Assessment of Abandoned Public Sector Physical Projects in Abeokuta Metropolis

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Abstract. The growing prevalence of abandoned public-sector physical projects in Nigeria, estimated at around 4,000 projects with a combined value of approximately 300 billion naira, has spurred the need for an in-depth inquiry. This study is centered within the Abeokuta Metropolis, with a focus on identifying, analyzing, and understanding the underlying causes of these abandoned projects. Specifically, 196 questionnaires, representing 7% of the sampling frame, were administered to residents residing in five neighborhoods situated within a 500-meter radius of each abandoned project. Furthermore, an additional 15 questionnaires were distributed to relevant ministries to gather insights into project timelines and ongoing rehabilitation efforts. The investigation into the causative factors behind abandoned public-sector physical projects utilized a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. The survey revealed an array of contributing factors, including inadequate monitoring, deficient planning, insufficient funding, shifts in governance, political interference, labor disputes, price volatility of construction materials, cultural influences, lack of user engagement, corruption, management inefficiencies, partial commitment from project proponents, natural disasters, and underutilization of town planners. The socio-economic implications stemming from abandoned projects, as reported by respondents, encompass misuse for criminal activities, temporary storage of stolen goods, environmental degradation, property devaluation, and increased costs for accessing essential public amenities. The study proposes a series of recommendations which include enhancing monitoring mechanisms, improving financial support and conducting rigorous feasibility studies, among others. By implementing these measures, a positive shift towards mitigating the incidence of abandoned public-sector physical projects can be achieved.

Keywords: abandoned physical projects; public sector; residents; causes; Abeokuta

1. Introduction

Physical project has distinctive attributes that distinguish it from ongoing work or business operations. They are temporary in nature, not an everyday business process and have definitive start dates and end dates. These characteristics are important because a large part of the project effort is dedicated to ensuring that the project is completed at the appointed time. To do this, schedules are created showing when tasks should begin and end. Projects can last minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, or years (Pappas et al, 2021). Physical projects play a huge role in a nation's economic development, and abandoning them may adversely impact the environment and the real properties (Ratcliffe et al, 2021). Zhang et al (2019), opined that a physical project is termed abandoned when it does not meet the project deliverables such as user's satisfaction and structural deficit. Abandoned public-sector physical project can take the form of structural failure (in the form of cracks, location, or weakness in the structure), or performance failure (numbers of staff/workers in the organization, level of services been registered) that is, not

optimally satisfying the standard set in the project scope, or the United Nation Standard set for such project (Smiley, 2022).

The abandoned physical project is a global issue which is not peculiar to one country. Various counties of the world are faced with abandoned physical project in different sectors of their economy or the other, be it educational, transportation, health, etc. Alao et al. (2019) noted that the abandoned physical projects is not peculiar to Nigeria as it is also present in countries like Malaysia, the United States, Spain, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Russia. However, this problem has been plaguing Malaysia long enough at a scale that deserves more attention. Nwosu and Zima (2021), admitted that abandonment is a well-known concept in physical projects in California, and this is due to the project's design which is so deficient that the contractor performs a massive amount of change orders and extra work, which ultimately causes the abandoned public-sector physical project.

Abubakar & Aina (2019) opined that the limited resources and immense challenges faced in the global world and developing countries like Nigeria is as a result of the physical development tools (models, laws, master plan/zoning, development control strategies, upgrading and renewal plans) and the various instruments and strategies put in place by the stakeholders in the regulation, coordination, and direction of physical planning has been contested on its functionality thereby leading to abandoned physical projects. Physical planning that deals with the decision-making processes and ordering of the relationship that exists between the natural resources and the human system seems not to be effective as the rate of urban blight and degradation is startling by the second. The rate of physical project abandonment in Nigeria is alarming and it is believe to be increasing by the day. Physical projects are supposed to be beneficial to both the individuals and society at large as it depicts the level of a country’s development. However, the incessant abandonment of these physical projects undoubtedly has some negative impacts on the people, real property values, the construction industry and the built environment at large.

Alzanati (2021) documented that the physical projects in Nigeria and the world over are confronted with a lot of complexities and ambiguities as a result of uncertainties of not meeting project deadlines. This is centers on low quality, and cost overruns which invariably leads to abandoning of such projects. Ayodele et al. (2011), reported that abandoned public-sector physical projects include building and other civil engineering infrastructure development projects like houses, churches, schools, roads, bridges, dams, tunnels, airports, sea ports, etc. litter the whole of Nigeria. Okafor et al. (2018) reported that Nigeria has become the “world’s junkyard of abandoned public-sector physical projects worth billions of naira and it is greatly unthinkable that Nigeria, blessed with so great potential in the building and physical project industry, can experience the magnitude of abandoned project.

Alao et al. (2019) reported that there were about 4000 uncompleted or abandoned public-sector physical projects belonging to the Federal Government of Nigeria with an estimated cost of above N300 billion which will take 30 years to complete at the present execution capacity of the government. Also, according to the report, the issue of abandoned physical project is being left without adequate attention for too long, which is now having a multiplier effect on the physical project industry in particular and the national economy as a whole. The building and physical project industry plays a vital role in the economy of any nation. A healthy economy usually experiences an increase in building and physical project activities, but in a depressed economy, the occurrence of project abandoned tends to be more predominant. In contemporary times, problems posed by abandoned public-sector physical projects are seemingly evident and marked by regional differences with enormous environmental impacts that soak deep into the environment's physical, health, socio-economic and cultural norms.

Several scholars have come up with different causes of abandoned physical project in the past. Kolawole (2006), stated in his study that there are several building projects which have been seen to be having good potential abandoned at different stages of the design and physical project process. Nakata & Hwang, (2020) also posited more or less the same reasoning on abandoned project, which are: incorrect estimation; unskilled personnel; inadequate planning; poor risk management; misunderstanding of the work requirement; poor quality control by regulatory agencies; corruption and communication gap among the personnel. They also further added some other factors such as cost; the developer and the contractors where the clients have difficulties in engaging with the contractors and as well as with the designers where they do not meet to the expectations of the clients; and contractors fail to prepare vital inputs such as materials, man power and machines efficiently on time.

The causes and effects of these development projects abandoned cut across several reasons. They also create declining effects on the values of developed properties located close to and within the vicinity. The expected prominence of any earmarked development projects is to be completed, while at the same time, adding value to the built environment. Recurring incidences of abandoned government-led physical projects pose serious challenges to stakeholders in the built environment. From the foregoing, this study is geared toward reviewing and assessing the spate of abandoned government-led physical projects as well as determining their socio-economic impacts on residents in the proximate neighbourhood within the Abeokuta metropolis.

1.1. Study Location

Nestled at an altitude of 157m above sea level, Abeokuta boasts a distinctive topography characterized by isolated formations of natural granite rocks, lending its landscape an enchanting undulation. Of notable significance is Olumo Rock (172.8m), gracefully positioned adjacent to the base of Ashuwon Hill. Additionally, the Ogun River traverses the town, elegantly dividing it into two distinct sectors. Abeokuta experiences a sultry and humid climate, marked by an average annual rainfall of 963.3mm. The transformation of Abeokuta into the capital of Ogun State in 1976 heralded a period of accelerated growth, magnetizing civil servants and catalyzing infrastructural advancement. Consequently, the demographic landscape underwent significant recalibration, resulting in a population of 377,089 in 1991. Subsequent estimates projected figures of 439,848 in 1996 and 452,932 in 1998. Subsequent census data recorded a population of 451,607 in 2006 and anticipated a population of 888,924 by 2017. Fig. 1 showed Ogun State in the context of Nigeria.

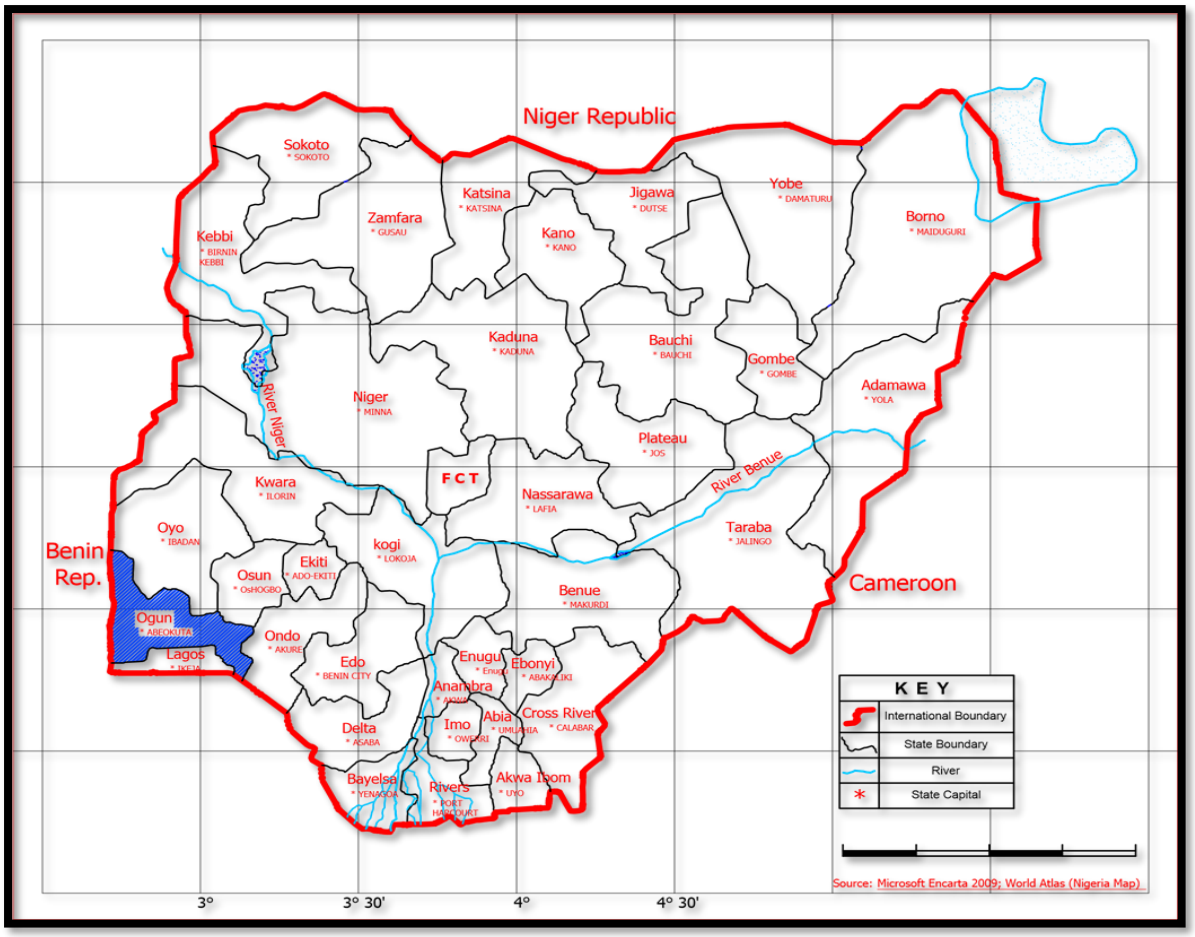

Figure 1: Map of Ogun State in National Context.

The establishment of industries, such as the Aro Quarry in 1904, and subsequent developments like the saw-milling industry, has added layers to the town's economic landscape. Nevertheless, a substantial segment of the population, particularly the elderly and underemployed, continue to embrace farming. The influx of public servants has given impetus to physical development, unearthing deficiencies in housing, water supply, sewage, electricity, transportation, recreation, and other vital public utilities and communal facilities. A key pillar of rapid socio-economic advancement resides in the presence of a robust road network, accompanied by well-designed parking facilities and efficient drainage systems. Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State, stands blessed with multiple transport modes, including overland (road and rail) and waterways, with the exception of air transportation. The roads within the study area are categorized into three classes: trunk A (Federal roads or highways), trunk B (State roads), and trunk C (Local Government roads). Ensuring effective transportation and meticulous road maintenance remains integral to sustainable development. Fig. 2 also displayed the two local government areas within the context of Ogun State.

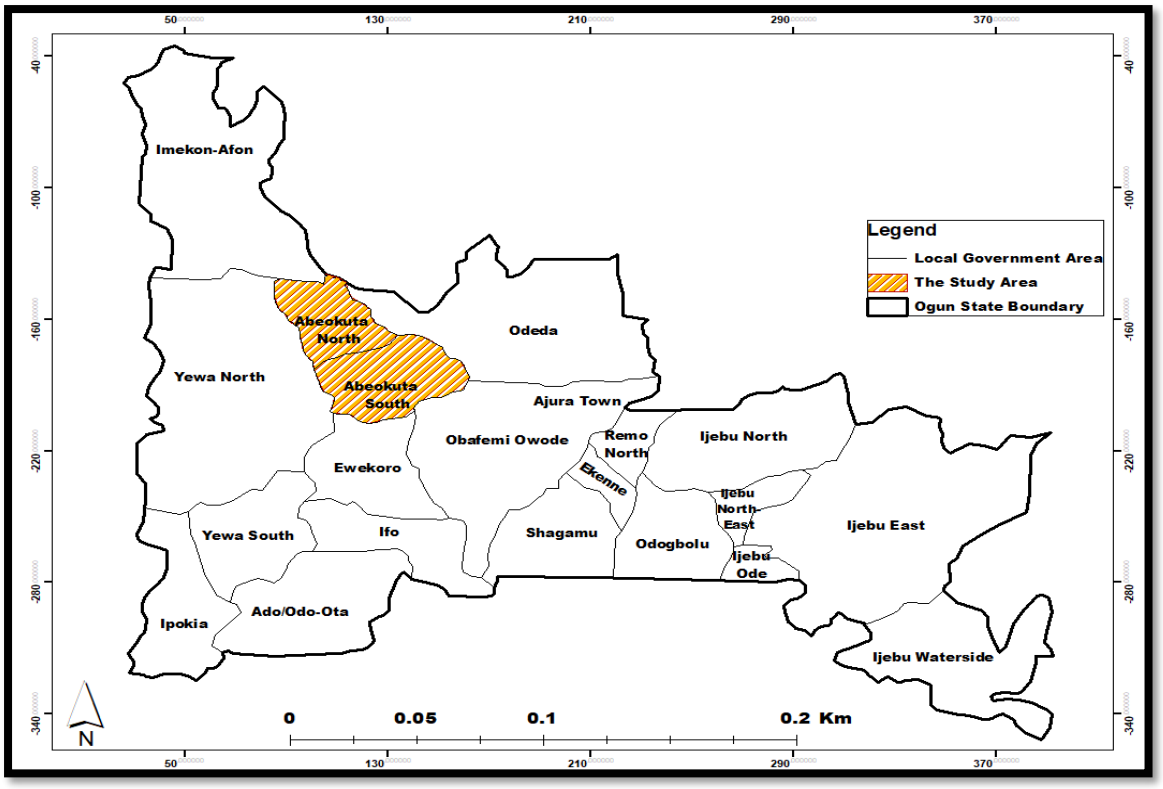

Figure 2: Ogun State Showing Abeokuta Metropolis

There are many abandoned public-sector physical projects in Abeokuta, and they serve as a reminder of the challenges facing the city. Most of these abandoned physical projects are assumed to be caused by mismanagement, poor implementation strategy, low finance, and lack of proper data collection as to the need of the project, among others. These projects could have eased the affairs of the people, rather, they are affecting the day-to-day activities of individuals. Most of these abandoned physical projects are turning out to be hazardous and hideouts for criminal activities as well as spot for informal activities and change of use. Some of the identified public sector projects are shown in Plates 1 to 7.

Plate 1: Abandoned Multi-million School Project in Abeokuta.
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

Plate 2: Abandoned Road Construction along Adatan.
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

Plate 3: Abandoned Complex Building at Ita-Eko in Abeokuta.
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

Plate 4: Abandoned Building Construction Project at Ita-Eko in Abeokuta.
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

Plate 5: Abandoned Building Construction Project in Abeokuta.
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

Plate 6: Abandoned Proposed Shoprite Building in Abeokuta.
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

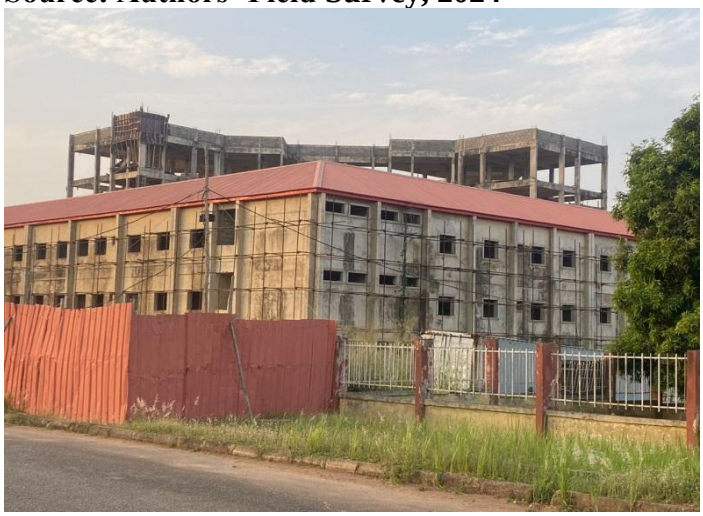

Plate 7: Abandoned Office Complex Building Project at Oke-Mosan in Abeokuta.
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

2. Material and Methods

Primary and secondary data were collected during the study. Secondary data was obtained from documented facts of both published and unpublished literature relevant to the study, and also information on records of abandoned public-sector physical projects was gotten from various ministries that were concerned with the physical project, such as the ministry of work and transport, the Ogun State Planning and Development Permit Authority, ministry of education and ministry of water resource. Primary data included a reconnaissance survey of the study area to identify the nature of abandoned physical project, questionnaire administration to residents and professionals such as civil engineers, and architects; to obtain information on the socio-economic characteristics of residents, year of commencement of the project, year and causes of abandonment and also the socio-economic effect of the abandoned project on the residence of the area. The sampling frame for the research was drawn from the total population of the buildings that fall within a 500-meter radius of the abandoned public project identified in the study area. The research's sample size was a proportion of the entire population constituted in the sample frame. The sample size was determined using the Glyne Table (Denny & Mailhot, 1976). Using a precision level of 7%, this resulted to 196 buildings, drawn from a sample frame of 5,497 buildings. Also, a total of 15 questionnaires were administered at the various relevant ministries. Various locations of the abandoned public sector projects are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Location of the Abandoned Public Physical Projects

Neighbourhood within 500m Radius	Project	Project Type	Location	
			Easting	Northing
Oke Mosan	Office Building	Public	541071	787027
	National Library	Building	540300	787082
OPIC/Iwe Iroyin Road	Shoprite Building		537671	788721
Panseke/Ita-Eko	Public Building		536742	788808
Awowo Village	School Building		532556	785735
Randa	Ayetoro/Randa Road	Road	532050	793015
Adatan	Adatan Road	Construction	543486	789423
Ajebo	Ajebo/Ibadan Road		546148	789400
Mokola	Mokola/Elega Road		537428	792870
Asero	Asero Road		544328	793548

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

3. Results and Discussion

3.1: Distribution of Development Projects across Neighborhoods

Table 2 offers valuable insights into the distribution of development projects across neighborhoods categorized by density levels. Analyzing the data, it was observed that neighborhoods with high population density, such as Panseke and Ita-Eko, received a significant allocation of projects, comprising 16.32% and 12.76% of the total respectively. This suggests a deliberate focus on addressing infrastructural and public facility needs in densely populated areas. Medium density neighborhoods, represented by Oke-Mosan and Adeun, account for 5.61% and 4.08% of the projects respectively. The allocation of projects in these areas appears to encompass a mix of office buildings, a national library, and road construction. This diversified approach could indicate a strategy to cater to different developmental aspects

within neighborhoods with moderate population density. Neighborhoods characterized by low population density, such as Obada-Oko and Awowo, show a focus on school building projects, contributing 3.57% and 3.06% of the total projects respectively. While these percentages are relatively lower, they underscore a commitment to educational infrastructure even in less densely populated regions.

Table 2: Distribution of Development Projects across Population Density

Density	Neighbourhood	Project	Frequency	Percentage
High	Panseke	Public Building	32	16.32
	Ita-Eko	Public Building	25	12.76
	Car Wash	Road Construction	10	5.10
	Ashero	Road Construction	20	10.20
	Ajebo	Road Construction	13	6.63
	Lalubu	Public Building	28	14.28
	Mokola	Public Building	14	7.14
	Adatan	Road Construction	12	6.12
Medium	Oke-Mosan	Office Buildings & National Library	11	5.61
	Adeun	Road Construction	8	4.08
Low	Obada-Oko	School building	7	3.57
	Awowo	School building	6	3.06
Total			**196**	**100.00**

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

3.2: Distribution of Projects across Different Departments

Table 3 offers a glimpse into the distribution of projects across different departments within a ministry. Examining the data, it was observed that the Planning and Development Permit Authority holds a prominent position, contributing to 26.67% of the total projects. This suggests a key role in overseeing project permitting and planning processes. The Works and Infrastructure department displays an even distribution, with projects spanning Engineering, Plan Processing, and Planning Research & Statistics. This could indicate a collaborative approach to project implementation, leveraging the expertise of different units within the department. Similarly, the Housing department appears to emphasize planning and processing aspects, reflected by its involvement in Plan Processing and Planning Research and Statistics.

Table 3: Project Distribution across Ministries

Ministry	Department Engineering	Plan Processing	Planning Research & Statistics	Row Total	Percentage
Information and Strategy	-	2	1	3	20.00
Works and Infrastructure	1	2	-	3	20.00
Community Development	-	-	2	2	13.33
Housing	-	2	1	3	20.00
Planning and Development Permit Authority		2	2	4	26.67
Total	**1**	**8**	**6**	**15**	**100.00**

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

3.3: Causes of Abandoned Project from the Residents' Perspective

The result obtained from this study revealed the causes of project abandonment as lack of project planning, inadequate project funding, price inflation, wrong estimate, faulty design, incompetent project managers and contractors, variation of project scope, death of client or contractor, delay payment and political instability. Abandoned project has been traced to some factors as represented in Table 4. This assumption was drawn from the responses gathered from the respondent on field. It is observed that poor planning be it at the inception stage, or another stage of the project uses or contributes to project abandoned, as identified from the response on Table 4, where majority of the respondents (120 persons) strongly agree to the assumption that poor planning can be the cause of abandoned public-sector physical projects. Also, poor monitoring (117 persons), poor management practice (99 persons), non-involvement of users (84 persons), partial commitment to work (106 persons) (either by project proponent or by workers), poor feasibility studies (104 persons), poor funding (103 persons), labour/ workers (77 persons), poor management practice (109 persons), change in government (88 persons), political interference (83 persons), corruption (126 persons), planning regulations (61 persons), natural disaster (111 persons) and cultural belief (80 persons) of the area and fluctuation in prices of material (71 persons) are all major issues that lead to abandoned project, owing to majority of the respondents, strongly agreeing to the assumption that they all contribute to project abandoned. Plate 4.3 shows an abandoned school project as a result of poor planning regulation.

Table 4: Respondent Rating of Factors that cause Project abandoned

	Respondents						
Causes of Abandoned Physical Project	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**	**SMV**	**CAI**
Poor Planning	120	61	6	8	1	879	4.48
Poor Monitoring	117	73	4	2	0	893	4.55
Poor Management	99	57	33	3	4	832	4.24
Poor Task Definition	40	68	68	5	15	701	3.57
Non-involvement of Users	84	71	5	9	27	764	3.89
Partial Commitment	106	65	13	11	1	852	4.34
Change in Project Scope	37	35	75	14	35	613	3.13
Poor Feasibility Studies	104	69	16	3	4	854	4.36
Poor Funding	103	37	31	14	11	795	4.06
Labour	77	50	34	13	22	735	3.75
Poor Management Practice	109	72	8	2	5	866	4.42
Change in Government	88	47	12	7	42	720	3.67
Political Interference	83	56	36	4	17	772	3.94
Corruption	126	50	12	2	6	876	4.47
Planning Regulation	61	59	22	9	45	670	3.42
Pressure Groups (NGOs, Media, e.t.c)	24	32	50	18	72	506	2.58
Natural Disaster	111	47	13	10	15	817	4.17
Culture Belief	80	69	26	6	15	781	3.98
Fluctuation in Price of Materials	71	64	32	1	28	737	3.76

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; SMV = statistical mean value and F= frequency

3.4: Causes of Abandoned Project from the Perspective of various Personnel in the Ministries

Table 5 presents a compilation of causes attributed to project abandoned, sourced from various personnel within the ministries under examination. Notably, the data reveals a distribution of responses reflecting the multifaceted nature of these challenges. A significant 21.7% of the total responses, constituting the largest segment, highlight issues surrounding poor feasibility, inadequate funding, and insufficient resource allocation, each accounting for 17.4% individually. The factors of governance transition and the absence of town planner involvement each encompass 13.1%, while the influences of political interference and community input share a smaller proportion at 4.3% each. Specifically, inadequate feasibility studies, characterized by a lack of consideration for project workability and financial implications prior to design approval, emerge as a prime contributor to project abandoned during the construction phase.

Furthermore, the impact of changes in governance becomes evident in the context of project abandoned, particularly when tied to shifts in political parties. This disruption frequently translates into a lack of project continuity, particularly for initiatives initiated under the previous administration. The data underscores how alterations in governance structures can wield substantial influence over the trajectory of ongoing projects, highlighting the intricate interplay between political transitions and the successful execution of development endeavors.

Table 5: Causes of abandoned project as gathered from the Various Ministries

Causes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Change in Governance	3	13.1
Poor Funding	4	17.4
Community Influence	1	4.3
Poor Monitoring	2	8.7
Poor Feasibility Studies	5	21.7
Inadequate Supply of Resources	4	17.4
Non-Involvement of Town Planners	3	13.1
Political Interference	1	4.3
Total	**23**	**100**

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

3.5: Effects of abandoned project on the social and economic aspect of the residents in the study area.

According to Tijani and Ajagbe, (2016) the key effects of physical project abandoned/noncompletion are: (1) loss of strength of structural members (Steel corrosion and concrete deterioration), (2) visual flaw to surrounding/project site, (3) hidden places for dangerous animals, (3) pollution (abandoned public-sector physical projects usually trigger the creation of uncontrolled and unsupervised garbage disposal), (4) marginalization of population (abandoned public-sector physical projects are used by homeless people, who live under

unhealthy and dangerous conditions without public services and with risk of building collapse), (5) it becomes a waste of finance and materials resources, (6) it leads to loss of economic value of the area, (7) it deprives government of the expected revenue from property, (8) it leads to increase in unemployment and (8) it leads to conflict between public administration and private sector. When physical projects are abandoned for so long, like buildings it become dilapidated; their grounds become unkempt and overgrown with weeds. This is in agreement with Tijani and Ajagbe (2016) when they mention that when projects are abandoned, they cause the development of unchecked and unsupervised garbage disposal. Also, since they are exposed to adverse weather conditions, the structural members lost their strength which poses risks and hazards.

Delayed payments adversely affect the supply chain regardless of the party responsible for them, thereby delaying physical project delivery, leading even to abandoned physical project. According to Tijan and Ajagbe (2016), delayed payments cause despair to contractors forcing them to pay higher interests on their loans and can lead to abandoned project or even make the contractors insolvent. Abandoned project has an adverse effect on the residence of the area where it is found. Among the major impact identified in this survey as gathered from the respondent on field illustrated below in Table 6 are; decay of the environment, outbreak of diseases, littering of the environment, pollution, constitution of nuisance to the environment, endangering of lives of residents by turning such building to habitat for the lunatic, temporary storage house for stolen goods. It is observed that majority of the respondents strongly support with the assumption that the listed impacts are the aftermath of abandoned public-sector physical projects in their environment. Apart from the highlighted social impact above, there are also economic impacts on the residents of the area. From Table 6, 129 respondents strongly agree that projects abandoned led to reduction in the value of properties in the area and while 141 of the respondents are of the opinion that abandoned public-sector physical projects lead to an increase in cost of accessing social amenities in areas where they can seek for them. The increase in cost may come as a result of transportation fee to access the amenity or the cost of buying from private enterprises.

Table 6: Respondent Rating of Impact of Abandoned public-sector physical projects on the Residents

Aspect	Impacts	Respondents						
		SA	A	N	D	SD	SMV	CAI
Social	Serves as Criminal Hideout	122	49	13	2	10	859	4.38
	Lead to Decay of Environment	115	67	7	5	2	876	4.47
	Leads to Outbreak Disease	106	79	1	6	4	865	4.41
	Litters the environment	104	81	7	3	1	872	4.45
	Turns the area to Lunatic residence	104	53	26	3	10	826	4.21
	Serves as Smoking Centre	115	63	12	2	4	871	4.44
	Pollutes the Environment	112	69	13	2	1	880	4.49
	Serves as Temporary Store	89	69	5	7	26	776	3.95
	Constitute Nuisance	117	62	14	2	1	880	4.49
Economic	Reduction in Value of Property	129	53	4	9	1	888	4.53
	High Cost of Accessing Social Amenities	141	40	8	4	3	900	4.59

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2024

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree and SMV = F= frequency

4. Conclusion

This study examined the rate of abandoned public-sector physical projects in Abeokuta metropolis. The major issues looked into were; identify and clarify abandoned public-sector physical projects in the study area; trace the physical project timelines of identified abandoned physical projects; examine the causes of abandoned public-sector physical projects; and assess the social and economic impacts of abandoned physical projects on residents in the study area. It can be deduced from the findings that there is a total of 10 abandoned construction project in the area, which their construction timeline dates back as far as 2008 down to 2015. However, these identified projects were not only limited to projects been facilitated by state government of Ogun state alone but inclusive of the Federal Government. Some of the identified causes of abandoned physical project were poor monitoring, poor planning, corruption, poor feasibility studies, partial commitment to project by the proponent, faulty task definition, natural disaster, poor funding, cultural belief, political interference, fluctuation in prices of materials, labour, non-involvement of users (lack of citizen participation), planning regulation, change in scope of the project and pressure from pressure groups (NGO, Media, Political activities etc.) among others.

Moreover, some of the identified impacts of abandoned public sector construction project on the residents of the area were: increase in cost of assessing social amenities in other areas where they are available and also getting them from private establishments; reduction in the value of properties in the area; causes nuisance; decay in the environment; littering of the environment; turning of the area to smoking area by hoodlums; disease outbreak to the environment as a result of litters; turning of the environment to criminal hideout, thereby endangering the lives of the residents; turning the area to residents of lunatics; and turning of area to temporary store of stolen goods.

With the overarching goal of enhancing the well-being of the populace, a prudent course of action for the government involves prioritizing projects that align with achievable timelines within their tenure. This strategic approach not only facilitates the completion of initiatives but also establishes a foundation for project continuity, which in turn bolsters the long-term impact on the community. Integral to this endeavor is the rigorous implementation of comprehensive monitoring and meticulous planning preceding full-scale commitment. This proactive stance serves as a safeguard, minimizing the risk of project derailment and ensuring that allocated resources are optimally utilized. Moreover, the imperative of conducting thorough feasibility studies cannot be overstated, as these assessments provide a critical roadmap for project viability and sustainability, guiding decision-making processes with a holistic understanding of potential challenges and opportunities. In sum, these guiding principles collectively signify a holistic framework for responsible and effective project execution, culminating in tangible improvements in the lives of the citizenry.

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