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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Obiora Timothy Anene

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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The Office of the Provost

Walden University
2019

Abstract

Strategies for Improving and Sustaining Real Estate Development Business Performance in Nigeria

by

Obiora Timothy Anene

MS, Walden University, 2016

BS, University of Lagos, 1990

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2019

Abstract

Real estate development (RED) businesses are critical to closing the housing deficit gap in Nigeria. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the strategies that successful business managers used to improve and sustain their business performance in Nigeria. The 7FE business process management framework was the conceptual framework used. Primary research data were collected through semistructured interviews held with a purposive population sample of 5 business managers who successfully improved and sustained their business performance in the Nigeria real estate sector. Secondary data were collected from company and public documents and extant literature. Data were analyzed using computer-aided data analysis software and methodological triangulation. Ten emergent themes were identified: business strategy; commitment to quality and building trust; industry and market research; training and knowledge acquisition; innovation and reward systems; operational effectiveness and project portfolio management; minimizing costs and financial leverage; marketing, promotions, and strategic partnerships; measuring business performance and assessing strategic success; and change management and documenting lessons learned. The implications of this study for positive social change include the potential to increase the number of sustainable RED businesses in Nigeria, providing more employment, housing for more people, offering better living conditions, improving quality of life, and contributing to both local and national economies.

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Dedication

I am grateful for the privilege to dedicate this study to Almighty God for His mercies and grace that enabled me to undertake this doctoral study journey successfully. To Him be all glory and thanksgiving. I also appreciate and thank my family, friends and colleagues, who made different sacrifices to support and encourage me throughout this journey. May God richly reward you all.

Acknowledgments

A study of this nature could not have been completed without the guidance and support of more experienced scholars and practitioners. I hereby acknowledge the support of many people who contributed in one way or another in making this study a success, thank you so much. Space will not permit me to mention all your names. However, I will like to especially appreciate and thank my doctoral Chair, Dr. Betsy Macht, for all her efforts and guidance in this doctoral process, and the review of this doctoral study manuscript. I also want to specially thank my second committee member, Dr. Tim Truitt, for his valuable support, in concluding this study. I appreciate and thank Dr. Krista Laursen, my former Chair, for her support and contributions to this doctoral study. Many thanks to my former second committee members, Dr. Julie Bonner and Dr. Douglas Keevers, for their contributions to this work. I acknowledge and thank Dr. Brenda Jack, the University Research Reviewer, for her critical reviews that ensured that the academic standard was maintained. I am grateful for the wonderful support I received from my classroom cohorts during my doctoral completion courses. Thank you all, I deeply appreciate you.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The Nigerian economy is largely dependent on oil, which makes it vulnerable to the emergent global economic crisis (Ngwube & Ogbuagu, 2014). According to Ngwube and Ogbuagu (2014), the Nigerian petroleum sector, driven by oil and gas production, accounts for 80% of the government's annual revenue and foreign exchange earnings of the nation's economy. Ngwube and Ogbuagu (2014) further stated that the Nigerian economic crisis initially started as a reaction to the U.S. mortgage default, which culminated in a system-wide credit collapse and finally the collapse of the global economy. In addition to the strain on the global economy, the sharp drop of oil prices in 2009 triggered a ripple effect in many economies of the world including Nigeria (Ngwube & Ogbuagu, 2014). The ensuing economic challenges affected the Nigerian real estate and construction sector negatively.

Background of the Problem

The economic crisis in Nigeria is underpinned by a decline in the gross domestic product (GDP) and eventually the devaluation of the Nigerian currency (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2016). This caused an unprecedented increase in the cost of real estate development in the country (Obi & Ubani, 2014). The high cost of real estate development translated into an increase in the price of real estate and consequently a drop in the demand (Obi & Ubani, 2014). High real estate prices in Nigeria led to a significant gap in the sector because many people still needed housing but could not afford what was available (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2016). The decrease in real estate sales caused many

real estate development companies to cease operations due to low return on investments, in real estate development (Obi & Ubani, 2014).

Researchers have attempted to offer explanations for the problems prevalent in the Nigerian housing sector. Adesiyan (2016) examined the role of funded housing programs and public-private partnership initiatives in contributing to the decline in the Nigerian real estate sector. Taiwo, Adeboye, and Aderonmu (2014) explored the impact of private sector housing finance on housing delivery for the low-income persons in Nigeria. Some of the programs were successful during the period of economic growth but were not sustainable during the economic crisis. In this doctoral study, I explored the strategies that business managers in the real estate development sector use to improve and sustain performance to remain successful and sustainable.

Problem Statement

The economic crisis in Nigeria, which ultimately led to the devaluation of the currency, triggered a downward spiral in the Nigerian real estate and construction sector (Daniel & Hunt, 2014), causing multiple real estate development businesses to cease operations (Obi & Ubani, 2014). In the first quarter of 2016, Nigeria's GDP, largely driven by oil and services (construction & industrial) sectors, indicated a negative growth rate of 0.36% (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2016). The general business problem was that real estate development companies cease operations due to a lack of strategies to survive during economic slowdowns. The specific business problem was that some real estate development business managers lack strategies for improving and sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies real estate development business managers use for improving and sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector. The study population consisted of five real estate development business managers in Nigeria, who implemented successful strategies for improving and sustaining business performance. The implications for positive social change include the potential for Nigerian real estate development managers to become empowered to grow and sustain their businesses through difficult economic times. Real estate development business managers may increase business efficiency, reduce production costs, and enhance business profitability, thereby reducing real estate prices and making real estate more affordable for more Nigerians.

Nature of the Study

I selected a qualitative approach for my doctoral study. Qualitative inquiry is an effective way to explore individuals' experiences, meaning, and interpretations (Birchall, 2014). Quantitative researchers examine relationships between two or more variables (Ladd, Roberts, & Dediu, 2015). A quantitative approach was not appropriate for this study because I did not examine relationships between variables. According to Darawsheh (2014), researchers apply the mixed method approach to blend qualitative data collected from participants' contextual settings with quantitative hypothesis testing. A mixed method approach was not appropriate for this study because I did not use numerical testing to examine the phenomenon in this study.

Using a case study design provides a framework to understand complex social situations, which can include social behavior, managerial methods, and organizational processes (Yin, 2017). Researchers use a phenomenological design to gain an understanding of a phenomenon by conducting an in-depth study of individuals' lived experiences (Budd & Velasquez, 2014). A phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study because I did not explore the meanings of lived experiences of participants. A narrative design includes individuals' accounts and experiences as a storyline (Onyali, 2017). The narrative design was not appropriate for this study because the participants did not tell their stories, and I explored strategies that Nigerian real estate leaders use to improve and sustain their business performance for success. The ethnographic research design is the study or close observation of people in a specified setting over a period of time (Liberati et al., 2015). I did not study the culture of people in this research. Hence, an ethnographic design was not appropriate.

Research Question

RQ: What strategies did some real estate development managers use for improving and sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies did you use to improve business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
2. What are the primary elements of effective strategies for improving business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?

3. Which strategies did not work for improving business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
4. What barriers did you encounter while implementing the strategies for improving business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?
5. How did you overcome these barriers to the implementation of strategies for improving business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?
6. What strategies did you use to sustain business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
7. What are the primary elements of effective strategies for sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
8. Which strategies did not work for sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
9. What barriers did you encounter while implementing the strategies for sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?
10. How did you overcome these barriers to the implementation of strategies for sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?
11. What else would you like to share that you have not already discussed regarding strategies for improving and sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework selected for this study was the 7FE framework. The 7FE framework is a business process management (BPM) implementation framework,

first published in 2006 (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). The theorists of the framework were J. Jeston and J. Nelis. The framework is a structured but flexible broad-based platform for analyzing and implementing BPM activities and the functions of business capabilities. The framework provides a holistic approach to exploring strategies for improving and sustaining key business process performance variables. The 7FE framework consists of 10 business processes in four process groups and includes three over-riding essentials: (a) leadership, (b) BPM project management, and (c) people change management. The 10 business processes of the 7FE framework include (a) foundation, (b) enable, (c) launch, (d) understand, (e) innovate, (f) people, (g) develop, (h) implement, (i) realize value, and (j) sustain performance. The four process groups with corresponding business processes in parentheses are: (a) Foundations (foundation, enable, launch), (b) Findings and Solutions (understand and innovate), (c) Fulfillment (people, develop, and implement), and (d) Future (realize value and sustain performance).

Foundations are the starting point of any BPM activity, while the Findings and Solutions are the findings or analysis of the existing process that must take place to understand, improve, and sustain the existing processes (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). The Fulfillment process group includes the people, development, and implementation components of BPM activity, while in the Future process group individuals organize the project for the future by realizing value and sustaining performance (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). I used the 7FE framework as a potential lens to explore the strategies that real estate managers might use to improve and sustain their business performance for success

in the Nigerian real estate sector during periods of recession, in all business processes of the BPM implementation process.

Operational Definitions

Business capabilities: Business capabilities are the internal and external organizational assets that support business operations (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). Assets include but are not limited to strategy, BOMs, people, processes, technology, project management, and project portfolio management (PPM).

Business operating model (BOM): A BOM is used by a company to establish the appropriate environment and the high-level guidelines for implementing the organizational strategy (Jeston & Nelis, 2014).

Business performance: Business performance is a measure of an organization's financial and operational performance (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986).

Business strategy: Business strategy refers to a comprehensive plan of action stating how the corporation will achieve its mission and objectives (Garcia-Melon, Poveda-Bautista, & Valle, 2015).

Business success: Success occurs when business leaders determine they have met or exceeded their goals, earned profits sufficient to cover costs, and increased the size, scale, or market shares of their business (Insah, Mumuni, & Bangiyel, 2013).

Organizational agility: Organizational agility is the capacity of an organization to efficiently and effectively redeploy or redirect its resources to value creating and value protecting (and capturing) higher-yield activities as internal and external circumstances warrant (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016).

Project management: Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements (Project Management Institute, 2013).

Project portfolio management (PPM): PPM is a high-level capability in which managers apply a set of tools, techniques, skills, and knowledge, and allocate resources to a collection of programs and projects or project portfolios to meet or exceed the desired organizational strategy and maximize the success of organizations (Petro & Gardiner, 2015). PPM is a business capability generally adopted in the implementation of the organizational strategy (Levin & Wyzalek, 2015).

Real estate development: Real estate development is the creation and management of space-time units (Graaskamp, 1992). According to Graaskamp (1992)**,** real estate development is a complex, collective process, not only accommodating an activity within the parcel, but also adapting to the context of a specific surrounding environment, involving different personalities and interest groups, as well as limited resources.

Wet trades: Wet trades in the construction industry refer to construction activities that use materials mixed with water, such as blockwork, concrete, rendering, and painting (Kolo, Rahimian, & Goulding, 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In this section, I described the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of this study. Outlining the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations will further define the context of the study.

Assumptions

Assumptions are unverified aspects of the study that may affect the research findings (Onyali, 2017). My primary assumption was that participants would provide truthful and candid responses to the interview questions. Second, I assumed that participants' responses would be representative of the experiences of the population regarding the Nigerian real estate sector. I also assumed that the participants had sufficient experience in real estate development to provide realistic responses to the interview questions. Finally, I assumed that my study data collection, interpretation, and analysis would be unbiased, ethical, and accurate.

Limitations

Limitations are uncontrollable conditions which form internal threats or weaknesses in the study and affect the generalizability of the research findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The local economy in Nigeria, is agro-based, unlike other cities in the country that depend on commerce, manufacturing, oil business, or pastoralism. The limitation was that the difference in the local economies may make the findings of the study inappropriate in some geopolitical zones of the country. Second, the interview participants have only experienced one cycle of national economic crisis caused mainly by the drop in the global oil price. The participants' views may be limited to their experience and not reflect other possible economic scenarios because the Nigerian national economy is tied to the global economy, which is more unpredictable.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the study boundaries set by researchers to determine the scope of the study (Ody-Brasier & Vermeulen, 2014). The first delimitation was that the sample pool for this study consisted of real estate development organizations within Nigeria. I consider this a delimitation in the geographical boundary. Secondly, I recruited only top management and leadership of selected real estate organizations.

Significance of the Study

Leaders of real estate development organizations in Nigeria may use findings from this study to approach value creation and competitive advantage from the business process perspective. Nigerian real estate managers who incorporate BPM into their organizations may achieve more sustainable development. Adopting the strategies recommended in this study may help real estate managers in Nigeria build organizations that are more responsive to internal and external environments during multiple types of economies.

Contribution to Business Practice

Business capabilities such as processes, people, technology, and project management are the key drivers of the BOM of an organization (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). Business leaders gain the most value when they align BOMs with organizational strategies through reduced operational costs (Bonakdar, Frankenberger, Gassmann, & Bader, 2017). Nigerian real estate managers may be able to use findings from this study to improve their business practices through effective improvement of business performance, which may lead to increased efficiencies and reduced operating costs. Real

estate managers in Nigeria may gain information they can use to improve and streamline such BOM components as technical and business processes, employee motivation and leadership, adaptive technological support, and PPM for strategy implementation to drive business performance for success.

Implications for Social Change

Increased success in the Nigerian real estate sector may help real estate managers create more job opportunities, thereby enabling more workers to earn wages and indirectly contributing to the growth of the local economy. Lower real estate costs may make housing more affordable to more members of Nigerian communities. Home ownership has psychosocial benefits because it increases an individual's net worth and self-esteem (Onyali, 2017). Home ownership also enhances an individual's social status. According to Ayotamuno and Owei (2015), citizens with access to affordable and satisfactory housing experience enhanced work efficiency, social stability, and a better social environment.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

This section consists of a review of existing professional and academic literature relevant to this doctoral study using available databases, search engines, library sources, seminars, and group discussions. The doctoral study was a qualitative multiple case study in which I explored the strategies that real estate development managers use for improving and sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector. I began this literature review with a summary of perspectives on Nigerian real estate sector practices, and the background of the study, which led to the problem statement and the

research question. I reviewed the literature on the conceptual framework in response to the research question. I also reviewed the literature on the applicable variables and capabilities that include real estate business processes, project and portfolio management, housing finance, technology, and human resource capital.

I used the following databases and sources of information to conduct this literature review: ABI/INFORM Complete, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Dissertations, and Theses, EBSCO eBooks, Emerald Management, Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, SAGE Premier, and ScienceDirect. The keywords for the search were: *real estate development, Nigeria housing sector, leadership strategies, 7FE Framework, project management, project portfolio performance, business performance, business success strategies, business process management, business capabilities, dynamic capabilities, real estate development finance,* and *communication*. I reviewed a total of 124 sources, including journal articles, seminal literature, dissertations, and government articles. Of the total number of sources used in this literature review, 105 (85%) were peer-reviewed and 118 (95%) had publication dates within 5 years of my anticipated study completion date.

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework selected in this doctoral study was the 7FE framework for BPM. The 7FE framework is a BPM implementation framework first published in 2006 (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). The theorists of the framework were J. Jeston and J. Nelis. The framework is a structured but flexible broad-based platform for analyzing and implementing BPM activities and the functions of business capabilities. The framework

provides a holistic approach to exploring the strategies for improving and sustaining key business process performance variables. I also proposed the balanced scorecard (BSC) framework as an alternate conceptual framework and reviewed other comparable conceptual frameworks such as the Six Sigma, Lean, Lean Six Sigma (LSS), the resource-based view (RBV), dynamic capabilities, and Porter's five forces of competition. In summary, this doctoral study should be generally viewed through the lens of the 7FE conceptual framework. Other conceptual frameworks have strengths relevant to this study and were cited as applicable.

7FE Framework for Business Process Management

The 7FE framework consists of 10 business processes in four process groups and includes three overriding essentials: (a) leadership, (b) BPM project management, and (c) people change management. The 10 business processes of the 7FE framework, shown in Figure 1, include: (a) foundation, (b) enable, (c) launch, (d) understand, (e) innovate, (f) people, (g) develop, (h) implement, (i) realize value, and (j) sustain performance. The four process groups with corresponding business processes in parentheses are: (a) Foundations (foundation, enable, launch), (b) Findings and Solutions (understand and innovate), (c) Fulfillment (people, develop, and implement), and (d) Future (realize value and sustain performance). Foundations are the starting point of any BPM activity, while the Findings and Solutions are the findings or analysis of the existing process that must take place to understand, improve, and sustain the existing processes (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). The Fulfillment process group includes the people, development, and implementation components of BPM activity, while in the Future process group,

individuals organize the project for the future by realizing value and sustaining performance (Jeston & Nelis, 2014).

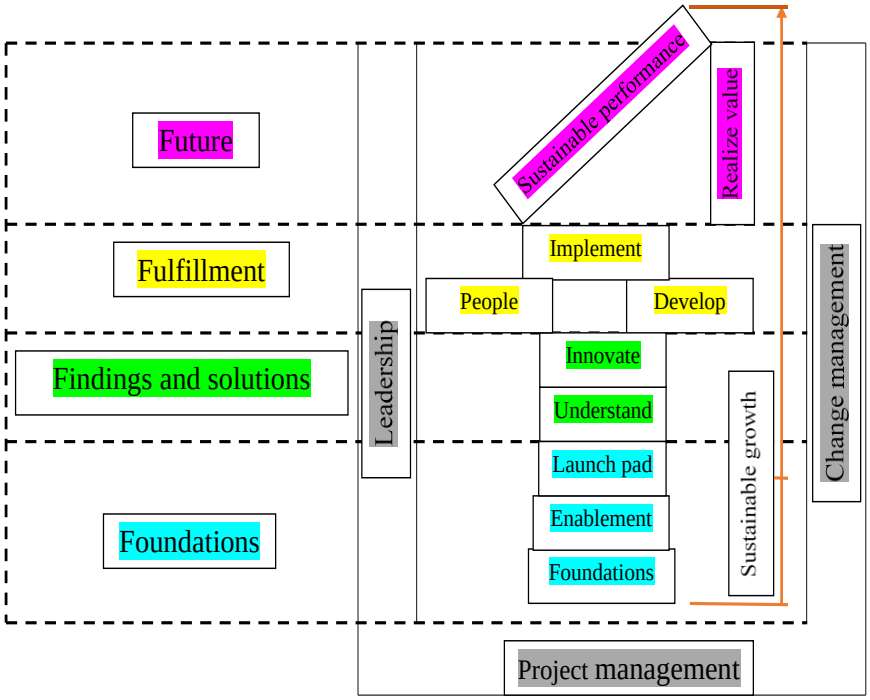

Figure 1. 7FE framework business processes, process groups, and essential components.

Foundations is the set of driving and guiding business foundation principles used to manage business processes within the organization. In this business process, organization strategy, vision, strategic goals, and business and executive drivers are clearly understood by the project team members. *Enablement* is the creation or provision of the key architectures and detailed elements to support and enable business capabilities to enhance the successful delivery of all components of the BPM strategy (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). This business process specifies the key architectures, rules, principles,

guidelines, and models that support the implementation of BPM across the organization. *Launch pad business process* helps process managers ensure that BPM activities benefit from other ongoing or completed BPM activities and increase the success rate of BPM over time. The launch pad business process has three key outcomes: (a) the starting point of BPM activity within the organization; (b) the processes, process goals and/or vision; and (c) the establishment of the BPM activity.

Understand is the process of understanding the existing business process environment that will enable organizational innovation. This may include collecting process metrics for the establishment of process baseline costs for future comparative purposes, root-cause analysis, and possible identification of quick wins (realizable value that could lead to project sustainability). *Innovate* is the creative business process of any BPM activity, which may involve other relevant stakeholders, both internal and external. The process includes identification, selection, and prioritization of new process options. Some of the methods used are; running process simulations, comprehensive activity-based costing, capacity planning, determination of implementation feasibility, comparison with the baseline metrics established during the Understand business process, and identification of possible quick wins (Jeston & Nelis, 2014).

People business process leaders ensure that the activities, roles, and performance measurements are aligned with the organization strategy and process goals. The people business process is critical because people implement the processes and use the technology. Hence, the effectiveness of the processes, and the efficiency of the technologies depend on how practitioners apply them. *Develop* is the development of all

the components for the implementation of the new processes. This business process involves building the necessary infrastructure to support the people change management program and changes in the support of the people who execute the processes (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). *Implement* is where all aspects of the project, including new processes, new role descriptions, performance management and measures, and trainings are implemented.

Realize value ensures that the outcomes outlined in the project business case are realized. The business process comprises the delivery of the benefits realization management process and benefits realization reporting. *Sustainable performance* is concerned with the transition of a project to a business operational activity (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). This business process involves ensuring that the project team works with the business to establish a method of continued process agility and improvements for sustainability.

The 7FE framework is not a one-size-fits-all approach but must always be tailored to meet the specific requirements of any organization, the specific BPM activity, and the organizational process culture and maturity (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), projects are predominantly initiated in one of the following three ways:(a) strategy-led, (b) business issue-led, or (c) process-led. The strategy-led approach is where the organization's strategy has been determined and documented, and ~~its~~ implementation has resulted in the initiation of the BPM activities. The business issue-led initiative is an initiative driven by the operational or business issues of an organization, business unit, or department. The impetus for a business issue-led project can be an

opportunity, problem, or regulatory requirement. The process-led project is a project initiated to achieve business process efficiency improvements from a process perspective.

Balanced Scorecard: Alternate Conceptual Framework

The BSC framework is presented as an alternate framework for this study. The BSC was originated in 1992 by R. S. Kaplan and D. P. Norton (Kaplan & Norton, 1993; Madsen & Slåtten, 2015). BSC is a strategic management framework that relies on four management processes, separately and in combination, to link long-term strategic objectives to short-term actions (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). According to the Balanced Scorecard Institute (2011), BSC is a strategic concept and measurement system adopted by organizations to communicate what they are trying to accomplish; align the day-to-day work that everyone is doing with organizational strategy; prioritize projects, products, and services; and measure/monitor progress towards strategic targets.

Choptra, Gupta, and Chhabra (2017) stated that BSC addresses the problems and limitations of relying only on financial measures for creation of strategy and measuring organizational performance in companies whose intangible assets played a pivotal role in creating value for stakeholders. BSC gained universal acceptance as an effective strategic management tool due to its applicability as a financial and nonfinancial measure of performance. Kaplan and Norton (1996) affirmed that BSC enabled companies to track financial results while simultaneously monitoring progress in building the capabilities and acquiring the intangible assets they would need for future growth. According to Madsen and Slåtten (2015), BSC is one of the most popular and contagious management ideas of the 21st century.

Kaplan and Norton (1996) stated that the BSC enables organizations to clarify and translate vision and strategy into measurable outputs; communicate and link strategic objectives and measures; plan, set targets, and align strategic initiatives; and enhance strategic feedback and learning. Hence, BSC has evolved from a simple performance measurement system to a strategic management system. The BSC framework consists of four management processes, namely, (a) translating the vision, (b) communicating and linking, (c) business planning, and (d) feedback and learning (Kaplan & Norton, 2007).

Translating the vision is the process of clarifying and turning the organizational vision to actionable strategy. The process enables managers to agree on the metrics to use in operationalizing the vision (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). The process also helps managers build a consensus around the organization's vision and strategy. The vision and strategy statements are expressed as an integrated set of objectives and measures agreed upon by all senior executives that describe the long-term drivers of success, for people to act in line with those objectives and measures (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). Wehde (2018) stated that functional groups in an organization must determine how to identify and execute activities that are strategically important to the organization.

Communicating and linking is the process that lets managers communicate their strategy up and down the organization and link it to departmental and individual objectives (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). Departments are evaluated by their financial performance, and individual incentives are tied to short-term financial goals. In addition, the scorecard gives managers a way of ensuring that all levels of the organization

understand the long-term strategy and that both departmental and individual objectives are aligned with the strategy (Kaplan & Norton, 2007).

Business planning is the process of setting targets, aligning strategic initiatives, allocating resources, and establishing milestones. The process enables companies to integrate their business and financial plans (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). According to Kaplan and Norton (2007), business planning enables implementers to undertake and coordinate only those initiatives that move them toward their long-term strategic objectives if BSC measures are used to allocate resources and set priorities. Georgiev (2017) stated that in using the BSC, success should reflect the balance between several important elements of work, the reasonable balance between attitude and the state of developed and developing components, as an alternative way of visualizing a business plan.

Feedback and learning process involves articulating the shared vision, supplying strategic feedback, and facilitating strategy review and learning. The process avails companies the capacity for strategic learning (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). According to Kaplan and Norton (2007), BSC ensures that a company can monitor short-term results from the three additional perspectives, namely, customers, internal business processes, and learning and growth, and also evaluate strategy in light of recent performance. Hence, BSC enables companies to modify strategies to reflect real-time learning.

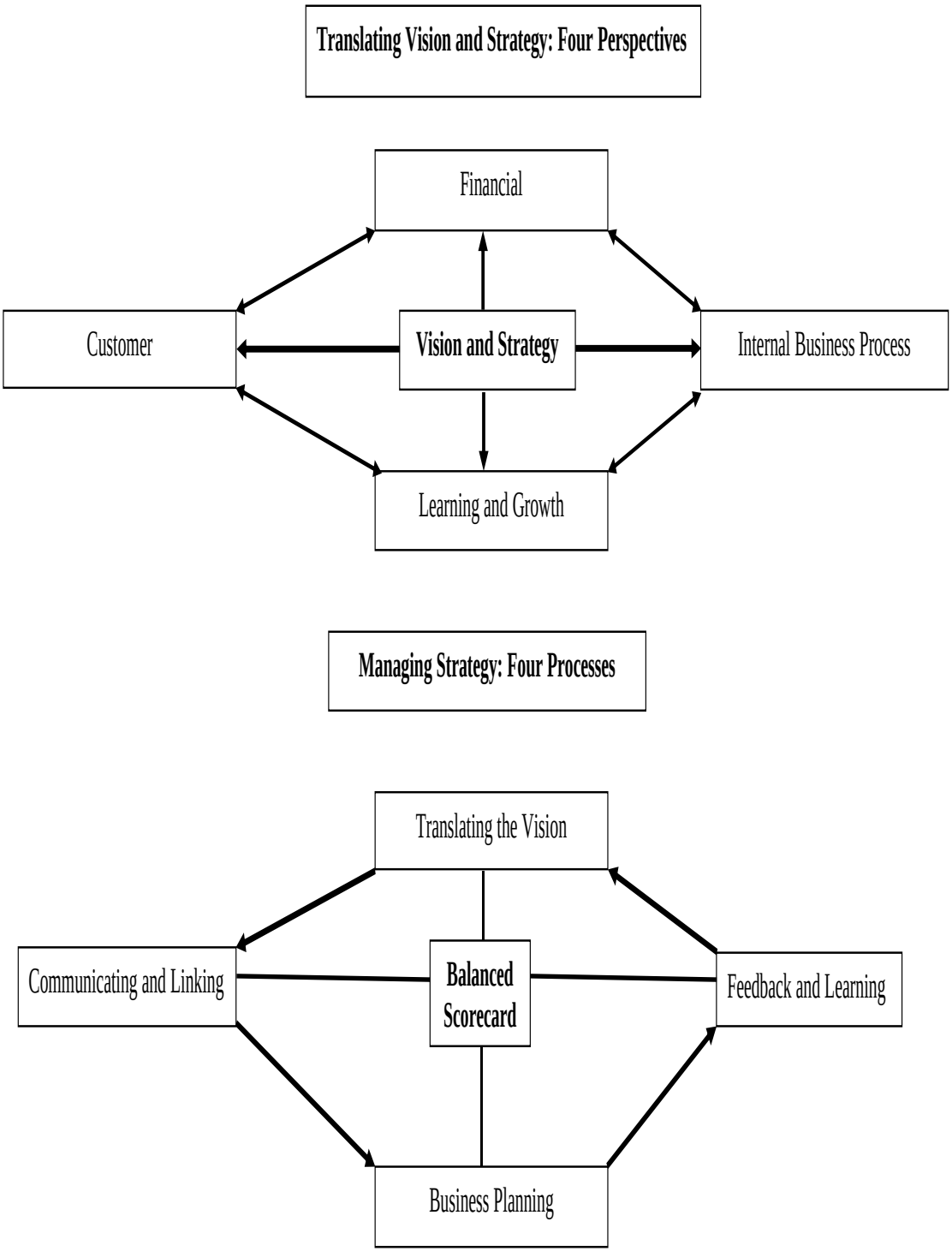

Figure 2. Balanced Scorecard 4 perspectives on translating vision and strategy, and 4 processes in managing strategy.

Comparable Frameworks

Other process frameworks comparable to the 7FE BPM framework exist. One such framework is the Six Sigma process framework. Motorola developed Six Sigma in 1986 to improve the quality of process outputs in manufacturing processes by identifying and removing the causes of defects (errors) and minimizing variability within the processes (Motorola, 2009). According to Motorola (2009), Six Sigma is the practice of continuous improvement that follows methods developed at Motorola and is based on the notion that no more than 3.4 defects per million are acceptable. Six Sigma was later used in nonmanufacturing business processes. Drohomeretski, Gouvea da Costa, Pinheiro de Lima, and Andrea da Rosa (2014) stated that organizations implement Six Sigma through statistical modeling in manufacturing processes where a sigma six rating indicates a 99.9996 percent error-free process. Six Sigma is a business improvement strategy that seeks to identify and eliminate the causes of defects or errors in business processes by concentrating on activities that are relevant to clients (Drohomeretski et al., 2014). However, achieving such a high error-free rating in any non-manufacturing environment, such as a bank, insurance or government organization, may be unrealistic (Jeston & Nelis, 2014).

Lean was derived from the Toyota Production System (TPS) management philosophy (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). According to Drohomeretski et al. (2014), the key philosophy of Lean is the creation of optimum value for the end customer. Any costs incurred which does not add value to the end customer is eliminated. Lean consists of tools that assists in the identification and elimination of waste usually referred to by the

Japanese term, muda. Drohomeretski et al. (2014) further stated that the key assumption of the Lean approach is that when waste is eliminated quality and production will improve while costs will reduce. Value Stream Mapping (VSM) is a Lean tool often used in Lean processes. Drohomeretski et al. (2014) stated that one of the starting tools for applying lean is value stream mapping (VSM). In Lean processes, wastes (muda) are associated with transportation, inventory, motion, waiting, overproduction, over-processing and defects (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). Although these seven aspects may apply in a non-manufacturing environment, the operating model was conceptually developed for manufacturing and production systems.

LSS is a business framework derived from a combination of the Lean and Six Sigma frameworks. According to Snee (2010), LSS is a business strategy and methodology that increases process performance resulting in enhanced customer satisfaction and improved bottom line results. LSS methodology aims to improve capability in an organization, reduce production costs, and maximize the value for shareholders by improving quality (Albliwi, Antony, & Lim, 2015). LSS is the combination of both Lean and Six Sigma and is focused on the elimination of the seven kinds of waste and the provision of goods and services at a rate of not more than 3.4 defects per million, the two primary objectives of Lean and Six Sigma (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). LSS systems are efficient and effective in production, manufacturing, precision systems and the like but lack the flexibility and robustness to be effective in human-based systems which require project management (Jeston & Nelis, 2014).

The RBV is a framework in which organizations use their internal resources to create competitive advantage (Porter, 2008). Penrose (1959) proposed the RBV theory, but the theory only became prominent in the 1980s and 1990s due to the subsequent publications of other scholars (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). The model of competition developed in 1980 by Michael E. Porter illustrated five competitive forces against businesses in their environments (Porter, 2008). Moura, de Lima, Deschamps, and da Costa (2015) proffered that RBV is strategic perspective to comprehend organizational competitive advantages through resources and competences. However, Moura et al. asserted that RBV alone was not adequate for a comprehensive understanding of organizational competitive advantages through resources and competences and hence relied further on enterprise engineering guidelines. The study findings indicated that indeed there were gaps in the guidelines, hence Moura et al. recommended a reviewed RBV approach to process improvement to augment the gaps which exist in process improvement when RBV alone is applied.

RBV has also been used to understand the position of a firm in the market. Kim, Song, and Triche (2015) stated that researchers have used RBV in the management strategy literature as a way of examining a firm's position in the market based on its resources. However, RBV is perceived to be static and not fully responsive to the rapidly changing market environment, hence the need for dynamic capabilities (Kim et al., 2015). According to Kim et al. (2015), RBV uses valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources. These dynamic capabilities address an organization's ability to constantly adapt and innovate, enabling the organization to adjust its strategy and resources to

maintain and sustain a competitive advantage. Kim et al. adopted an integrated approach using the RBV and the dynamic business capabilities frameworks and the impact on service innovation. According to Kim et al. (2015), focusing on service innovation is very significant as innovation is the key to most astounding breakthroughs in any industry. Kim et al., further stated that innovation plays a critical role in highly competitive markets.

Researchers identified organizational resources and capabilities as the key drivers of organizational performance. According to Bozic and Cvelbar (2016), RBV evolved and developed in three broad categories: knowledge-based view (KBV) (Grant, 1996), nature-based view (NBV) (Hart, 1995), and dynamic capabilities-based view (DCV) (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). In KBV, knowledge is the key factor in an organization's sustainable competitive advantage, while in NBV nature and natural values are emphasized as the key factors in an organization's competitive advantage (Bozic & Cvelbar, 2016). Bozic and Cvelbar (2016) also stated that in the DCV a firms' ability to adjust to changes from the environment is the main factor in an organization's competitive advantage.

D. Chun explored the linkages between organizational performance, aspiration theory (Cyert & March, 1963), and the RBV, the interaction of the theories, and the overall influence of culture on how an organization may react to Schumpeterian (Schumpeter, 1934) shock issues (Chun, 2016). Chun (2016) stated that firms generally look to firms sharing their own cultural backgrounds when selecting similar others, however when the environment is no longer beneficial the focal firm may consider firms

from other cultural backgrounds when forming aspiration levels. Schumpeterian shocks are business environmental shocks which occur in the emergence of revolutionary innovations making rivals' positions obsolete and change industry structure (Schumpeter, 1934). Chun related change management to the ability of an organization to react to Schumpeterian shock, stating that while temporary shocks, and smaller environmental changes which do not significantly change the competitive environment may be accounted for within the parameters of RBV, in the event of a Schumpeterian shock, the industry field is significantly restructured, making what had once been valuable and rare no longer so. Chun concluded that organizational performance will be greatly improved by studying the aspirations of an organization, the contextual factors of the environment, and the cultural setting of the organization, including those of similar organizations in the industry.

Business Models and Organizational Capabilities (BOM)

A business strategy requires a BOM and business capabilities to support it. A BOM is an established set of rules related to how a business will be conducted to implement business strategy (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). Also referred to as the business architecture, the BOM should be holistic and pragmatic. The BOM should include the high-level business value chain, products and services, distribution network and locations, business integration, and standardization. According to Fjeldstad and Snow (2018), each of the elements of a business model is affected by a firm's value configuration depending on whether the firm is a value chain, value shop, or value network. Fjeldstad and Snow further clarified the theoretical foundations of the business

model concept and relate them to the five elements of a business model namely: customers, value propositions, product/service offerings, value creation mechanisms, and value appropriation mechanisms.

Different layers of organizational capabilities exist. According to Jeston and Nelis, (2014), capabilities include strategy, BOMs, people, process, and technology. Hafeez, Keoy, and Hanneman (2006) stated that three e-business capabilities, namely business strategy, supply chain strategy, and e-business readiness can be further divided under technology, organization, and people dimensions to assess their contribution for business effectiveness. The key drivers of the BOM in a BPM are people, process, and technology. The next layer of capabilities closely related to the key drivers of BOM include business project management, leadership, and people change management (Jeston & Nelis, 2014).

Developments in the Nigerian Real Estate Industry

Past studies of the real estate industry practices in Nigeria included a focus on the dynamics of affordable housing, government interventions in sustainable housing, developing the mortgage sector through long-term finance, quality in public housing delivery, offsite manufacturing, and the contributions of the public and private sectors in housing delivery. Obi and Ubani (2014) stated the important role played by housing in the life and social life of individuals, the economy, and the environment. The researchers examined contemporary practices in the housing and construction sector, highlighted new approaches, and recommended possible solutions to the housing challenges in the country. Ibimilua and Ibitoye (2015) stated that housing is a tool for national

development, and one of the best indicators of a person's standard of living and place in the society. Obi and Ubani identified some of the factors responsible for poor housing delivery in Nigeria as: rapid population growth, a rapid urbanization process, rural-urban drift, the high cost of building materials, a dearth of indigenous technology and skilled personal, inadequate financial structure, as well as, poor managerial skills at mortgage institutions. Obi and Ubani reviewed urban growth in Nigeria and the historical antecedents of housing programs dating back to the precolonial era of 1928. The researchers also noted that solutions to Nigerian housing challenges could include: (a) research, (b) development and utilization of locally sourced building materials, (c) development of human resources, (d) government creation of an enabling environment for the housing sector, and (e) provision of accessible long-term housing finance.

Of the 5 factors identified above, long-term housing finance has remained a challenge. Johnson (2014) stated that challenges to long-term housing finance in Nigeria included (a) poor mortgage bank operating efficiency, (b) regulative and normative constraints, and (c) cultural cognitive constraints. According to Nicholas and Patrick (2015), the key challenges identified include, the failure of government to build a solid platform for various sources of housing finance such as life insurance reserves, commercial banks, savings and loan institutions, and primary mortgage institutions. Johnson asserted that effective government policies, regulation, and the amendment of existing laws would help improve the efficiency of the mortgage banking sector and attract investors to this sector. Nicholas and Patrick examined the various interventions of government on sustainable housing provision in Nigeria. Nicholas and Patrick opined that

inconsistency and lack of continuity of government programs contributed to the housing challenge in Nigeria and recommended that governments should, as a matter of responsibility, build a solid platform for various sources of housing finance. In addition, Nicholas and Patrick observed that housing policies must provide the basis for household improvement and should be consistent and continuous.

Public and private housing quality cannot be over emphasized due to the need to meet public safety requirements and the likelihood of occurrence of quality issues in real estate development projects. Quality is defined as the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfill requirements (International Standards Organization, 2008). Quality assurance is the process of implementing a set of planned and systematic acts and processes defined within the project's quality management plan (Project Management Institute, 2013). Adenuga (2013) examined the factors that hinder effective quality assurance practices to ascertain who should be largely responsible for ensuring and enforcing effective quality assurance practices in public housing projects. Adenuga observed that the aims and objectives of quality assurance were compromised, and frequently lost, because every project stakeholder has a role to play in ensuring quality assurance. Some of the quality assurance activities included establishing and enforcing quality standards by government agencies, setting up of quality assurance departments by construction firms, complying with the statutory requirements on quality, as well as providing trainings and seminars on quality standards.

Offsite manufacturing construction (OSM) is a beneficial housing construction solution but has remained relatively unexplored in the Nigerian housing. Recently,

researchers have shown that the use of OSM can help to improve the quantity and quality of the Nigerian housing (Kolo, Rahimian, & Goulding, 2014). Kolo et al. (2014) stated that the benefits of OSM include less on-site wastages, less construction time, quality improvement, and reduction in wet trades. Additional OSM benefits include improved workforce skills and reduced housing costs. Ogunbayo, Alagbe, Ajao, and Ogundipe (2016) asserted that public-private partnerships (PPP) in the Nigerian housing sector remain one of the most viable options for successful housing delivery in Nigeria. Ogunbayo et al. (2016) recommended that while the government provides a conducive enabling environment and land, the private sector should provide financing manpower and technical support to complement the weaknesses of the public sector with the strength of the private sector.

Challenges to Public Housing Delivery in Nigeria

Although numerous public housing programs were undertaken in Nigeria, the housing deficit in the country has never been significantly reduced (Rahimian, Goulding, Akintoye & Kolo, 2017). Government and professional associations have made significant progress in reducing the housing deficit in Nigeria. According to Rahimian et al., 2017), efforts to address the housing deficit have included promulgating housing and urbanization policies, developing building codes, and establishing the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) and Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN). Private sector investors, banks, and other financial institutions have also participated actively in the sustenance of the housing sector in Nigeria. However, these efforts have not been able to close the demand and supply gap in the industry (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2016).

Rahimian et al. (2017) stated that despite several mitigation attempts, Nigeria is still facing a deficit of 17 million houses. According to Makinde (2014), affordable housing schemes that utilize the public–private partnership effort and numerous private finance initiative models, could only provide for about 3% of the housing requirement in Nigeria.

Project management success factors for public housing delivery in Nigeria was a subject of review by researchers. Ihuah, Kakulu, and Eaton (2014) identified 22 critical project management success factors essential for the achievement of sustainable public housing delivery in Nigeria. The factors are related to the project manager, the organization, the team members, and the external project environment. Ihuah et al. found that the factors relate to the triple objective of sustainable development involving the social, economic, and environmental factors. Ihuah et al. asserted that governments should implement and support the identified critical success factors based on the people's real needs, not driven by political and financial motives.

Offsite manufacturing (OSM) is another form of housing delivery explored by researchers in resolving the Nigerian housing delivery question. Rahimian et al. (2017) proposed the OSM as an alternative strategy to the existing on-site practices. According to Rahimian et al. (2017), OSM can be defined as set of processes that incorporate prefabrication and pre-assembly to produce units and/or modules that are then transported to site and positioned to form a permanent work. Despite the benefits of OSM, real estate developers are yet to embrace the approach due to negative local perception, client resistance, skills shortage, and lack of infrastructure. However, the adoption of OSM will help to support and boost housing delivery in the country. Ibimilua and Ibitoye (2015)

examined the importance of housing in the attainment of sustainable development, the various housing strategies, programs, and policies that emerged in Nigeria. Some of the problems identified were poor programme implementation, inadequate funding, insufficient infrastructural amenities, and inadequate housing finance. According to Ibimilua and Ibitoye, there should be periodic review of the Nigerian housing policy, funding for development of housing policies, encouragement of the use of local materials, and the provision of low-cost houses in urban and rural places.

Urbanization is a phenomenon dating back to early civilization. According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (UN-Habitat, 2004), the movement of people from the rural areas to urban areas has been recorded since the 1800s. Currently, more than half of the world's population lives in cities (Muggah, 2012) and Nigeria is one of the largest urban areas in the developing world (Opoko & Oluwatayo, 2014). Opoko and Oluwatayo (2014) identified the challenges of urbanization as rapid population growth, changes in demographic structure, poverty and unemployment, difficulties in accessing housing delivery inputs, and lack of adequate institutional capacity on the part of the government. Opoko and Oluwatayo recommended changes in the current planning and regulatory framework, housing finance, use of local building materials, and care in design and construction phases.

Studies were carried out on housing as an economic tool for the improvement of Nigeria GDP. According to Popoola and Alamu (2016), housing is an economic tool for fostering GDP of developed countries like Britain and the United States of America. However, in the Nigerian context, housing is beset with a myriad of problems including

housing finance, corruption, and a low number of committed financial institutions. Popoola and Alamu examined the role of government in housing finance and the challenges associated with it. Popoola and Alamu recommended a way forward which includes creating an enabling environment for investors, providing necessary funds for housing, and promoting the housing business.

Perspectives on Project Success in Real Estate Development

The relationship between project management methodology and project success, and the impact of project governance on project success was a subject of study by Joslin and Müller (2015). In 2015, Joslin and Müller investigated the relationship between the use of a PMM and project success, and the impact of project governance on PMM and project success (Joslin & Müller, 2015). Joslin and Müller found that the application of a PMM accounts for 22.3% of the variation in project success, and PMMs that are considered sufficiently comprehensive to manage the project, lead to higher levels of project success than PMMs that need to be supplemented for use by the project manager (Joslin & Müller, 2016). In a subsequent work, Joslin and Müller stated the relationship between project governance and project success from agency theory and stewardship theory perspectives. Joslin and Müller operationalized project governance as the extent of shareholder versus stakeholder orientation, and the extent of behavior versus outcome control, both exercised by the parent organization over its project.

Researchers further stated the importance of stewardship approaches in the context of successful projects. Evidence abounds in academic literature of the positive effect of transformational leadership on project portfolio success, however, the

mechanism of this relationship was scanty in professional literature. Aga, Noorderhaven, and Vallejo (2016) stated that team-building plays a mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success, and proposed this as a possible explanation of the relationship. One knowledge gap that negatively influences project success is poor project success analysis and the lack of proper documentation of the results of previous projects. Todorovíc, Petrović, Mihic, Obradovic, and Bushuyev (2015) stated that project success analysis—presented through the definition of critical success factors, key performance indicators, and performance-measuring process—has a positive influence on knowledge acquisition and transfer in project environments. In summary, project management methodology, transformational leadership, good project governance, and project success analysis framework all have positive influence on project success. Adesiyan (2016) stated that the leadership strategies to maximize profitability in the Nigerian housing sector including the need to (a) plan within the available resources, (b) employ and invest in competent staff, (c) increase leadership influence, and (d) improve knowledge of the business environment.

Globalization has resulted in corporate real estate management becoming a source of competition both locally and internationally. However, such exposure comes with a price. Schuur (2016) stated that the exposure of the Nigerian real estate market to foreign investors attracts higher visibility and demand greater skill for both strategy and leadership. Schuur suggested that industry executives must be proactive and global, with competitive and excellent planning, influencing, and teamwork skills. Davis (2014) emphasized the need to ensure a common understanding of project success by the project

stakeholders, including senior management, the project core team, and project recipient stakeholder groups. Davis argued that the common understanding of what constitutes project success is an imperative to avoid discontinuity down the project line. According to Davis, earlier studies have shown that disagreement of understanding is commonplace.

The existence of knowledge gaps between project management practitioners and scholars were examined. Chiocchio and Hobbs (2014) stated that although project teams are central to organizations everywhere, a knowledge gap exists between project management scholars and organizational behavior and industrial–organizational (OB/IO) scholars. Chiocchio and Hobbs argued that the gap seriously impedes the advancement of knowledge because scholars from both fields have not leveraged each other's considerable knowledge and might be relying on outdated models and evidence to study project team phenomena, manage project teams, or develop university curricula. Chiocchio and Hobbs called for interdisciplinary research projects devoted specifically to developing a research agenda on project teams, stating that reviews performed in the past by project management scholars that touch on human factors have been conducted, but the same lack of cross-pollination in the reviews themselves was discernable.

Sargent (2016) adopted a perspective of improvement of PMM, for enhanced market delivery, reduced costs, and increased profitability. Sargent (2016) stated that business leaders in the IT industry lose competitive value for failure to improve their project management maturity processes. Sargent argued that the improvement of project management maturity processes is essential for repeated project success. Sargent (2016) identified six major strategies to improve PMM processes, namely project leader

development, customer focus, standard methodology development, interactive communication, establishing a project office organizational structure, and practicing continuous process improvement.

Further studies were conducted on leadership and governance within the regulatory organs of government, and the impact on infrastructural development in the Nigerian context by Onolememen (2015). According to Onolememen (2015), the Nigerian leadership crisis corresponds with political instability and infrastructure weakness. Onolememen developed his theoretical framework consistent with Burns' (Burns, 1978) and Bass' (Bass, 1985) theories of transformational leadership, and Davis' (Davis, 2011) and Toikka's (Toikka, 2011) theories of transformation and transition in governance. Onolememen claimed that, in the context of leadership and governance, several factors were responsible for a dearth of infrastructural development in Nigeria. The factors included, political instability and the Nigerian civil war, military dictatorships implemented improvements but neglected rural areas, need for development and funding of a new national infrastructure plan, combat corruption, and governance based on a pragmatic-visionary form of leadership.

Researchers also examined the incidence of real estate development project failure. Nzekwe, Oladejo and Emoh (2015) stated that there was a high rate of project failure in Eastern Nigeria. Nzekwe et al. appraised the factors critical for project success in the region with a view to stem the high incidence of project failures. The researchers found out that the ability to handle unexpected crises above client commitment is the most important factor for project success and recommended that the finding be applied in

the entire Eastern region of Nigeria. Takey and de Carvalho (2015) stated that managing individual competence and mapping competence-building trajectories for the project manager and team members is strategic. Takey and de Carvalho proposed a seven-step method for project management competency mapping. The steps included, a description of competence and performance criteria, an assessment process, a diagnosis of the current proficiency level, the identification of competence levels that differentiate professional categories, the establishment of expected profiles, a gap analysis, and the association between experience and competency development.

Strategies that small businesses use for sustainability was a subject of review by Akaeze (2016). Akaeze (2016) stated that small businesses, as primary drivers of economic wealth, contribute about 39% of the GDP and create two out of every three new jobs. The case study used was a small automobile dealership. The downturn, however, is that only approximately 25% of small businesses survive after 5 years. Dokes (2017) on the other hand, stated that the U.S. incurs as much as $300 billion in annual performance losses due to ineffective leadership behaviors. The irony of this scenario is that while small businesses are the key economic drivers, the businesses depend on effective leadership to sustain business performances. In the context of drug, medical, and consumer products businesses, Macht (2016) stated that business leaders use strategies to influence organizational culture of quality and compliance for short-term and long-term benefits.

Different methodologies are used in identifying small business strategies for sustainability. Using RBV, model and data coding techniques, and cluster analysis for

data analysis, Akaeze (2016) stated the following emergent themes: consumer satisfaction, business knowledge, effective supervision, human capital, genuine commitment, and aggressive marketing. Adopting the virtuous leadership theory (VLT) model, Dokes (2017) recorded six emergent themes, continuous communication, employee knowledge and training, the use of virtuous tenets, transference of wisdom, modeling justice, and team building. Using the theory of constraints in her study in 2016, Macht (2016) showed that the emergent themes on the strategies that influence quality and compliance culture included leadership, culture and habits, communications, and management systems and data analysis.

The following conclusions were drawn by researchers on small business strategies. Akaeze (2016) stated that small business owners should focus on consumer satisfaction strategies, aggressive marketing strategies, genuine commitment to business, human capital strategies, business knowledge strategies, and effective supervision strategies. Dokes (2017) found that consistent verbal and nonverbal communication, training to enhance workplace skills, virtuous tenets, transfer of experiential knowledge facilitate and model social justice and teambuilding. Similarly, Macht (2016) stated the need for top management to discuss and reinforce expectations; reinforce culture and habits in an organization to drive desired behaviors; ensure communications with employees and external customers to ensure clear understanding of quality and compliance expectations; and use management systems and data analysis where programs establish a global structure for quality and compliance and enable data collection and analysis.

Different success dimensions were identified for construction projects in the extant literature. Using a case study of stadium development Bernhold, Lattuch, and Riemenschneider (2014) stated that the five success factors are prospects, viability, planning, administration, and operations. These five factors encompass the whole stages of a construction project, from project conception to use of the finished facility. According to Bernhold et al., project management activities determine the success of any significant development because of stakeholder engagement, in the real estate development sector.

The subject of how comprehension, motivation, skills, resources, and communication can predict project success in the real estate construction sector in Nigeria was also the focus of a study by Onvali (2017). Onyali (2017) stated that the elements of comprehension, motivation, skills, resources, and communication were important for developing project management strategies to optimize profitability. Using the duck alignment theory (Lidow, 1999) and the multiplier linear regression analysis, Onyali showed that a significant relationship existed between each of the five elements and profitability.

The impact of economic fluctuations on the growth and performance of the construction sector in Nigeria was studied. Okoye, Ngwu, Ezeokoli, and Ugochukwu (2016) found that organizations that experience mild gains during expansionary periods were most likely to suffer only mildly during contractions, while those that recover fastest from recessions were most likely to feel the impact of an economic downturn earlier and more strongly than other organizations. Kun (2005) stated that construction

investments were the most volatile components of a nation's GDP, yet construction investments need long development periods and long response time to adjust to new market conditions. The Nigerian GDP had a steady increase from 2009 to 2013, but the slump of oil prices triggered a chain reaction effect on the economy because the construction industry reduced budget revenues (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2016). This restricted the government's ability to invest in infrastructure, and eventually budget-funded infrastructural projects were frozen (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2016). As the Nigerian economy continued in a downward spiral the need arose to investigate the economy in relation to the activities of the construction sector, as one of the key drivers of the economy (Okoye et al., 2016).

The volatility of the growth rate of the construction sector compared to the national GDP was examined. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Quarterly, econometric techniques, and ordinary least square regression method analysis, the growth rate of the construction sector is more volatile compared to that of GDP (Okoye et al., 2016). The NBS recommended that positive construction policies be established, as the construction sector has the potential for improving and growing the national economy and recovering the economy from recession. The Nigerian residential real estate finance system and the factors influencing the mortgage market was explored. Oladiran (2015) stated that mortgage demand is negatively influenced by age group, interest rate, and household disposable income. Adopting the quantitative approach, and using descriptive and analytic techniques, Oladiran recommended the improvement of the mortgage market and reduction of interest rate.

Project Portfolio Management

Project management and portfolio management are components of the dynamic business capabilities of a real estate organization. Project success contributes directly or indirectly to the overall success of the organization. Alias, Zawawi, Yusof, and Aris (2014) stated that critical success factors (CSFs) were inputs to project management practice which can lead directly or indirectly to project success. Alias et al. (2014) examined the extent of the relationship between CSFs and project performance. Davis (2014) stated that that the perception of project success by different stakeholders differs significantly. Davis demonstrated the divergent stakeholder perceptions on project success using an inductive thematic analysis and concluded on the need for greater stakeholder engagement at the definition of the criteria for project success.

Sustainability of construction projects in Nigeria was the subject of review by some researchers. Banihashemi, Hosseini, Golizadeh, and Sankaran (2017) stated that although sustainability considerations in construction projects have been receiving attention in the advanced economies of the world, many organizations in the developing countries are yet to integrate sustainability in their programs. Banihashemi et al. investigated the critical success factors (CSFs) necessary for the integration of sustainability into project management of construction projects in developing countries. Banihashemi et al. proposed a framework for delivery of construction projects through the lenses of innovation diffusion theory, while applying the CSFs.

An empirical research was conducted by Abrantes and Figueiredo (2015) on how companies developing new products reconfigure their human resources management

processes as changes continuously occur to their new product development (NPD) portfolios. Abrantes and Figueiredo (2015) stated that the sources of resource conflicts when managing NPD project portfolios are categorized into product marketing, product design, technology factors, development process design, and resourcing policies. Abrantes and Figueiredo showed an example of better process management through the integration of a resource management process with existing portfolio management standards.

A study was done on the mediating effect of management perception and satisfaction in the context of innovation project portfolio management (IPPM) performance. According to Spieth and Lerch (2014), IPPM is concerned with an organization's dynamic capability to assess the challenge of evaluating, selecting, and prioritizing innovation projects. Spieth and Lerch hypothesized and tested the impacts of method usage, criteria usage, IPPM design, information availability, and internal interactions on management perception and satisfaction, and also on IPPM performance and innovativeness.

Unger, Rank, and Gemünden (2014) reviewed the relationships between corporate innovation culture in different cultural contexts and practices, and the dimensions of project portfolio success including portfolio strategic fit and portfolio balance and using national-level culture practices as moderators. Unger, Rank, and Gemünden (2014) stated that corporate factors should be compatible with national culture to elevate the fit and balance of project portfolios. Data for the study were collected from four different countries consisting of 165 cultural practices. Deployment of PPM

methodology greatly enhances project portfolio performance, and consequently influences business success factors positively (Unger et al., 2014).

Project management (PM) contributes significantly to project success especially within the constraints of scheduling and cost margins. De Carvalho, Patah and Bido (2015) stated that a significant and positive relationship exists between the response variable schedule with PM enablers and project management efforts in training and capabilities development. De Carvalho, Patah and Bido also stated that project complexity has a significant effect on two aspects of project success: margin and schedule. The researchers used the contingency approach to evaluate project complexity, industry effects, and the country. According to de Carvalho et al. (2015), researchers corroborated the results across the countries and the industries studied. Sequel to their earlier work in 2015, Joslin and Müller in 2016 examined the relationship between project governance and project success from the agency theory and stewardship theory perspectives. Joslin and Müller operationalized project governance as the extent of shareholder versus stakeholder orientation, and the extent of behavior versus outcome control, both exercised by the parent organization over its project. Joslin and Müller (2016) stated that project success correlated with increasing stakeholder orientation of the parent organization, while the types of control mechanisms did not correlate with project success.

Project success does not automatically translate to project portfolio success. The primary objective of PPM is to maximize the value created by a set of project investments, while a business case provides the rationale behind each project (Kopmann,

Kock, Killen, & Gemünden, 2015). Kopmann et al. identified three elements of a business case control at the portfolio level and investigated the relationship between business case control and project portfolio success. Business case control is positively related to project portfolio success accountability for business case realization and incentive systems increased this positive effect. Portfolio complexity also positively moderates the relationship (Kopmann et al., 2015).

Transition

In Section 1 of this doctoral study I presented the foundation and background of the study which showed the basis for the research problem. The problem statement consisted of a statement of the general and specific business problem, and the purpose statement included the purpose of the study, rationale for the research method, design, and participant sample. I also presented the nature of the study, research question, conceptual framework; operational definitions; assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; significance of the study; and a review of the literature. I adopted a BPM conceptual framework and the operational definitions clarified the meanings of commonly used terms in the study. The significance of the study component showed the contributions of the study to business practice and the implication for social change.

Section 2 of this study includes the purpose of the doctoral study and a description of my role as the researcher and in the data collection process, in relationship to my research study. In Section 2, I also described aspects of the research components including participant recruitment, data collection, analysis, and the processes I used to support the validity and reliability of the study. In Section 3, I presented the findings and

empirical evidence that ties to the conceptual framework relating to the research question. Section 3 also includes a discussion of the application of the study to business practice, implications for social change, recommendations for further studies, and reflections on the doctoral study process.

Section 2: The Project

In this section, I state the purpose of the study, the detailed roles, the methodologies, and the instruments I used for the research. The section also includes discussion of the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, and data organization and analysis areas. Finally, I address study reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies real estate development managers use for improving and sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector. The study population consisted of five real estate development business managers in Nigeria, who implemented successful strategies for improving and sustaining business performance. The implications for positive social change include the potential for Nigerian real estate managers to become empowered to sustain their businesses through difficult economic times. Real estate development business managers may increase business efficiency, reduce production costs, and enhance business profitability, thereby reducing real estate prices and making real estate more affordable for more Nigerians.

Role of the Researcher

I was the researcher and data collection instrument for this study. Qualitative research requires both the emotional maturity and strong interpersonal skills of the researcher to listen to and comprehend the expressed experiences of participants who describe a phenomenon of interest (Collins & Cooper, 2014). According to Patton (2015),

researchers use the qualitative method to gain an understanding of why an individual or group acted in a specific way and why processes, activities, and events occurred the way they did. Also, the researcher uses experience and knowledge to enrich the research content and ascertain the trueness of research findings (Foster & Lauver, 2014). Dokes (2017) stated that a researcher's knowledge of the study topic should serve to augment a thick description of the phenomenon under review.

I successfully completed the basic researchers' course (see Appendix B). I also brought to the researcher's role for this study more than 20 years of experience in civil engineering practice, project management, and administration. Having received formal university training as a civil engineer, my work involves the art and science of design, analysis, construction, and maintenance of infrastructural facilities and the built environment. In addition, I was certified a Project Management Professional and I managed infrastructure development projects such as real estate development, public housing projects, roads and bridges, and water supply systems. In lieu of the relationship between the doctoral study topic and my academic background and professional experience, there was a potential for personal bias and possibly conflict during data collection and analysis.

I identified areas of possible conflict and bias in accordance with the recommendations of Patton (2015), who advised researchers to state explicitly areas of possible conflict and bias and to avoid these areas. I limited myself to taking notes and recording (when the participants agreed to be recorded) during interviews and collected and transcribed participants' interview input. I refrained from any personal sensitivity

biases to ensure validity of the study findings. I adhered to the ethical principles and guidelines on respect for persons, beneficence, and justice in the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979) for the protection of human subjects.

I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) as (a) a logical interview format for providing directions, (b) an instrument for collecting participants' data, and (c) a basis for recognizing emerging themes. According to Yin (2017), researchers use interview protocols to ensure the collection of viable and reliable data. I ensured data saturation and verification using the strategies of member checking and transcript review (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Participants

The participants for this study included five real estate development business managers who have successfully improved and sustained their business performance for at least the last 7 years, a period covering the duration of the most recent economic crisis in Nigeria. I obtained a list of the business managers from a search conducted on the database of the active real estate developers in Nigeria. According to Ward, Vaughn, Burney, and Ostbye (2016), the recruitment of an adequate sample is critical to the success of any study. I sent requests for interview to the participants introducing myself and the purpose of this study. I initiated the recruitment of participants through phone calls and follow up e-mails. Watson, Robinson, Harker, and Arriola (2016) stated that web-based recruitment tools such as e-mail may elicit quicker responses, while a postal mail procedure may elicit a higher response rate (Hardigan, Popovici, & Carvajal, 2016).

Other researchers have used hybrid tools of recruitment. Moe, Lytle, Nanney, Linde, and Laska (2016) used a mix of postal mail and e-mail to recruit participants for their study. To reduce unnecessary surprises and establish a good working relationship, I provided participants with initial information and a brief introduction to the study during a phone call and then followed up with an e-mail providing more detailed study participation information.

I clearly stated in introductory e-mails to the participants that their consent and participation were voluntary and that they may withdraw their consent at any time. I kept participant responses confidential, and I held their responses in a location accessible only by me. According to Kawar, Pugh, and Scruth (2016), informed consent is an ongoing process of communication and mutual understanding between researchers and participants that requires researchers to disclose the purpose of the study, any reasonably foreseeable risks to the participants, any potential benefits to the participants or other people, and the extent of confidentiality protections for the participants. I was introduced to some participants by other reputable members of their local real estate developers' professional association. Ward et al. (2016) found that increased engagement with community partners increased the recruitment and participation rate in their study. I also addressed concerns about participation and burdens on the participants in my introductory mail. Ward et al. stated that addressing concerns that might be raised by participants helps the researcher facilitate a better working relationship and higher participation rate.

To establish a working relationship and earn participants' trust, I gave an honest and clear explanation of the purpose of this study, answered any questions, addressed concerns of participants, and assured participants of their confidentiality in line with the recommendations of ethical strategies (Ferreira, Buttell, & Ferreira, 2015). I sent consent forms that disclosed the relevant information that allowed the participants to confirm the authenticity of this study in compliance with published standards of ethical research (Check, Wolf, Dame, & Beskow, 2014; Tam et al., 2015). I first collaborated with the gatekeepers of potential participants to understand the preferences of the participant to enable me to determine the best method of approach to the participants to earn the participants' trust.

Research Method and Design

The three established research methods are, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Barnham (2015) stated that researchers use personal interviews in the qualitative method to explore attitudes, behaviors, motivations, and working strategies. I conducted this study using the qualitative method because qualitative methods are usually more appropriate when the research problem is exploratory, and the researcher needs to conduct detailed inquiries into the problem. The study was also a multiple case study. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016), the use of a multiple case study can assist the researcher in making the context clear when interviewing large groups.

Research Method

I selected a qualitative approach for my doctoral study. Qualitative inquiry is an effective way to explore individuals' experiences, meaning, and interpretations (Birchall,

2014). Yin (2017) stated that the qualitative research method can be used with open-ended questions for exploring a subject matter of interest when predetermined answers do not exist. According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2013), qualitative research methods are used for studying, in a holistic manner, reality as constructed by individuals in the contexts of their worlds. Researchers use a qualitative method to capture the lived experiences of entrepreneurs, including their perceptions and challenges faced during the development of their business enterprises (Zirima, Nyanga, Mupani, & Chifamba, 2013). I used the qualitative research method for this study to explore the strategies used by successful real estate development business managers to improve and sustain business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector.

Using the qualitative method presented an opportunity to interview some real estate development business managers who have successfully used strategies to survive economic slowdowns in Nigeria and to review written communications about their companies, resulting in data triangulation. Qualitative research includes data from interviews, focus groups, observations, and written materials (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). According to Patton (2015), data triangulation is recommended in qualitative research data analysis. The use of a qualitative research method allows for the development of an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences.

Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2013) stated that quantitative methods researchers rely on measurable knowledge reported numerically. Quantitative researchers examine relationships between two or more variables (Ladd et al., 2015). Quantitative research methods can be used to examine or to explain the causal relationship between variables

about a phenomenon of interest. A quantitative approach was not appropriate for this study because I did not examine the relationships between variables.

The mixed methods approach involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative data in a research study (Patton, 2015). According to Darawsheh (2014), researchers apply the mixed method approach to blend qualitative data collected from participants' contextual settings with quantitative hypothesis testing. A mixed methods approach was not appropriate for this study because I did not use statistical testing to examine the phenomenon in this study. Hence, quantitative and mixed methods were not appropriate for this study because the purpose of this study did not pertain to cause-and-effect, statistical evaluations, or comparisons of variables using statistically appropriate sample sizes.

Research Design

I used a multiple case study design for this study. Using a multiple case study design provides a framework to understand complex social situations, which can include social behavior, managerial methods, and organizational processes (Yin, 2017). Researchers use a phenomenological design to gain an understanding of a phenomenon by conducting an in-depth study of individuals' lived experiences (Budd & Velasquez, 2014). A phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study because I did not explore the meanings of lived experiences of participants. A narrative design includes individuals' accounts and experiences as a storyline (Onyali, 2017). The narrative design was not appropriate for this study because the participants did not tell their stories, but I explored strategies that Nigerian real estate leaders use to improve and sustain their

business performance for success. The ethnographic research design is the study or close observation of people in a specific setting over a period of time (Liberati et al., 2015). I did not study the culture of people in this research. Hence, an ethnographic design was not appropriate.

Case studies are suitable for answering research questions on contemporary issues of how or why something occurs rather than a historical perspective on a phenomenon (Yin, 2017). Yin (2017) further asserted that researchers use case study research for exploration of contemporary physical systems, using several sources of proof in circumstances where the demarcation between phenomenon and context may not be distinct. Baškarada (2014) stated that a case study is appropriate for scholarly research in the context of the business environment because it facilitates the collection of different data for methodological triangulation to arrive at a truthful answer to the research question.

According to Yin (2017), qualitative research designs other than a case study, may not allow a researcher to capture the perspectives and experiences leading to an understanding of what decisions and choices business managers make and how they make them in specific business environments. A case study can be single or multiple in design and may be descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory in nature (Yin, 2017). I selected a multiple case study design as the research design for this study. A multiple case study may be more compelling and more robust than a single case study, and it involves the description of more than one entity, including the nature, circumstances, and characteristics of the inhabitants of those entities (Yin, 2017).

A case study design includes the use of open-ended questions in semistructured interviews and document analysis to obtain an understanding of a single event or multiple situations from the identification of patterns of behaviors (Yin, 2017). I collected data using open-ended questions in semistructured interviews (on phone and Skype) with five real estate development business managers from five reputable business organizations. I also obtained documents related to their business enterprise that support and augment the interview data. Using multiple data sources, which included multiple participants and the collection of company documents, enhanced the validity of this multiple case study leading to data saturation and methodological triangulation. According to Yin (2017), data saturation and the application of methodological triangulation techniques during the analysis process of a multiple case study increases the reliability of the case study findings. The corroboration of evidence from multiple sources was desirable to avoid single data sources skewing results towards one perspective. A multiple case study also helped deepen my understanding of the strategies used by real estate development business managers to improve and sustain their business performance.

Population and Sampling

The population sample for this doctoral study was five real estate development business managers from five organizations who have successfully improved and sustained their business performance in Nigeria in the last seven years. Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research when the researcher selects individuals who are informed and understand the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Yin, 2017). Emerson (2015) stated that purposeful sampling is suitable for selecting

participants who have knowledge about a phenomenon and can communicate their experience. I used the purposeful sampling method to identify and select five participants from reputable real estate development businesses for this doctoral study. I also used snowball sampling as a secondary strategy for the recruitment of participants. Snowball sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling procedure in which the researcher selects participants from the target population with the assistance of previously selected populations (Watson et al., 2016).

Yin (2017) stated that qualitative researchers could use a sample size of between five and 50 participants. I selected a sample of five real estate development business managers who have successfully improved and sustained their business performance. Data saturation is an important component of rigor in qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Qualitative researchers reach data saturation when they obtain no new information from additional qualitative interviews (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is the building of rich data within the process of enquiry until the data collected becomes replicated (Morse, 2015). I interviewed five real estate development business managers and conducted member checking for data saturation. I achieved data saturation with the depth of information provided by the five business managers.

Elo et al. (2014) stated that the experience, competence, and ability to answer questions are prerequisites for participation in qualitative research. Researchers select study participants based on convenience and the availability of the participants (Palinkas et al., 2015). I selected the participants based on all of the following eligibility criteria: (a) actively engaged in a real estate development business, (b) part of senior management

and involved in decision-making of a real estate development organization, (c) serving in an organization that has been in the real estate development business for at least seven years, and (d) experienced in real estate development in Eastern, Nigeria. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), selecting quiet locations free from any distractions while conducting interviews is important. I held interviews with participants in a convenient location and comfortable atmosphere, on phone or on Skype. Skype was used to establish contact with the participants where phone connection with the participant was poor. Skype camera was not used. Each interview lasted for between 30 and 60 minutes.

Ethical Research

Ethical research relates to the day-to-day ethical issues that occur while conducting research (Wallace & Sheldon, 2015). Standard processes and procedures are required to ensure the ethical conduct of a doctoral research. I began data collection for this doctoral research only after the Walden University institutional review board (IRB) had approved my research proposal and issued my IRB approval number. The IRB approval demonstrates adherence to ethical values regarding human research participants in the study. The IRB apply rules and regulations to protect human research subjects include the informed consent process, ensure a balance of risks and benefits, and protect participant privacy (Adams et al., 2013). I followed the three fundamental principles of (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice in accordance with the recommendations of the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research ,1979). The IRB approval number for this study is 03-21-19-0614038.

Gaining informed consent from participants is a requirement before a researcher collects data (Beskow, Check, & Ammarell, 2014). I sent consent forms and introductory letters to the selected eligible participants. The consent form included information such as the research topic, consent to participate, research purpose, research procedures, research risk and benefits, voluntary nature of participation in the research, and confidentiality protection procedures for participants. Tam et al. (2015) stated that the consent form should contain a statement that participation in the study is voluntary and respondents can withdraw during the interview process anytime. I clearly informed participants that they are free to withdraw from the study before or during the interview without any explanation. Yin (2017) suggested that a researcher may decide whether participants may receive compensation in a study. I did not give compensation to the participants in this study but may present the final copy of the study to participants.

According to Dekking, van der Graaf, and van Delden (2014), researchers are responsible for the protection of the study participants by obtaining informed consent of the study participants, protecting participants from any harm, avoiding the use of any form of deception in the study, and protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality. Furthermore, Yin (2017) urged researchers to protect the rights of the participants, preserve their privacy, and ensure paramount care during data gathering, data storage, and data analysis. I ensured the protection of the participants rights and privacy by adhering to the highest ethical standards, avoided all forms of deception, and retained the consent forms, all recordings, transcripts, and other documentation in a locked safe. I continued to hold participants' information and documentation in a locked safe and will

destroy collected study data after 5 years. I did not use names of participants nor official documents; instead, I assigned participants and their business information coded labels as an additional measure to ensure anonymity, and to guarantee confidentiality and privacy protection of participants.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in a qualitative research (Robinson, 2014). I am the primary data collection instrument in this doctoral study. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) as a guide to ensure I collected all relevant data in a consistent and structured manner. Yin (2017) stated that a detailed, well-reviewed, relevant interview protocol is an important tool in qualitative research involving interviews, to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. Yin further stated that interview protocols include brief details of the case study, the main features of the data collection routine, the precise wording of the interview inquiry, and a study report guide.

Data collection methods in a qualitative study may include (a) informal interviews, (b) semistructured interviews, (c) phenomenological in-depth interviews, (d) focus groups, (e) audiovisual materials, and (f) archival documents (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). According to Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins, and Peng (2014), semistructured interviews promote interaction with informants in an interview situation, to foster goal-oriented thinking, and utilize social negotiation and co-production of knowledge. I used semistructured interviews for primary data collection in this study. I collected secondary data from company documents obtained from participants or other

authorized company personnel, public documents from the local government development authorities, and the real estate development professional association.

Researchers should state explicitly areas of possible conflict and bias and avoid these areas (Patton, 2015). I explicitly expressed any areas of possible conflict and bias and limited myself to taking notes and recordings (if participants consented) during interviews. I refrained from any personal sensitivity biases to ensure the validity of study findings. Member checking allowed participants to review their responses and respond to initial interpretations (Andraski, Chandler, Powell, Humes, & Wakefield, 2014). Member checking enhances the reliability of a qualitative research (Harper & Cole, 2012). I conducted a follow-up member checking interview with each participant by providing a copy of my study findings from their interviews and allowing them to review, comment, and confirm (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Data Collection Technique

The primary data collection technique for this study was through semistructured interviews and the secondary data collection was through the review of company and public documents. A variety of interview styles exist, such as structured, unstructured, and semistructured interviews, group interview and focus group interview (Mojtahed et al., 2014). Meyer (2014) classified interviews into three types: (a) structured, (b) semistructured, and (c) unstructured interview. Yin (2017) stated that a structured interviewer uses preformulated questions with strict regulation of the order of the questions, while in semistructured interviews, the interviewer uses preformulated questions but with no strict adherence to the questions. In unstructured interviews, the

interviewer does not use preformulated questions, and the participants can discuss other issues as they wish (Yin, 2017).

Researchers use semistructured interviews to introduce additional questions to a fixed set of questions to explore the phenomenon (Yin, 2017). Semistructured interviews are free from barriers and result in the gathering of rich data that enables understanding of the processes, networks, and relationships (Drew, 2014). I used semistructured interviews as my primary data collection technique and used the interview protocol (see Appendix A) as a guide to ensure focus of the interview and provide consistency across all participants. A potential disadvantage of a semistructured interview is the likelihood of collecting less information when compared with unstructured interviews, where the discussion can digress more. However, the advantages to the use of semistructured interviews may include (a) fostering effective rapport with participants, (b) enhanced researcher-participant interaction, (c) use of subquestions to ensure deep gathering of data, and (d) interviewer may use audio/visual techniques (such as Skype) to collect data when the participant is not easily accessible (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) as a guide during the interviews. Hyett, Kenny, and Dickson-Swift (2014) stated that developing a clear data collection protocol is a significant practice in qualitative inquiries. According to De Massis and Kotlar (2014), protocols are essential guides which are advised for multiple case study research. When using protocols qualitative researchers stay more focused and are less distracted by interesting but irrelevant views related to the explored concepts (Neuman,

2014). I performed data cleansing by deleting all irrelevant data and correcting raw data (Gschwandtner, Gartner, Aigner, & Miksch, 2012).

I also collected secondary data through company documents obtained from participants or other authorized company personnel, and public documents from the local government development authorities and real estate development professional association. According to Hyett, Kenny, and Dickson-Swift (2014) the review of company documents to support and augment the interview data is a standard approach in data collection involving methodological triangulation in case study research. Baškarada (2014) stated that researchers engaged in case study research collect data from two or more sources. While according to Yin (2017), interviews and documents establish converging lines of evidence for robust findings. One disadvantage of relying upon documents as a data source is the possibility that the information may be outdated, irrelevant, incomplete, unavailable, or in some way biased (Yin, 2017). However, the advantage of secondary data is that it can be used as collaborating evidence. Denzin (2012) stated that documents relied upon by others in a process are inherently reliable sources of corroborating evidence. Hence, I requested and collected any supporting documents the participant availed, after each interview.

I did not conduct a pilot study but tested my recording instruments to ensure that they were in good working condition. According to Morin (2013), the main reason for conducting a pilot study is to develop and test the research instrument. According to Anney (2014), member checking is a significant process which enhances the credibility of qualitative study. Member checking improves the accuracy, credibility, and

verifiability of data collected and analyzed throughout research (Harper & Cole, 2012). Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie (2015) stated that member checking reduces the role of subjectivity as participants review the researcher's interpretation of interview data to ensure a proper reflection of their personal experience. I used member checking in this study to reduce researcher subjectivity and ensure proper reflection of the personal experiences of real estate development managers who have successfully used strategies to improve and sustain business performance.

Data Organization Technique

Data organization is the process of arranging, moving, and keeping track of the research data (Almutairi, Gardner, & McCarthy, 2014). Wahyuni (2012) stated that proper management of raw data is critical to the success of the analysis stage. According to De Massis and Kotlar, (2014), raw data includes rich textual transcripts, documents, and reflective journals and notes. I created a computer-based case study database consisting of case study folders using NVivo®11, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program, to organize the data into files with different themes and folders. I then filed data from multiple data sources in designated folders to facilitate data access and analysis. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) stated that a case study database enhances the reliability of research. I identified case study folders as, *Case-1, Case-2, …to Case-5*. After transcribing the interviews, I commenced data organization by labeling the data using the following coding identifiers: *P1-C1, P2-C1, P3-C1, etc.*, for the study participants, and *C#D#* for the documents where *C#* identifies the case number and *D#* identifies the respective document number. The changes, corrections, or

additional information resulting from the member checking process were incorporated and filed subsequently.

Each folder included all the correspondence, recordings, transcripts, reflexive notes, and documents obtained from the participant and elsewhere for that respective case. I used the filename system *P#_C#_Rec#* to identify the interview recording of a specific participant and the case number, *P#_C#_Trans#* to identify the transcripts of a specific participant and the case number. Similarly, I used *P#_C#_Doc#* to identify the documents, *P#_C#_Ref#* to identify the reflexive journal and interview protocol, and *P#_C#_Cons#* to identify the informed consent. I uploaded the transcripts, documents, and reflexive notes to NVivo®11 for coding and analysis. Neuman (2014) stated that software packages such as NVivo®11 are practical tools used for qualitative data analysis. I encrypted and safely stored the collected data electronically under each case corresponding folder in line with the ethical research requirements. I developed backup copies of computer files, developed a master list of types of information gathered, protected the anonymity of participants by masking their names in the data, and developed a data collection matrix as a visual means of locating and identifying information for this study (Yin, 2017).

According to Mealer and Jones (2014), the use of a safe and password-protected computer to store research data is a critical requirement. Qualitative researchers use a password-protected personal computer and external disk to store collected data (Yin, 2017). I used a password-protected personal computer to record, store, index, sort, and code my research data using CAQDAS analytical software. I used an internal and an

external hard drive to store all my research raw data in a locked secure safe for five years after which the data will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves making sense of relevant research data to identify and correlate themes from the literature and conceptual framework using computer software (Inubiwon, 2017). According to Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014), data analysis involves the process of analyzing data and interpreting the meaning from participant's experience, reducing the data into themes, and representing the data in a discussion. Data analysis in qualitative research involves review of data to discover meaningful patterns that lead to thematic answers to the central research questions of a study (Yin, 2017).

I used methodological triangulation in this study. According to Anney (2014), methodological triangulation is the most common type of triangulation used in case studies. Methodological triangulation consists of two types: across-case method and within-case method (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Within-case method triangulation involves the use of more than one set of data collected from different sources within one data collection method (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Across-case method triangulation involves the use of two different data collection methods, such as qualitative and quantitative (Heale & Forbes, 2013). While theory triangulation involves using multiple theoretical perspectives to conduct the research or interpret research data (Modell, 2015), methodological triangulation involves using more than one method for data gathering, such as interviews, questionnaires, observations, and documents to improve the validity

by combining various techniques in one study (Manganelli et al., 2014). Hence, I used methodological triangulation in the combination of interviews, member checking, documents, and observations.

Yin (2017) stated that data analysis includes coding data, combining codes into themes, and displaying and making comparisons in the research data. I conducted the entire process of data analysis including data organization, coding system, and data representation. Talanquer (2014) stated that a CAQDAS is used to aid the data analysis process. After the participants had validated the accuracy and completeness of the transcript, I used NVivo®11 software to identify the emerging themes. Using the emerging themes, I identified commonalities in the research data (Ong'ondi, 2017). I then correlated the key themes emerging from the interviews with the extant literature and the conceptual framework to answer the research question, the primary goal of this doctoral study.

Three systematic methods of data analysis are generally applicable in qualitative research namely, thematic, content, and constant comparison (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). According to De Massis and Kotlar (2014), systematic analysis reflects the strength of case study in the reader's point of view. Although there is no specific universally accepted method of data analysis associated with a multiple case study, Petty et al. (2012) stated that thematic analysis is commonly used. I used a thematic method of data analysis by comparing words and phrases that lead to the identification of themes. I then adopted a four-stage nonlinear sequential process to analyze the data. The four stages were (a) reading the collected data multiple times and preparing the data in order

to better understand the phenomenon explored, (b) coding or allocating labels to interview transcripts (c) abstracting the codes from interviews and documents into conceptual categories or themes, and (d) identifying the themes' relationships and patterns and creating a thematic map confirmed by triangulation (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). I read, cleaned, simplified, and condensed the collected data in the first stage of the data analysis to ensure proper alignment of data with the research question. Elo et al. (2014) stated that thorough preparation before starting the data collection and analysis improves the trustworthiness of the thematic analysis.

In the second stage of analysis, I uploaded the prepared data into NVivo®11 and will classify data under families corresponding to each case. I then began the first cycle of coding by identifying words, phrases, and paragraphs in each case; the second cycle of coding included the reconfiguration of codes and the description of their meanings (Saldaña, 2015). In the third stage of data analysis, I grouped the codes that corresponded to the same meaning under themes by using the code options of CAQDAS. I classified the codes under two categories, to match with either the theory-generated codes derived from the literature, or NVivo 11 codes emerging from the collected data, as recommended by Marshall and Rossman (2014). According to Yin (2017), a successful coding ties the data collected to the theory. Yilmaz (2013) further stated that practicing an open coding strategy allows for the emergence of themes and patterns. While Neuman (2014) asserted that coding constitutes the primary conceptual task, and patterns constitute the major findings, in qualitative research. In the fourth stage of my data analysis I aggregated the themes, identified the patterns of each case, compared and

matched the themes and patterns across the studied cases, and confirmed the convergence of the findings by corroborating with documentary evidence and reflexive notes.

I identified links, connections, and patterns among the emerging themes. I performed a within-case explanation and a cross-cases comparison as recommended by De Massis and Kotlar (2014). According to De Massis and Kotlar (2014), pattern matching is an appropriate approach that enhances the validity of case study research. I focused on the strategies, processes, key drivers, challenges, main influencing factors, and lessons learned by real estate development managers in improving and sustaining business performance during economic slowdowns. Roulston and Shelton (2015) stated that spending time on reflexivity reduces bias and increases the trustworthiness of the research. I used reflexive notes during data analysis to help define my preconceptions and avoid personal bias while categorizing or filtering the participants' responses.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of qualitative research are factors that depict rigor and the quality of a research work (Street & Ward, 2012). Reliability and validity are central to judgements about the quality of a qualitative research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Reliability refers to replication and consistency, where a researcher can replicate an earlier research design and achieve the same findings. Validity refers to the appropriateness of the measures used, accuracy of the analysis of the results and generalizability of the findings. Although some researchers argue that confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability are better criteria for evaluating qualitative research, reliability and validity have consistently helped to minimize bias or subjectivity

and have become criteria to ensure the rigor of qualitative work. I ensured the rigor of this research through prolonged engagement, methodological and theoretical triangulation, member checking, reflexivity, and deep descriptions. I also used the interview protocol to ensure cohesion and reinforce validity, consistency, and reliability.

Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability is defined as the repetitive and consistent procedures used by the researcher during the case study (Yin, 2017). Reliability is the extent to which other researchers could use the same steps and arrive at similar results of the case study (Morse & McEvoy, 2014). According to Noble and Smith (2015), reliability refers to the consistency employed by a researcher concerning established analytical procedures and applies to data not to measurement instruments. I used a semistructured interview and a review of organizations' documents to explore the strategies that real estate development business managers use to improve and sustain their business performance. The use of a multiple case study approach is congruent with the constructivism viewpoint of subjective and shared meanings, and the academic literature is in line with the research method, design, and framework.

Dependability is defined as the constancy of data over comparable research conditions whereby the study findings can be replicated with similar participants in comparable conditions (Cope, 2014). Dependability and reliability are related in that they are both based on a researcher's ability to clearly explain procedures such as justification, selection, and strategy application, which may be further validated by an auditor (Yilmaz, 2013). Marshall and Rossman (2014) stated that the concept of dependability aligns with

that of reliability. According to Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, and Pearson (2014), the notion of dependability is similar in some ways to reliability in the quantitative study. To address the dependability of this research, I used triangulation, member checking, and an expert review process. I collected and analyzed data from multiple sources including Skype interviews and review of organizational and public documents. I also compared findings with the reflexive notes for confirmation. According to Anney (2014), conducting proper online in-depth interviews and using triangulation strengthen the dependability of research findings. Member checking is a significant process which a researcher uses to enhance the credibility of a qualitative study (Anney, 2014). Most qualitative researchers use member checking, transcript review, and triangulation to address the dependability issues of their study (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Merwe, 2014). I ensured dependability in this study by documenting the sequences of data process and analysis, member checking, and triangulation.

Validity

A case study analysis meets the criteria of validity if the results match the predicted outcomes of the study significantly (Yin, 2017). In qualitative research, validity refers to the accuracy of the findings (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). To ensure the validity of this study, I used an interview protocol to systematically collect data from multiple sources, member checking to obtain rich data, and triangulation methods to ensure saturation. According to Yilmaz (2013), the participants involved in a qualitative study decide the trueness and the credibility of the study. Yin further stated that a researcher must address issues relating to credibility, transferability, and confirmability to

ensure validity in a qualitative study. I addressed issues of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation by following processes described below.

Credibility refers to the trustworthiness, or the believability of research work. According to Elo et al. (2014), the findings of the qualitative researcher are credible when the findings represent an accurate interpretation of human experiences that people who share the same experience could recognize. Munn et al. (2014) stated that the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings derives from the dependability and credibility of the qualitative research. Prolonged engagement of the researcher on data collection, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking can strengthen the credibility of a qualitative research work (Noble & Smith, 2015). I used prolonged engagement, participants' transcript review, member checking, and triangulation to ensure credibility of the study.

Transferability is the determination of the degree to which research processes might apply to other settings or contexts (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Transferability is used to ensure the validity of a qualitative study. Elo et al. (2014) stated that researchers need to describe in detail the research context and the assumptions central to the research to ensure transferability of the findings of qualitative research to other contexts or settings. Yin (2017) urged qualitative researchers to provide rich, descriptive explanations of collected data to allow external readers to interpret findings and to apply transferability of the studies. To ensure transferability of this study, I described the background of the research phenomenon, the assumptions, and data collection processes including criteria for participation, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

Confirmability refers to whether others can confirm the findings to ensure that the results reflect the understandings and experiences from observed participants, rather than the researcher's preferences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2015). Elo et al. (2014) stated that confirmability in research is the extent that the results of the study are a product of the research and not the researcher's bias. Confirmability is achieved in qualitative research by addressing the value, consistency, and applicability of the study (Noble & Smith, 2015). I improved the confirmability of the study by triangulation and use of NVivo to ensure that I mitigated my biases. Sherry (2013) stated that reflexivity is used by researchers to disclose their personal experiences and biases that could influence the study. I documented all personal notes regarding personal feelings, biases, and insights immediately after each interview, to ensure confirmability of this study.

The achievement of data saturation is important in qualitative research to ensure validity of the research data (Morse, 2015). Fusch and Ness (2015) explained that researchers reach data saturation when no new data, themes, or information emerges from interviewing participants. Yin (2017) explained that qualitative researchers can reach data saturation with a sample size between 5 and 50 participants. I interviewed 5 participants to ensure that data saturation was reached.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2 of this study I gave a narrative on the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, and ethical research. Other contents of Section 2 included data collection instrument and technique, data organization techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity. In

Section 3, I will present the findings, the application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further research, reflections, and conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies successful real estate development business managers used to improve and sustain business performance in Nigeria. According to Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), business performance is a measure of an organization's financial and operational performance. I used purposive sampling as my recruitment strategy and subsequently used snowball sampling as a secondary recruitment strategy. I conducted a search of the professional database of real estate developers and identified reputable businesses and business managers who have successfully used strategies to improve and sustain their business performance over a period of at least 7 years. I recruited participants through introductory phone calls and follow up e-mails. Watson et al. (2016) stated that web-based recruitment tools such as e-mail may elicit quicker responses, while a postal mail procedure may elicit a higher response rate. I collected data using semistructured interviews conducted via Skype and over the phone. Some of the participants also provided documents.

I analyzed the collected data after conducting member checking. I identified 10 key emerging themes that are aligned to the four process groups of the 7FE BPM framework, the conceptual framework for this study. The emerging themes were: (a) business strategy, with profitability a common key driver; (b) commitment to quality and building trust amongst stakeholders; (c) industry and market research; (d) training and knowledge acquisition; (e) innovation and reward systems; (f) operational effectiveness

and PPM; (g) minimizing costs (administrative and operational) and financial leverage (debt/equity ratio); (h) marketing, promotions, and strategic partnerships; (i) measuring business performance and assessing strategic success; and (j) change management and documenting lessons learned. In some cases, the participants gave varied descriptions of the emergent themes. In addition to the emerging themes, the commonalities of strong leadership, business project management, and change management were evident in all the reported cases.

Presentation of the Findings

In this study, I recruited five participants from five different organizations. I assigned coded identifiers to both the participants and their organizations to protect the confidentiality of the interview participants and their organizations. The identifiers of participants were P1_C1, P2_C2, P3_C3, P4_C4, and P5_C5. The codes for the five real estate development businesses are C1, C2, C3, C4 and C5 respectively.

I collected data from three main sources: (a) participant interviews, (b) review of organizations' documents, and (c) public documents. However, the interview data constituted the bulk of the data collected for this study. The analysis of the collected data helped to answer the main research question for this study: What strategies do some real estate development managers use for improving and sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?

I recorded and transcribed all interviews and then conducted member checking with the interview participants. Using methodological triangulation and member checking, I achieved data saturation with the depth of information provided by the five

business managers. I commenced data analysis effectively after member checking by reviewing and studying the verbatim transcriptions of interview data to better understand the data. I adopted a four-stage nonlinear sequential process to analyze the data, as recommended by De Massis and Kotlar (2014). The steps of this process were: (a) reading the collected data multiple times and preparing the data in order to better understand the phenomenon explored, (b) assigning codes or allocating labels to interview transcripts, (c) abstracting the codes from interviews and documents into conceptual categories or themes, and (d) identifying the themes' relationships and patterns and creating a thematic map. Accordingly, I read, cleaned, simplified, and summarized the collected data. I identified common phrases, word patterns, and emergent themes. Table 1 shows the 10 emergent themes.

Table 1

Emergent Themes

Theme	Description of emergent theme
1	Business strategy
2	Commitment to quality and building trust
3	Industry and market research
4	Training and knowledge acquisition
5	Innovation and reward systems
6	Operational effectiveness and PPM
7	Minimizing costs and financial leverage (debt/equity ratio)
8	Marketing, promotions and strategic partnerships
9	Measuring business performance and assessing strategic success
10	Change management and documenting lessons learned

Theme 1: Business Strategy

The first emergent theme from all the interviews conducted in this research was having a clear business strategy developed from the vision and mission statements. On the vision and mission statements question, participant P1_C1 stated, “Our mission statement is to provide affordable housing for the people of Nigeria.” Participant P3_C3 said, “Our mission statement is threefold, namely, housing for all, poverty alleviation, and mentoring.” The vision and mission statements depict the foci and the central themes

of their business strategies. Although participants P1_C1 and P3_C3 did not state their organizations' visions, they clearly stated their mission statements and business strategy.

For some participants, their business strategy was to study the market and target potential clients in specific income brackets. According to P2_C2, "Our business strategy is to conduct comprehensive feasibility studies prior to investing in any location . . . also we always define our target market and design our projects to meet the requirements of that target market group." P2-C2 also said, "Due to our studies and understanding of the real estate market trends, we decided just in good time to leave the housing market in Abuja and relocate to Enugu." P2_C2 explained,

> The Abuja housing market experienced a boom for a period but later the market became saturated and after a careful study of the housing market in Enugu, we moved our major investments from Abuja to Enugu and specifically targeted creating accommodation for students and residential apartments for young professionals.

Company documents obtained from C5 showed that the organization developed projects to offer a premium lifestyle best suited for specific clients. P5_C5 further explained, "We identify and assess the capacity of some elite clients, identify real estate development needs in some locations, and then offer those potential clients professional advice, and proposals on the investment opportunities." According to P5_C5, "We have successfully undertaken many projects in this regard and were able to meet the real estate development needs of communities and at the same time creating investment opportunities for our clients." All real estate development organizations studied in this

research had clear business strategies that included profitability as one of the key drivers of strategy. Hence, profitability emerged as a key driver of business strategy common to all organizations, although some participants had a sense of performing some form of social service to their host communities and clientele. P3_C3 stated, “We see our customers as partners . . . we do not see them as just customers. We continue to support them even after sales are made, to enable them [to] realize value for their investments.” Similarly, P1_C1 indicated, “We always put the interest of our host community in our development programs.”

The emergent theme of business strategy and the process of operationalizing strategy align with the Foundations business process of the 7FE BPM framework and the extant literature. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), Foundations business process refers to an agreed set of driving and guiding business foundation principles to manage business processes within the organization. This business process includes ensuring that the organization strategy, vision, strategic goals, business, and executive drivers are clearly understood by the project team members. Garcia-Melon et al. (2015) stated that business strategy refers to a comprehensive plan of action stating how the corporation will achieve its mission and objectives. Jeston and Nelis (2014) stated that while an organization’s strategy is important, it is the execution of it that really matters and makes a difference to an organization. Based on the organizations’ business strategy, the BOM can be developed. Kaplan and Norton (1993) stated that for people to act on the words in vision and strategy statements, those statements must be expressed as an integrated set of

objectives and measures, agreed upon by all senior executives, that describe the long-term drivers of success.

According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), projects are predominantly initiated in one of the following three ways: (a) strategy-led, (b) business issue-led, or (c) process-led. The strategy-led approach is where the organization's strategy has been determined and documented, and its implementation has resulted in the initiation of the BPM activities. Schuur (2016) stated that the exposure of the Nigeria real estate market to foreign investors attracts higher visibility and demands greater skill for both strategy and leadership.

Theme 2: Commitment to Quality and Building Trust

All the participants in the five case studies emphasized the importance of commitment to quality services, products and results, and the need to build trust amongst all stakeholders, especially amongst the clientele. P3_C3 stated, "Our organization is faith-based (Christian faith), hence we are always obligated to meet all our commitments to all stakeholders and offer the best standards of services possible." He further explained that his organization has a virile after-sales relationship with their clients. Organization C3 provides technical and financial support services to ensure that the clients realize value for their investments. P1_C1 asserted, "The only way to ensure that we keep our customers is to provide quality services and meet our contractual obligations." P2 further said, "The first objective is to provide the level of quality services better than any of our competitors . . . people may not know it, so you have to tell them that you have a better quality." P5_C5 observed, "We offer quality services, but we are always trying to

improve." P4_C4 argued that many organizations compromise on quality due to costs. He claimed, however, "Quality is very key for us and we do not compromise on that . . . it is better for us to incur a little more marginal cost but yet deliver on quality than the other way around." P4_C4 further advised, "Organizations should approach the market with that kind of orientation to make sure the quality is very good." P5_C5 added, "We go beyond our set limits to ensure that we win on quality, so we pride ourselves in telling the customers of our quality services and products." High-quality products and consistently high-performance standards are requirements for business success in Nigeria (Modilim, 2016). P1_C1 noted, "High quality service, consistency, and conforming to high standards earn customers' respect, build trust, increase their sense of commitment and the likelihood of coming back for another business engagement." P5_C5 observed, "The central focus of all our business engagements is customer satisfaction."

Within the context of the 7FE BPM framework, the groundwork for real estate development project quality commences during the Enablement business process. Jeston and Nelis (2014) stated that the Enablement business process is the process of creation or provision of the key architectures and detailed elements to support and enable business capabilities to enhance the successful delivery of all components of the BPM strategy. This business process specifies the key architectures, rules, principles, guidelines and models that support the implementation of BPM across the organization (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). In this business process, quality management plans are developed. Quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfill requirements (Project Management Institute, 2013).

In real estate development projects, issues on quality are addressed by performing the project quality management processes and activities. The process includes identifying quality requirements and/or standards for the project and its deliverables and documenting how the project will demonstrate compliance with quality requirements (Project Management Institute, 2013). Furthermore, Project Management Institute (2013) leaders stated that the processes determine quality policies, objectives, and responsibilities so that the project will satisfy the needs for which it was undertaken. Implementing a project quality management plan ensures that the project requirements, including product requirements, are met and validated.

Theme 3: Industry and Market Research

Industry and market research emerged as an important BPM activity during the interviews. According to P2_C2, “We always study industry trends and conduct market surveys before making key decisions such as where to invest and when to commence project implementation.” P1_C1 stated, “You cannot operate in the real estate development sector except [unless] you know what is going on in it.” P3_C3 stated, “Our organization not only conducts industry studies but also carry [ies] out regular market surveys, analyze [s] the annual budget of the federal government, and undertake[s] financial and political forecasts.” P3_C3 further explained, “These preceding steps are a build-up to major investment decisions and support the scale, structure, and timing of these decisions.” P5_C5 disclosed, “We adopt the business intelligence approach where the focus is on the potential clients, and market surveys are conducted to aggregate investment costs.”

Industry and market research are seen by most participants as imperative for any real estate business that aspires to succeed and remain sustainable. P3_C3 stated, “We try to offer the best services and products to our customers … but we need to know what is out there in the market for us to maintain our leading position … so we are constantly watching the market trends.” P3_C3 further stated, “When we analyze the national budget, we also look at the possible sources of expected revenue. Sometimes, we may not rely on the government projected revenues for our forecasts and decision-making because of the volatility of the markets, say for projections on expected oil revenues.”

Industry and market research offer tremendous potential for business organizations to gain insights into their day-to-day operations, as well as long term opportunities and threats. This theme aligns with the Understand business process of the 7FE BPM framework. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), the Understand business process is about understanding enough of the current business process environment to enable the Innovate business process to take place. It is essential that process metrics (including metrics from customers, suppliers, and partners) are gathered to allow for the establishment of process baseline costs for future comparative purposes.

Hence, industry and market research is important for two reasons: (a) real estate development business in Nigeria is highly influenced by the fast changing socio-economic and political landscape of the country, and (b) an understanding of the industry and market trends enable business managers make better cost projections, market forecasts and key strategic decisions (Jeston & Nelis, 2014).

Theme 4: Innovation and Reward Systems

Participants generally opined that competition in the real estate development business triggered the need for creativity and innovativeness. Lawson and Samson (2001) stated that the emergence of the knowledge economy, intense global competition, and considerable technological advancement has seen innovation become increasingly central to competitiveness. P1_C1 was emphatic and said, “The only personnel management strategy that helped boost innovation and staff motivation in our organization was the incentive and reward system … offering a percentage of the proceeds of any business to the staff member who attracted such business to the organization.” P3_C3 stated, “Our organization ensures that our staff salaries are amongst the best in the industry and the staff are paid whatever is due to them whether a business venture is at a loss or profit.” Documents obtained from P3_C3 showed that C3 has a high level of commitment to staff welfare with a comprehensive staff welfare package. P5_C5 stated, “Our organization contracts the best staff in the industry and pay[s] competitive bonuses as incentives for innovation and creativity.” P5_C5 stated, “We pay our professional staff competitive bonuses, amongst the best in the industry, as [an] incentive for creativity.”

The innovation and reward system theme align with the Innovate business process of the 7FE BPM framework. Jeston and Nelis (2014) stated that the Innovate business process in BPM is the creativity business process of any BPM activity, which may involve other relevant stakeholders - both internal and external. The business process includes identification, selection, and prioritization of new process options. Some of the methods used are running process simulations, creating comprehensive activity-based

costing, doing capacity planning, determining implementation feasibility, comparing the baseline metrics established during the Understand business process, and identifying possible quick wins. According to Dougherty and Hardy (1996), innovation is the mechanism by which organizations produce the new products, processes and systems required for adapting to changing markets, technologies, and modes of competition.

Jayaweera (2015) stated that leadership practices positively influence employee perceptions of work climate, employee motivation, and job performance, and so, contribute to the success of the business enterprise. According to Alese and Alimi (2014), the alignment of enterprise goals with individual goals helps individuals and business enterprises succeed.

Theme 5: Training and Knowledge Acquisition

A consensus of opinions emerged amongst participants that competent and committed staff was essential to all departments of a real estate development business. While some organizations engage full-time staff members and train them, others engage different categories of trained staff either part-time or on contract. P3_C3 stated, “We recruit all categories of staff and train them in the way the organization’s business is conducted.” P3_C3 further stated, “Training our staff offers the organization an opportunity of communicating the organizations policies, business strategy, and industry standards.” According to P5-C5, “We are a small-scale real estate development organization, so we engage the best professional staff in the industry on [a] contract basis. We pay them competitive bonuses, amongst the best in the industry, as [an] incentive for

creativity. At the end of each project we usually exceed the expectations of our clients and as a result, more businesses are attracted to the firm."

Organizational knowledge acquisition builds organizational process assets. The Project Management Institute (2013) defined organizational process assets as the plans, processes, policies, procedures, and knowledge bases specific to, and used by, the performing organization which includes any artifact, practice, or knowledge from any or all of the organizations involved in the project that can be used to perform or govern the project. According to the Project Management Institute (2013), throughout the project, the project team members may update and add to the organizational process assets as necessary. According to P2_C2, "We have a culture of proper documentation of all our projects…. that way whenever we are planning a new project, we review the lessons learned from past projects and we always have the benefits of hindsight." P3_C3, stated, "Performing the change management plan enables us to address all issues regarding the change which may include cost changes, timelines, and alterations to product outputs…we also document the changes." P5_C5 said, "We keep [a] record of our challenges and how we overcame them… this help us on our new projects."

The emergent theme of staff training and knowledge acquisition aligns with the Understand business process of the 7FE BPM. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), the Understand business process is the process of understanding the existing business process environment which will enable organizational innovation. This may include collecting process metrics for the establishment of process baseline costs for future comparative

purposes, conducting root-cause analysis, and identifying quick wins to realizable value that could lead to project sustainability.

Theme 6: Operational Effectiveness and Project Portfolio Management

Operational effectiveness and PPM came out clearly as one of the key strategies employed by organizations to ensure sustainability of business performance. P3_C3 stated, "My organization clearly define[s] the responsibilities and deliverables for every department in the firm which are also monitored… reviews are conducted to ensure that all programs are progressing as planned, and if not, the issues are readily resolved." According to P1_C1, "Another thing that I do is that I followed them (field staff) up weekly … they bring a report of all the things, the projects they have been working on within the week." P5_C5 explained that for operational effectiveness… "Most of our staff are project based and they are placed on individual contracts for the duration of the projects. Payments on such contracts are made based on deliverables achieved." P2_C2 recounted an incident when his firm relocated their office and operations from Abuja to Enugu due to socio-political crisis in the country… "We were able to survive because we streamlined our operations, only undertaking low capital intensive, low risk, and quick turn-around projects."

Operational effectiveness and PPM fall within the Fulfilment process group of the 7FE BPM framework. The Fulfillment process group consists of the People business process, Develop business process, and Implement business process. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), the People business process ensures that the activities, roles, and performance measurements are aligned with the organizational strategy and process

goals. Hence, the effectiveness of the processes, and the efficiency of technologies, depend on how practitioners apply them. The Develop business process is the development of all the components for the implementation of the new processes. Building the necessary infrastructure to support the people change management program and changes in the support of the people who execute the processes are involved in the Develop business process (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). The Implement business process is where all aspects of the project, including the new processes, new role descriptions, performance management and measures, and trainings are implemented.

Organizational effectiveness has been a subject of several academic discussions and debates regarding the precise definition, the correct levels of analysis (individual, work-unit, or organization levels), and the conceptual basis for the assessment of performance (Ford & Schellenberg, 1982). However, operational effectiveness is widely recognized as a broader form of the performance concept within an organization (Connolly, Conlon, & Deutsch, 1980). When there is operational effectiveness in an organization less supervision is required for employees and processes. Cordeiro (2013) stated that having competent and trained staff was of the utmost importance and enabled business leaders to devote more time to strategic matters.

PPM is a skillset that greatly enhances operational effectiveness and facilitates the implementation of business strategy. According to Petro and Gardiner (2015), PPM is a high-level business capability in which managers apply a set of tools, techniques, skills, and knowledge, and allocate resources to a collection of programs and projects, or project portfolios, to meet or exceed the desired organizational strategy and maximize the

success of the organizations. Unger, Rank, and Gemünden (2014) stated that the deployment of PPM methodology greatly enhances project portfolio performance, and consequently influence business success factors positively.

Theme 7: Minimizing Costs and Financial Leverage (Debt/Equity Ratio)

The strategic functions of minimizing costs and indebtedness were strongly expressed by participants. Participants stated that every effort was made to minimize costs and reduce financial leverage. These include reduced material costs from sourcing, bulk purchases, competitive supplies, strategic funding sources and prudence in the application of funds. P1_C1 opined,

> Since the cost of production of different components that make up real estate development is in the public domain . . . the strategy we use to maintain our profit margin is ensure that our material sources are the most economical . . . we also maximize the efficiency of our systems to avoid unnecessary wastes.

P3_C3, stated, "We engage in bulk purchase of real estate development consumables such as cement, reinforcement bars, hardwood timbers, etc." According to P3_C3, "The cost of borrowing from the Nigerian banks is very high . . . so we always consider our financial ratios, particularly the debt to equity ratio, prior to incurring additional financial burden." P3_C3 further stated,

> The funding structure of Nigerian commercial banks are not adapted to the real estate development and construction industry . . . while the commercial banks funding is usually short-term, the real estate industry require long term funds . . . however, when we work with the government on social housing programs, it is

> possible to negotiate long term funding from the mortgage banks with the government as the guarantor.

P1_C1 stated,

> We are convinced that the banks are not meant for us due to the high interest rates and management fees the banks charge on their loans . . . it is big risk to touch the bank loans…the bank loans can put you in deficit and destroy your business.

P4_C4 opined,

> We are not big enough to dabble into Nigeria bank loans due to high interest rates . . . what we do is to arrange private sources of funds like family, friends and partners . . . we only used funds from family and friends when we started the business but subsequently we engage partners who [have] interests in the business, if need be.

The study participants unanimously agreed that the Nigerian commercial banks are not good sources for real estate development funding. P3_C3 explained that while the commercial banks only offer short-term funding, the real estate development business requires long-term funding, hence the funding structure of the commercial banks are not adapted to the real estate development sector. P5_C5 stated, “We only depend on the organization’s resources and advance payments from clients where possible.” P1_C1 further stated, “We rely on strategic investment partnerships with other real estate development organizations and friends where investment capital is huge.” On the other hand, P2_C2 informed, “The financial burdens of our real estate development

investments are borne by both our organization and the clients…the ratio of the financial burdens depends on the overall project costs, risk levels, and return on investment."

This theme is aligned with the Implement business process of the 7FE BPM framework. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), the Implement business process is where all aspects of the project including the new processes, new role descriptions, performance management and measures, and trainings are implemented. Minimizing costs, both financial and material, is a component of performance management. Okuwoga (1998) stated that the performance of the construction industry in Nigeria has consistently been a source of concern to both public and private sector clients as previous studies have identified cost and time overruns amongst others as key performance indicators. According to Okuwoga (1998), this has been particularly significant for public sector clients in Nigeria, where due to poor budgetary control, many projects have been abandoned at various stages of completion.

Theme 8: Marketing, Promotions, and Strategic Partnerships

Marketing plays a huge role in all the cases studied. The bigger real estate industry players embark on promotions more than the small-scale players. However, the small-scale real estate developers engage in strategic partnerships more than the large-scale developers. Globalization and competitive markets made creative marketing strategies, promotions, and strategic partnerships an imperative for business success. P5-C5 said, "Our organization practice[s] a unique marketing strategy where we target specific clients either [as] individuals or organizations, study them, identify the needs of the potential clients, and develop real estate investment proposals specific to the clients."

P5_C5 claimed, “Our organization has had over [a] 90% success rate with this approach.” However, P3_C3 asserted, “Based on the three vision statements of housing for all, poverty alleviation, and mentorship, my organization sometimes partner[s] with the government and mortgage financial institutions to provide real estate development solutions to the public…hence, our services in such cases are open to the public with equal opportunity for everyone.”

However, P1_C1 stated, “Profitability is the key driver of our business strategy; hence, we invest only in real estate development businesses with low risk, profitable, and quick turnaround time.” P1_C1 further explained,

> “After conducting feasibility studies on a project and approving the project, some level of investment is made to secure and add value to the project before marketing strategies are implemented through brochures, internet platforms, email messaging, and in some locations, radio jingles . . . In some instances where the level of initial capital outlay is huge, we seek strategic partnerships with other real estate development firms …so we pull our resources together.”

P4_C4 also stated, “We engage in strategic partnerships, where our organization does not have a competitive edge, and the partnerships help to improve our sales and enable us [to] achieve our sales targets.”

The emergent theme of marketing, promotions, and strategic partnerships align with the Realize Value business process. The purpose of this is to ensure that the benefit outcomes outlined in the project business case are realized, which comprises the delivery of the benefits realization management process, and benefits realization reporting (Jeston

& Nelis, 2014). Jeston and Nelis (2014) further stated that although this business process is categorized as a discrete component of the framework, parts of the business process could be performed in other business processes of the framework. This is consistent with the views expressed by some of the participants who indicated that sometimes they begin marketing, promotions, and strategic partnership activities prior to the completion of the development projects.

Theme 9: Measuring Business Performance and Assessing Strategic Success

Several participants spoke of their practice in measuring business performance and assessing strategic success. Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) stated that business performance is a measure of an organization's financial and operational performance. The participants in this study expressed different opinions on how their organizations' measure business performance. The participants also discussed the ways business managers measure and monitor the performance of individuals and business work units.

Participant P3_C3 explained, "The work we do is tied to our tripartite vision of housing for all, poverty alleviation, and mentorship." "In that regard, what we consider success is", according to P3_C3, "have we fulfilled the tenets of the three aspects of the vision for our firm?" P3_C3 then asserted, "What we will consider success would be different from another firm whose tender is for profit maximization." On the other hand, P1_C1 stated, "The bottom line of any of our business endeavors is to make profit, hence the remuneration of all our field staff are tied to their performance." P5_C5 said, "We engage professional staff for most of our development projects and they are paid based on

the achievement of the deliverables agreed on at the beginning of the projects." According to P2_C2,

> The tasks and targets for each department in [our] organization is clearly spelt out and we hold weekly meetings for the assessment of the progress and to address any challenges . . . on [a] quarterly basis, the organization assesses [its] strategic success with respect to its strategic objectives and goals.

Successful measurement of performance enables the managers to assess an organization's strategic success (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). However, every organization determines its performance parameters in terms of their key performance indices (KPIs). Strategic success is a relative term depending on the organization and the KPIs, as evident from the views expressed by the participants. Performance measurement and assessing strategic success enables an organization to realize value. Jeston and Nelis (2014) stated that the purpose of the *realize value* business process of the 7FE BPM is to ensure that the benefit outcomes outlined in the project business case are realized. Hence, the benefit outcomes and the KPIs are outlined at the onset, in the business case. Writing about the BSC performance measurement tool, Kaplan and Norton (2007) stated that by relying on measurement, the scorecard forces managers to come to agreement on the metrics they will use to operationalize their visions.

Aside from differing from organization to organization, the concept of performance and success also differs across different organizational levels. Most real estate development firms, due to their portfolio of developmental projects, constitute a projectized matrix management structure (Project Management Institute, 2013).

However, project success differs from project portfolio success as the performance parameters or the KPIs are different. While project success is measured in terms of achieving the project cost, quality, and time objectives, project portfolio success is measured in terms of achieving the portfolio's strategic business objectives. Although the meaning of success differs at the two organizational levels, both performance measures are necessary. According to Badewi (2016), measuring project performance only could limit the effective realization of business benefits. Furthermore, Hussein, Ahmad and Zidane (2015) stated that, limiting the success criteria to project success may reflect a weak alignment between projects and business strategy. Hence, the ability of a real estate development firm to measure its business performance (individual, project, portfolio and organizational levels), and assess its strategic success, is critically important for improving and sustaining such performance. Performance measures indicate the status of various KPIs which predicates the need for performance improvement or sustenance. Badewi (2016) advised business leaders to assess the project success based on both long and short-term objectives.

Measuring business performance and assessing strategic success is aligned to the Future process group of the 7FE BPM conceptual framework. The Future process group consists of the *realize value* and *sustain performance* business processes. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), the *realize value* business process basically comprises the delivery of the benefits realization management process, and benefits realization reporting and unless the benefits are realized, the provision of additional funding to continue further process projects should be reconsidered.

Theme 10: Change Management and Documenting Lessons Learned

All participants echoed the need for organizations to have an effective change management process in place and to properly document lessons learnt. P1_C1 said,

> Once we have approved a prospective project, we follow up on all the processes necessary for the implementation of the project to avoid or minimize the effect of market changes . . . in some cases where changes were inevitable, we re-adjusted our plans to effect the changes.

P3_C3 stated,

> We always incorporate a clause or two in our contracts to make way for possible changes during our project life cycle . . . sometimes changes are requested by our clients and once we receive such requests, they go through our formal change order process.

According to P3_C3, "Performing the change management plan enables us to address all issues regarding the change which may include cost changes, timelines, and alterations to product outputs…we also document the changes." P2_C2 stated, "We have a culture of proper documentation of all our projects . . . that way whenever we are planning a new project, we review the lessons learned from past projects and we always have the benefits of hindsight." P5_C5 said, "We keep [a] record of our challenges and how we overcame them . . . this help[s] us on our new projects."

The real estate industry in Nigeria is predominantly a dynamic sector primarily because it is driven by the local and national economies. In the light of this reality, organizations must ensure their ability to implement an effective change management

process in response to certain changes during the life cycle of a project or program. Also, every real estate development business that aspires to grow and sustain its business performance must properly document every project, especially the lessons learned.

Lessons learned is an organizational process asset and helps to update the organizational knowledge base. According to the Project Management Institute (2013), "organizational process assets are the plans, processes, policies, procedures, and knowledge bases specific to, and used by, the performing organization which include any artifact, practice, or knowledge from any or all of the organizations involved in the project that can be used to perform or govern the project." Furthermore, organizational process assets include an organization's knowledge bases such as lessons learned and historical information (Project Management Institute, 2013). Hence, documenting lessons learned is a practice that improves an organization's knowledge base and contributes to operational effectiveness of any organization. Mohammed and Obeleagu-Nzelibe (2014) stated that proper recordkeeping was a significant factor in business enterprise success as it helps garner financial support and leads to the provision of information needed to reposition or restructure the business in the face of changes in the business environment.

Relationship of Findings to Conceptual Framework

The 7FE BPM framework was the conceptual framework for this study. The 7FE framework consists of 10 business processes in four process groups and includes three over-riding essentials of leadership, project management, and people change management (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). The four process groups with corresponding business processes in parentheses are: (a) Foundations (foundation, enable, launch), (b) Findings and Solutions

(understand and innovate), (c) Fulfillment (people, develop, and implement), and (d) Future (realize value and sustain performance).

I identified and abstracted the emergent themes from this study into the four broad process groups of the 7FE conceptual framework for BPM. The four process groups of 7FE conceptual framework include; Foundations, Findings and Solutions, Fulfillment, and Future. When the emerging themes from the interviews were abstracted into the 7FE conceptual framework process groups, the following patterns (Table 2) were identified.

Table 2

Aligning Emergent Themes with Conceptual Framework

7FE BPM framework process groups	Emerging theme/s
Foundations	• Business strategy • Commitment to quality and building trust
Findings and Solutions	• Industry and market research • Training and knowledge acquisition • Innovation and reward systems
Fulfillment	• Operational effectiveness and PPM • Minimizing costs and debt/equity ratio
Future	• Marketing, promotions and strategic partnerships • Measuring business performance and assessing strategic success • Change management and documenting lessons learned

The emergent themes of business strategy and commitment to quality and building trust were aligned to the Foundations process group of the framework while industry and market research, training and knowledge acquisition, and innovation and

reward systems were aligned to the Findings and Solutions process group of the framework.

Operational effectiveness and PPM, and minimizing costs and debt/equity ratio, were aligned with the Fulfillment process group of the framework; and marketing, promotions, and strategic partnerships; measuring business performance; and assessing strategic success; change management and documenting lessons learned were aligned with the Future process group of the framework, as shown in Table 2.

Applications to Professional Practice

In this study, I explored the strategies that business managers use to improve and sustain performance in real estate development businesses in Nigeria. The findings and recommendations of this study can be practically applied to professional practice by real estate development professionals in Nigeria, by developing business strategies that are aligned with organizational vision and mission statements, agreeing on the metrics for operationalizing the vision, and communicating and linking the operationalized vision throughout the organizational hierarchy. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), the Foundations business process of BPM refers to an agreed set of driving and guiding business foundation principles to manage business processes within the organization. Jeston and Nelis (2014) further stated that the Foundation process includes ensuring that the organization's strategy, vision, strategic goals, and business and executive drivers are clearly understood by the project team members. Kaplan and Norton (1996) stated that as the high-level scorecard cascades down to individual business units, overarching strategic

objectives and measures are translated into objectives and measures appropriate to each business unit.

Applications of study to professional practice by real estate development professionals may also include a commitment to quality and building trust amongst stakeholders, conducting industry studies and regular market surveys, and engaging in staff training and knowledge acquisition. Innovation linked to clearly defined and easily understood reward systems is a good practice as incentive for staff motivation and performance (Lawson & Samson, 2001). Streamlining operations enhances organizational effectiveness and proper PPM enables business managers to implement organizational strategy (Joslin & Müller, 2016) in the overall administration of real estate development projects. Minimizing costs, be they, administrative, operations, materials, or financial costs, improve profitability and hence, a good practice. Globalization and stiff competitive markets require innovative marketing strategies, promotions, and strategic partnerships (Lawson & Samson, 2001). Some strategic partnerships, where an organization does not have a competitive edge, may improve or sustain sales.

Measuring business performance and assessing strategic success are very important factors in the progress of any organization. Without proper evaluation and application of corrective measures, the state of affairs, or as-is status of an organization, may not be known. Issues may result in conflicts or adverse conditions for the organization without visible warning signs. Hence, the evaluative process of measuring performance and assessing strategic success is an important practice for any organization that wants to become better and grow. Change management is the process of: (1)

reviewing all change requests, (2) approving changes and managing changes to deliverables, (3) organizational process assets, (4) project documents and the project management plan, and (5) communicating their disposition (Project Management Institute, 2013). Real estate development businesses usually constitute a high project matrix organizational structure due to the nature of development projects. Any change to a project management plan should be implemented through an approved change management plan. Hence, the practice of organizational change management is key to mitigating project risks, avoiding cost overruns, and delivering quality services and results on time. Documenting lessons learned improves the organizational process assets.

Implications for Social Change

Housing is a basic human need that has both psychological and social impact on people. Home ownership also enhances an individual's social status. Onyali (2017) stated that home ownership has psychosocial benefits because it increases an individual's net-worth and self-esteem. According to Ayotamuno and Owei (2015), citizens with access to affordable and satisfactory housing experience enhanced work efficiency, social stability, and a better social environment. Real estate developers may use findings from this study to promote improved and sustainable business performance and lower real estate costs and increased profitability in their real estate businesses. Lower real estate costs may make housing more affordable to more members of Nigerian communities. Increased profitability will help real estate managers expand their businesses and create more job opportunities. More job opportunities will enable more workers to earn wages and indirectly contribute to the growth of the local economy. Hasse and Bekker (2016) stated

that business leaders who adopt strategies for improving the alignment of large real estate development projects with business strategy could save around 11% of the projects' economic cost.

The application of the findings in this study may make real estate development businesses more successful which will positively affect both the organizations' internal stakeholders and communities. According to Locatelli, Mancini, and Romano (2014), real estate success includes nonmonetary facets such as the benefits to the community and positive social change. Hence, the findings of the study may lead to overwhelming implications for social change such as more houses for more people, more jobs for more people, better living conditions and improved quality of life. Also, the findings may add to the existing body of knowledge for organizational leaders and the members of the society by providing relevant strategies to improve and sustain business performance to upcoming real estate development businesses in Nigeria. Availability of the information on the findings and recommendations of this study to the public may serve as a basis for a positive social change. Increased social awareness may trigger improved business practices and the benefits of improved communities' lifestyle, in the long term. Consequently, the sustained application of the recommendations may lead to the effective reduction of the poverty levels in the country.

When the significance of sustainable real estate development business performance is highlighted as an important social value, the implication for positive social change may emerge by changing the existing government policies on the development and social support structure of real estate development businesses in

Nigeria. Modilim (2016) stated that as a regulated business sector, the social implication may include not only social but also environmental policy changes. Conversely, Agwu and Emeti (2014) stated that the effective implementation of policy changes may validate the posterity of the small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria.

Recommendations for Action

The recommendations for action in this study are predominantly based on the emergent themes and the review of literature. Organizational leadership has the key responsibility of adapting and implementing the recommendations to achieve organizational growth and sustainable business performance. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), business leaders need to establish an appropriate environment and high-level guidelines of how the organization's strategy is to be executed. Hence, business leaders are encouraged to be mindful of the results of this study and to ensure its implementation.

The first recommendation is that business leaders should endeavor to have a clear business strategy that is aligned with the organization's vision and mission statements. According to Rijke et al. (2014), the attributes of business success include clear priorities', clear vision, and transparent planning. A business strategy could be well-articulated but unless it is widely communicated, understood, and implemented, an organization may not benefit from it (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Hence, it is not enough to have a business strategy but also to agree on the metrics for performance measurement, which should be effectively communicated to all levels of the organizational structure

and linked to all business units. Sohmen and Dimitriou (2015) stated that possessing and communicating a clear vision is an essential core competency of project leaders.

The second recommendation is that organizations must commit to providing quality services, products, and results to build trust among all stakeholders, especially customers. Conversely, not providing quality services is a fast way of destroying customer confidence. Indeed, organizations should aspire to exceed customer expectations, if such organizations desire to retain such customers. According to the Project Management Institute (2013), quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfill requirements. Hence, it is evident that quality impacts directly on customer expectation and satisfaction.

An understanding of the real estate development industry in Nigeria and regular market research is requisite to more accurate organizational forecasts and decision-making processes. Consequently, I recommend that business managers of real estate development businesses always strive to understand the prevailing trends and new developments in the industry and also conduct regular market surveys. In addition, it is also a good practice to keenly watch the environmental sociopolitical dynamics. Some sociopolitical issues can trigger migration of the impacted people which can in turn lead to unprecedented changes in housing demand in the affected geographic locations. Such sudden changes could affect real estate development businesses positively or negatively depending on the accuracy of their investment forecasts, as came out from the primary data of my study.

The fourth recommendation for action is the need for trained and competent staff and knowledge acquisition in real estate development businesses. Human resources are one of the key business capabilities which drive business strategy. Other key capabilities include business process, technology, and project management (Jeston & Nelis, 2014). Organizational staff is arguably the most important business capability because the staff use the technology and implement the processes. Hence, the need for trained and competent staff cannot be over-emphasized. More so, real estate development businesses are involved with public infrastructure which require a high level of competence for safety reasons. It is therefore recommended that business leaders must strive to either train their staff to the required level of competence or hire competent professionals to deliver on quality and facilitate operational effectiveness. Documenting lessons learned is one of the most common methods of organizational knowledge acquisition. However, other methods exist such as business intelligence, knowledge transfer, industry research, and market surveys. Corporate knowledge, a component of organizational process asset, helps organizations forecast and plan better. I recommend that business managers update the corporate knowledge base regularly.

Closely aligned to staff training and staff competence is staff motivation through incentives and reward systems. Business managers in the real estate development business must consider utilizing incentives and reward systems for boosting employee motivation. However, the incentives and reward systems are primers for innovation in any organization. Lawson and Samson (2001) stated that innovation is a unique business capability and proposed that innovation management can be viewed as a form of

organizational capability. Excellent companies invest and nurture innovation management as an organizational capacity (Lawson & Samson, 2001). Lawson and Samson (2001) explained that excellent companies invest and nurture innovation capabilities. According to Lawson and Samson (2001), leading innovators encourage, expect, and reward innovation from everywhere within the organization. Hence, business leaders must establish the structures that support organizational innovation, such as substantial investment in innovation capability, and encourage and set up reward systems for innovation.

The sixth recommendation is that business managers should make use of PPM techniques for effective strategy implementation. Adopting the project management methodology greatly enhances the chances of project success while PPM methodology engenders business success which is aligned with business strategy. According to Joslin and Müller (2016), there is a positive relationship between project methodology elements and the characteristics of project success. Joslin and Müller (2015) stated that the application of a project management methodology account for 22.3% of the variation in project success. Project management methodology that are considered sufficiently comprehensive to manage the project lead to higher levels of project success than project management methodologies that need to be supplemented for use by the project manager. Also, the use project management methodology facilitates operational effectiveness. Joslin and Müller (2015) further stated that the application of project management methodology enhances project effectiveness and increases chances of success.

The seventh recommendation is that business leaders and mangers should minimize all forms of costs (administrative and operational) and ensure that the financial leverage of the organization, specifically the debt to equity ratio, is low enough prior to taking on additional debt burdens. Costs may be reduced through bulk purchasing of project materials, eliminating middlemen from the supply chain. A debt to equity ratio of 2 is considered high for privately owned businesses while a debt to equity ratio of publicly owned organizations may not be considered high until it is up to 3 – 5units, depending on the type of organization. Another recommendation related to the emergent theme 8 is the development and implementation of marketing strategies, product promotions and strategic funding, and marketing partnerships for improved sales are encouraged and recommended.

The ninth recommendation is that business managers can improve performance by hierarchical implementation of strategy and respective performance measurements. According to Kaplan and Norton (2007), when business strategy is disseminated up and down the organizational chart and individual business units, overarching strategic objectives and measures are translated into objectives and measures appropriate to each particular group, strategy becomes a tool available to everyone. Kaplan and Norton (2007) further stated that tying this set of targets to individual performance and reward systems enables individual performance to be measured and the individual employees can also understand how their own productivity supports the overall organizational strategy. Such organizational and individual performance measurements make it easier to assess

strategic success more accurately based on the success criteria outline in the business case.

One of the key beneficial follow-up actions of performance measurement is the change order management which was an emergent theme in this study. Change order management may be initiated if there is a need for corrective action and a formal change request is approved. Jeston and Nelis (2014) stated that if a project team chooses to continue through a phase of the 7FE business process framework without achieving success in the commensurate change management step, then the project will simply be at a higher risk of not achieving the success they desire. Lastly, I recommend that business managers should possess the skillset of leadership, BPM project management, PPM, and people change management, usually referred to as BPM project essentials. According to Jeston and Nelis (2014), leadership, BPM project management, and people change management are the essential components upon which any successful BPM activity rests, and they permeate all process groups of the project framework. As mentioned earlier on the need for constant updating of organizational process assets, documenting lessons learned is an imperative on any real estate development business that desires to learn from the past, plan better, and avoid past mistakes.

This study might be beneficial to real estate development business leaders, associations of real estate development businesses, and organizations established to support the growth and development of real estate development businesses. I will share the results of this study with participants, professional business associations, and key government functionaries such as the State Ministry of Physical Infrastructure, Federal

Ministry of Works and Housing, other government agencies, other business associations. It is also my intention to make the results of this study widely available to future and current real estate development business leaders using the most effective and suitable channels. Consequently, I recommend full appraisal and understanding of the information presented in this study for new real estate development business start-ups and already practicing business leaders. Whenever I have the opportunity, I will present the results of my study at appropriate seminars, webinars, conferences, or training sessions.

Recommendations for Further Research

The recommendations for further research on this study are five-fold. This study was limited to five participants in five different businesses hence I recommend that further research may be conducted on real estate development business performance elsewhere using a higher number of participants due to the limitation imposed on the study by the number of participants used. The study was also limited to a specific geographic location in Nigeria, which may limit the application of the findings in other locations. I, therefore, recommended that further study be carried out in other major cities like Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja. The role of policy makers, government organizations, and regulatory agencies were only partially covered as the focus of the study was on exploring the strategies which business leaders use to improve and sustain their business performance. Hence, I recommend that a separate study may be carried out to clearly define who does what in government to create an enabling environment conducive for real estate development businesses to thrive.

I used a qualitative research method and a multiple case study design. However, I recommend the use of other methodologies and designs for further research. According to Aronson, Shenhar and Patanakul (2013), the mixed method approach is gaining increased popularity in project management research. I recommend a more thematic focused study on operational effectiveness and PPM as it applies to the Nigerian context. This could only be treated in a limited manner in this study as the study topic is concerned with the broader issues of strategy used by business leaders to improve and sustain business performance.

Reflections

My experience within the DBA Doctoral Study process can be summarized as a self-fulfilling endeavor in a genuine academic and professional inquiry into what could be termed a perennial question that has inundated the history of the Nigerian real estate sector – the question of sustainability of the real estate development business in Nigeria. I conducted this study as a student of Walden University under the guidance and supervision of competent and experienced Walden University professors, in accordance with the stipulations of the university doctoral study rubric and research guidelines, and adherence to the highest ethical standards. The doctoral study process also included different layers of reviews and approvals which offered me the unique opportunity of seeking the answer to this lifelong question, in a most professional and scholarly manner.

Although the topic of this study has been a subject of interest to me for a long time, I took definite steps to ensure that this study was unbiased, ethical, and accurate. I explicitly expressed any areas of possible conflict and bias and limited myself to taking

notes and recordings during interviews, just to ensure that personal biases were either completely eliminated or minimized. I also refrained from any personal sensitivity biases to ensure validity of my study findings. According to Patton (2015), researchers should state explicitly areas of possible conflict and bias and to avoid these areas. I also adhered to the ethical principles and guidelines on respect for persons, beneficence, and justice within the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1979) for the protection of human subjects.

I identified the interview questions before conducting the literature review, an important practice to avoid adopting the path defined by the preconceptions in the existing literature. This practice also allowed participants to discuss their personal experiences only. However, I realized that reviewing the existing literature helped to expand my horizon and improve my understanding of the study topic.

Conclusion

Business leaders must develop and communicate business strategy for organizational direction and focus, and ensure the delivery of quality services, products, and results to build customer confidence, increase customer base, and engender customer repeat business. Real estate development (RED) business managers in Nigeria, must study the industry and conduct regular market surveys to understand the prevailing industry and market trends for more accurate forecasts and decision-making processes. RED businesses should recruit competent and trained staff for efficiency, operational effectiveness, and the delivery of quality services, products, and results. Documenting lessons learned is an imperative on any real estate development business that desires to

learn from the past, plan better, and avoid past mistakes. According to the Project Management Institute (2013), knowledge acquisition is essential for building corporate knowledge base for staff access and use, especially for planning processes.

Real estate development businesses (RED) must innovate and be creative to remain competitive and sustainable in the 21st century. According to Dougherty and Hardy (1996), innovation is the mechanism by which organizations produce the new products, processes, and systems required for adapting to changing markets, technologies, and modes of competition. Adopting the project management methodology greatly enhances the chances of project success while PPM methodology engenders business success which is aligned with business strategy. Joslin and Müller (2015) stated that the application of project management methodology enhances project effectiveness and increases chances of success. RED businesses must employ all possible strategies to minimize costs and maintain good financial leverage to remain competitive. Developing and implementing marketing strategies, product promotions, and strategic funding and marketing partnerships for improved sales was recommended.

Business leaders must ensure that business strategy cascades down the organizational structure to business units, so that individual performance can be measured, and strategic success assessed, more easily. A change order management process must be initiated for corrective action when a formal change request is approved to avoid unnecessary delays, increased production costs, and/or low-quality products. Jeston and Nelis (2014) stated that if a project team chooses to continue through a phase of the 7FE business process framework without achieving success in the commensurate

change management step, then the project will simply be at a higher risk of not achieving the success they desire. Consequently, RED business managers were implored to possess the skillsets of leadership, project and portfolio management, and people change management.

In summary, business leaders are encouraged to utilize the recommendations presented in this study, by ensuring a clear vision and business strategy; communicating the vision; providing quality services, products and results; understand the industry and markets; train and motivate staff; innovate; minimize costs; instill operational efficiency and effectiveness; engage in aggressive marketing and strategic partnerships; establish key performance indices and performance measures; maintain agility for change and document lessons learned.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

1. Establishing a Skype Connection:

- Ensure that the recording device is ready and working properly.
- Put off the source of any background noise (like mobile phone, TV sets, etc.) and ensure interview space is free of interference.
- Make the call to the participant and explain that you want to ensure that you have established a good Skype connection first by initiating the following conversation.
  - "Please be advised that the voice recording has not yet started."
  - "Please confirm that you have no connection issues. *[Response]*. Thank you."
  - "Please advise whenever you notice that the connection becomes poor." *[Response]*. "Thank you."
  - "If you are not happy with the video call, I will establish a voice call only. However, note that there is no video recording, the interview will be voice recorded only."

2. Before Starting the Recording:

- Before the start of recording, remind and reassure the participant of the following;
  - "Thank you for accepting to participate in this research. Please note that I am establishing this call in an isolated sound room and taking all the necessary measures to protect your privacy."
  - "Measures to ensure privacy include using case numbers instead of organization name, and participant identifiers in place of your name. Your case number is C#, and your identifier is P#-C#."

- "The interviews will be transcribed and analyzed without any indication to your organization or to your name."
- "The recording and transcript will be saved for five years and then deleted permanently."
- "The length of this interview will be between 45 to 60 minutes."
- "You have the right to terminate this interview whenever you require."
- "Also, you have the right to request ignoring any statement you will give during the interview. Any such request will be fully respected."
- "Before starting, I would appreciate if you confirm that you have read and agreed the consent form consisted of the identity of the researcher, the background and the objective and nature of the study, interview procedures and time, the voluntary nature of the study, risks and benefits of participating to the study, compensation, confidentiality, and contacts and questions." *[Response]*. "Thank you for your confirmation."
- "I restrict myself to using the information only posted in your company profile and the public domain (website). Please identify the personal or any information that I should not use." *[Response]*. "Thank you."
- "Do you have any question before starting?" *[Response]*.

3. Points to Note:

Please note the following points, as you start the interview.

- Start interview and keep the interview focused on research topic.

- Observe the participant, listen attentively to what the participant is saying and the tone of speech, and take notes.
- Do not interrupt the participants.
- Ask follow-up, probing questions, end interview, and schedule follow-up member checking interview

4. Opening Statement:

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study is to explore strategies real estate development business managers use to improve and sustain their business performance, especially during economic slowdowns. Your organization was identified for this doctoral research based on a search of the database of reputable real estate development businesses who have successfully improved and sustained their business performance through the periods of economic slowdown in Nigeria. As one of the participants, I selected you to contribute based on your extensive experience in improving and sustaining business performance in the real estate development and construction industry. I chose the topic in line with my interest in seeking an answer to the perennial question of business performance sustainability in the real estate development and construction industry. However, during this interview, I will take deliberate steps to bracket my points of view and mitigate any biases or prejudice and allow you to share the thick and rich description related to your experience in the phenomenon of improving and sustaining business performance. The contribution of this study to positive social change may result in improved real estate development businesses, more real estate jobs, more houses for

more people, improved living conditions and better environmental quality. Are there any questions for me or should I go ahead with the interview questions? *[Response]*.

5. The Start of Recording:

- I will now start recording – [start the recorders].
- There are nine interview questions, but the primary research question is: What strategies do you use to improve and sustain business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?

6. Interview Questions:

1. What are the primary elements of effective strategies for improving business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
2. Which strategies did not work for improving business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
3. What barriers did you encounter while implementing the strategies for improving business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?
4. How did you overcome these barriers to the implementation of strategies for improving business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?
5. What are the primary elements of effective strategies for sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
6. Which strategies did not work for sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector?
7. What barriers did you encounter while implementing the strategies for sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?

8. How did you overcome these barriers to the implementation of strategies for sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?
9. What else would you like to share that you have not already discussed regarding strategies for improving and sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector?

7. Data Organization Technique:

Case No.	**Participant**	**Recording**	**Transcript**	**Document**	**Folder**	**Interview Date**
C#	P#-C#	P#-C#-Rec#	P#-C#-Trans#	P#-C#-Doc#	P#	

8. Conclude Interview:

Thank the participant for granting the interview and his/her time.

Schedule a follow-up member checking interview.

9. Follow-up Member Checking Interview	
• Thank participant for honoring the invitation for a follow-up member checking interview.	
• Share a copy of concise synthesis for each interview question and remark that the copy is a summary of an interpretation of the participant's responses based on the previous interview.	
• Explain the significance of the participant following as we review together to ensure accuracy, consistency, of my interpretations.	
Share a copy of the concise synthesis for each individual question. Bring in probing questions related to other information you may have found—note the information must be related so you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval. Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask: Did I miss anything? or, What would you like to add?	• What are the primary elements of effective strategies for improving business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed. • Which strategies did not work for improving business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed. • What barriers did you encounter while implementing the strategies for improving business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed. • How did you overcome these barriers to the implementation of strategies

	for improving business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed.
	• What strategies do you use to sustain business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed.
	• What are the primary elements of effective strategies for sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed.
	• Which strategies did not work for sustaining business performance for success in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed.
	• What barriers did you encounter while implementing the strategies for sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed.
	• How did you overcome these barriers to the implementation of strategies for sustaining business performance

	in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed.
	• What else would you like to share that you have not already discussed regarding strategies for improving and sustaining business performance in the Nigerian real estate sector? synthesis of the interpretation in one paragraph or as needed.