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Abstract: This study draws on CSR and stakeholder theories to explore how community interest (CI) influence responsible project management practices (RPMP) in construction projects in Nigeria. The study further sought to identify the responsible actions required of the project managers to demonstrate ethical practices and ensure hitch-free relationships with the community. To achieve this, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the results showed that CI like employment, recognition, and accountability encourage RPMP in the construction industry. We discovered that CI enhances RPMP by creating collaboration, abating acrimony, reducing costs, and saving time, thereby, enhancing sustainability practices. Actions like sensitisation, communication, engagement, and interactions enhance ethical practices and ameliorated protests

and animosity among the project stakeholders. This research contributes to the theory of RPMP, by demonstrating the role of CI in influencing RPMP. Project managers are advised to integrate CI into projects to improve relationships, prevent agitations, and gain supportive stakeholders.

Keywords: sustainable development goals; SDGs; community interests; responsible practice; responsible project management; construction industry.

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1 Introduction

The construction industry has been found to occupy a pinnacle position in the economic and infrastructural development of nations including the developing economies (Ugwu and Attah, 2016; Ogunbode et al., 2017). Recently, there has been continuous pressure on the construction industry to adopt responsible project management practices (RPMP) due to its enormous impact on the environment and society (Maqbool et al., 2023). Lima et al. (2021b) indicate that the industry contributes about 35% of the global CO₂ emissions and accounts for more than 45% of the waste in landfills. In defining construction projects, we adopted the definition provided by Ejohwomu et al. (2016) which acknowledged construction as those activities related to building, renovating, and maintaining infrastructures like roads, bridges, railways, tunnels, houses, etc.

The construction projects seem to be considered as a conduit of development and economic stability, their rapid growth in conjunction with harmful impacts on both the environment and the society have made responsible practices in the industry a growing/essential area of interest for both the academics and other stakeholders (Rathenam and Dabup, 2017; Thompson and Williams, 2018). This means, there is a heightened expectation for project managers to claim more liability for the impact of their projects on the community and the environment and to act within the confines of ethical practice in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) especially, making communities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG11) (Thompson and Williams, 2018; Otegi-Olaso et al., 2019).

The growing need for responsible management in construction indicates that within the industry, competitive advantage is currently based on the construction firms’ ability to meet the expectations of stakeholders in terms of incorporating strategies to mitigate the negative impacts on the environment, act ethically and particularly demonstrate socially responsible practices (Ogunsanmi, 2016; Lima et al., 2021a). Thus, RPMP in the construction space can serve as a drive to achieving safe and inclusive communities (SDG 11). In this study, we assess how community interest (CI) influences the adoption of RPMP in the construction industry.

Responsible project management (RPM) involves conscious efforts on the part of project managers to ensure that a project’s outcome and its positive consequences, span beyond the nuclear circle of shareholders to becoming societally relevant and beyond the short-run timeframe benefits into the far future, providing for the present society without hampering the future (Thompson and Williams, 2018). Several authors (e.g., Thompson and Williams, 2018; Silvius and Schipper, 2020; Otegi-Olaso et al., 2019) have considered this as the approach through which several construction companies can initiate the integration of sustainable construction practices into their construction project management. The enormous investments in construction projects have made them critical to the politics of both developed and developing economies (Tinoco et al., 2016). For

example, the Network Rail – Southern Railway Renewals, estimated at 9.6b GBP in England (Barbour, 2023), and Ibom Deep Seaport in Nigeria, estimated at 4.6b USD (Okafor et al., 2021) approximately 4.45b GBP. These projects have attracted criticisms from environmentalists and other stakeholders regarding their impact on the environment, society, and economy relative to the investments made.

The Ibom Deep Seaport, for example, is feared to pose serious threats to aquatic life and overburden existing infrastructure without adequate enhancement (Okafor et al., 2021). This means the success of projects must surpass the traditional tenets of cost, time, and customisation (Tinoco et al., 2016) to incorporate responsible practices. Ogunsanmi (2016) and Tinoco et al. (2016) have expressed the need for current projects to focus on adopting techniques and capabilities to protect the future. This means the current construction firms should include ways of minimising social and environmental negative impacts to improve competitive advantages and address the interests and concerns of stakeholders.

Several studies such as (Tinoco et al., 2016; Ogunbode et al., 2017; Banihashemi et al., 2017; Silvius and Schipper, 2020) acknowledge that factors including, new technology, new competencies, capabilities, infrastructure, and other environmentally friendly projects could influence the RPMP of firms. Despite the plethora of research on these factors, more work is still needed to reveal how firms could improve RPMP. In this study, we argue that by aligning and establishing joint sustainability goals with the community, construction firms can reduce negative societal impacts and establish good reputation thereby gaining competitive advantage while encouraging responsible practices. Thus, working with the community and responding to CI could be critical for construction firms, and responding to the sustainability demands of stakeholders may integrate responsible practices into project management.

Nonetheless, there is an overall lack of research regarding how CI affect RPMP in construction projects. This study, therefore, attempts to proffer a course of responsible actions which will enable project managers to act ethically and create better relationships between the community and the project team to jointly realise SDG 11. In light of the gaps identified, the study responds to the following questions.

- 1 What constitutes community interest (CI)?
- 2 How do community interest (CI) influence the responsible project management?
- 3 To what extent can construction firms align interests with the community to create a sustainable collaboration?

To answer these questions, qualitative research methodology was adopted due to its ability to:

- 1 offer in-depth information required to make validated claims about human behaviour for purposes of development and necessary adjustment in an organised setting (Mohajan, 2018)
- 2 dig deep into people's belief, experience, and value system (Mohajan, 2018).

The research was conducted in Akwa Ibom, a State in Nigeria with several construction projects. According to Ugwu and Attah (2016) and Ogunbode et al. (2017), construction projects squander a chunk of the resources and negatively impact the environment and society thus demanding accountability. In this study, it is expected that by working with

the society to develop socially responsible practices, construction firms could be enabled to integrate socially responsible practices in the execution of construction projects.

In the next section, the literature relating to responsible project management, responsible project management and sustainable development, responsible management practices, community and CI, the construction industry and construction projects in Nigeria, and the relationship between CI and project management are discussed. From this, two main propositions are developed. The subsequent section discusses the methodology and presents the process for analysing the data. Next, the findings and discussions which include the contributions to research and practice are presented. Lastly, the conclusions of the study are drawn.

2 Review of related literature

2.1 *Responsible project management and SDG*

The campaign for sustainable development in communities is the current trend in human ventures globally (van der Byl et al., 2020). Ogunbode et al. (2017) propose that the societal need to eradicate poverty, provide employment, and preserve the environment can be achieved through sustainable development. Though construction is supposed to be an enemy of environmental preservation, yet community needs construction projects to keep abreast with development and stay aesthetic (Thompson and Williams, 2018). High accountability and relational competence on the side of the project manager are required to reconcile construction projects with environmental preservation and achieve SDG11 (Ibok and Mboho, 2011; Thompson and Williams, 2018).

SDG 11 is concerned with creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable communities. Communities can be sustainable if structures and infrastructure comply with prescribed standards to optimise long-term comfort and well-being by adopting energy-saving technologies such as smart lighting and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC), and environmentally friendly operations. Therefore, construction Project managers are required to take responsibility to ensure that project delivery guarantees structures that promote human health and preserve the environment (Thompson and Williams, 2018). Otegi-Olaso et al. (2019) comment that the responsible project manager needs competency development especially communication to create sustainability awareness among all project stakeholders. The need to integrate the environmental, social, and economic factors in the performance of construction projects birth the RPM which makes project managers more liable for the impact of their projects in enhancing sustainable development (Thompson and Williams, 2018).

With RPM, construction project managers are expected to possess the technical and relational competence to deliver structures that guarantee and promote human health and well-being, preserve the environment, and result in economic profits (Thompson and Williams, 2018). As asserted by Tinoco et al. (2016), Otegi-Olaso et al. (2019) and van der Byl et al. (2020), RPM places a demand on the project manager to draw upon the perspective of responsible innovation, accountability, and sustainability in project environment and addresses project impact beyond the traditional tenets of cost, time and scope. The project manager is expected to make conscious efforts to accommodate the various project stakeholders and act as a steward of their estate (Otegi-Olaso et al., 2019).

Incorporated into the framework by Thompson and Williams (2018) are eight principles of RPM including:

- 1 understanding the purpose of every project
- 2 being aware of the possible impact and implication of every project
- 3 being curious to uncover every complexity inherent in the projects and projects' environment
- 4 recognising uncertainty and making plans to mitigate
- 5 anticipating the possible project scenarios beyond the familiar ones
- 6 creativity to keep abreast with global innovation
- 7 accepting responsibility to protect, nurture and replenish the experiences of stakeholders and natural resources
- 8 striving for a balance by combining short term and long-term goals and three dimensions of success for people, planet and profit.

Although these principles are interrelated (Thompson and Williams, 2018), principles 2, 7, and 8 speak particularly about CI and relate with the adopted definition of RPMP: as continuously demonstrating actions that would provide for harmonious relationships between the project team and project stakeholders – considered in this study. The community comprises the environment and the stakeholders. Principle 2 relates with RPMP and focuses on CI in the sense that the responsible project manager is expected to take cognisance of project environments and act in ways that the possible impact and implications of the project are for the interests of the present stakeholder and environment without detriment to the future. In the same way, principle 7 foretells the demand of RPMP which places responsibility on the project manager to deliver project outcomes that protect, nurture, and replenish the environment and stakeholders' interests and experiences. Furthermore, as expressed in principle 8, RPMP anticipates the project manager to execute projects in ways that balance the triple bottom line benefits both for the short and long run. These principles are to help the project managers provide for CI.

However, according to Lima et al. (2021b), the construction industry still struggles to implement RPM, indicating the need for further research to identify actions that could facilitate RPM and enhance sustainable development for the interest of the communities. Consequently, this study aims to identify actions that will facilitate RPM and when demonstrated give rise to RPMP. Thus, organisations would be applying these RPM principles by Thompson and Williams (2018) if they adopt RPMP.

Given the important role that stakeholders play in project execution and outcome, current projects are likely to be halted if the voices of the community are not apprehended. In the same vein, Ejohwomu et al. (2016) and Otegi-Olaso et al. (2019) perceive that the project manager needs to exhibit a set of behaviours that will result in project outcomes that satisfy the short-run expectations of the community. This means working with the community and aligning the project goals with the sustainable development expectations of the society could be critical to the firms becoming socially responsible. The community can point out the potential negative effects of the project and develop joint solutions to mitigate the societal impact of the project that help the company to achieve SDG.

2.2 Responsible project management practices

RPMP involve exhibiting a set of principles or actions aimed at ensuring effective, ethical, and collaborative execution of projects to achieve sustainable outcomes (Lock, 2020). Meredith et al. (2017) identifies some fundamentals of these principles or actions to include stakeholder engagement, communication, sensitisation, ethical decision making, accountability, quality assurance, and compliance with regulations. Practices means the act of repeatedly performing some activities to improve skills and proficiency, or established ways of doing things (for the achievement of specific goals) intended to be passed down through generations (Palazzo and Wentland, 2011). Harrison and Lock (2017) opine that practices can also denote the application of theoretical knowledge or developing a pattern of behaviour that will remain within a setting. A consistent pattern of doing things in an organisation could be termed organisational culture, in the same way, a consistent pattern of behaviour in a field of practice could constitute their ethos or identifier (Lock, 2020). Therefore, for this study, RPMP shall be defined as the act of consistently demonstrating actions that achieve a harmonious relationship between the project team and other project stakeholders to enhance sustainable project outcomes with the ultimate intention of making such behaviour (demonstration) the ethos of project management profession while ensuring progressive competency that could identify and distinguish a responsible project manager. RPMP shall be considered as the practical application of responsible project management (RPM). Tinoco et al. (2016) say RPM is striking a balance and harmony among social, environmental, and economic interests. In another study, Otegi-Olaso et al. (2019), imply that RPM is directing projects with a conscious attention to the intended and unintended project outcomes. Thompson and Williams (2018) posit that RPM is a conscious effort on the part of the project manager to behave in ways that will provide for collaboration between all stakeholders and the project team.

The consistent adherence to or adoption of certain methodology, skills, behaviour, and actions that demonstrate for instance, ‘striking a balance, conscious attention and/or conscious efforts’ which result in collaboration, harmony, and positive project outcomes is considered RPMP by this study. Comprehensively, these practices are expected to be a consistent pattern of behaviour, methodology, ethos, or identifier of responsible project management, to build competency in the project manager to achieve harmony and collaboration among project stakeholders as well as sustainable development. The need to evolve ways of eradicating construction projects’ waste and creating triple-impact wealth for all stakeholders necessitates the investigation into the role of CI in improving RPMP.

2.3 Community and community interest

CI is founded on community needs and belief systems (Di Maddaloni and Davis, 2018). In this study, CI is regarded as the (demand of/expectation of) a group of people living together from projects in their community. Lim and Skaik (2024) highlighted the significance of working closely with the community for the success of the project. In terms of economic concerns, CI may vary from one community to another but basically, every community wants an improved life while preserving their age-long legacy (Sanggoro et al., 2022). Generally, every community demands adequate compensation, through employment, contract awards, and the provision of social amenities. Members in the community could demand to be involved in major technical and economic decisions

concerning the projects which the project team may object to on the grounds that these community members may lack the required competency (Fei et al., 2021; Teo and Loosemore, 2017; Ola-awo et al., 2021). In situations where these demands are not satisfied, according to Teo and Loosemore (2017), there may be protests from the community for which cost implications can be enormous.

Projects that interfere with this sort of structure can necessarily be objected. Besides, according to Rathenam and Dabup (2017), human beings inherently resist change, and this makes change a process that requires competence on the part of the change administrator in this case the project manager.

Projects especially construction, commonly alter the existing structure of things culturally, socially, environmentally even ecologically within the locality, sometimes without commensurate compensation (Erol and Unal, 2015). While such projects can provide access for inter-community and inter-state businesses and boost economic activities, they can also cause communal disintegration, desecration, disruption of aquatic and land ecosystems, and serious displacement of the local population (Lima et al., 2021b). Projects can further disrupt the social harmony that existed in the community and introduce insecurity by the influx of people (Erol and Unal, 2015; Teo and Loosemore, 2017). These adverse effects could make a community perceive construction projects as threats and consenting to them as taking high risks, such perception if not dispelled can result in acrimonies (Teo and Loosemore, 2011). It cannot be denied that construction projects degrade environments, deplete natural resources, and generate ill perceptions in the community about construction projects (Di Maddaloni and Davis, 2018).

To avoid these costs and other ills like community conflicts and to facilitate improved collaboration and participation strategies, project managers must gain insight into the underpinning factors that can breed and nurture animosity among the project stakeholders and adopt a management approach that will abort the conflicts and ensure sustainable delivery (Fei et al., 2021; Teo and Loosemore, 2017; Ola-awo et al., 2021). It may be very important to demonstrate responsiveness in the project space so that construction project managers can be useful contributors to SDGs (Silvius and Schipper, 2020). This means, given the consequences of construction projects, RPMP can serve as a mediating framework that can align and mitigate the conflicting status between the project team and the host community.

2.4 The construction industry and construction projects in Nigeria

The construction industry is very important in the economy of every country, from the rural community to the metropolitan community, structures are built by construction organisations (Odukoya et al., 2021). Unambiguously, the construction industry is considered a major growth driver of the economy (Tinoco et al., 2016; Ogunbode et al., 2017). This industry provides the infrastructure on which every other sector of the economy rolls on. Furthermore, it provides an arena for social interaction and cultural integration, skilled and unskilled labour interact to learn and unlearn skills and competence (Teo and Loosemore, 2017). The construction industry is considered as one of the most significant employers of labour. According to Odukoya et al. (2021), it absorbs about eight (8) million people in Nigeria, this represents 25% of the workforce in the country.

However, some scholars query the premium placed on the construction industry, for example, Adeleke et al. (2018), highlighted that despite the effort put into the

construction industry, construction project sustainability performance in Nigeria is poor. Similarly, Erol and Unal (2015) dispute the assertion that the construction industry is the driver of economic development and rather posit that construction projects are followers of fluctuations in macro-economy, especially in Turkey. This argument can be supported by the fact that the resources invested in construction projects are generated from other economic activities. Thus, unequivocally, construction projects depend upon other economic indices, and extract more from the environment and society rather than what it offers (Ugwu and Attah, 2016). Hence, the construction industry owes society the prevention of harm.

In developing nations, especially Nigeria, it is expedient to give attention to the construction industry and ensure that the developing communities get the best from its management practices (Ugwu and Attah, 2016; Ujene and Oladokun, 2017). Nigeria commonly suffers scarcity of funds for development, this requires responsible administration of the scarce resources to achieve sustainable development (Ejohwomu et al., 2016). Lima et al. (2021b) claim that the construction industry is equally the agent of environmental degradation, atmospheric pollution, resource depletion, and social disintegration. This has increased the interest of stakeholders in the socially responsible practices of the industry (Lima et al., 2021a).

Concerns about construction projects have been high in various parts of Nigeria, especially Akwa Ibom State after so many investments (Ugwu and Attah, 2016). Akwa Ibom, one of the states in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria with an estimated population of 5.5 million (Adedokun et al., 2020), is a relatively new state in the country. Akwa Ibom state is made up of several communities with enormous potential for infrastructural development (Ugwu and Attah, 2016). This has led to the rapid increase in construction activities in the area causing an enormous negative impact on the community. The rise in projects in the area has also increased the need for more research into the responsible practices of the firms. For example, the building of the East-West Road from Akwa Ibom State in the south-south to Ogun State in the South-West had its positive and negative effects on the affected communities. With the ample opportunities for infrastructural development, it is naturally relevant to research how the construction industry can harness the scarce resources of the state to attain sustainable developments.

Several authors (e.g., Tinoco et al., 2016; Ogunbode et al., 2017; Banihashemi et al., 2017; Silvius and Schipper, 2020) have researched the factors influencing sustainable construction. In this study, we argue that involving the community in the design of management plans of construction firms could increase sustainable construction practices. Nonetheless, studies in the area are almost non-existent.

2.5 Theoretical framework

This study hinges on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder theories, which are similar concepts that stress the importance of incorporating societal interests into business operations (Albuquerque et al., 2019; Hedblom et al., 2019). researchers have also considered social entrepreneurship theory (SE) and found that SE involves novelty attempts to solve unmet social needs and tends more toward the charity (Niño, 2015; Phillips et al., 2015) and therefore did not address the unique interests of the host community while CSR involves usual actions to provide for societal interests with

relative economic implication (Hedblom et al., 2019) thus becoming a best fit for companies' response to CI (Niño, 2015).

Furthermore, corporate social responsibility theory was adopted because recent assertions including:

- 1 Albuquerque and Cabral (2021) have it that CSR is a strategic concern for organisations no more an afterthought Carson (1993) in Freeman and Dmytriyeve (2017) because over time, organisations have learned to respond to stakeholders' interests
- 2 that the global expectation of business as corporate citizens is fulfilled through CSR (Tilt, 2016)
- 3 that the integrative and ethical approach of CSR as classified by Melé (2008) expects companies to integrate communities' interests into project charter alongside their aim of wealth creation.

The corporate social responsibility theory which conveys some expectations on the community and responsibilities on the project team (Albuquerque et al., 2019), implies that companies demonstrate a set of practices that guarantees the maximum positive impacts of its operations on the community (Brin and Nehme, 2019). The basis for CSR as stated by Tilt (2016) is that businesses are committed to becoming holistically involved as part of the community they operate in and transiting from minimising harm to creating value while ensuring ethical and responsible practices. Al-Shammari et al. (2022) allege that CSR has been employed in resolving disputes between construction project firms and communities. The theory has been used to identify community priorities and determine how best to satisfy them (Brin and Nehme, 2019). It integrates the community's ethical and ecological expectations in the companies' processes and applies prudent use of resources to ensure quality life for the present as well as the future.

The stakeholder (SH) theory postulates that anyone who has a claim on a firm is a stakeholder and should not be considered as a means to some end but should be involved in determining the progressive direction of the firm in which they have the stake (Oppong et al., 2017). It further stipulates that firms' objectives are likely to be realised only by providing for and balancing the interests of the different stakeholder groups, in this case, the community (Ola-awo et al., 2021).

2.6 Relationship between community interest and RPMP

RPMP as explained by this study, is the bond between construction project teams and host communities. According to Thompson and Williams (2018), the responsible project manager resolves crises that arise from variant objectives of project stakeholders. The project management profession is continuously bombarded with demands to deliver more value than invested inputs to the different stakeholders (Thompson and Williams, 2018). This challenge, according to Otegi-Olaso et al. (2019), requires the project manager to take some actions in line with CSR and SH theories that will enable the provision for all interests and demonstrate ethical practices, these actions form RPMP. While Otegi-Olaso et al. (2019) think that too much is required of the project manager, Oppong et al. (2017) support the community impression that project managers should deliver more given the investments in construction projects. Thompson and Williams (2018) seem to think that adopting the RPM framework is a final solution for construction project management

challenges but others like (e.g., Zuofa and Ochieng, 2016; Ogunbode et al., 2017; van der Byl et al., 2020) argue that there is no one-for-all situation framework for managing construction projects responsibly. Therefore, they sought ways to meet the needs of the community as provided for in CSR and SH theories. Nevertheless, RPMP is an attempt to enhance managerial competence that can align CI with project objectives. It requires project managers to demonstrate actions that deliver the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development while recognising conflicting interests and using such consciousness to make informed decisions.

Ola-awo et al. (2021) and Amade and Iringe-Koko (2019) affirm the opinion of Zuofa and Ochieng (2016) that the application of RPM principles is faced with many challenges in the field. Although, Silvius and Schipper (2020) survey factors that promote responsible management practice, these factors cannot be reproduced in every project or project situation. Sanggoro et al. (2022) posit that projects are different because of their unique circumstances, community culture, norms, and values as well as intended outcomes. This paper agrees with Sanggoro et al. (2022) because of the uniqueness and complexity of communities. The studies reviewed give a connotation that CI impresses positively on RPMP. Thus, exhibiting a sense of responsibility as advocated in the underpinning theories by project managers can go a long way to inhibit conflicts that may arise from diversity of interests. Based on this, the researchers propose that:

- 1 Community interest (CI) allows responsible project management practices (RPMP) in construction projects in Akwa Ibom State.
- 2 Identifying and demonstrating responsible actions in construction project space can achieve hitch-free relationships with the host community.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design and philosophy

Due to the attendant issues on RPMP, the complexity of the construction project environment, and the need to conduct an in-depth investigation into CI, qualitative research methodology precisely, interviews were selected (Zuofa and Ochieng, 2016; Mohajan, 2018). Qualitative research methods are crucial for obtaining astute information required to make validated claims about human behaviour for purposes of development and necessary adjustment in an organised setting as well as dig deep into people's beliefs, experiences, and value systems (Almahmoud and Doloi, 2018).

Since our research is concerned with social phenomena that are subjectively measured (Almahmoud and Doloi, 2018), the interpretivism philosophy was selected to understand the impact of CI on RPMP by construction project managers (Miles et al., 2018). This is because the complexity of social phenomena is better explored through interaction to apprehend the process and meaning as well as understanding the subject under study (Collis and Hussey, 2021). Adopting interpretive philosophy makes it clear that; this research involved natural, and not an artificial setting (Miles et al., 2018), had to do with human beings with unpredictable characteristics and not objects that are relatively predictable (Collis and Hussey, 2021), and that we are concerned with process rather than outcomes (Saunders and Lewis, 2018). Due to this, the qualitative

methodology was selected as a tool for primary data collection, and the interpretive method was applied to obtain the result.

3.2 *Sample size, participants' attributes, and interview process*

This study focused on the construction industry in Akwa Ibom State. As posited by Abrams et al. (2017) choosing a suitable sample size in qualitative research is eventually a matter of knowledge and experience on the part of the researcher in appraising the quality of data against the purpose for which it will be used, and the research method and sampling strategy adopted. Mohajan (2018) also suggests that a relatively small sample size is suitable for qualitative research based on the notion that a small sample size with an adequate understanding of the subject under investigation is more apt to provide richer and more useful information than a large sample size with inadequate knowledge of the subject matter. Consequently, a purposive and judgemental sampling technique (Hewitt-Taylor, 2017) was adopted to select 20 project managers from the list obtained from Port Harcourt Chambers of Commerce.

Table 1 Participants attributes

<i>PARTICIPANT ID</i>	<i>CURRENT POSITION</i>	<i>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE</i>	<i>NUMBER OF SITES</i>	<i>ORGANISATION</i>
ENGR1	Project engr civil	20	Several	OIL EXPLORATION/CIVIL
ENGR10	Project manager social	6	Few	CIVIL CONSTRUCTION
ENGR2	Project manager civil	12	Several	CIVIL/ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION
ENGR3	Project manager construction	15	Several	GOVERNMENT
ENGR4	Project manager safety and civil	15	Several	OIL SERVICING/CIVIL CONSTRUCTION
ENGR5	Project manager civil/procurement	16	Several	OIL SERVICING/CIVIL CONSTRUCTION
ENGR6	Project manager	7	Few	CIVIL CONSTRUCTION
ENGR7	Project manager electrical	14	Several	CIVIL/ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION
ENGR8	Project manager pipeline	17	Several	OIL EXPLOATION/CIVIL CONSTRUCTION
ENGR9	Project manager civil	5	Few	CIVIL CONSTRUCTION

Out of this, only ten participated in the interview. The choice of these interviewees was facilitated by familiarity based on previous interactions with the select respondents. These respondents were first contacted through phone calls, and participants' agreement/participants' information forms were sent to them via emails and chased through with several calls. On their acceptance to participate, the interview guide was also sent to each of them. We obtained ethical approval and ensured that the ethical standards were

adhered to throughout the investigation. Subsequently, Microsoft Teams or Zoom account was set up for each of them. Most of the respondents were in top positions and had a lot of experience (see Table 1). For anonymity, pseudonyms ENGR1, ENGR2, ... ENGR10 were used to identify the different participants.

An interview guide was developed (see the Appendix), and semi-structured interviews which lasted between 30 and 35 minutes were conducted virtually with ten practicing project managers using Microsoft Team or Zoom (see Table 2). Given the busy schedules of the project managers and the cost involved in travelling to each of the interviewees, virtual interviews were preferred. In Table 2, the duration of each of the interviews together with the medium are presented. With the permission of the respondents, the live-transcript function was enabled during the interviews to aid the transcription of the discussion. To ensure accuracy and authenticity the audio versions were played against auto transcript versions several times, and words that were mis-captured were appropriately corrected to produce valid and reliable word version of the transcripts. In-process themes were identified as the researcher gained familiarity with the data and the interview data were well processed and imported into NVivo where codes and themes were developed, -and thematic analysis done.

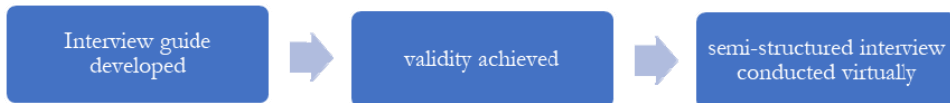
Table 2 Interview time and method

<i>Participant ID</i>	<i>Interview time in minutes</i>	<i>Interview method</i>	<i>Summary of opinion</i>
ENGR1	36.57 minutes	Zoom	RPM means the outcome of the project should not affect the people, the place, and the company adversely
ENGR2	33.30 minutes	Zoom	RPM is getting the community involved
ENGR3	35.12 minutes	Zoom	RPM is to sum up and get ready with intended and unintended effects of a project so that there is no disruption.
ENGR4	31 minutes	Microsoft Teams	RPM is taking the interest of the community to heart by carrying out EIA
ENGR5	33.34 minutes	Microsoft Teams	RPM is managing to preserve the flora and fauna. It is harmonising the desire of the people and the place.
ENGR6	29.17 minutes	Microsoft Teams	RPM is embarking on environmentally friendly projects
ENGR7	35.05 minutes	Microsoft Teams	RPM starts with meeting the community people (the stakeholders)
ENGR8	30.07 minutes	Zoom	RPM is to manage the project requirements, objectives, and resources
ENGR9	29 minutes	Zoom	RPM is taking the lead role, being accountable, monitoring, and ensuring goals are achieved
ENGR10	30.41minutes	Zoom	RPM is managing projects with conscious attention that there may be intended and unintended impact

Figure 1 shows the interview process. Since existing literature on this study area is lacking, the researchers developed the interview guide (see the Appendix) purposely for this study and subjected it through rounds of checks to enhance its validity. The questions

were generated based on the research questions and the objectives of the study. Firstly, the interview questions together with the aims of this research were sent to a management professor whose comments were implemented, then to a qualitative research expert whose critique and inputs were implemented as well. Finally, a pilot study was conducted with professional project managers from the UK one of whom had supervised a mega project in Nigeria, and two who are based in Nigeria. The observations, feedback, and insights gained from the pilot test were implemented to validate the questions (see the Appendix).

Figure 1 Interview process (see online version for colours)



4 Data analysis

Responses obtained from participants through the virtual interviews (Microsoft Team or Zoom) were transcribed and subjected to the three-stage procedure of reducing, displaying, and analysing to obtain the codes as prescribed by experts (Miles et al., 2018; Collis and Hussey, 2021). The transcripts were cleaned (data reduction) by selecting the relevant responses to the research question, these responses were further abridged in Excel spreadsheets of eleven rows and ten columns for concision and clarity. The rows were the participants' identity (ID) and the columns were the abridged questions/responses. Due diligence was taken during the data cleaning process to preserve the original information.

The spreadsheet was imported into NVivo software as data for analysis. Uploaded data were reorganised and explored using such functions as, 'create' for nodes and case classifications, 'explore' for word frequency, and text search to develop codes and themes based on the research questions. Word frequency, text search query, and auto coding were used to gain familiarity with the collected data. Furthermore, data familiarisation was improved during the rigorous process of transcription and querying in NVivo as remarked by Saunders and Lewis (2018). The auto transcripts of Zoom and Microsoft Teams were first transcribed into word-edited documents. To ensure accuracy and authenticity the audio versions were played against auto-transcripts versions several times, and words that were wrongly captured were properly corrected to attain a valid and reliable word version of the transcripts.

Anchor nodes based on research objectives were created which helped the researchers to organise sub-nodes in the dataset. Interview questions that directly address the research questions were also identified. The data interrogation feature was to create word clouds, this added reliability to the result as human errors were eliminated. Relevant texts were selected and auto-coded by NVivo feature. The visualisation of words in the word cloud helps the researchers to compile the qualitative data into codes and themes based on the word frequency as displayed in Figures 1 and 2.

Themes according to Collis and Hussey (2021) are recurring patterns in the data bundle that capture key ideas related to the research question. Going through the

“Responsible project management is a project management that takes the interest of the community to heart ... So, under responsible project management, you are expected to carry out a project and leave the environment as safe as it was before you came in.”

Moreover, in the words of ENGR2

“... responsible management practices... First and foremost, get the community involved, ... Get to the level of having not just telling them about the project but let them be part of it... If you go to a community that () people are not that technically skilled, you know, there are other things you can engage them with, it gives them a sense of belonging that this is our projects, ...”

ENGR5 mentions the responsible actions to include showing understanding, carrying the along, etc. This excerpt from his transcript has it expressed;

“... give them that understanding. They are normal. In most of the communities we worked, some people worked there and they had problems with them () but we came into this understanding coming from the background of having a good environmental impact assessment (EIA) before you go to any work, we understand how to carry them along.”

From empirical findings, we discovered that the interests of the community (like leaving the environment safe, involving them, and understanding how to carry them along as mentioned by the participants) brought about interaction, sensitisation, negotiation, engagement, etc (which are adjudged responsible actions that form the RPMP). If these actions are taken the community can feel recognised, involved and appeased. This appeasement brings about harmony between the community and the project team. Finally, our construct makes a significant contribution to the literature by showing how the CI impacts on RPMP and brings about eventual benefits to the trio – community, environment, and project team – people, environment, and economy.

The responses of the respondents to the question on what is generally considered RPMP in the construction industry indicate that project managers in the study area have good knowledge of RPMP. Although there were differing expressions, each has some element of RPMP in their definition.

For instance, ENGR5 said RPMP is

“... managing to preserve the flora and fauna”

and ENGR6 explained:

“...what I consider to be responsible project management in the construction, in the construction industry, you know is embarking on a project that is environment friendly. And a project that seeks to incorporate the Umm feelings and aspirations of the community...”

Other respondents used expressions such as ‘get the community involved’, ‘manage with the interest of the community at heart’, ‘be conscious of intended and unintended outcomes’, etc., which confirm their understanding of what RPMP entails and its place in building to achieve the SDG. The definitions given by ENGR5 and ENGR6 are consistent with the definition of Thompson and Williams (2018) and the UN sustainable concept which stipulates that responsible management should provide for all stakeholders, the environment, and the economy in the present without hurting the future. Generally, the respondents seemed to be working with the societal orientation of project

management and adopting a people-oriented approach for successful relationships with the host community.

It was necessary to identify actions that constitute responsible and ethical practice and are relevant for collaborative relationships between the host community and the construction project team, which are considered as RPMP. These actions according to the obtained responses included, inter alia, honesty, interaction, relationship, negotiation, and compliance with extant legislation which indicated the desired behaviour required to achieve RPMP (see Figure 2). An extract from ENGR1 response states:

Number one here. The project manager should make best possible decisions, interact, sensitise the community ... two, ..., he should demonstrate honesty ... three, he should act consistently with the relevant government regulation and laws, such as Ministry of Environment and in terms of oil and gas company, Nigerian upstream petroleum regulation corporation, ... four he should handle personnel data information professionally, ... information concerning community should be kept confidential.

Based on Figure 3, it can be inferred that if project managers interact with the community, good relationships can be developed, and hitch-free experiences can be enjoyed. However inherently, NVivo expresses similar ideas with different words thus congesting the word cloud with too many words that can have the same meaning. So, from the words displayed twelve sub-nodes were developed and similar words collapsed into the nodes to form the required actions as displayed in Table 3 column RPMP.

Figure 3 Word cloud showing responsible actions (RPMP) (see online version for colours)



4.1.3 Theme 3: community perception of construction projects

One of the objectives of this study was to discover the perception of the host community about construction projects. The participants were asked what they observed as the perception of the host community concerning the construction project. Though various

responses were given, they conveyed a common perception – that communities want construction projects. Some respondents said the communities were welcoming, others said they were excited and grateful for the development in their community. The youth in the community saw it as an opportunity to acquire skills, gain employment, and become usefully engaged in the projects. However, some respondents also mentioned that their perception depended largely on their previous experience. Interestingly, a section of the community who had been previously marginalised was described as very sceptical and required assurance by scrutinising the listed responsible actions to convince them of the projects' good intentions. For example, ENGR1: said

“So based on the marginalization by previous companies operating in this area so there's like a sort of enlightenment now by the youth and communities, so that each company that comes in. They want you to do things properly, you cannot just go into community and start to work like that, they would demand to know your environmental impact assessment (EIA) because they need to know how this community project will impact on the environment”

Furthermore, we also found that most people who had been marginalised and cheated required the national government and international community like the UN intervention to ensure compliance with environmental impact assessment (EIA), memorandum of understanding (MOU), and other legislative instruments like the Petroleum Industrial Acts (PIA) (2021), Harmful Waste 2004 Act and Corporate Social Responsibility Acts, 2015.

4.1.4 Theme 4: responsible actions for ethical practice, collaboration, and sustainability

As part of the aim of this research, we sought to identify and present strategic actions as a work template for the construction project manager which will ensure ethical practice and a hitch-free relationship with the host community. Getting this work template became necessary because differences in human perceptions and reactions to life phenomena are certain (Teo and Loosemore, 2017). Conflicting interests are bound to exist where people are involved, and these conflicting interests can destroy good intentions and frustrate the most positive efforts (Lima et al., 2021a). In the same way, communities are bound to react especially when an event they consider strange is happening around them (Fan et al., 2017). Like ENGR2, who has twelve years of experience working in different communities asserts that:

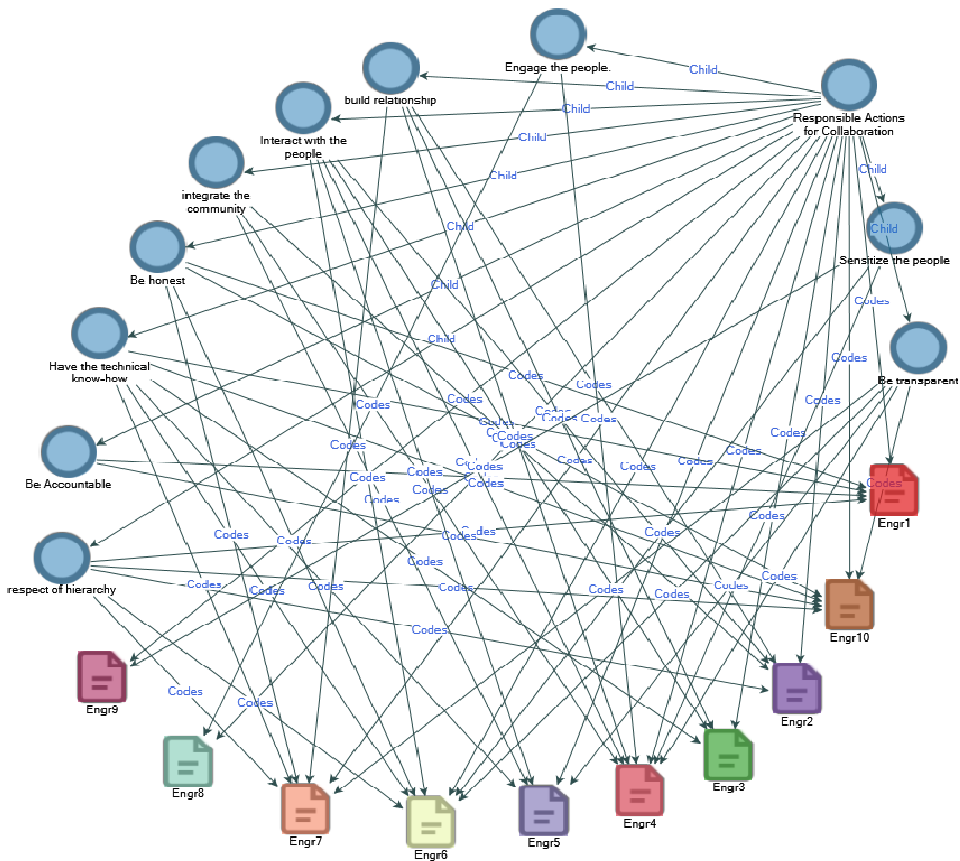
“There are different reactions ... it cannot be the same across board. ... there are some communities, that are very literate communities ... they will demand to know the scope of the work, ... Then, there are others ... the literacy level is not very high, they are always feeling that you're coming with less after you've been given so much. ... Different kinds of perceptions...”

So, while some may be quick to assimilate others may require *a little more* of responsible practice from the project managers (as emphasised by ENGR 5). ENGR 5 and ENGR4 maintain that there are always ‘dissenting voices’. In the words of ENGR4:

“...the people you are dealing with are mixed character ... it () takes caution for you to be able to carry them along in a smooth manner from the beginning till the end.”

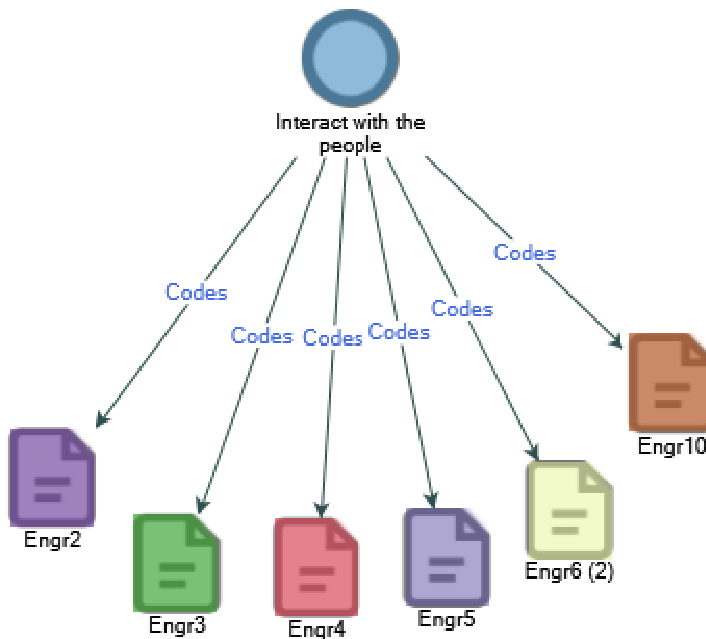
Consequent upon these conflicting interests and the need for a harmonious working environment, it was necessary to investigate what actions these successful project managers demonstrated as those actions would enable other project managers to be compliant with ethical practices and achieve collaboration between the host community and the project team. The participants agreed to have challenging experiences that test their ingenuity in dealing with people at some point. Actions taken during such impactful experiences to resolve the challenges became precedence to solving similar issues in another community. Fig. 4 displays the different actions suggested by the participants which included: sensitising the people, engaging, integrating, interacting, compliance with government regulations, technical expertise, and accountability. The suggested actions to form the responsible actions are represented by the circular blue nodes (sub-nodes), and the participants are represented by the multi-coloured nodes. The circular blue node at the right extreme of the figure represents the anchor nodes (responsible actions for ethical practice and collaboration). The arrows that go out of the blue nodes to the respondents' nodes indicate the respondents who suggested the actions while the arrows that go into the sub-nodes from the anchor node confirm that these are responsible practices (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Project map showing identified responsible actions (see online version for colours)



The responses from respondents seem to suggest a common approach evolving from similar experiences working in different communities. For instance, the arrows from the node ‘interact with people’ show that six respondents suggested this action (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 Project map showing participants who recommended interaction as RPMP (see online version for colours)

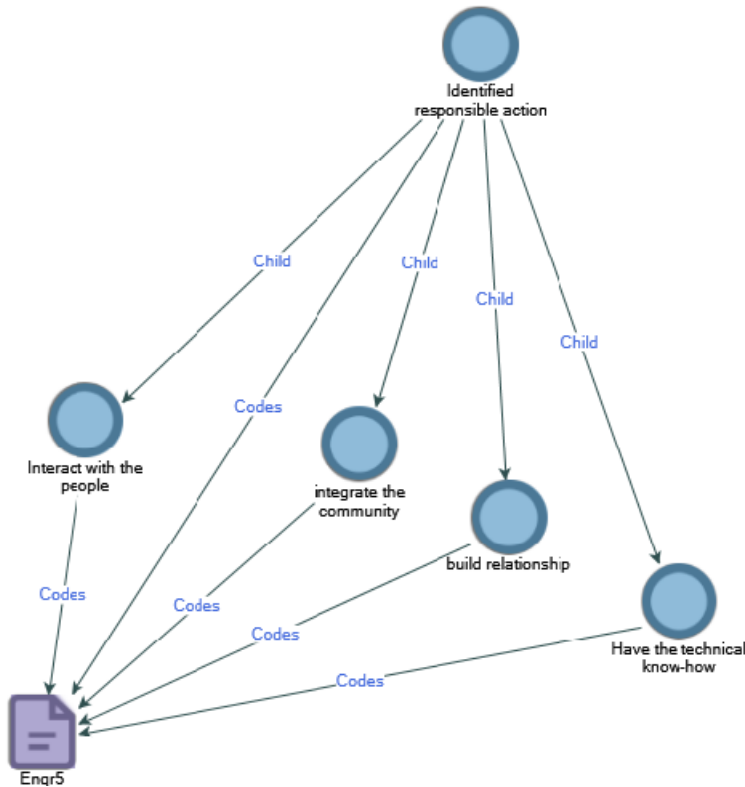


ENGR5 confirmed that companies who give heed to these little actions enjoy collaborative relationships with the host communities and do not have to grapple with regulatory agencies because of unethical practices. ENGR 5 confirmed that:

“Them (community) not being recognized will have a lot of problems for you know your job. From all the strata, call all of them together. Work with them. They go before you and then talk to the aggrieved sectors. By the time they come together you harmonize them. ... You talk to the women, if it is the men that have been ... in the forefront go behind, talk to their women bring them together. They will go back home and talk to their men on your behalf. Talk to the few. You understand? ... possibly play, we play football with them on the football field. Let them understand that you are coming with an olive branch and they will extend such to you.”

The participant suggested four actions namely: build relationships, interact with the people, integrate the community, and have technical expertise.

Figure 6 Project map showing one participant giving many suggestions (see online version for colours)



From the actions identified in the study nodes created (see Figures 3 and 5) which make up the responsible actions for the project manager, it is believed that if these actions yielded positive results for these professionals in several communities, and the communities are found to have common interests, these actions if replicated by other construction project managers, given the same community status may likely have the same results, however, this is not a linear template. The actions do not follow any format, they can be taken at any stage in the project life cycle and can be taken as many times as it is necessary. Demonstrating these simple actions is considered the basics of RPMP.

The respondents made it clear that the integration of RPMP starts from the conception of the project and flows through to delivery, this aligns with the claims of Thompson and Williams (2018) that RPM occurs throughout the project lifecycle. For example, ENGR1 said:

Yes, the community interests are in the project planning during the planning stage, ... before acquiring the site ... stakeholders meeting, public enlightenment ... let them know ... discuss the environmental impact assessment of this project with them and the gray area is being ironed out before you go into – so, during the planning stage the host community is paramount before the design, approval, execution stage.

Admittedly, as mentioned by the respondents, ENGR4:

“Responsible project management... takes the interest of the community to heart carrying out environmental impact assessment ... there will be a memorandum of understanding between the community and the company handling the project. And that memorandum of understanding will spell out a lot of interests. So, under responsible project management, you are expected to continuously involve the people, interact, communicate back and forth from project initiation to finish ... leave the environment as safe as it was before you came in.”

ENGR5:

... responsible project management starts from the beginning and through the project duration... Talk to them while you are making the evaluation, executing and delivering... Not leaving any negative sign or negative feedback.

Interaction with the community begins before the project in the form of sensitisation and consultations and continues as negotiations, dialoguing, etc. According to them, one form of communication or another must always be employed throughout the project.

4.1.5 Theme 5: impact of community interest on responsible project management practices

To assess the impact of CI (proposition 1) on RPMP, the respondents were asked to list in order of priority what influences their responsible practice decisions, they commonly responded that CI is their priority. All the participants in their various ways either expressed or implied that CI exerted a positive impact on their RPMP except one participant, ENGR7, who believed in ethical practice above CI says:

... okay well mmm for me the factors that mmm I would consider as influencing my responsible project management is just the focus on doing what is right. Basically, being *ethical* ... be it economic interest or the interest of the community you know mm just focus on doing what I know is correct and doing what is right by law... yeah definitely community interest is prioritized but not to the extent to which it contravenes what is right and just be *ethical*

One of the basic interests of the community is to be fully engaged in whatever goes on in their community. Equally, one of the basic actions identified as RPMP is proper and timely interaction to engage the community to fulfil the principle of inclusivity and enhance building sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) (Silvius and Schipper, 2020). Every responsible manager according to the respondents desires a peaceful community, and construction project managers are compelled by CI to act responsibly for peaceful co-existence. This is implied in ENGR6's response that:

“...Ah! You want a peaceful community, ... First, yes, we call it here stakeholders meeting. When you get to rural to work, to do any construction job ... it is expedient first, you have a meeting... call those stakeholders, the community, for ... a meeting. Come to agreement, address their interests... you have to tell them see we are coming to do this and do that we are coming in peace ...we are going to ... build a transformer substation. These substations might have () to take part of your farm... letting people know exactly what it means, will give your team relative peace. You don't impose project on them, you negotiate ...”

It is a fact that where there is no communication confusion is bound to set in and this will give rise to animosity (Al Safarini et al., 2021). Thus, the construction project manager entering someone's community to carry out any project no matter how important that

project may be, is expected to pre-communicate his intention to the host community (Zuofa and Ochieng, 2016; Odukoya et al., 2021). For instance, ENGR1 who has 20 years' experience working as a construction project manager for an oil exploration company stated that it is imperative to pre-inform the host community before entry. ENGR1 stated that:

“... Yes, the community interests are in this project planning ..., you cannot just go into a community like that, without stakeholders meeting, public enlightenment program, may be lecture or ... workshop you have to let them know ...”.

From the identified CI and RPMP, CI impacts positively on RPMP, thereby, supporting the proposition that CI allows RPMP and further proving that CI impacts positively on RPMP (Rathenam and Dabup, 2017). The tabular and the diagrammatic presentations in Table 3 and Figure 4, respectively indicate the positive impact exerted by CI on RPMP as each of the CI may compel the project manager to take responsible actions (see Table 3).

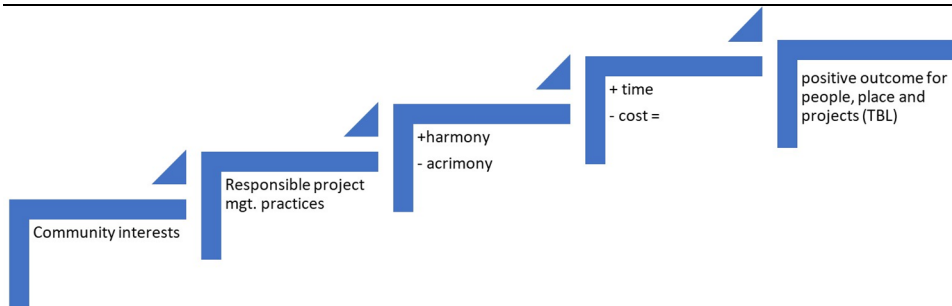
In Table 3, column CI presents identified CI while column RPMP presents responsible actions required to provide for these interests. For example, employment is a CI which the project manager responds to by engaging the community members and sensitising them about the job requirements. In the same way, awarding contracts and sub-contracts through negotiation, sensitisation, interaction, and engagement is responding to their interests. Furthermore, protecting the environment and providing social amenities, etc by integrating/and respecting the community members, and complying with government laws and regulations means responding to CI. These responses are considered ethical practices which may make the community happy to support and participate in the project as indicated in the result column. This collaboration helps the project team to implement SDG11 building safe and inclusive cities, and thus, help them to become sustainable. Being sustainable in this context means having the ability to meet the present needs of the people without compromising their future. Responding to the CI, therefore, may enhance construction projects to preserve the flora and fauna of their host community.

Table 3 Matching community interest (CI) against responsible actions

<i>CI</i>	<i>RPMP</i>	<i>Results</i>
Employment	Engage, sensitise them	Ethical practice and collaboration
Contract and sub-contract	Negotiate, sensitise, interact, engage	Ethical practice and collaboration
Environmental protection	Integrate, respect, engage, consistent with government laws and regulations, sensitise	Ethical practice and collaboration
Participation/ involvement	Sensitise, interact, engage, build relationships, respect traditional hierarchy, be transparent	Ethical practice and collaboration
Provision of amenities/ infrastructure	Be transparent, and accountable. Integrate them, negotiate, sensitise, recognise traditional hierarchy, and be consistent with government laws and regulations. Display your proficiency	Ethical practice and collaboration
Recognition	Respect traditional hierarchy, engage them, and build relationships.	Ethical practice and collaboration

Given that every community has interests that if neglected can result in acrimony, practicing managers in their experience discovered that to enjoy harmony in the host community they need to demonstrate certain competencies to address the interest of the communities, and in doing so they acted responsibly (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 Diagrammatic presentation of positive impact of CI on RPMP (see online version for colours)

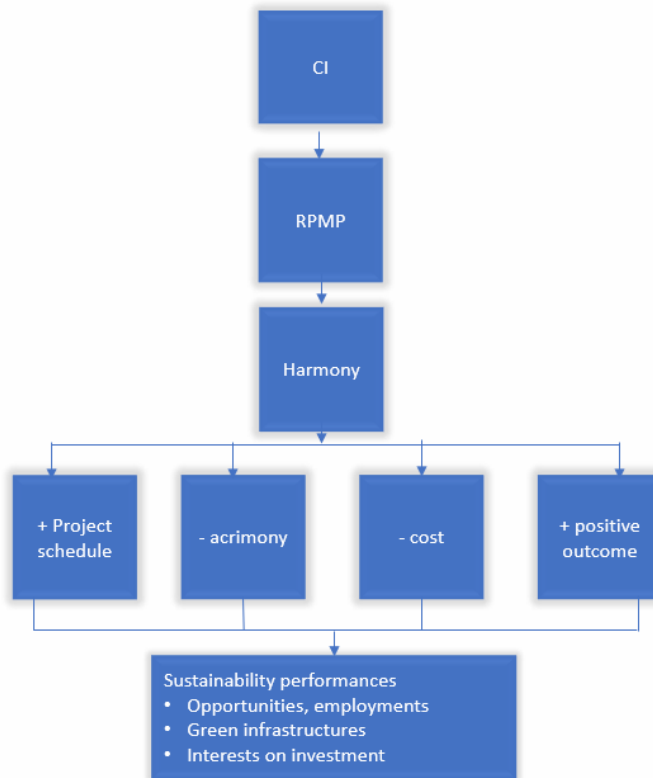


CI motivates RPMP, achieves harmony, avoids acrimony, achieves project schedules (time), and avoids delay (costs) as well as results in positive outcomes, see Figure 7. The upward direction of the steps from CI to profits shows the events in order of occurrence. (CI motivates RPMP which results in harmony, when there is harmony, acrimony and costs are avoided, and project schedule and profits are achieved at the end). This finding confirms the claims of construction project authors like Zuofa and Ochieng (2016) that construction is the bedrock of infrastructural development in communities. Ugwu and Attah (2016), Ogunbode et al. (2017), Fei et al. (2021) and Ogunbode et al. (2017) in a similar vein opine that construction projects are a conduit of infrastructural development. Thompson and Williams (2018) attribute social, economic, and human development to projects and responsible project management. Consequently, the outcome of RPMP goes back to the community, the people, and the economy (TBL).

Based on the results obtained from this study, a new conceptual framework was generated (see Figure 8).

The conception of responsible actions is CI, and continuous demonstration of these actions becomes responsible practices. When these actions are applied in project management it gives rise to RPMP. All other things being equal, RPMP may bring about harmony as is shown by the direction of the arrows from CI to harmony. Harmony among the various stakeholders is central to positive project outcomes like achieving project schedules (+), no acrimony (-), no costs arising from delays (-), and positive outcomes (+) (see Figure 8). Teo and Loosemore (2017) say conflict-free environment will add value to project delivery.

This conceptual construct integrates all concepts evolving from this work, while each of these concepts has been implied in the literature and responses from the interviews as contributing to the findings and conclusion of this study, its impact was not as fascinating. Therefore, this diagram presents an explicit connection and facilitates an understanding of how CI impacts RPMP and helps project managers achieve sustainable results in terms of profit and societal well-being. Excerpts from the interview are presented in support of the explanation of these terms.

Figure 8 New conceptual framework (see online version for colours)

4.1.5.1 Harmony

From the interviews, it could be emphasised that responsible actions taken in response to CI results in harmony. The respondents attest to the fact that they enjoyed collaboration after settling scores with the communities. As indicated in the excerpts below, a respondent says that recognising the value of the community prevents project managers from having issues with community members:

... if you don't seem to place a priority on their value or if you don't take interest on their value, you will have problem. For instance, the community we are talking about is divided into three major sets of people ... So now their values are not the same... At the end of the day. You have to work out a balance... tell them... this is the modality of which you are going to work... By the involvement of youths as part of the workforce. And getting the elders also involve. In terms of a negotiation, settlement and hospitality ..., you deliver the needed amenity to the community. That is fantastic. *You won't have any issue.*

additionally, ENGR2 says

...there are some who have already made up their mind...they were already out for trouble. So, once you get the important people in the community. To understand your position. And establish that trust... They will be the ones bringing others to understand and telling them to work with you... so by the time you bring the stakeholders to understand, ... that trust has been

established. Everybody will come back to normal. *They will even offer to join hands and sort out some areas* that were like holding you back from not going as planned. So, it's always good to resolve.

In the same vein, ENGR6 said

... use a lot of diplomacy, constant mm persuasion just trying to woo as many people as you possibly can into your part. So that's what we did, constant persuasion and mm *members of these local communities they are not so difficult to convince---*.

Responding to a question about his experience in one of his host communities ENGR5 says

"Uh, usually they have one voice, one goal but sometimes it depends on the inference from you how you accept them. How you welcome their ideas how you welcome their personality if you () are open to them. Bring them close ... the whole community works with you. But if you feel too rigid... You may have a lot of problems managing the project."

Explaining further he adds

"Them not being recognized will have a lot of problems for you. So, you need to harmonize their desires, ... and you need to make them understand the benefits, because you need to do the costs-benefits analysis and let them understand it before you take off your project."

4.1.5.2 Acrimony

This study shows that conflicts and agitations could be avoided if responsible actions are demonstrated by project managers. In response to a question about dealing with agitation in the community, the participants shared their experiences. For instance, ENGR3 has this to say;

"Agitation comes when you go into the community and put your equipment, without even meeting the community themselves the second part will come if some people go with the money that was meant for the community without giving the other side but if that is settled ab initio you wouldn't have that reaction."

Emphasising that good relationships with the community avoid rancour ENGR9 says;

"That's why when you get to a community you need to see the leaders of the community, ... You have a stakeholder meeting where every stakeholder of the project; everyone who sits on board and discusses extensively... things will be highlighted at that point and remedies will also be given to it ... actually when you have a roundtable meeting, stakeholders meeting, ... everyone will be informed ...and that can give you the soft way to go to where you want to do work."

ENGR4 in support that responsible actions avoid acrimony expresses his opinion about adhering to the provisions of the memorandum of understanding (MOU). According to him, the CI is spelt out in the MOU.

"That memorandum of understanding that you have signed. The community expects you to adhere to, to the latter. But sometimes everything might not work out as expected and whenever they felt you betrayed their interest. there would be an uproar. And if you don't manage it properly... you are not able to ... to make them understand your position. They may stall your projects ... so

it () takes caution for you to be able to carry them along in a smooth manner from the beginning till the end.”

ENGR7 an electrical engineer implied in his response that recognising the community’s constituted hierarchy avoids acrimony, narrating his experience in one of the communities he worked in he says;

“Okay, now, (), ... we were installing transformers and some group of people came and there was this dispute ... they made a whole lot of fuses, so I drove away. I went and reported first to the village head and then the street chief. And ... they all went to the... houses of those people that came to ferment trouble and they were very, ()... very furious that they did the wrong thing, ... and were able to continue. In fact, after two days were able to get back to site ...”

Furthermore, ENGR5 says:

... the magnitude of the problem that Shell Nigeria ... is facing in Ogonni land
... Because of such... I mean, not attending to the to the plight of the people.

He further stressed his point by sharing a personal experience that confirms one can win the community by being responsive to their interests.

“Like there was a project we handled in a part of Eket one time and we found we faced a lot of stiff resistance but something that worked for us was that we went to the village, we met the village heads. And they told us what they wanted. It was a little more Uh, than what we budgeted, you understand?”

4.1.5.3 *Cost and schedule*

During the interviews, it was found that responsible actions in response to CI prevents costs due to delay and enhance project delivery according to schedule. Some of the respondents admitted that if one does not act to prevent misunderstanding, the project could be stalled. The inability to harness resources is also a serious threat to project schedules. In the words of ENGR3, for example;

“... as a project manager, you should be able to harness them (resources) to work on the same scope, the same speed and direction, with quality assurance in mind of what you want, ... If you are not () able to do that your project delivery date will be delayed, your quality of work will be affected negatively. That can also translate into losses, ... If you delay some projects ... that would impact on you negatively. Knowing very well that every part of the project is being given a cost, and also having the duration to tell you the number of man-hours you need to put in...”

Furthermore, confirming the effect of responsible actions on project schedule ENGR4 gave a scenario in which the project firm accepted to provide social amenities as part of their corporate social responsibility for the interests of the host community, but they experienced some unforeseen circumstances that may delay the provision of such amenity, he said;

“The best thing to do is to pre-informed them, carry them, carry them along in your in your progress, ... Before it comes to a point of that misunderstanding of which your project is going to be stalled. You have the community relation officer that’s the CLO ... and you instructed him to go and inform the community ... So, it won’t look like a disappointment. There will be facts on ground to prove to them that you still have their interest, ... So, in such case, you have a smooth operation.”

4.1.5.4 *Positive outcome*

The findings from this study also show that construction projects will result in positive outcomes for every stakeholder if CI receives corresponding actions. The participants testified that the community members were happy with them, supporting them to get their work done in time once their needs were addressed. The excerpt of ENGR1 highlights and confirms the benefits of responsible action thus,

“Yes, the community interests are in this project planning during the planning stage ... I () in conclusion ... consider responsible project management is the key to project success, ... in terms of meeting up with your budget, quality of work and schedule. Those three things are very important. Your schedule will not slip, if you have a responsible project management, the timeline will not slip. Delay in delivering project you will not experience it.”

ENGR5 also says in harmonising the people certain costs are avoided which results in profits,

“But when you harmonize all, ... you have a community liaison office officer. He brings who () is who in the community to you. Then you discuss with them in harmony, everybody flows with you. ... Make it the whole a holistic one. Talk to everybody at the same time. Then you will have a smooth sail. Your company will save costs make profit and the people will be happy. Otherwise, you will meet dissenting voices at every stratum of the community life.”

Sustainability performance

The effect of a successful construction project cannot be over-emphasised, Sanggoro et al. (2022) say ample opportunities are opened, small businesses will spring up and there will be more self-employment prospects that improve the economic well-being of the community. On the environment, there will be green infrastructure because the project manager is conscious “to preserve the flora and the fauna” says ENGR5. The construction company goes off with interest on their investment because all things being equal the project is executed within forecast – time, money, and scope. ENGR1 says

“... time will not be exceeded, you will not exceed your budget, therefore ... you can make profits ...”

5 Discussion

This study explores the impact of CI on RPMP and identifies responsible actions that will help project managers to align the diverging expectations of the host community, achieve collaboration between the community and the project team, and achieve sustainability within the construction industry. The research was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, a community in Nigeria. The results indicate that CI which was a major driver in this study exerted positive impacts on RPM as actions considered responsible practices were responses to community demands. These actions (recognition, engagement, employment) which pacify the host community whenever there seem to be agitations become the responsible actions of the project manager. Responsible actions are hoped to enhance ethical practice, and collaboration, and help the company to achieve sustainability by reducing the adverse impact of construction activities on the environment. Further results show that communities in Akwa Ibom State perceive construction projects as a means of

providing the necessary economic and social development. It was also found that the project managers in Akwa Ibom State appreciate the concept of RPM.

Predicated upon the findings of this work several insights can be gained. Firstly, the perception of the community about construction projects as an agent of social and economic development is a piece of good information to relax the nerves of the project manager who would not need to be overly defensive since he already knows that the community is happy with the project. This finding contradicts the view of Teo and Loosemore (2011) that communities are likely to perceive construction projects as high-risk ventures and that such perceptions can trigger protests. The disposition of project managers can be adversely affected if they are expecting opposition in the workplace (Di Maddaloni and Davis, 2018). However, it was found that negative perceptions from the community depended largely on their previous experience. Communities that had been marginalised previously were very sceptical and could only be convinced of good intentions if project managers demonstrated responsible actions. Regarding this one respondent said:

So based on the marginalization by previous companies operating in this area so there's like a sort of enlightenment now by the youth and communities, so that each company that comes in. They want you to do things properly, you cannot just go into a community and start to work like that, they would demand to know your EIA because they need to know how these community projects impact on the environment.

Therefore, this study is significant in creating friendly atmospheres and cordial relationships among the project stakeholders in Akwa Ibom State.

Secondly, the findings of this study indicate that CI exerts supporting impact on RPMP. Having this knowledge is an important guide for the project manager and the community. If the community perceives that their interest is protected, they can accord the project team their full support (Ogunbode et al., 2017; Fei et al., 2021). This finding agrees with Sanggoro et al. (2022) that the influence of the local community is more dominant than the interest of the project team on project social issues like good relationships on site. It also supports the earlier findings of Olander and Landin (2005) which revealed that an evaluation of project stakeholder influence is a necessity in planning and implementing construction projects. This finding further supports Teo and Loosemore (2017) that the community wants to be allowed to make meaningful contributions to whatever is happening in their environment and stresses the report of Fei et al. (2021) that on the construction site, there are different interests and expectations, and the manager is expected to harness his economic and moral resources to accommodate these interests and achieve sustainability. However, Odukoya et al. (2021) opines that construction stakeholders are major contributors to project failures and substandard construction projects' deliveries. For clarity, 'stakeholder' here needs to be specified because substandard construction is not a characteristic of RPM which is supported by CI and does not also make for sustainability.

The study further reveals responsible actions for project managers and these actions when demonstrated can result in ethical practices, promote harmony in the construction space, and help the project company to achieve SDG11 (that is building a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable community).

As found by the study, the project manager who is saddled with the responsibility of providing for every stakeholder group, preserving the environment, and making profits

for his organisation, may need a guide (proven actions) to enable him to demonstrate the required competencies for optimum performance. This finding is in consonant with Rathenam and Dabup (2017) who posit that community involvement in projects is a basis for several developments. The actions, for example, 'interact' further agrees with Sanggoro et al. (2022) who opined that project teams must identify those groups of stakeholders who can impact projects and manage their various demands through good communication. It corroborates with Teo and Loosemore (2017) who admonish project managers to identify principal group leaders and establish early contact with a view to building solid relationships that can ensure effective communication to prevent protest. This finding further simplifies the proposed RPM framework by Thompson and Williams (2018), which recognises communication as crucial and the opinion of (Teo and Loosemore, 2011; Lima et al., 2021a) that the project manager needs to develop relational skills in addition to technical proficiency and adopt a people-oriented approach to project management. In a nutshell, responsible a project manager is an innovator, and thus is willing and open to different ideas that can help achieve sustainability in his practice and communicate effectively with the community to understand the new things that are emerging in their society (Otegi-Olaso et al., 2019).

5.1 Theoretical implication

This research contributes to the literature on responsible project management and aims to examine the impact of CI on responsible practices in the construction industry. Several research including, inter alia, Zuofa and Ochieng (2016), Ejohwomu et al. (2016), Ujene and Oladokun (2017), Ogunbode et al. (2017), Oppong et al. (2017), Rathenam and Dabup (2017), Teo and Loosemore (2017), Lima et al. (2021b) and Ola-awo et al. (2021), have delved into uncovering the intricacies of effective construction project management with a view to resolving the challenges of construction projects failures and achieving hitch-free relationships between the project team and the host community for sustainability. Nonetheless, none of these studies has focused on examining the impact of CI on RPMP especially in an emerging economy like the study area. Additionally, Zuofa and Ochieng (2016) focused on experienced managers and sustainability in construction delivery in Nigeria, Udo et al. (2016) also identified lack of adequate safety measures as the cause of conflicts at the construction site. Ogunbode et al. (2017) in their study, investigated critical challenges mitigating sustainable construction. Ola-awo et al. (2021) focused on critical success factors for effective internal construction stakeholder management while Teo and Loosemore (2017) identified community-based protest construction projects. Despite this plethora of research, the impact of CI on RPMP has not been addressed.

In this research, we confirmed that the community as a major stakeholder plays a critical role in successful project implementation and outcome such that if CI is properly attended to, a bulk of construction project management issues could be resolved. Furthermore, this study discovered required actions that may resolve the innate animosity in community-project team relationships to achieve a non-violent atmosphere and generate RPM, especially in the construction industry.

The participants' responses suggest that preventing community-project-team acrimony may enhance collaboration which may lead to sustainable project outcomes that benefit the economy, environment, and people, both now and in the future. Consequently, as presented in the conceptual framework (see Figure 8), this study has discovered that CI

motivates responsible practices which may result in harmony among project stakeholders, abate acrimony, achieve project schedule, avoid cost overruns, and achieve wholistic benefits for the environment, the project company, and the people.

Theoretically, the results of this study may be stated thus, CI motivates RPMP creates collaborative relationships among project stakeholders, abates acrimony, saves time and costs, and generates positive outcomes for the company, community, and people.

5.2 Practical implications

Based on the results of this study, we found that project managers can improve relationships with the host community, for instance, recognising traditional hierarchy, interacting with the community, being transparent, and demonstrating accountability will promote harmony and help the project company to achieve sustainable outcomes as presented in the conceptual framework (see Figure 8). Practically, project professionals can easily prevent agitations from community by learning from the experience of these respondents, quell existing fracas by adopting suitable action from the identified actions and demonstrate same at the project sites. From the identified actions, we recommend that the project managers have a fall-back resource for example, if interacting with the elderly does not yield the expected results, engaging the youths may provide the necessary results.

Engaging and responding to the interests of the community can avoid delays, disagreements, and agitations from the community. Managers can achieve some level of harmony when they can reduce acrimony in the community leading to timely project schedules and avoidance of cost overruns due to delay consequently resulting in positive outcomes as shown in the framework, (see figure 8). Additionally, good relationships can be an asset as the community can campaign repeat patronage for good clients (Rathenam and Dabup, 2017). Besides, peaceful work environment can enhance proficiency which could result in satisfactory project outcomes thus avoiding the costs of rework and enhancing organisation's profits (Ejohwomu et al., 2016). Moreover, the findings discussed imply that the construction project manager can gain necessary insights into implementing RPMP which drives their sustainability efforts while enjoying full support from the host community.

6 Conclusions

This paper ascertains the impact of CI on RPMP and determines responsible actions required to achieve ethical practices, collaboration among project stakeholders, and drive sustainability efforts in the Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Some level of resistance may arise in the project implantation space if project managers do not act responsibly. In addition, investigating the impact of CI on RPMP shows that responsible actions are results of/responses to community demands which form the CI, hence, CI encourages RPMP. These responses to community demands are thus the building blocks for responsible actions which can help the construction project manager to align diverging interests and enhance collaboration among various project stakeholders.

This study attempts to fulfil the recommendation of Olander and Landin (2005) that a study is needed to formulate a model of how external stakeholder process should be

managed in construction projects and the recommendations of studies (e.g., Ugwu and Attah, 2016; Zuofa and Ochieng, 2016). Considering the role of the host community in project management, as recommended by Zuofa and Ochieng (2016), it was necessary to investigate the influence of CI on RPMP in construction projects in the study area, to uncover and highlight the actions that can provide cordial relationships between the host community and other project stakeholders. It is recommended that the project manager in response to CI which include recognition, transparency, accountability, engagement, employment, sub-contacting, and environmental protection (see Table 3) should demonstrate the highlighted actions.

The findings further support the claim of CSR theory that propagates ethical execution of projects for the good of everyone (Ibok and Mboho, 2011). It also supports the stakeholder theory by advocating that every stakeholder needs to have a share in projects' positive outcomes (Ejohwomu et al., 2016).

In the cause of this investigation, limitations encountered included the sample size, only ten practicing project managers were interviewed. This sample size may provide critics the impetus to consider the result of this study as hasty generalisation. Though interviews were conducted from different locations, results from other countries and more respondents may be more generalisable.

A further shortcoming of this study was that respondents consisted of only the project managers; a more balanced result could have been obtained if the community members were also involved. Thus, further research is recommended on this subject that will include the community. Moreover, other factors besides CI impacted RPMP such as government influence, industry standards, budgets, natural factors like topography, etc but it was beyond the scope of this work to examine the influence of these factors in detail. Therefore, it is recommended that further studies be carried out on the impact of these factors on RPMP.

Furthermore, this study concentrated in Akwa Ibom state, a similar study could also be done in other parts of Nigeria or even outside Nigeria. Essentially, future research should quantitatively test the framework as presented in Figure 8 to obtain statistical evidence on the impact of CI on RPMP. It is hoped that the outcome of this investigation will contribute to the literature on RPMP.

Data availability statement

The data, models, and theories used in this study are available in the manuscript. The data from the interviews can be made available on request.

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Appendix

Interview guide

- 1 General Information about the profession and Industry:
 - a How long have you been working as are project manager?
 - b How many sites? Briefly state any observed differences or similarities
 - c What were your expectations from this site? Did your experience tally with your expectations? Comment on the community interests.
- 2 In the construction industry generally, what do you consider responsible project management (RPM)?
- 3 What are the factors that influence your RPM decisions?
- 4 In order of priority what factors do you consider when making RPM decisions
- 5 As a community liaison officer for your project team and based on your observations, what are the perceptions of your host community about construction projects and what do they consider as sustainable development?
- 6 What in your opinion informs these perceptions?
- 7 What were your experiences with work schedules in terms of expected delivery time and specified scope?
- 8 What would you consider to be the community interests and how do these affect RPM?
- 9 How does community interest affect your pre-proposed actions as regards responsible practices within the industry given the budget, time, and scope constraint?
- 10 How would you describe the engagement level of the community in the project from initiation to delivery and what informed this level of engagement?

- 11 Based on your observation what is the demographic segmentation of the interest groups of the community?
- 12 What steps were taken to cope with these community interests in the face of sustainability requirements and project constraints (budgets, schedule, and scope)?
- 13 Given that RPM is a conscious effort to provide for all stakeholders and sustainability is to provide for the present without depriving the future, how were you able to demonstrate RPM in the face of these influences?
- 14 Or why were you not able to achieve your expected best practices despite your efforts?
- 15 Can you comment on the reactions of the community after responsible practices are considered?
- 16 Based on your knowledge and experience what would you suggest project managers can do to ensure ethical practices and collaboration between the community and project team to achieve sustainable development in the construction industry?