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Evaluating barriers to effective implementation of project monitoring and evaluation in the Ghanaian construction industry

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Abstract

Construction projects monitoring and evaluation is a vital process in project delivery which is aimed at ensuring that major objectives and goals are achieved. However, the implementation of monitoring and evaluation in the Ghanaian construction industry have seen numerous challenges and as a result, the poor performance of the industry. This paper identifies and evaluates the barriers faced by projects in the implementation of monitoring and evaluation in the Ghanaian construction industry. Literature was reviewed and subsequently, a semi-structured questionnaire developed to stimulate the relevant response from the major stakeholders in the Ghanaian construction industry. The collected data were analysed using the one sample t-test. Literature revealed ten (10) challenging factors to the implementation of monitoring and evaluation. Weak institutional capacity, limited resources and budgetary allocations for monitoring & evaluation, weak linkage between planning, budgeting and monitoring & evaluation, weak demand for and utilisation of monitoring and evaluation results and finally, poor data quality, data gaps and inconsistencies were identified as the most significant contributing factors to the implementation of PM&E in Ghana construction projects. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on the challenges to effective monitoring and evaluation of construction projects.

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Keywords: Construction industry stakeholders, Effective project implementation, Project monitoring and evaluation, Ghana.

1. Introduction

The construction industry world over and more especially in developing nations are greatly manual and as such requires more human resource to undertake the many activities aimed at achieving set targets. These activities,

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however, require close supervision to ensure that they are executed right at first hand to eliminate re-work, increased project cost and prolong project duration and as such the need to monitor and evaluate projects to achieve the desired outcome. Project monitoring and evaluation, therefore, is a management function geared towards achieving effective use and efficient utilisation of project resources and as such cannot be overemphasized. Monitoring and evaluation are therefore critical to the performance of the construction industry and it seeks to facilitate strategic decision making to guarantee successful project implementation through a systematic and routine collection of project information and assessment of same [15]. Project monitoring and evaluation is explained to mean In spite of the effort made by project monitoring and evaluation teams (stakeholders) to achieve project objectives, problems with project delays, cost overruns, and non-conformity, as well as environmental issues, remains as yet unsolved. As early as the year 2000, [15] confirmed this inability of Third World and developing countries to successfully deliver projects but indicated the panacea to this challenge is the implementation of monitoring and evaluation.

Unfortunately, project monitoring and evaluation have been faced with numerous barriers to their implementation in the sub-region due to reasons such as the complex nature of construction and divergent views on project delivery with less technological integration in the industry in developing nations. The study, therefore, evaluates possible barriers and their dire/disastrous implications regarding the implementation of monitoring and evaluation in the Ghanaian construction industry. It is hoped that this study will provide an avenue for a more streamlined process for the reliable delivery of quality and economical projects within the stipulated time frame [4].

2. Literature review

2.1 Barriers to the implementation of project monitoring and evaluation

Worldwide projects have experienced numerous barriers in their implementation. As a solution, project monitoring and evaluation are key elements in improving project performance. These barriers are primarily influenced by the kinds of measures being used and the minimum amount of attention given to the practice. The effectiveness and success of every monitoring plan depend largely on the capacity of the institution or individual mandated to undertake the activity. Implementation of project monitoring and evaluation is therefore challenged with weak institutional capacity. Capacity building of institutions is relevant, not just for the immediate correction of poor performance, but also for the involvement based on a broad aim and result analysis [3]. Monitoring and evaluation are processes and therefore there is a need for synergy with other activities in the project cycle, such as planning and budgeting. Weak linkage between planning and budgeting on the one hand and project monitoring and evaluation on the other will adversely affect the ultimate aim of PM&E. An important consideration in planning for data collection and analysis is to identify any limitations, biases, and threats to the accuracy of the data and analysis [6]. It is also imperative to carefully plan for the data management of the M&E system which curtails time and resource wastage [6]. Budgeting for PM&E tasks and overall responsibilities must be listed and analysed where necessary. Items associated with each task must be determined, including their cost, and there must be a budget for staffing, including full-time staff, external consultants, capacity building/training, and other human resource expenses. In addition, the budget should include all capital expenses, including facility costs, office equipment and supplies, travel and lodging, computer hardware and software, and other expenses. Budgeting must also determine whether all tasks are included in the overall project budget, such as support for an information management system, field transportation, vehicle maintenance, translation, and printing and publishing of M&E documents/tools. Poor linkage between these crucial steps in project monitoring and evaluation eventually poses a challenge [13].

The kind of measures used in measuring project monitoring and evaluation constrains the effective implementation of project monitoring and evaluation. [11] postulates that a problem with the various monitoring and evaluation models is that most of the measures are only capable of reporting on performance after they have occurred. According to [2], a conference of leading representatives from a group of design and construction companies noted that major problems with the key performance indicators (KPIs) of the Construction Best Practice Program (CBPP) were that they do not offer the opportunity to change and that they are designed as post-results KPIs. An examination of the other KPIs reveals a similar situation [5]. [2] explain two alternatives of KPIs as measures of assessment under “lagging” or “leading” measures: key performance outcomes (KPOs) and perception measures. KPOs could be used to assess a sub-process and give indications for change in the next sub-process. In