of Works Gombe State as revealed by the study. Hence the project management tools help to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes, whether inter-ministry, cross-ministry or cross sectoral in their scope. This provides a basis for deploying, managing and integrating logically related projects (from the same programme) across the departments in a ministry, across ministries and even across sectors. Fouthly, pre-execution audit for projects is another thing lacking in the Ministry of Works Gombe State. This ought to be introduced as it helps to reduce much task of feasibility study and reveal worthiness of a project. Lastly, feasibility study of projects is not well practiced in the Ministry of works Gombe State, and as a result some projects are executed at high cost and some even deviated from the plan. Hence there is need to carry out feasibility study before execution of every project.

Based on the above conclution, it was recommended that: first, management should incorporate project management tools in planning, operating, controlling and evaluation of projects e.g. Balanced Scorecard, Mind Manager 2002, Microsoft Project 2002 etc. Second, special monitoring and evaluating unit should be set in the organization to help in the operational process of project execution.

Third, pre-execution audit should be given a priority to ensure that all the procedures governing the awards of project are duly complied with. fourth, feasibility study should be given a room in the organization so as to help improve the planning of projects. And finally, the Evaluation Unit should develop an Internet-based evaluation report database to store evaluation reports by year, type, region and theme. The abstracts of reports are publicly available for use in the organization.

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