

Innovations

An Evaluation of Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies for Addressing Housing Project Challenges in Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract : *Housing is of utmost importance to man, hence the need for its continuous supply. With housing deficit in Nigeria at upwards of 19 million housing units, there becomes a need to ensure effective and efficient delivery of housing and a pivotal way to achieve this is to ensure that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies are employed in housing production to address challenges. The aim of the study was to explore CSR strategies adopted by firms for addressing challenges in housing projects. This study collated CSR strategies from past literature and grouped them into the five-housing project life cycle phases. The study then sampled opinion of professionals in four housing development projects in Abuja, Nigeria so as to determine the potentials of these strategies. The data analysis tools adopted for the study were Mean Rating and Kruskal Wallis Test, respectively. The study found the five key CSR strategies in addressing housing project challenges to be: Sketch design to match clients' requirements; Appoint a credible project manager; Enhance land acquisition and compensation process; plan maintain and control work and project resources and Undertake a feasibility study. Information on the ranking of the CSR strategies will inform project stakeholders on importance of their adoption during the course of executing housing projects to address challenges.*

Keywords: *Housing, Project, Challenges, CSR, Strategies.*

1. Introduction

A strategy is a plan or action designed to achieve a long term or overall aim. A strategy is important because it outlines a defined pathway for firms which further brings a sense of focus while rendering services. Strategies also help to improve a business's self-awareness and gives employees something to target. Thus far, Corporate Social Responsibility practice requires strategizing in order to achieve targets set by firms in an organised fashion and at a stipulated time. Strategies may differ based on aim and process during service rendering and operations. Furthermore, strategies have been applied in various aspects of CSR practice. Lomano (2010) noted that a CSR strategy in housing projects involves: an overall direction for where the construction firm wants to take its CSR structure; care for stakeholders and their respective interests; a responsible approach for moving the housing project ahead; specific

housing project priority areas; a time line for action; use of responsible staff and a process for reviewing and assuring outcomes. The need to develop a CSR strategy then becomes imperative.

To develop a workable CSR strategy, it becomes imperative for a construction firm to always: build support with the shareholders, senior management and employees, research on what other construction firms (competitors) are doing with the aim of assessing the value of recognised CSR instruments; prepare a matrix of proposed CSR housing project actions; develop options for proceeding with the project and decide on direction, approach, boundaries and focus areas. During steps in developing a CSR strategy, it is important to identify the specific benefits that can be brought into a firm. Also, during a process of strategizing, firms need to deal with questions like: in which way can a CSR strategy contribute to the firm's objectives? How can a firm inter-twine these objectives with the ongoing developmental progress? and How can a CSR strategy assist the firm in obtaining skilled and diverse workforce in the future? To synchronise CSR strategy with a construction firms' project requirements, it may become important for firms to define what their targets are, considering the best and most convenient ways to adopt CSR.

1.1 The Study

Considering the extent of housing deficit in Nigeria and its negative effect on the economy and the citizenry, the need to increase supply becomes ever more vital. To effectively scale up supply, the challenges in the management of housing projects would have to be adequately addressed. The aim of the research was then to evaluate CSR strategies adopted in housing projects, which help in addressing challenges that are detrimental to the project life cycle. A total of 31 strategies were collated from past literature relating to housing projects. These CSR strategies were grouped under the five-housing project life cycle phases namely: Initiation, Planning, Design, Execution and Commissioning. The Null hypotheses of the study was formulated being that: "There is no significant variation in the perception of stakeholders on the CSR strategies to address challenges in the management of the housing project life cycle in Abuja". Analysis was carried out using Mean Score and Kruskal Wallis Test respectively, after which the strategies were ranked based on their mean scores and their Kruskal Wallis values.

2. Literature Review

For housing project management, CSR has been applied in a multitude of ways. For instance, Preston (2005) posited that strategies such as being able to responsibly select qualified project managers without attaching sentiments and bias has been used by firms with very positive results. Also, the ability to responsibly create a good project plan prior to projects; managing risks early enough and as they arise; the ability to maintain healthy practices; use of fit and proper equipment and the use of well trained and qualified labour are some of the beneficial strategies applied in housing projects which ensured that projects were completed in time, efficiently and profitably. Lomano (2010) noted that construction firms

adopted responsible strategies such as: producing achievable and cost-effective designs; performing feasibility and viability studies prior to projects, early mobilisation of resources needed to advance projects; creating a quality project, resource and financial plan as strategies often applied by firms in the management of housing projects.

Strategies such as: appointing a grounded project manager; steps towards defining and justifying the need for the project; ability to set up a project board early enough; mobilise other resources needed to enable the required outcome; plan, maintain and control the work and resources of the project; ensure that safety standards are followed; manage risks as they occur; maintain communication with those impacted by the project and its outcome; report progress and issues to project board/stakeholders have been applied in housing projects (Hung, Ismail & Yin, 2006).

Yun and Lee (2011) noted the following CSR strategies to be helpful in housing projects if properly applied, which are the ability to take responsible decisions while: performing quality and time management; performing efficient cost management; performing change management; performing risk management; performing issue management; performing procurement management; performing acceptance management; developing a business case to enable the client/project board decide whether its cost and risk are justified; preparing a quality Gantt chart for process; mobilising other resources needed to enable the required outcome; planning, maintaining and controlling the work and resources of the project; ensuring that safety standards are followed; managing risks as they occur; maintaining communication with those impacted by the project and its outcome; reporting progress and issues to project board/stakeholders; deciding ongoing viability in the light of experiences and any changes in requirements and ensuring that deliverables are fit for purpose and will only enable benefits to be realised.

Given the enormous drift towards CSR, the question for firms is not whether to engage in CSR, but what the best way forward is while crafting CSR strategies that reflect a firm's business values in addressing social, humanitarian and environmental challenges (Mackey, Mackey & Barney, 2007). Hohnen and Potts (2007) indicated that in projects, CSR strategies should go with a CSR assessment. A CSR project assessment provides an understanding of: the firm's values and ethics; the internal and external drivers motivating the firm to undertake a more systematic approach to CSR; the key CSR issues that are affecting or could affect the firm; the key stakeholders who need to be engaged and their concerns; the current corporate decision making structure and its strengths and inadequacies in terms of implementing a more integrated CSR approach; the human resource and budgetary implications of such an approach and existing CSR-related initiatives (Hohnen & Potts, 2007).

To enable a more streamlined CSR process, Preston (2005) suggested that keen interest should be on how CSR can be better integrated into the overall strategy of the construction firm, rather than inconsistencies and indecision as to when to adopt CSR strategy. The care for stakeholder interest and the public in housing project management should be vital in creating a strategic CSR plan (Yun & Lee, 2011). Furthermore, Yun and Lee (2011) advanced that the public in this case represents shareholders; clients; employees; suppliers to include everyone directly or indirectly linked to housing projects. Any issues that affect the public should be vital to construction firms to capitalise on while strategising. An organisation seen as not

reflective towards the environment is very likely to be seen as socially irresponsible, and therefore risks the relationship with all of its stakeholders (Dima & Ramez, 2007). By taking a strategic approach, construction firms may determine what activities they have the resources to devote towards being socially responsible.

2.1 Challenges in Housing Project Management

Challenges have always remained detrimental in housing project delivery which has manifested in housing shortage (Nwosu, 2010). Challenges in housing project delivery was collated along the five project life cycle phases which are: initiation, planning, design, execution and commissioning. Some of the collated challenges from past researchers such as Okechukwu, (2008); Usman, Kamaru and Mieri (2014); and Onuachu (2019) which are detrimental to the project life cycle include: initiation phase project challenges are faulty forecasting, poor project fund allocation, poor project budgeting, lack of feasibility study, lack of viability study, failure to properly define project, inadequate amenities, poor infrastructure, weak project initiatives and poor housing project sensitisation. Others include: inability to mobilise contractors, low government assistance in projects, inadequate housing project financiers, poor attitude of housing project stakeholders, weak project policies, poor resource mobilisation, erratic contract negotiations and unrealistic expectations from clients or partners. These challenges if not prevented, can affect the entire planning process of the project.

The collated housing project challenges from literature which can be detrimental to the planning phase of a housing project life cycle are: late site delivery to construction firm; poor project funding; faulty documentation (feasibility report, drawings, technical specification, bill of quantity); task collusion during project; poor organisational framework; poor scheduling; poor planning; poor site allocation; poor resource distribution; diversion of project funds; land acquisition issues; delay in Certificate of Occupancy follow up to include poor loan arrangement. Others are poor project infrastructure and layout; poor choice of contractors; poor devolution of responsibilities; inability to create enabling environment and inflated contract quotes. These setbacks are likely to influence decisions needed to advance the project in the design phase of the life cycle.

Some of the design phase challenges collated from literature which can affect activities in a housing project include: inappropriate design; faulty design; uneconomic design; late site delivery; poor design interpretation; delay in correcting design changes; design change during housing project; unachievable designs and improper design interpretation. These design issues will impact negatively on project execution.

The collated housing project challenges which are detrimental to the execution phase of a housing project life cycle are: poor project supervision and control; poor workmanship; misuse of resources; wastage of materials; poor quality of materials; delay in supplies; site accidents; equipment breakdown and religious and tribal conflicts. The occurrence of these challenges will negatively affect the housing project timeframe as well as commissioning.

The collated commissioning phase challenges from other literature are: inability to set up a closing team; poor progress evaluation; failure to keep pace with project phases; inconsistent project funding; poor management; misuse of time; poor communication and delay in project hand-over.

2.2 CSR Stakeholder Engagement as a Strategy in Housing Projects

Housing project stakeholders are people or entities who have an interest in a given housing project. Stakeholders, in a housing project can be either the project sponsor otherwise known as the client; people with an interest or the potential to gain from the successful completion of a project and people who may have a positive or negative influence in a timely and quality project completion. Dolo (2013) posited that stakeholders existing in a construction project include but may not be limited to: customers as businesses exist to satisfy customer construction needs; employees as they have a direct stake in construction firms as they earn income to support themselves along with other benefits; investors which include shareholders who invest capital in construction and expects to earn a certain return on invested capital. Others are suppliers who market construction products and rely on revenue generation as well as on-going income; communities whom are the hosts of construction projects and contribute in job creation and economic development; and government which provides amenities, supervises and taxes. Hwang and Lim (2013) posited that in a competitive business environment, project stakeholders play an important role in firms' strategic management decisions, while Brown and Badanes (2004) noted that housing project stakeholders are unique in their own characteristics but share very similar characteristics with other construction project stakeholders in general. Housing project stakeholders can be said to be vectors for change and for the implementation of strategies and innovations that can bring competitive advantages to construction firms.

The nature of housing project's complexity requires its firms to have the ability to address a variety of stakeholder issues with human, financial and technical dimensions, to name a few and this can be addressed through corporate social responsibility. The adoption of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework which recommends that firms commit to focusing on social and environmental concerns, just as they do on profits can equally and continuously guide the drift towards enhancing housing project stakeholder interest through CSR (Preston, 2005). The ability to embark on housing projects through corporate social responsibility is largely dependent on performance and commitment levels of housing project stakeholders. Ojo and Oladokun (2013) posited that housing project success through CSR is dependent on performance levels of stakeholders. Nwosu (2010) posited that primary and secondary stakeholders exist in housing projects and noted housing project primary stakeholders to be: clients; funders and shareholders; construction firms, project managers and project staff (on and off site). The secondary stakeholders include: the housing project community; local authority; other statutory authorities; suppliers; the emergency services (Nwosu, 2010). As a result, housing project stakeholders must respond to difficult project tasks usually characterised by constant work and a frantic pace in order to beat challenges through CSR (Yam, Ismail & Tan, 2011).

Ketut and Dwijendra (2013) suggested that a housing project's goals may not be achieved by stakeholders if attention is not paid to critical aspects such as: housing project complexity, requests for changes in housing project work scope, organisational restructuring, housing project risks, technological changes and financial planning. Kerzner (2013) posited that one

major study within project management that is frequently discussed but rarely agreed upon is the notion of “project success”. The success of any housing project is determined by how well the housing project stakeholders contribute to the achievement of project strategic objectives otherwise known as effectiveness and how well the housing project has been carried out otherwise known as efficiency.

Patah (2010) posited that project success is mandatorily related to two components which are efficiency and effectiveness. Ahmed and Othman (2013) noted that project success is directly linked to efficiency and effectiveness. From indications, these two words, “effectiveness and efficiency”, are critical to stakeholder success in housing projects. Doloi (2013) explained that effectiveness is measured or evaluated as a function of the degree to which project goals are achieved, while efficiency is measured as a function of meeting the project's deadline, budget, and quality criteria. Patah (2010) captured that project management is established to optimise projects' efficiency and effectiveness. From indications also, the act of being effective and efficient in a housing project is corporate social responsibility. A housing project stands to possibly benefit such that housing project stakeholders can efficiently maximise project responsibilities to a given input and output level while effectively achieving the housing project's goals and objectives in a timely manner through CSR. Both practices are goal-oriented and are related to effectively achieving housing project success.

2.3 Importance of CSR Strategy in Housing Project Management

Many construction firms had believed for years that their only responsibility was financial related which is the maximisation of value for shareholders (Bouma, 2002). Firms are pathways through which housing projects are executed. Corporate social responsibility is a new idea where the corporate sector incorporates social and environmental concerns in their services and plays a more responsible role in the world (Santos, 2011). Suggestions have been put forward that with some effort and foresight, CSR can very importantly be integrated seamlessly into the goals of almost all housing firms (Mia & Othman, 2008). This can ensure a smooth and flowing process within the phases of a housing project. Jones, Comfort and Hillier (2006) listed four important factors of CSR in construction to be: an increased employee satisfaction; an enhanced brand image of the construction firm; an increased client loyalty and an enhanced creativity in construction.

Yun and Lee (2011) asserted that firms participating in corporate social initiatives in housing have an experienced range of important bottom-line gains which include several of the following: an increased service delivery; growth in firms share value, a strengthened positioning, an enhanced corporate image and clout, an increased ability to attract, motivate, and retain employees, decreased operating costs and an increased appeal to investors and project stakeholders. Preston (2005) noted that CSR is important in housing project delivery and defended the stance by listing some benefits which include: improving the public image of construction firms; boosting employee engagement in projects; attracting and retaining better investors; enabling a positive workplace environment; encouraging professional and promoting individual and community philanthropy through CSR in housing projects.

A green area that guides the application of CSR is the efficient and vital integration of CSR critical success factors which enhances performance in service delivery (Chen, 2011). CSR critical success factors that can be integrated into firms practice for an enhanced housing project management include: commitment from key parties; integration of CSR values and vision into housing projects; effectively communicating CSR approach/strategy/aim; openness to learning; improvement and innovation; stakeholder engagement; involving employees in developing and implementing CSR; to include a high level of awareness creation amongst parties (Preston, 2005). Project managers in a housing project management setting have the ability to introduce CSR to the various phases of the housing project life cycle and promote social good within a housing project. If properly strategised with, CSR is considered a win-win facilitator that benefits the firm as well as society. Silberhorn and Warren (2007) advanced the importance of CSR because it ensures that firms continually have regards for: the likely consequences of any decision in the long term; the interest of the firms employees; the need to foster the firms relationships with stakeholders; the impact of the firms operations on the community and environment; the desirability of the firm to maintain a reputation for high standards of service conduct; and the need to act fairly as between different members of the firm.

Through corporate social responsibility, housing projects take responsibility for the impact of their activities on clients, employees, shareholders communities and the environment in all aspects of operations by acting responsibly (Yun & Lee, 2011). Housing projects may also take voluntarily steps responsibly towards improving the quality of life for employees and their families as well as society at large. CSR is sometimes called “corporate citizenship,” meaning that a firm should be a good neighbour to the communities that are affected by its presence (Tolati, 2013). Activities of housing are expected not only to adhere to ethical standards and norms but also to live up to the responsibility of a dynamic source of change in a globalising world (Holmes, 2002).

Tolati (2013) noted that proponents of CSR have used four arguments to prove the importance of their strategic legitimacy, which are: moral obligation; sustainability; license to operate and reputation. In the context of housing projects the above can be expressed as follows:

- i. **Moral Obligation:** This explains the reality that stakeholders of a growing number of construction firms can only be satisfied when the firm balances the rudiments of its service delivery with socially responsible practices.
- ii. **Sustainability:** This explains the need for construction firms to meet the present needs of shareholders and stakeholders without compromising their capabilities in future service delivery. Substantial progress can be made by investing in a strategy that is socially, environmentally and financially sustainable (Hwang and Liam, 2013).
- iii. **License:** This means the ability of construction firms to operate or act legally with any form of licence obtainable and in consonance with the confines of the law. Patah (2010) posited that CSR strategies should be channelled towards obeying laws in the course of service delivery.
- iv. **CSR Initiatives:** Which is supported due to an enhanced reputation on the grounds that it will improve a firm’s image and even raise the value of its services. The nature of

accruable benefits to construction firms as a result of CSR initiatives can include a greater clientele, the ability to keep making profit with CSR and the retention/hiring of more productive employees.

Poor CSR strategising can also be perilous to a housing project. Yun and Lee (2011) posited that in Singapore, the poor implementation of CSR has created impediments in the running of services which made for setbacks on the goals and achievement of construction firms. With growth in the complexity of project services and concerns about housing project sustainability, there may be conflict between the enhancement of a construction firm's long-term profitability and its need to act responsibly (Yun & Lee, 2011). Construction firms are liable to corruption and scandal that taints the corporate world even if only a few individuals can be held to account (Holmes, 2002). Tharp and Chadhury (2008) held that the public has a right to expect construction firms to discharge their functions honourably within the social framework and play a role that commends it to public trust. Dima and Ramez (2007) noted that in developing nations with weaker economies, firms should be more sensitive to anything that damages their reputations hence the importance of implementing CSR.

2.4 Potential Benefits of Implementing CSR Strategy in Housing Projects

In line with the discussions on corporate social responsibility, housing projects stand to benefit if CSR is applied during project activities. Preston (2005) listed the following benefits of implementing CSR in housing projects: a better anticipation and management of an ever-expanding spectrum of risk; improved reputation management; enhanced ability to recruit, develop and retain project staff; improved innovation and competitiveness; improved ability to attract and build effective supply chain relationships; enhanced ability to address project change and a more robust social licence to operate projects in a community, as discussed below:

- i. **Better Anticipation and Management of an Ever-Expanding Spectrum of Risks:** Effectively managing governance, legal, social, environmental, economic and other risks in an increasingly complex environment, with greater oversight and stakeholder scrutiny of corporate activities, can improve the security of supply and overall service stability in a housing project. Considering the interests of parties concerned about a construction firm's impact is one way of better anticipating and managing risk.
- ii. **Improved Project Reputation:** Construction firms that integrate and perform well with regards to CSR can build and enhance their reputation, while those that perform poorly can damage brand name and firms' value when exposed. Reputation, or brand equity, is founded on values such as trust, credibility, reliability, quality and consistency (Blowfield&Frynas, 2005).
- iii. **Enhanced Ability to Recruit, Develop and Retain Project Staff:** This can be the direct result of a sense of pride in construction firms' services and practices, or of introducing improved human resource practices such as "family-friendly" policies. It can also be the indirect result of programmes and activities that improve employee welfare and morale.

Ojo and Oladokun (2013) advanced that housing project employees are not only front-line sources of ideas for improved performance, but are pivots of a firm for which they are proud to work.

- iv. **Improved Project Innovation and Competitiveness:** CSR is as much about seizing opportunity as avoiding risks (Ite, 2004). Drawing feedback from diverse stakeholders can be a rich source of ideas for new service strategies resulting in competitive advantages. For example, a construction firm may become certified to environmental and social standards so it can become a service provider to particular clients. The history of good service provision has always been one of being alert to trends, innovation and responding to construction markets/targets.
- v. **Improved Ability to attract and build Effective Supply Chain Relationships:** A construction firm is vulnerable to the weakest link in its supply chain. Like-minded firms can form profitable long-term business relationships by improving standards, and thereby reducing risks. Barney, Mackey and Mackey (2007) observed that firms can stimulate stakeholders with whom they do business to implement a CSR approach. For example, effective CSR implementation requires construction firms' employees, contractors, consultants and suppliers to comply with work codes and supply standards (Santos, 2011).
- vi. **Enhanced Ability to Address Project Change:** A construction firm with proper information and communication through regular stakeholder dialogue, is in a vantage position to anticipate and respond to regulatory, economic, social and environmental changes that may occur during projects (Preston, 2005). Housing projects may take up a trend of using CSR as radar to detect evolving change activities that can enhance the field of project management.
- vii. **More Robust Social Licence to Operate Project in the Community:** Through CSR, improved citizenry, stakeholder welfare and understanding of construction firms' objectives and activities can translate into enhanced stakeholder relations (Ojo&Oladokun, 2013). This, in turn, may evolve into more robust and enduring public, private and civil society alliances (all of which relate closely to CSR reputation). CSR can also help to build social capital.

3 Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive research design which was aided with the Research Onion developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007). The research philosophy was guided along Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology. Ontology was inclined towards subjectivism, epistemology was inclined towards pragmatism and the axiological suggestion was inclined in the direction of value laden axiology. The research approach adopted was mixed design method, while the research strategy was case study research strategy. Research time horizon was cross-sectional as it involved a shortened and specific duration. The research population of the study was unknown considering that it was impossible to determine the total number of professionals in the built industry in Abuja Nigeria, as a number of professionals wouldn't be registered with professional bodies, despite being in active practice.

The study adopted the mixed design and the sampling technique included questionnaire (Purposive) and interview (Judgmental). The methods of data collection were: Questionnaires and Interviews for primary data; and viewing of project documents and CSR policy documents for secondary data. Methods of data analysis included Mean rating and Kruskal Wallis test. The sample size of the study was pegged at 138 respondents as determined by the formula and steps presented below, as suggested by Napierala (2014):

$$n = \frac{Z^2 (p)(q)}{e^2} \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

- Where: n = Sample size
- e = Acceptable margin of error
- Z = Confidence level obtained from the Z score
- p = Probability of success (number expected to be returned)
- q = 1-p Probability of failure (expected number of un-retrieved instrument)

For this study, the following parameters were used at confidence level of 95%

- $p = 0.9$
- $q = 1 - 0.9 = 0.1$
- $z = 1.96$, for confidence level of 95%
- $e = 5\%$

This implies that:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.9)(0.1)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{(3.8416) \times (0.09)}{0.0025} = 138$$

4 Data Analysis

Opinions of actively engaged respondents in the built industry was sampled with the use of a well-structured questionnaire so as to determine the effectiveness of CSR strategies adopted by construction firms to effectively and efficiently address housing project challenges by way of ranking. The table below presents the analysed data indicating the various CSR strategies, their respective mean scores, ranks and Kruskal Wallis Values all arranged along the four earlier mentioned housing project life cycle phases. Kruskal Wallis Values less than 0.05 indicates a significant variation in the perception of stakeholders on the CSR strategies to address challenges in the management of the housing project life cycle in Abuja, while those less than 0.05 indicates insignificant variation in stakeholders' perception.

Table 1
 CSR Strategies for Mitigating the Challenges Associated with Managing Housing Projects

Strategies	Mean Score	Rank	Kruskal Wallis Value
Initiation Phase			
Define and Justify the Need for the Project	4.86	11	0.001
Specify, Quantify and Agree on Desired Outcome and Benefit	4.84	13	0.000
Appoint A Credible Project Manager	5.00	1	0.950
Set Up an Effective Project Board	3.24	46	0.027
Ensure That the Reasons for the Project is Defined in The Project Brief	4.87	10	0.000
Develop a Good Business Case	3.97	35	0.003
Undertake a Feasibility Study	4.98	5	0.724
Establish a Project Charter	3.52	41	0.017
Appoint a Project Team	4.81	15	0.000
Set Up a Project Office	4.44	26	0.012
Enhance Land Acquisition and Compensation Processes	5.00	1	0.950
Planning Phase			
Plan How to Deliver the Required Outcome and Benefits.	4.73	17	0.000
Decide How to Manage Relationships.	4.04	34	0.003
Decide How to Manage the Delivery Process.	4.48	25	0.000
Determine the Required Labour Force.	4.58	22	0.001
Determine the Resource Requirements.	4.68	20	0.011
Develop A Business Case to Enable the Client/Project Board to Decide Whether Cost and Risk Is Justified.	4.43	29	0.000
Prepare Gantt Chart for The Process	3.20	45	0.000
Create Project Plan	4.26	33	0.006
Create Resource Plan	4.31	32	0.009
Create Financial Plan	4.34	31	0.012
Create Quality Plan	2.69	51	0.204
Create Risk Plan	2.87	50	0.001
Create Acceptance Plan	2.26	53	0.371
Create Communication Plan	3.64	40	0.047
Create Procurement Plan	3.84	37	0.073

Design Phase			
Sketch Design to Match Clients' Requirements	5.00	1	0.052
Develop the Design	4.90	8	0.000
Obtain Planning/Drawing Approach	4.48	25	0.000
Ensure Design Is Cost Effective	4.84	13	0.000
Estimate Total Project Site Area	4.52	24	0.101
Refine the Scope of Work	4.44	26	0.000
Adjust Drawings (Structural, Mechanical, Plumbing And Electrical).	4.77	16	0.000
Execution Phase			
Mobilise Resources Needed to Enable the Required Project Outcome	4.91	7	0.043
Plan, Maintain and Control the Work and Project Resources	5.00	1	0.950
Ensure That Safety Standards Are Followed	4.85	12	0.000
Manage Risks as They Occur	4.44	26	0.007
Maintain Communication	3.79	38	0.059
Report Progress to Stakeholders	3.67	49	0.161
Decide Ongoing Viability	3.91	36	0.156
Ensure Deliverables Are Fit for The Purpose	4.55	23	0.000
Perform Time Management	3.00	49	0.068
Perform Cost Management	3.14	47	0.070
Perform Quality Management	3.07	48	0.197
Perform Change Management	2.59	52	0.284
Perform Risk Management	3.34	42	0.009
Perform Issue Management	2.02	54	0.018
Perform Procurement Management	3.32	43	0.130
Perform Acceptance Management	1.92	55	0.303
Perform Communications Management	3.32	43	0.430
Commissioning Phase			
Evaluate the Outcome of The Project Against the Plan	4.90	8	0.000
Release Resources Used by The Project	4.64	21	0.000

Review Benefits Achieved at The End of The Project	4.70	18	0.000
Prepare Plans for Post-Project Review.	4.42	30	0.000
Determine the Degree for Any Improvements or Modifications.	4.70	18	0.000
Ensure that Project is Duly Handed Over	4.92	6	0.001

Source: Field Work (2020).

5 Findings

In order to determine the effectiveness of CSR strategies adopted by construction firms to effectively and efficiently address housing project challenges, respondents' opinions were sampled and the result is presented in table 1. Kruskal Wallis test is usually adopted to indicate if there is a significant variation in the opinion of respondents between two or more groups, or not. Corporate Social Responsibility strategies used in addressing the challenges associated with the management of housing projects were collated and investigated to determine whether there were or weren't significant variations in the opinions of the respondents. The result showed that 'Sketch design to match client's requirements' (5.00); 'Appoint a credible project manager' (5.00); 'Enhance land acquisition and compensation process' (5.00) and 'Plan, maintain and control work and project resources' (5.00) were jointly ranked 1st, while 'Undertaking a feasibility study' was ranked 5th with a mean score of 4.98. This suggested that the CSR strategies adopted by construction firms in mitigating the challenges associated with the management of housing projects in Abuja borders on credibility of project managers, enhancing land acquisition and compensation process, adequate control of work and project resources; and diligently undertaking feasibility studies of projects.

The overall submissions of the various groups were examined to determine whether there was consistency in their ratings and the result is presented in Appendix B3. Sketch design to match clients' requirements was ranked 1st by Contractors and Clients, 11th by Government and 19th by consultants and had a sig. P value of 0.052. Appointing a credible project manager was ranked 1st by Contractors, Consultants and Government and 2nd by clients and had a Kruskal Wallis sig. P value of 0.950; Enhancing land acquisition and compensation process was also ranked 1st by contractors, consultants and government and 2nd by clients and it had a sig. P value of 0.950; Plan, maintain and control the work and project resources also had exact rankings by the responding groups with a corresponding Kruskal Wallis sig. P value of 0.950; Undertaking a feasibility study was ranked 1st by contractors, 1st by consultants, 4th by government officials and 2nd by clients with a sig. P value of 0.724. Considering that the Kruskal Wallis sig. P values of all 5 strategies were more than 0.05 as clearly shown in table 6, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant variation in the perception of stakeholders on CSR strategies used for mitigating challenges in the management of housing projects in Abuja, was accepted.

There were similarities in the top-ranking themes that occurred in both the quantitative and the qualitative data results of the study, however, only the quantitative data has been reflected in this article.

5.1 Mitigating Housing Project Challenges

CSR strategies are helpful in addressing housing project challenges. The challenge of faulty forecasting can be mitigated through undertaking a proper feasibility study; poor project fund allocation can be mitigated through planning, maintaining and controlling project resources. Lack of feasibility and viability studies can be prevented or mitigated by undertaking a feasibility and viability appraisal for damage aversion and control. Poor infrastructure can be mitigated through planning, maintaining and controlling project resources. Poor housing project sensitization can be addressed through well-defined CSR objectives and inability to pay contractors can also be mitigated through planning maintaining and controlling project resources. Low government assistance in projects can be mitigated through setting up an effective project board to liaise with government officials at different levels with follow-ups. Lack of commitment from firm can be addressed by the integration of proper CSR values and vision in housing projects while challenges as a result of the death of a housing project financier and poor resource mobilization can be mitigated by effectively planning, maintaining and controlling available project resources to get the project to an advanced level. Poor attitude of stakeholders can be mitigated by appointing a good project manager with the ability to engage.

Poor project funding was mitigated by ensuring proper commitment from key stakeholders in housing projects. Faulty documentation can be addressed by responsibly creating a proper project plan to ensure that employees saddled with those requirements perform them effectively and this can be backed up with effective monitoring. The challenges of task collision and poor organizational framework can be mitigated by appointing a credible manager to advance projects, while poor scheduling, poor planning, poor site allocation and poor resource distribution can be mitigated by adequately planning, maintaining and controlling project resources. Challenges concerning land acquisition and delay in Certificate of Occupancy issuance can be mitigated by enhancing land acquisition and compensation processes where inspections, interviews, determining valuations, payment systems and stakeholder engagements are carried out. Furthermore, the use of inferior building materials and poor devolution of responsibilities can be mitigated by appointing a credible project manager. Inability to create an enabling environment can be mitigated by integrating proper CSR values and vision where relevant factors needed are worked on.

Faulty designs can be mitigated by peer-reviewing and correcting within the shortest possible time prior to commencement. The challenge of late design delivery can be mitigated by constant follow-up and interfacing with the design team, while poor design interpretation and delay in correcting design changes can be mitigated by effective monitoring and demanding. Design change during housing projects can be mitigated by promptly engaging with the clients and project owners to explain the impact of changes on the available resource, towards agreeing if the changes are indeed needed. Unachievable designs can be mitigated

by interfacing and advising interested parties to make the requisite changes early enough while explaining the repercussions of not doing so, as well as providing inputs. Improper design interpretation can be mitigated by peer reviews and meetings with qualified personnel for the purpose of proper interpretation.

Challenges of poor project supervision and control; poor workmanship and misuse of resources can be mitigated by appointing a quality project manager who oversees and takes vital decisions in all aspects of the execution phase. For wastage of materials, efficiently controlling and utilising project resources will mitigate this challenge. The effect of equipment breakdown can be mitigated by arranging for expert mechanics and spare parts suppliers in close proximity to arrest such situations. Religious and tribal conflicts in a housing project can be mitigated by proper orientation, adequate provision of internal and external security within project sites as well as proper stakeholder engagement during execution. Inconsistent project funding can be mitigated by adequately mobilising additional funds and ensuring that these funds are channelled to the purpose for which they were obtained. Effectively monitoring economic indices and proper financial projections can guide future expectations, which informs on when additional funds should be sourced for. Misuse of time during projects can be mitigated by effective time management and ensuring that it is adhered to, while poor communication can be mitigated by ensuring that proper communication is maintained amongst stakeholders in the project.

6 Conclusion

Housing remains an integral need for man and its shortage at any point in time always has negative effects on the well-being of people as well as the economy of Abuja, Nigeria and any other clime however, challenges keep affecting the housing project lifecycle. The study focused on addressing housing project challenges by applying CSR strategy in the project process. CSR strategies were being adopted by firms to address housing project challenges however, there was little or no Government presence towards encouraging the efforts of construction firms, which is often the case in developed climes. CSR practices are involuntary and the efforts of government can motivate the practices but this has not been taken advantage of by government despite the potential to improve on the practice. There were also complaints of lack of communication from government so as to investigate and support firms' strategies considering the fact that government has the capacity to enhance the CSR plans of these firms'. Furthermore, there were suggestions about the difficulty of project participants to determine which CSR strategies to adopt from the pool, determine what time and under what conditions to apply the CSR strategies with the intention of achieving housing project success.

Responsible decisions in the form of strategies was many times not made either pre, or during housing projects. Responsible decisions vary between climes therefore CSR strategies are never fixed, as what might work successfully in one project may be detrimental to the success of another depending on peculiarities stemming from housing project requirements and project host communities. Issues of design in construction projects remain one of the toughest challenges faced by developers. A quality CSR practice by firms in housing projects ensures that designs are done with the best ideas and precision. In Abuja, design of housing

projects is ought to be made attractive in line with modern trends however, some developers did not capture that the more simplistic the better. Designs have also not been made sustainable, thereby not standing the test of time such that it will be archaic and affected by blights in the immediate future.

A proper CSR is for firms to ensure that a quality and capable project manager is appointed to advance a housing project, which is often taken for granted. Considering that a project manager is a major decision maker, the decision to appoint one should be keenly made which has many times been undermined. Housing projects in Abuja have been marred by the nature of the managers and their decision making. There is no housing, neither are there estates without land. Land remains the part of the earth that is not covered by water. One unique and integral feature about land is that it is tied to ownership. A major CSR strategy in housing project delivery is the ability to enhance land acquisition and compensation process however, the process still remains frustrating to developers.

To effectively execute a housing project, there is a need to plan, maintain and control project resources considering the trend of hyper-inflation however, there is relative laxity in achieving this. To effectively plan, maintain and control project resources, some firms failed to screen supplies as well as suppliers by not inspecting supplied items prior to payments as well as inability to pay suppliers as at when due, even when the items were of the required standard. The ability to undertake a feasibility study is a CSR strategy which can impact positively in a housing project towards the mitigation of project challenges, but it was seldom done by some firms. Feasibility identifies and validates the need to embark on housing projects, which has proven to enhance success rates in projects.

7 Recommendations

The recommendations

- i. It is very vital for CSR strategies to be applied as it can properly ensure that designs match the requirements of clients. This can be a catalyst in saving costs and ensuring that litigation is avoided which are major sources of challenge in a housing project.
- ii. To prevent future challenges, a critical approach should be applied via CSR strategy in engaging the services of project managers as they make key decisions in a project setting. Investigations need to be carried out to determine level of experience, credibility, expertise and nature of projects previously executed.
- iii. Proper investigations, adequate vetting and effective screening must be done prior to land purchase, so as to avoid human or natural unfortunate impacts that may stall or lead to project abandonment.
- iv. Project resources need to be adequately planned, maintained and controlled with CSR strategies so as to maximise output from inputs in a housing project setting. This can help to mitigate cost overruns.
- v. A feasibility study should be made mandatory prior to housing projects. This guarantees the possibility of projects by flagging the possible prospects as well as set-backs likely to be faced during the course of the life cycle.

- vi. The government should encourage and appreciate construction firms CSR strategies by instituting support mechanisms for the purpose of development.
- vii. A means to encourage construction firms CSR strategies is by periodically interfacing with these firms to determine their CSR strategy plans, thereby taking decisions on how to assist or improve on what is to be provided. CSR strategies should be reviewed occasionally based on project peculiarities.

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