

Analysis of Factors Contributing to the Failure and Abandonment of Construction Project Delivery in Nigeria¹

Godson Kelechi and Nwogu Prince Chinemerem

Abstract

Given that the construction industry is a major contributor to economic growth, its challenges cannot be ignored. The study investigated the factors responsible for failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria. The main purpose of this study is divided into two which include identifying factors responsible for the failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria, as well as measures used by key stakeholder to mitigate these challenges. The research initiated with preparation of an exhaustive literature review on the issue by different writers. The survey design of the research had two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires administered to professionals in both public, private sectors as well Rivers State, Imo State, Abia State Enugu and Ebonyi States located South East part Nigeria and as such 35 questionnaire were given to Project Managers while 50 to builders, 40 to Architects, 40 to Civil Engineers, 55 to Quantity Surveyors and only 30 for Clients. Two hundred (200) questionnaires out of the total Two-hundred fifty 250 administered were successfully returned which was used them for this study. Design of standard questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to obtain responses from Professionals in Nigerian construction industry in both public and private sectors in Nigeria on data gathering and Relative Importance Index (RII) were generated using Microsoft Excel 2016 to handle the analytical tools.

Based on the result of a study, there are about fifty factors causing or contributing construction project failure and abandonment in delivery of construction projects such as mismanagement resources, technical incompetence, poor planning, contractual disputes, inconsistency government policies, inadequate design among other problem. The study has also ten measures used to mitigate this factors of failure and abandonment of construction project delivery such as improvement on; planning for projects, financial management in projects, legal frameworks etc.

The study recommends that government as a matter of urgency should implement policy that helps to stabilize the economy and also help in better planning on financial provisions, resource mobilization for construction projects by not only guaranteeing project funding but as well manage cost efficiently which will invariably enhance proper delivery of construction jobs while mitigating other factors responsible for failure and abandonment of projects thus fostering stakeholders participation /engagement among communities at large ensuring communication hallmarks through collaboration with all vested builders individually. There should be holistic feasibility studies before commencement process ordinance encompassing socio-economic evaluation

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exercise. Stakeholders have a role throughout ensures professionalism too is realized pushing accountability and thereby promoting integrity and transparency from inception till completion stage.

Keywords: *Failure, abandonment, construction, construction project delivery, Nigeria.*

1. Introduction

A successful delivery of construction projects will help to enhance project efficiency and effectiveness and also enable various construction professionals to meet up construction project deadlines (Kelechi, Amadi, & Chinemerem, 2025). In Nigeria as a case study and worldwide, construction projects are usually affected by complexities and ambiguities, resulting to missed deadlines, poor quality of work, and budget overrun, which in turn result to project failure and abandonment. According to Ubani and Ononuju (2013) and Olalusi and Otunola (2012), noted that these failures and abandonments mostly in public sector projects pose significant issues for construction sector stakeholders in Nigeria. The construction industry is essential for the development of any nation, by enhancing better infrastructure and services to the inhabitants. However, lower performance and resulting disillusionment among various construction stakeholders have become a serious issue and concern. The main growth of any country depend heavily on the quality and capacity of its construction sector, but the inherent complexities and uncertainties often prevent projects from meeting their original objectives. Despite being Africa's largest economy, Nigeria has struggled to provide its citizens with a high standard of living, economic growth, and justice, as noted by Ingwe et al. (2010). Across the globe, failed and abandoned construction projects are prevalent, including in countries like Malaysia, the United States, Spain, Dubai, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Abu Dhabi (Hoe, 2013), and Nigeria (Ewa, 2013).

Many projects have not been completed in Nigeria as a case study. Ewa (2013) indicates that Nigeria has approximately 4000 uncompleted or abandoned public projects, costing around ₦300 billion, and it could take up to 30 years to finish them. Factors identified as contributing to these failures include poor planning, the death of clients, unqualified project managers, inaccurate cost estimates, poor design, political influence, and inadequate funding (Olalusi & Anthony, 2012; Ubani & Ononuju, 2013; Ayuba et al., 2012; Hoe, 2013; Ayodele & Alabi, 2011). Although various scholars have suggested solutions to mitigate these issues, the problem continues to be widespread (Hoe, 2013; Olalusi & Anthony, 2012; Ubani and Ononuju, 2013; Ayuba et al., 2012; Sahibzada & Mahmood, 1992).

This research seeks to offer more comprehensive measures to address the issue of construction project failures and abandonment by conducting an in-depth analysis of potential measures. In Nigeria, the repeated failure and abandonment of construction projects have become a significant concern, with substantial investments often being wasted (Cross & Abbas, 2019). Construction projects are intended to bring new services and products to the community and enhance the

environment (Alaezi et al., 2021; Atamewan, 2020). As a result, the failure and abandonment of these projects have far-reaching negative impacts on the population, the nation's development, and the environment. The success or failure of a construction project is judged based on performance criteria such as cost overruns, time delays, quality, and functionality. A failed project, while completed, fails to meet the needs of its end users (Ikediashi et al., 2014), while an abandoned project experiences a significant delay between the suspension and resumption of work, leading to material loss (Tawo et al., 2017). To this end, this study aims to examine factors contributing to the failure and abandonment of construction projects delivery in Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are: to identify key factors contributing to the failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria and provide measures used in mitigating failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Construction Project Incompletion and Neglect

Project failure and abandonment are widespread issues in Nigeria that greatly affect the country's economic development and social progress, Adewuyi and Olowookere (2020). Multiple factors contribute to the high incidence of these problems such as Poor Planning and Design, Funding and Financial Mismanagement, corruption, inadequate project management, political instability, environmental and social issues etc. Ofori and Ogunlana (2021). Over the years, there have been numerous attempts to define project failure, but no consensus has been reached (Damoah et al., 2015; Zuofa & Ochieng, 2014). Construction projects are generally considered failures if they do not meet the criteria of time, cost, and quality. However, a project is also labeled a failure if it does not meet the expectations of stakeholders or provide societal or organizational benefits (Zuofa & Ochieng, 2014). According to Damoah et al. (2015), a failed project fails to achieve its time, cost, deliverables, stakeholder satisfaction, or contributions to its sector and national development. An abandoned project encounters significant challenges that make further progress seem unlikely (Doraisamy et al., 2015) and is not prepared for use (Abdul-Rahman et al., 2013). Therefore, even if a project is completed on time and within budget, it is still considered a failure if it does not fulfill its intended purpose. Thus, an abandoned project is a failure, and merely finishing a project does not guarantee its success.

2.2 Underlying Causes of Failed and Abandoned Construction Projects Delivery in Nigeria

The failure and abandonment of construction projects in Nigeria present serious issues that affect both economic development and infrastructure advancement. Akinmoladun and Alabi (2020) noted that financial mismanagement and lack of proper funding are significant reasons for project abandonment. Projects often start without confirmed funding or suffer from resource misallocation, which results in unfinished projects (Akinmoladun & Alabi, 2020). Identifying the root causes of these failures is essential for enhancing project success rates. Poor planning and design are major factors leading to the failure of many construction projects in Nigeria. Inadequate

feasibility studies and impractical project timelines often result in project failures from the beginning (Nwagboso & Nnamdi, 2019). Nwankwo and Obi (2023) revealed that Political instability and frequent shifts in government policies can disrupt ongoing projects. Construction projects are inherently complex, involving numerous participants and lengthy durations, leading to a high level of uncertainty and risk (Abdul-Rahman et al., 2016). The industry comprises various processes and stakeholders, including construction professionals, clients, artisans, manufacturers, local communities, consultants, and others (Ezenekwe & Uzonwanne, 2017; Na Ayudhya & Kunishima, 2017). Failure to execute construction projects can impact multiple entities within a country, resulting in underdeveloped infrastructure (Ajayi & Chinda, 2022).

Consequently, the success of a construction project heavily relies on the effective coordination of these participants and processes. The causes of construction project failures and abandonment vary by region due to differences in geographical locations and organizational operations (Eja & Ramegowda, 2020; Hussain et al., 2018; Ihuah & Benebo, 2014). Ghapanchi et al. (2012) and Ebiega-Oselebe et al. (2021) note that these factors are complex and vary between companies and countries. According to the Nigerian Institution of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS), contract failures in Nigeria stem from poor cost estimation, lack of expert involvement, ignoring expert advice, corruption, awarding contracts to political cronies, and a lack of continuity due to power transitions (The Vanguard Editorial, 2022). Ayodele & Alabi (2011) identified inadequate planning, finance, inflation, contractor bankruptcy, project scope variations, political factors, client death, payment delays, and incompetent project managers as major causes of project abandonment in southwestern Nigeria. Otunola & Olalusi (2012) highlighted corruption, inadequate estimation, poor planning, insufficient skilled personnel, and communication gaps as significant issues.

Table 2.1 Factors contributing to the failure and abandonment of construction projects in Nigeria

S/N	Factors	Sources
1	Poor Project Management	<u>Ogunlana et al., 2003</u>
2	Inadequate Funding	<u>Aibinu & Jagboro, 2002</u>
3	Corruption	<u>Obaidat et al., 2017</u>
4	Unreliable Supply Chain	<u>Muda et al., 2010</u>
5	Poor Planning	<u>Mahamid, 2013</u>
6	Inadequate Design	Laryea & Aboagye-Nimo, 2010
7	Technical Incompetence	Kumaraswamy & Chan, 1998

8	Regulatory Issues	Gidado, 2004
9	Environmental Factors	Ojo & Akindele, 2015
10	Contractual Disputes	Ibrahim & Aibinu, 2010
11	Political Instability	Ali & Aibinu, 2011
12	Inadequate Skills of Workforce	Ogunlana et al., 2003
13	Lack of Commitment from Stakeholders	Ojo et al., 2014
14	Poor Communication	Fapohunda, 2013
15	Fluctuations in Material Prices	Babalola & Ibrahim, 2011
16	Insufficient Project Documentation	Mahamid, 2013
17	Late Delivery of Materials	Ogunlana et al., 2003
18	Poor Risk Management	Zou et al., 2007
19	Cultural Factors	Aibinu & Jagboro, 2002
20	Lack of Modern Technology	Fapohunda, 2013
21	Changes in Project Scope	Muda et al., 2010
22	Labor Unrest	Ogunlana et al., 2003
23	Mismanagement of Resources	Ali & Aibinu, 2011
24	Mismanagement of Resources	Ali & Aibinu, 2011
25	Overestimation of Project Timelines	Gidado, 2004
26	Unpredictable Weather Conditions	Obaidat et al., 2017
27	Legal Issues	Ojo & Akindele, 2015
28	Unrealistic Budget Estimates	Mahamid, 2013

29	Non-compliance with Safety Standards	Zou et al., 2007
30	Inadequate Supervision	Babalola & Ibrahim, 2011
31	Lack of Project Feasibility Studies	Fapohunda, 2013
32	Inefficient Project Scheduling	Aibinu & Jagboro, 2002
33	Poor Quality Control	Muda et al., 2010
34	Conflict of Interest	Ogunlana et al., 2003
35	Lack of Experience among Contractors	Kumaraswamy & Chan, 1998
36	Fluctuating Currency Exchange Rates	Obaidat et al., 2017
37	Lack of Project Integration	Ali & Aibinu, 2011
38	Inadequate Legal Framework	Ojo & Akindele, 2015
39	Misalignment of Project Goals	Gidado, 2004
40	Lack of Effective Communication Channels	Mahamid, 2013
41	Inconsistent Government Policies:	Mbachu, J. I. C., & Nadon, R. N. (2007).
42	Inadequate Procurement Practices:	Dada, M. O., & Jagboro, G. O., 2012
43	Security Issues	Abubakar, A., et al., 2015
44	Project Complexity	Alutu, O. E., 2007.
45	Delays in Approval Processes	Idoro, G. I., 2008.
46	Inadequate Insurance Coverage	Aje, I. O., & Aje, J. O. , 2009
47	Inadequate Public Participation	Oladapo, A. A. 2008
48	Economic Recession:	Adeyemi, A. Y., et al. ,2006
49	Lack of Innovation	O. A., et al. ,2016.
50	Lack of Transparency	Oladapo, A. A. ,2008.

Source: Authors compilation, 2025.

Measures used in mitigating failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria.

Thorough project planning that includes detailed scheduling, budgeting, and risk assessment can identify and address potential problems early on. Effective planning can help avoid many causes of project failure and abandonment (Ogunlana, S. O., et al., 2003). Maintaining adequate funding and strict financial controls throughout a project is crucial for managing costs and preventing delays due to financial issues. Regular audits and effective budgeting are essential (Aibinu, A. A., & Jagboro, G. O., 2002). Enforcing stringent legal and re Improving Financial Management regulatory standards can mitigate non-compliance and corruption. This includes clearer contract terms and better enforcement of safety and quality regulations (Gidado, 2004). Early identification and mitigation of potential risks can prevent project failures. Effective risk management includes contingency planning and regular risk assessments. Implementing robust quality control measures ensures that construction work meets required standards, reducing defects and rework, which can cause delays and additional costs. Effective communication among stakeholders, including project managers, contractors, and clients, helps quickly resolve issues and ensures alignment on project goals and expectations. Using modern construction technologies, such as Building Information Modeling (BIM) and project management software, can enhance efficiency, accuracy, and coordination, reducing the risk of project failure (Fapohunda, 2013). Providing continuous training for the workforce ensures that construction professionals stay current with the latest techniques, standards, and regulations, leading to higher quality work and fewer errors. Effective contract management involves clear terms, monitoring compliance, and promptly addressing disputes to prevent delays and issues that could lead to abandonment (Ibrahim, K., & Aibinu, A. A., 2010). Ensuring reliable supply chains and timely material delivery can prevent project delays and cost overruns. This includes selecting reliable suppliers and effectively managing procurement processes. These measures can help address common causes of failure and abandonment in construction projects, thereby improving overall project delivery and success rates in Nigeria.

Table 2.1 Measures used in mitigating failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria.

S/N	Measures	Sources
1	Enhancing Project Planning	Ogunlana, S. O., et al., 2003
2	Improving Financial Management	Aibinu, A. A., & Jagboro, G. O., 2002
3	Strengthening Legal Frameworks	Gidado, K., 2004
4	Ensuring Effective Risk Management	Zou, P. X. W., et al., 2007
5	Ensuring Quality Control and Assurance	Jha, K. N., & Iyer, K. C., 2006
6	Enhancing Stakeholder Communication	Fapohunda, T. M., 2013
7	Implementing Technological Integration	Fapohunda, T. M., 2013

8	Enhancing Training and Development	Ogunlana, S. O., et al., 2003
9	Contract Management	Ibrahim, K., & Aibinu, A. A., 2010
10	Strengthening Supply Chain Management	Muda, A., et al., 2010

Author's compilation, 2025.

3. Methodology

This study examined a study on factors contributing failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria and evolve measures used in mitigating failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria. This research used a survey research design, focusing on Enugu, Ebonyi, Rivers State, Abia and Imo State which is in southeastern Nigeria. Two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires were distributed to various professionals in both public and private sectors of the construction industry in Nigeria including the project managers, architects, builders, civil engineers, quantity surveyors and the clients. A judgmental and area sampling technique was used, targeting areas with high population density and a concentration of construction projects. Two hundred (200) valid responses were received for further analysis. Primary and secondary data sources were utilized, and data collection employed a well-structured, standard questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale to gather responses from professionals across Nigeria's construction industry sectors. Data analysis utilized methods like Relative Importance Index (RII) to analyze the data for this study.

Results

Table 2.3 Questionnaire distribution and responses

Respondents	Distribution	Responses	(%)Responses
Project managers	35	30	86
Builders	50	40	80
Architects	40	30	75
Civil engineers	40	35	88
Quantity surveyors	55	45	82
Clients	30	20	67
Total	250	200	80

Source: Field Data, 2025.

Table 2.4 Showing relative importance index for primary factors contributing to failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria

		Respondent's scorings						
S/N	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	RII	Rank
1	Poor Project Management	30	40	30	40	60	0.66	16 th
2	Inadequate Funding	20	30	40	60	50	0.69	8 th
3	Corruption	40	30	50	40	40	0.61	29 th
4	Unreliable Supply Chain	25	35	40	50	50	0.67	14 th
5	Poor Planning	50	60	20	20	50	0.56	41 st
6	Inadequate Design	35	35	45	45	40	0.63	24 th
7	Technical Incompetence	15	25	55	25	90	0.78	2 nd
8	Regulatory Issues	54	35	35	60	25	0.59	33 rd
9	Environmental Factors	10	40	50	50	50	0.69	8 th
10	Contractual Disputes	5	45	45	55	50	0.76	3 rd
11	Political Instability	25	60	30	50	35	0.61	29 th
12	Inadequate Skills of Workforce	28	42	45	45	40	0.63	24 th
13	Lack of Commitment from Stakeholders	60	20	20	60	40	0.6	31 st
14	Poor Communication	22	48	50	35	45	0.63	24 th
15	Fluctuations in Material Prices	30	30	40	70	30	0.64	21 st
16	Insufficient Project Documentation	70	30	20	20	60	0.57	39 th
17	Late Delivery of Materials	20	42	38	48	52	0.67	14 th
18	Poor Risk Management	52	40	30	18	60	0.59	33 rd
19	Cultural Factors	3	47	58	34	58	0.69	8 th

20	Lack of Modern Technology	15	28	52	55	50	0.59	33 rd
21	Changes in Project Scope	48	12	48	48	44	0.63	24 th
22	Labor Unrest	40	40	40	40	40	0.64	21 st
23	Mismanagement of Resources	30	30	40	55	45	0.95	1 st
24	Mismanagement of Resources	55	55	40	20	30	0.52	48 th
25	Overestimation of Project Timelines	52	48	24	48	28	0.55	44 th
26	Unpredictable Weather Conditions	28	30	40	42	60	0.68	12 th
27	Legal Issues	50	50	20	40	40	0.57	39 th
28	Unrealistic Budget Estimates	60	60	20	20	40	0.52	48 th
29	Non-compliance with Safety Standards	2	58	40	40	60	0.69	8 th
30	Inadequate Supervision	27	37	35	55	46	0.56	41 st
31	Lack of Project Feasibility Studies	20	25	65	15	75	0.7	7 th
32	Inefficient Project Scheduling	40	15	45	50	50	0.66	16 th
33	Poor Quality Control	32	42	66	30	30	0.58	37 th
34	Conflict of Interest	0	55	55	45	45	0.68	12 th
35	Lack of Experience among Contractors	43	57	35	30	35	0.56	41 st
36	Fluctuating Currency Exchange Rates	41	49	40	59	11	0.55	44 th
37	Lack of Project Integration	19	39	49	57	36	0.65	19 th

38	Inadequate Legal Framework	11	53	27	20	89	0.72	4 th
39	Misalignment of Project Goals	65	25	45	15	50	0.51	50 th
40	Lack of Effective Communication Channels	30	50	60	18	42	0.59	33 rd
41	Inconsistent Government Policies:	5	25	65	50	55	0.73	4 th
42	Inadequate Procurement Practices:	40	50	12	25	73	0.64	21 st
43	Security Issues	35	45	55	35	30	0.58	37 th
44	Project Complexity	20	52	58	32	38	0.62	28 th
45	Delays in Approval Processes	38	45	55	43	19	0.53	47 th
46	Inadequate Insurance Coverage	19	30	30	51	70	0.72	4 th
47	Inadequate Public Participation	70	14	46	45	25	0.54	44 th
48	Economic Recession	40	40	35	50	35	0.6	31 st
49	Lack of Innovation	14	56	40	51	39	0.65	19 th
50	Lack of Transparency	20	28	60	60	32	0.66	16 th

Authors results analysis, 2025.

The table above shows relative importance index ranking of factors contributing to the failure and abandonment of construction project delivery in Nigeria. It can be seen that mismanagement of resources as the most important factor contributing to the failure and abandonment of construction project delivery which is ranked first with RII value (0.95), followed by technical incompetence with RII Value (0.78), contractual disputes with RII value (0.76), inadequate insurance coverage. fourth with RII value (0.72) and down to misalignment of project goals ranked fifty with RII value (0.51).

4. Discussion of Findings

Mismanagement of resources is identified as the most critical factor leading to the failure and abandonment of construction projects, with an RII value of 0.95. This issue is widely debated within Nigeria's construction sector (Damoah et al., 2015, 2018; Ewa, 2013; Nguyen & Chileshe, 2015; Nweze, 2016; Shafiei & Puttanna, 2021). Resource mismanagement—encompassing financial, human, and material resources—leads to project failures due to budget overruns, inefficient workforce use, and poor material handling. Akinwale (2010) emphasizes that mismanagement of funds often results in overspending and resource wastage. Idoro (2012) notes that corruption and a lack of transparency can divert project resources. Technical incompetence,

ranked second with an RII value of 0.78, significantly contributes to project failures. Okereke (2014) highlights how skills shortages affect project delivery, leading to delays and technical issues. Kerzner (2013) advocates for ongoing training to address these gaps and improve outcomes. Contractual disputes, with an RII value of 0.76, also play a major role in project abandonment. Ogunsemi and Jagboro (2006) stress the need for clear contract terms and effective dispute resolution to avoid disruptions, while Fenn, Lowe, and Speck (1997) suggest proper contract administration and stakeholder communication as solutions. Inconsistent government policies, ranked fourth with an RII value of 0.73, create an unstable project environment, leading to delays and increased costs. Ebegbulem (2011) and Adeniran (2013) discuss the adverse effects of political instability and policy changes on infrastructure projects. Lack of feasibility studies, with an RII value of 0.70, is another crucial factor. Ojo (2011) emphasizes the necessity of thorough feasibility studies for project success, while Chin, Spowage, and Yap (2012) note that such studies help in identifying risks early. Non-compliance with safety standards, ranked eighth with an RII value of 0.69, leads to accidents and delays. Laryea and Mensah (2010) and Mohamed (2003) discuss the importance of adhering to safety standards and management systems. Cultural factors, also ranked eighth with an RII value of 0.69, impact project management due to communication issues and cultural misunderstandings. Hofstede (1980) and Ochieng and Price (2010) stress the need for cultural sensitivity. Inadequate funding, with the same RII value of 0.69, results in project delays and abandonment. Akinwale (2010) and Flyvbjerg, Holm, and Buhl (2002) highlight the importance of realistic budgeting and securing adequate funds.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The study investigated fifty factors leading to the failure and abandonment of construction projects in Nigeria such as mismanagement of resources, technical incompetence, contractual disputes, inconsistency government policies and among others and identified measures to mitigate these issues such as enhancing project planning, improving financial management, strengthening legal frameworks etc. Out of fifty factors identified in this study, eight were found to be the most significant. Using a questionnaire survey and Relative Importance Index (RII), the research found that resource mismanagement is a major factor in project failure. This study offers valuable insights for construction professionals in both public and private sector construction industry, stakeholders, policymakers, and the public regarding project failures in Nigeria. The study recommends that government as a matter of urgency should implement policies to stabilize the economy and ensure better financial planning and resource allocation for construction projects and this includes securing funding and managing costs effectively thereby enhancing construction project delivery and mitigating those factors responsible for failure and abandonment of projects, engaging various stakeholders and communities to foster better communication and collaboration among all project stakeholders, ensuring thorough feasibility studies are conducted before project initiation to assess economic, environmental, and social impacts, promoting accountability, integrity and transparency among industry professionals throughout inception and completion of the project and to avoid project abandonment caused by administrative transitions, regulations should mandate that new administrations complete ongoing projects from the previous government

before undertaking new initiatives. In 2019, Ekiti State implemented a law to prevent such abandonment (Olanrewaju, 2019). Other states in Nigeria are encouraged to implement similar measures.

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About the Authors



Godson Kelechi, M.Sc

Rivers State University
Port Harcourt, Nigeria



Godson Kelechi is an assistant Lecturer at Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and a probationer (member) of the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS). He holds a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech.) in the Department of Quantity Surveying with Second Class Upper Division at Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and Master of Science (M.Sc) in Project Management Technology from Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State and currently pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D) in Construction Management at the Department of Building, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State. He hails from Egwi, in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. Godson Kelechi can be contacted at godsonkelechi44@gmail.com



Nwogu Prince Chinemerem, M.Sc

Rivers State University
Port Harcourt, Nigeria



Nwogu Prince Chinemerem is a staff of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and a Professional Member of the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS). He holds a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech.) in Quantity Surveying from the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and Master of Science (M.Sc) in Project Management Technology from the Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State and currently pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D.) in Construction Management at the Department of Building, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State. Nwogu Prince Chinemerem can be contacted at prince.nwogul@ust.edu.ng