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THE INFLUENCE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY INTEGRATION: IMPLICATION FOR PRACTITIONERS IN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract
This study investigates the integration of sustainability principles into project management practices in selected construction companies in Lagos State. A survey of 79 construction companies was conducted in Lagos State using a questionnaire as a research instrument. and structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine the relationship and the contribution among sustainability integration and project management practices in the construction industry. Our results show that both organisational culture ($r = 0.604$; $p<0.01$) and organisational Professionalism ($r = 0.486$; $p<0.01$) have a significant relationship with sustainability integration. Also, our result confirms that only organizational culture ($t = 2.879$; $p<0.05$) is the significant contributing factor to project sustainability integration among the construction companies. The study concludes on the importance for project managers and organizations seeking to improve their sustainability practices and project performance in their organisation to focus on enshrining organisational culture that help to build sustainability integration in project management.

Keywords: Construction company, Lagos State, practitioners, project management practices, Sustainability integration, Sustainability principles,

1. Introduction

Sustainability integration in project management is crucial for organizations to minimize their environmental footprint, reduce costs, and enhance their reputation. However, many organizations struggle to incorporate sustainability principles into their project management practices. Obviously, in project management, sustainability is not just a moral need but also a tactical one. It entails integrating People, Planet, and Prosperity-the triple bottom line into the development and implementation of projects (Molaei *et al*., 2020). With this strategy, projects are guaranteed to provide economic value while also protecting the environment and benefiting society. A growing number of scholars believe that incorporating sustainability into project management techniques is essential to the long-term profitability and success of projects, particularly in light of global issues like social injustice and climate change (Toljaga-Nikolić *et al*., 2020; Gupta, 2021 and Omamode *et al*., 2024).

The rising involvement of project managers serves as another evidence of the need for sustainability in project management. Integrating sustainability considerations into every stage of the project lifecycle, modern project managers are expected to alleviate above standard project

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management competencies (Joel, 2016). This calls for a thorough comprehension of sustainability concepts and the capacity to use them in a variety of project scenarios. Furthermore, incorporating sustainability into project management is in line with global frameworks and initiatives, like the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, which highlight the importance of project management in reaching sustainability targets worldwide (Toljaga-Nikolić *et al*., 2020).

The incorporation of sustainability into project management is not without difficulties, despite its increasing significance. The lack of established measures and procedures for gauging project sustainability outcomes is one of the main problems (Larsson and Larsson, 2019). There is a lack of effective integration of sustainability principles into project management practices, leading to missed opportunities for cost savings, reputation enhancement, and environmental benefits (Omamode *et al*., 2024). This makes it challenging to compare various projects using sustainability metrics and to determine the actual sustainability impact of projects. The adoption of sustainable practices may also be hampered by the frequent opposition of traditional project management methods to modification.

It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of sustainability in project management. Bringing project objectives in line with the more general objectives of sustainable development indicates a significant advancement in the discipline. The need for project management to achieve sustainable results is growing as the globe struggles with environmental and social issues and environmentally friendly methods (Gupta, 2021). In order to guarantee that projects have a good impact on the earth and its populations, future studies on project management practice need to keep looking into and refining how sustainability principles are incorporated.

2. Literature review

Sustainability in Project Management

Over time, the idea of sustainability in project management has changed dramatically and has become a significant topic of discussion in both professional and academic circles. Using a variety of academic sources, in this section of the literature review explores the numerous definitions and interpretations of sustainability in the framework of project management, utilizing a variety of academic scholars. In their 2020 study, Toljaga-Nikolić, Marija Todorović, Dobrota, Obradović, and Obradović investigate how sustainability factors are included in project management. According to their research, the use of project management techniques encourages the inclusion of sustainability elements, especially the social component. The increased interest in sustainable project management and the difficulties it presents for project managers are highlighted by this study. From the viewpoint of Brazilian experts, Ferrarez, Valle, Alvarenga, Dias, Vasco, Guedes, Chinelli, Haddad, and Soares (2023) investigate important techniques for integrating sustainability into project management. Their study identified five essential practices, including project success, environmental efficiency, compliance, social responsibility, and ongoing improvement and learning. This study advances knowledge on how sustainability initiatives might benefit project management procedures. The study conducted by Banaduc, Mirea, and Draghici (2022) delves into the relationship between sustainability and project management, with a specific focus on sustainable objectives in urban projects. Their thorough literature analysis demonstrates the synergistic potential of merging project management and sustainability technologies by highlighting the capabilities these two domains can share (Moehler, Hope, and Algeo, 2018).

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Organizational Culture

Every project works with both internal and external customers, so it is crucial for a project manager to strictly understand the association's background, situation, and corporate culture. Luthans *et al*. (2021) see corporate culture as the principles, attitudes, and values that are portrayed by members of an organization that are consistent over a period of time. Corporate culture differs from firm to firm; it also determines how members of a firm behave, perceive, interact, and, most of the time, decide on issues and phenomena. There are specific cultures, norms or rules, and social contact in project organizations (Colyer, 2000; Schein, 2016; Joseph and Kibera, 2019).

Some characteristics of corporate culture can be easily identified while some are not. Employee dress, administrative environment, and speaking are easily identified. In a particular firm, individuals may carry out tasks separately in closed workplaces, while in others, they work as a team in a shared environment (Khan et al., 2020). The higher the refined elements of corporate culture include the values and all-encompassing business philosophy; this may not be actually visible, but it is reflected in the firm's employee manners, signs, and conventions applied in their operation (Mousavi *et al*., 2015).

Project Managers Expertise

A project manager is saddled with the responsibility of integrating, organizing, leading, and directing projects from the initiation stage to the completion stage, ensuring that they deliver the task on time, with a specific budget, and to the required quality. In a complex or large-scale project, the project manager is responsible for overseeing two categories of subordinate groups. The team member directly assigned to the project which is directly under his/her authority and the other group comprises a team of experts from the company's functional, technical, and service support departments who are provisionally assigned to the project team but still remain a member of the various department or unit (Dunn, 2001; Gillard 2005, 2009). The dual tasks of a project manager require concrete leadership skills and technical skills for adequate and effective management of a project. Smallholder construction firms may not require permanent project offices, but project managers may function within the firms (Gillard, 2009; Laufer et al., 2015). The project's physical arrangement does not lessen the multifaceted duties of the typical project manager. The primary duty of the project manager is to meet the objectives of the project, design schedules estimate the budget, and evaluate alternative courses of action, also has a responsibility to assess risks involved in the project and make a decision on how to agree to take, avoid, eliminate or mitigate them, and for leading the initiative to successful delivery of project (Dunn, 2001; Zielinski, 2005; DiVincenzo, 2006 Baca, 2007 and Alhyari, 2017).

Project Management Practice

According to the Project Management Institute (PMI) (2013), there are nine identified knowledge areas of project management practice, including Project integration management, project scope management, project time management, project cost management, project quality management, project human resource management, project communication management, project risk management, and project procurement management; they are encompassed in the project management processes and are commonly bounded in the project management methodologies.

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According to Silvius (2013), sustainability might be expanded beyond project management proficiency into an advanced stage, potentially encompassing portfolio management and project management offices (PMOs). According to Eskerod and Huemann (2013), the significance of knowledge domains in sustainable construction management is different from that of conventional construction and its objectives.

Silvius and Schipper (2014a) and Young (2016) stressed that blending sustainability into project management methods is a capability work of the project manager. Project managers must, therefore, develop and embed sustainability into business positioning in order to address growing concerns. They must also make all management decisions with the primary goals of sustainability in mind, which include minimizing environmental degradation, reducing the rate of resource consumption, and aiming for a healthy environment for the project and all stakeholders, including the community and the surrounding area (Phung, 2019).

Project Sustainability Performance

Managers source required information through the evaluation of team performance, which is essential in assessing if the team members have the appropriate knowledge, creating a positive environment for the team and effective communication conditions, proper workplace, and ensuring transparency and accountability (Songer, Molenaar, and Robinson, 2015). In order to effectively manage a project team, there should be an appraisal of workers' performance as well as project performance. The managerial decision is made through the performance appraisal report on the effective ways of managing the team. Alhyari (2017) sees workers' performance as including their work output, which includes the quality and quantity of jobs done, work behaviors, and job-related attributes. Among other.

After reviewing workers' performance, a project manager should do the following:

i. Provide feedback to the work on how diligently they have performed tasks in relation to a pre-defined goal

ii. Offer feedback to workers on areas of their weakness and strengths so that they can perform better on the job.

iii. To motivate employees, rewards should be given to individuals with exceptional performance.

iv. Corrective action should be taken to address problems with workers performing below expectation.

Stakeholder Satisfaction

The conventional method of evaluating project success involves achieving stakeholder satisfaction and project performance. Project boundaries, such as scope, money, time, and quality, must be met using this technique (Pulaski and Horman, 2005; Shenhar et al., 2001; Songer, Molenaar, and Robinson, 2015). All contemporary project management standards integrate the well-known four project restrictions. Furthermore, ensuring stakeholder satisfaction is another matter that requires proper attention. In the last few decades, it has recently come to light as a crucial project performance criterion. Meeting the desires and prospects of all significant stakeholders, such as customers/investors, final users, the project team, and external stakeholders, is the main goal of stakeholder satisfaction (Chan et al., 2002; Salminen, 2005; Serrador and Turner, 2015).

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Sustainable Integration

Nowadays, sustainable project management techniques are not used to deliver sustainable projects. The result cannot be sustainable if no sustainable process is used (Marcelino-Sádaba et al., 2015). Because of their dynamic role in the project, the project manager should be responsible for managing the sustainable process. As a result, it is imperative that sustainability be incorporated into project management theory and practice (Phung, 2019). Because the project manager holds a unique position that influences the firm to attain a higher level of sustainability (Russell, 2008) and has an impact on the implication of sustainability in the project management process (Goedknegt, 2012), project managers have major responsibility for the project to be both success (Toney, 2002) and achieving sustainability

The mindset shift of the project manager is a fundamental value in the transition to sustainability (Silvius and Schipper, 2014b). There are numerous obstacles faced by project managers when initiating project construction (Hwang and Ng, 2013), and their responsibilities are in connection with nearly all sustainability problems (Silvius, Neuvonen, and Eerola, 2017). Silvius and Schipper (2014a) emphasized that system-thinking, anticipatory, normative, strategic, and interpersonal skills are prerequisites for project managers to have when dealing with sustainability concerns. According to Hwang and Ng (2013), in order to produce sustainable projects, a project manager has to possess the following critical abilities: decision-making, delegation, analysis, teamwork, and problem-solving. For better sustainable project delivery.

Effect of Organization Culture on Project Sustainability

Several Scholars advocate that there is a close connection between organizational culture and project sustainability; they observed that the requirement for the accomplishment of project sustainability may be the organizational culture itself (Lee and Kim, 2017; Abdullahi and Luketero, 2018; Anderson, Schuldt and Astrand, 2018). Timisoara and Onea (2013) emphasize the culture as an anchor that concentrates on particular values, including leadership commitment, recognizing and respecting others, level of employee commitment to work, positive beliefs about work, positive work values, interpersonal relationships, and group norms to achieve sustainability. Sustainability, according to Hart and Milsten (2003), is the potential to improve the current generation's environmental and social performance without compromising the capacity of future generations to satisfy their community development, create jobs, and reduce waste. A firm's culture permeates every part of its operations and, as a result, greatly affects employee performance, interpersonal relationships, and dedication to their jobs (Cross and Inim, 2019).

Comparing the concept of sustainable creation as a technique to the traditional model of project management, which supports the success of goals allied with the three pillars of sustainability, Poerschke and Gampfer (2013), Yudelson (2013), Wilson, Hargreaves and Hauxwell Baldwin (2015), and Brokhaus et al. (2017) have all endorsed them, include economic sustainability which involves the growth in cost-effective as a result of utilizing adequate resources, appropriate labor, materials waters among others, on environmental sustainability it comprises of averting environmental hazard and source for everlasting impacts of the environment by carefully utilizing the natural resources, reducing waste and likewise, Social sustainability involves meeting the needs of the public at every stage of the building process, delivering exceptional customer

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satisfaction, and collaborating closely with clients, suppliers, workers, and local communities (Alhyari, 2017).

3.Methodology

In this study, we employed a survey research design for collection of primary data from selected construction companies in Lagos State. Seventy-nine (79) construction companies in Lagos State were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was employed as the research instrument for data collection on sustainability integration in project management practices. Project managers, sustainability officers and equivalent positions were recommended as the responding unit in the selected construction companies. Descriptive statistic tools in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and inferential statistic tool such as Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS which describes the interrelationship among constructs as well as their relationships to the items used in assessing them (Bollen, 1989a; Eboli and Mazzulla, 2012) were all employed to analysed the data collected.

The full structural equation model is given as:

$$\eta = B\eta + \Gamma_1\xi_1 + \Gamma_2\xi_2 + \zeta$$

where:

η	-	Sustainability integration
ξ_1	-	Organisational culture
ξ_2	-	Organisational professionalism
ζ	-	Residual error
B	-	Coefficients of dependent variable
Γ_1 - Γ_2	-	Coefficients of respective independent variables

4. Results and Discussion

Project Management Practices in the Construction Companies

Table 1 showed the overall average for organizational culture is 4.4785, indicating that the majority of respondents agreed with the statements. The score reflects agreement with statements on organizational culture, with a notable tendency for these responses to be on the upper end of the scale (Agreement). A value of a 0.50273 overall standard deviation provides context by indicating that the responses are closely grouped around the mean. This indicates a uniformity in the manner in which participants evaluated the concepts of organizational culture.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Culture

	Level of Agreement					Average	
	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
Your organizational culture, values and principles influence project management practices	60.8%	35.4%	1.3%	2.5%	0%	4.5443	0.65628
Organizational culture plays vital role in shaping project team dynamics	54.4%	40.5%	2.5%	1.3%	1.3%	4.4557	0.73025

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Organizational culture support continuous learning and professional development	58.2%	40.5%	0%	1.3%	0%	4.5570	0.57170
Organizational culture promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion	46.8%	45.6%	5.1%	2.5%	0%	4.3671	0.70123
Metrics or indicators are used to evaluate culture's impact on project Management	50.6%	46.8%	1.3%	1.3%	0%	4.4684	0.59561
Grand Average						4.4785	0.50273

Breakdown of Sustainability Integration

The result in Table 2 shows that the overall average for sustainability integration is 4.0557, indicating that the majority of respondents agreed with the statements. The score reflects agreement with statements on Sustainability integration, with a notable tendency for these responses to be on the upper end of the scale (Agreement). A value of a 0.59909 overall standard deviation provides context by indicating that the responses are closely grouped around the mean. This indicates a uniformity in the manner in which participants evaluated the concepts of project sustainability integration.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Sustainability integration

	Level of Agreement					Average	
	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
Sustainability integrate into your company's project management framework	19%	44.3%	10.1%	19%	7.6%	3.4810	1.21803
Community benefits and social impacts considered in project planning in your company	36.7 %	51.9%	8.9%	2.5%	0%	4.2278	0.71521
Sustainable procurement practices integrated into project planning in your company	41.8 %	51.9%	3.8%	1.3%	1.3%	4.3165	0.72579
Your company do evaluate the economic viability of sustainable projects	40.5 %	41.8%	7.6%	10.1%	0%	4.1266	0.93873
Your company follow policies and regulations govern sustainability in project management	39.2 %	44.3%	6.3%	10.1%	0%	4.1266	0.92497
Grand Average						4.0557	0.59909

Source: Field survey (2024)

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Measurement model

The factor loading of the measurement model for this study is presented in Figure 1. After an initial run of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the factor structure of our dataset based on their grouping using inter-variable correlations, the result shows that three (3) constructs, comprising a total of eight (8) observed variables/items with high loadings (>0.7), were extracted from the dataset. A closer look at the constructs shows that three (3) items were extracted under sustainability integration, three (3) items under organizational culture, and two (2) items under organizational professionalism. In addition to the factor loading, the figure also presents the result of correlation analysis between constructs. The result shows that both organisational culture (r = 0.604; *p<0.01*) and organisational professionalism (r = 0.486; *p<0.01*) have a positive and strong significant relationship with sustainability integration in the construction industry. This suggests that organisational culture and organisational professionalism are related to project sustainability integration.

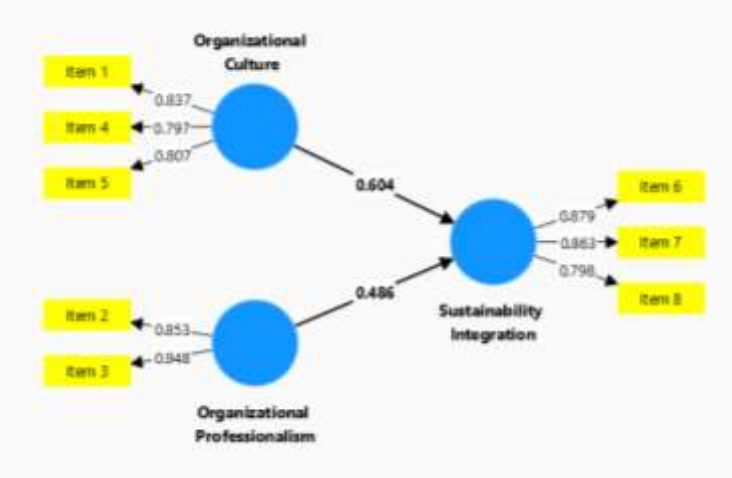

Figure 1: Factor Loadings of Observed Variables

Reliability and Validity Test

Table 3 presents the outcome of the reliability and validity of the constructs (unobserved variables) in the model. The results from the table show that Cronbach's alpha, which measures the internal consistency of the latent variables for each of the constructs is above the minimum threshold (>0.7). Similarly, as a substitute for Cronbach's alpha in measuring the internal consistency of the constructs, composite reliability (rho_c) values, which give a more robust result, indicating that all the constructs are adequate with values well above 0.7 which, according to Hair *et al*. (2010), is the minimum threshold. While the average variance extracted (AVE) which, according to Malhotra and Dash (2011), is a more conservative method of measuring convergent validity than composite reliability, has values that are well above the recommended threshold (>0.5). In addition to the construct reliability and validity, we assessed the discriminant validity, which measures the distinctiveness of our constructs using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT).

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The result reveals that the discriminant validity values are within the recommended threshold of less than 0.85 (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Hair *et al*., 2010).

Table 3: Construct Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Construct	Reliability and Validity			Discriminant Validity – HTMT		
	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Organizational professionalism	Organizational culture	Sustainability integration
Organizational professionalism	0.783	0.897	0.814			
Organizational culture	0.749	0.855	0.663	0.834		
Sustainability integration	0.804	0.884	0.718	0.567	0.750	

Structural model

The result of the structural model that describes the hypothesized model of project management practices on project sustainability integration as represented by the relationship among all the constructs (i.e. dependent and independent variables), and is presented using Table 4. The result show that project sustainability integration, which is the dependent variable in the model, is significantly influenced by organizational culture (t = 2.879; $p<0.05$). On the contrary, there is no statistical evidence of the contribution of organizational professionalism (t = 0.942; $p>0.05$) to sustainability integration in the study. This result suggests that though culture and professionalism are related to sustainability integration, only organisational culture influences project sustainability integration of construction companies.

Table 4: Path Analysis of Dependent and Independent Variables

Project Management Practices	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics
Organizational professionalism-> Sustainability integration	0.159	0.196	0.169	0.942
Organizational culture-> Sustainability integration	0.499	0.484	0.173	2.879**

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the influence of project management practices on project sustainability integration in selected construction companies in Lagos State. The findings reveal a positive significant relationship between the constructs of project management practices and the construct of project sustainability integration. This indicates that effective project management practices

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enhance sustainability integration in construction projects. However, between the two (2) constructs of project management practices that are positively related to sustainability integration in the study, only organizational culture significantly contributes to project sustainability integration of construction companies. Therefore, construction companies with robust sustainability policies and procedures may likely demonstrate higher levels of sustainability integration. The study recommends that construction companies should develop and implement sustainability-focused project management frameworks, conduct regular training and awareness programs for project managers and team members, establish sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs) and monitoring systems and encourage stakeholder participation and engagement throughout the project lifecycle.

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