

Effect of Abandoned Building Projects on the Neighbourhood of Abuja, Nigeria

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It is observed that abandoned building projects have a negative effect on environment of Abuja. However, the extent of effect on the neighbourhood is not established. The aim of this study was to assess the effects of abandoned building projects on the neighbourhood of Abuja by identifying and assessing the causes and effects of abandoned building project in Abuja. Quantitative methodology was used, involving the use of questionnaires to obtain data from abandoned building projects. Data collected was analysed to obtain the RII for each cause and effect. The result revealed that abandoned building projects have a negative effect on the neighbourhood of Abuja and these effects vary in extent with effect on construction workers having the most impact followed by effect on economic. The six identified effects of abandoned building projects have a negative effect on the neighbourhood of Abuja. Government should therefore set a clear and strict deadline on contractors or owners of abandoned building projects to resume work on the project or face revocation of contract or ownership.

Keywords: Causes, Abandoned Buildings, Causes and Effects, Neighbourhood

Introduction

The concept of neighbourhood has many meanings and uses. Neighbourhood can be used to describe group of buildings that are together in an area and function as a unit (Ahmed, 2013). According to Ahmed (2013), neighbourhood are community of people often interacting with building. Furthermore building projects often have great social-economic impact on the community. When community development projects are not completed, the community members are automatically denied of the expected benefits of the project and consequently leave them worse than they were before the project (Hanachor, 2012). It is therefore unfortunate to find numerous building projects that have been unfinished in various neighbourhoods in Nigeria with Abuja having a large number of these unfinished building projects (Stanley, 2014).

Thus serious concern has been expressed by Regulatory Agencies such as Building Development Control, Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) and Ministry of Environment among others,

about private and public building projects that have been unfinished in various neighbourhood of Abuja. These unfinished building projects in various neighbourhoods of Abuja make the environment of the city less safe and convenient for living, business and recreation activities (Yusuf, 2014).

This is a worrisome development because this unfinished projects have a negative effect on the neighbourhood of Abuja and considering the fact that huge financial investment has been committed by stakeholders (Government, Private institution and financial institution), Communities, Contractors and so on) to ensure completion of these projects. These stakeholders are concerned about the implication of such scenario called abandoned building projects. This study focused on the effects of abandoned building projects on the neighbourhood of Abuja. This study therefore, intends to provide answers to the following research questions which include:

What are the various causes of abandoned building projects?

What are causes and effects of abandoned building projects on the neighbourhood of Abuja?

What is the extent of the effects of abandoned building projects on the neighbourhood of Abuja?

Literature Appraisal

Abandoned Building

Abandoned building projects can be said to be the complete suspension of all construction works in their unfinished state without any specific time of resumption (Ahmed, 2013). Similarly, Yusuf (2014) defines project abandonment as the complete and total stoppage of all construction works and activities on a project site with no certain date of resuming these works and activities. A project is confirmed abandoned when the time lag between suspension and resumption works is so much and there is no certainty of resumption of any construction works on project site (Hanachor, 2012). Abandoned projects refers to structures on which all works have completely halted due to shortage of resources as a result services are neither paid for nor provided (Olapade & Anthony 2012).

Causes of Project Abandonment

Akindoyeni (1989), identify some of the causes of project abandonment in Nigeria to include: deaths of client, inability of client to attract fund and lack of good planning, change in government as causes of project abandonment. While Olapade and Anthony (2012), identify incorrect estimation, lack of available skilled personnel; poor risk management; misunderstanding of the work requirement; poor quality control by regulatory agencies; corruption and poor communication gap among the personnel, failure of the contractor to obtain vital materials, manpower and machines as causes of abandoned projects. According to Hanachor (2012), the causes of project abandonment include choice of project site or location, embarking a project without need analysis, lack of social analysis of the projects, project imposition, improper financial analysis, under bidding of projects

and lack of technical analysis. Other causes of project abandonment include government logistics land matters which involves the problem of double allocation, reallocation and revocation of land (Ahmed, 2013). According to Olapade and Anthony (2012), inconsistent government policies, lack of accountability, high level of corruption, incompetent contractors, non-availability of building materials, lack of utility infrastructure, wrong location and so on are other causes of abandonment of building projects. Bankruptcy of the contractor, variation of project scope, incompetent project manager, wrong estimate and inadequate cost control are problems that lead to project abandonment (Elijah, 2011). Similarly, Olapade and Anthony (2012) argued that, inconsistent government policies, lack of accountability, high level of corruption, incompetent contractors, non-availability of building materials, lack of utility infrastructure, wrong location have been causes of abandonment of building projects. According to Ahmed (2013), one of the causes of project abandonment is variation in the price/cost of construction, which is a situation where there is a change in the construction price and in the bill of quantity as a result of changes in the price of building materials such as cement which the contingency does not make provision.

Effects of Abandoned Building Projects

When community development projects are abandoned, the community members are automatically robbed of the expected changes and consequently leave them worse than they were before the project (Hanachor, 2012). Abandoned projects, results in job lost and unemployment and this will result to loss of economic benefits of the projects (Ahmed, 2012).

Abandoned buildings are frequently boarded-up or worse still, become burnt-out shells. In any event, they bring no aesthetic pleasure to the residents of neighbourhoods in which they are located (Setterfield, 1997).

Abandoned Building Projects has a negative impact on government tax revenues thereby reducing the budget on services such as the

provision fire and police services (Ahmed, 2013). Decrease in the tempo of economic activities, Decrease in revenue accruing to government, lowering of living standard, and wastage of resources are some of the economic effects of abandoned building projects (Giwa, 2011). Abandoned building projects reduce social-economic activities and affect other properties within a neighbourhood by lowering property values (Ahmed, 2014). Abandoned buildings attract crime by providing centres for the pursuit of a range of criminal activities, including prostitution, consumption and trafficking of drugs, and illegal activities (Bala, 2012). According to Stanley (2014), abandoned buildings are often the sites of illegal activity because of how isolated they are Criminal gangs often turn them into a meeting hall or warehouse to hide stolen goods or drugs.

Research Methodology

Mixed research methodology was used which involves the use of questionnaire and interview to obtain data. Questionnaire backed with interview was used to collect data on the effects and caused of abandoned building project for the study. The target population of the research was total 437 officially enlisted abandoned building projects in Abuja obtained from the headquarters of the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), Abuja. Since not all the abandoned building

projects could be included in the study a purposive sampling technique was adopted. This involves the deliberate selection of 22 abandoned building projects in the neighbourhood of Abuja to constitute the sample size for this research work. These abandoned building projects were selected from 7 districts of Abuja and the total number constitutes the sample size for the study. Table 1 below shows the number of abandoned building projects in the selected districts of Abuja.

Table 1: Sample size of abandoned building projects

Selected districts	Number of abandoned building
Central area	6
Garki	3
Maitama	4
Asokoro	3
Wuse	2
Jabi	2
Utako	2
Total	22

Data Presentation Analysis and Discussion of Results

There are various causes of abandoned building projects as posited in various literatures. Respondents were requested to choose in terms of relevance among the causes abandoned building projects as seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Causes of abandoned building projects in Abuja

s/no	Causes of abandoned building projects	5	4	3	2	1	$\sum f$	$\sum fx$	Mean	RII	Position
1	Lack of accountability and corruption	17	11	5			33	144	4.4	0.88	4 th
2	Change in government	26	7				33	158	4.8	0.96	1 st
3	Land matters	21			12		33	129	3.9	0.78	9 th
4	Improper financial analysis	20	10	3			33	149	4.5	0.90	3 rd
5	Failure to attract vital materials	10	20		3		33	136	4.1	0.82	7 th
6	lack of technical analysis	3	20	10			33	125	3.8	0.76	10 th
7	Inability of client to attract funds	10	23				33	142	4.3	0.86	5 th
8	Poor risk management	14	14	3	2		33	139	4.2	0.84	6 th
9	Communication gap among the personnel	17	5	5	6		33	132	4.0	0.80	8 th
10	Death of client	26	5	2			33	156	4.7	0.94	2 nd

Effects of Abandoned Building Projects in Abuja

The effects of abandoned building projects as posited in various literatures were used to ask the respondents to choose in terms of relevance of the effects of abandoned building projects as shown in the table 3.

Discussion of Results

From the survey carried out, it is impressive to know that all the causes of abandoned building projects have high RII rating as it is above 0.60. The respondents ranked “change in government” with a very high RII rating of 0.96 as the most important causes of abandoned building project, While “lack of technical analysis” was the least important cause with rating of 0.76.

From the survey on the effects of abandoned building projects the respondents’ ranked “reduction in economic activities” as the

most relevant effect of abandoned building project with a very high RII value of 0.99. However, breeding ground for dangerous animals and insects was ranked as the least effect with RII value of 0.72.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The causes and effects of abandoned buildings projects were identified from literature survey and were used to obtain data. RII was used for data analysis with “change in government” identified as the most important cause of abandoned building project, while reduction in economic activities” was the most relevant effect of abandoned building project. There should be continuity in government policy with regards to infrastructural project and possible legislations on completion of project.

Table 3: Effects of abandoned building projects

s/no	Effects of abandoned building projects	5	4	3	2	1	Σf	Σfx	Mean	RII	Position
1	promotion criminal activity	35	20	5			60	270	4.5	0.90	7th
2	garbage dump site	45	15				60	285	4.75	0.95	4th
3	negative aesthetic to the neighbourhood	50	10				60	290	4.83	0.97	3rd
4	loss of economic benefit of the project	55	3	2			60	293	4.88	0.98	2nd
5	environmental and physical danger to residents	10	30	15	5		60	225	4.25	0.85	8th
6	Negative impact on government tax revenue	15	25	10	5	5	60	220	3.67	0.73	9th
7	breeding ground for dangerous animals and insects	10	27	13	10		60	217	3.62	0.72	10th
8	Reduction in economic activities	56	4				60	296	4.93	0.99	1st
9	Public/fire safety hazard	45	10	5			60	280	4.67	0.93	5th
10	centres for illegal activity	40	15	5			60	275	4.58	0.92	6th

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