EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ABANDONMENT ON BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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Abstract: This review examines the impact of construction project abandonment on business sustainability, focusing on the causes, effects, and mitigation strategies relevant to the construction industry, particularly in developing countries. The study identifies critical factors contributing to abandonment, such as financial mismanagement, political instability, and technical challenges. Despite extensive literature on construction project abandonment, there is a significant gap in understanding how these factors interrelate and their compounded effects on business sustainability, especially in the context of developing countries. Through systematic search, screening, and thematic analysis of studies published since 2010, this review synthesizes key drivers and outcomes of abandonment, as well as the effectiveness of mitigation strategies. It highlights the need for more research on region-specific approaches and the integration of innovative technologies for risk management. The findings reveal substantial economic, social, and environmental impacts, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive policy frameworks and stakeholder engagement. The review concludes by identifying future research directions to address gaps in the understanding of abandonment's long-term effects on business resilience and sustainability.

Keywords: Business Sustainability, Mitigation Strategies, Project Abandonment, Project Failure, Risk Management

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of construction project abandonment, characterized by the premature cessation of work before completion, poses multifaceted challenges to business sustainability, encompassing financial, operational, and reputational dimensions (Aziz et al., 2025). This pervasive issue has long been a global concern, particularly in developing nations, where inadequate regulatory frameworks and ethical lapses exacerbate its prevalence (Ariffin et al., 2024; Demirdöğen, 2023). The resulting delays and cost overruns not only inflict substantial economic losses but can also lead to project termination, negatively impacting the environmental, social, and governance policies of involved companies (Álvarez-Pozo et al., 2024). Moreover, such abandonment frequently precipitates significant economic repercussions, including financial distress for contractors due to delayed payments, which can result in business failure and protracted legal disputes (Chadee et al., 2023). These financial ramifications extend to project stakeholders through schedule overruns, additional costs for dispute resolution, and potential litigation, ultimately impacting overall project performance (Yudhistira et al., 2024). Furthermore, the abandonment of construction projects significantly impacts the economy, overall development, and public well-being, as incomplete or poorly constructed infrastructure, such as roads, can lead to increased safety risks and hinder national progress (Lynn et al., 2022). This comprehensive review aims to synthesize existing literature on the underlying causes, pervasive effects, and potential mitigation strategies related to construction project abandonment, thereby illuminating its profound implications for business sustainability.

1.1 *Research Objectives and Scope*

The primary aim of this review is to investigate the multifaceted impacts of construction project abandonment on business sustainability across diverse contexts, regions, and types of projects. Understanding how abandonment events influence economic viability, social dynamics, and environmental stewardship is crucial for stakeholders seeking to improve project outcomes and sustain business operations in the construction sector, particularly in developing countries where vulnerabilities may be heightened.

Specific objectives formulated for this review include the following:

1. Identify the causes of abandonment, examining financial, organizational, political, and technical factors.
2. Analyse the consequences that abandoned projects impose on business entities and stakeholders, particularly in economic and social terms.
3. Explore mitigation strategies to reduce the incidence of abandonment and support sustainable redevelopment efforts.

These objectives are discussed in detail in Table 1, which summarizes the primary goals of the review.

Table 1: Specific Objectives of the Review

Objective	Description	Reference(s)
Identify Causes	To identify the predominant causes of construction project abandonment, examining financial, organizational, political, and technical factors.	Lan et al. (2025); Ogunnusi et al. (2021)
Analyse Consequences	To analyse the economic and social consequences that abandoned projects impose on business entities and stakeholders.	Lan et al. (2025); Ogunnusi et al. (2021)
Explore Mitigation Strategies	To explore strategies and best practices to reduce the incidence of abandonment and support recovery or sustainable redevelopment efforts.	Derks & Romijn (2019); Sagan & Mach (2025)

In addition to these general objectives, several studies provide insights into the specific causes and impacts of construction abandonment. For example, Table 2 highlights key studies and their findings on abandonment causes, consequences, and mitigation strategies. These studies form the foundation for defining the research objectives and the scope of this review, ensuring a comprehensive approach that encompasses both cause and effect dimensions of construction project abandonment.

Table 2: Key Studies and Their Findings

Study/ References	Focus	Key Findings
Lan et al. (2025)	Financial and economic consequences of construction failure	Cost overruns, delayed schedules, loss of revenue; severe effects on clients and contractors
Ogunnusi et al. (2021)	Causes of infrastructure abandonment in Nigeria	Inefficient procurement, political instability, cost overruns, and inadequate planning
Derks & Romijn (2019)	Rural microgrid infrastructure projects in Indonesia	Policy-driven goal displacement, emphasizing quantity over service quality
Sagan & Mach (2025)	Environmental impacts of construction waste management	Improper waste handling leads to pollution and neighbourhood disturbances
Badkoubeh& Ghannadpour (2024)	Supply chain resilience in construction	Backup supplier models to mitigate abandonment risks
Esangbedo et al. (2024)	Stakeholder engagement in sustainable building projects	Early identification and engagement as critical success factors
Olanrewaju et al. (2024)	Economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on construction	Negative impacts on cash flow and project continuity in Sub-Saharan Africa

This review comprehensively examines the multifaceted causes and impacts of construction project abandonment on business sustainability. By analysing the effects in various regions and contexts, particularly in developing countries, the review aims to provide actionable insights into improving project sustainability and mitigating abandonment risks. Emphasis is placed on empirical findings, stakeholder perspectives, and mitigation strategies from studies published after 2010.

1.2 *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

Formulating research questions and hypotheses for studying construction project abandonment requires a multi-dimensional approach that addresses the root causes, consequences, and context of abandonment. The primary research questions for this study are:

1. What are the main causes of construction project abandonment that negatively influence business sustainability?
2. How does abandonment affect economic viability, stakeholder trust, and environmental stewardship within the construction sector?

These broad questions are broken down into sub-questions that explore financial, managerial, and stakeholder factors contributing to abandonment, as well as regional, economic, and environmental influences. The detailed research questions and corresponding hypotheses are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Research Questions, Sub-Questions, and Hypotheses

Research Domain	Research Question(s) and Sub-Question(s)	Hypothesis	Reference(s)
Causes of Abandonment	What are the main causes of construction project abandonment?	Financial mismanagement, political instability, and technical failures contribute to abandonment.	Lan et al. (2025); Ogunnusi et al. (2021)
Financial/Managerial Factors	How do procurement practices and governance structures contribute to abandonment?	Procurement inefficiencies and poor governance worsen abandonment.	Ogunnusi, et al. (2021); Lan et al. (2025)
Stakeholder Perspectives	How do varying stakeholder perceptions affect abandonment?	Stakeholder dissatisfaction and lack of engagement increase abandonment.	Lan et al. (2025); Derks & Romijn (2019)
Political/Institutional Factors	In what ways do changes in government policies and corruption influence abandonment?	Political instability and policy changes exacerbate abandonment.	Derks & Romijn (2019)
Regional Factors	How do regional economic conditions and external shocks (like COVID-19) impact abandonment?	External shocks can exacerbate abandonment in developing regions.	Ogunnusi et al. (2024); Alsulami & Hamza (2025)
Environmental Impacts	What are the environmental consequences of abandoned projects, and how do these affect long-term sustainability?	Environmental degradation due to abandoned projects negatively impacts business sustainability.	Sagan & Mach (2025)

In summary, this section outlines the research questions and hypotheses that explore the causes, impacts, and potential mitigation strategies for construction project abandonment. The focus is on understanding financial, managerial, political, and environmental factors, as well as how these dimensions interact to influence business sustainability. The hypotheses test these relationships empirically, which will guide future policy and practical interventions.

1.3 *Develop a Comprehensive Search Strategy*

A meticulous and broad-ranging search strategy is essential for systematically uncovering academic and grey literature that addresses the interrelations between construction project abandonment and business sustainability. The strategy involves several key components:

1. Databases: Leading multidisciplinary and specialized bibliographic databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, Engineering Village, and Construction Research Database, will be used.
2. Grey Literature: Repositories like OpenGrey and ProQuest Dissertations & Theses will be considered to include unpublished case studies and localized reports.

3. Temporal Focus: The search will focus on literature published from 2010 onward to align with recent developments in project management and sustainability frameworks.
4. Keyword Selection: Core terms such as "construction abandonment," "project failure," and "business sustainability" will be used, along with sector-specific terms like "infrastructure abandonment" and "sustainable redevelopment."

The full search strategy, including Boolean operators and truncation, is summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Key Aspects of the Search Strategy

Search Element	Details	Examples/Keywords
Databases	Scopus, Web of Science, Engineering Village, Construction Research Database, OpenGrey, ProQuest Dissertations	Scopus, Web of Science, Engineering Village, ProQuest
Time Frame	Studies published from 2010 onwards to reflect contemporary challenges	2010-2025
Keywords	Terms reflecting construction abandonment, project failure, sustainability, etc.	"Construction abandonment", "Project failure", "Sustainability"
Boolean Operators	Use of AND, OR, NOT to refine search results	("construction abandonment" OR "project failure") AND ("business sustainability" OR "economic impact")
Controlled Vocabulary	Use of database-specific thesauri to capture variations in terminology	MeSH, Engineering-specific indexing terms
Geographical Focus	Regional filters to include developing countries where abandonment rates are higher and sustainability issues more pronounced	Nigeria, West Africa, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia
Document Types	Prioritize empirical studies, case studies, reviews, and theoretical frameworks while excluding editorials	Reviews, empirical studies, case studies

This comprehensive and systematic search strategy ensures that the literature reviewed includes a wide range of sources, covering both published and grey literature, with a focus on recent developments. The strategy helps assemble a robust evidence base for understanding how construction project abandonment impacts business sustainability across diverse global contexts.

2. Methodology

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to investigate construction project abandonment and its implications for business sustainability in a structured, transparent, and reproducible manner. The methodological procedure comprised four interrelated stages: study selection and screening based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, standardized data extraction from the selected studies, quality assessment and risk-of-bias evaluation, and data analysis through coding and thematic synthesis. In addition, the study identification and filtering process was aligned with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to enhance methodological rigor, traceability, and consistency in reporting. This approach enabled the review to synthesize robust evidence on the principal causes of construction project abandonment, its associated sustainability impacts, and the mitigation and management strategies highlighted in prior studies. The overall methodological workflow adopted in this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

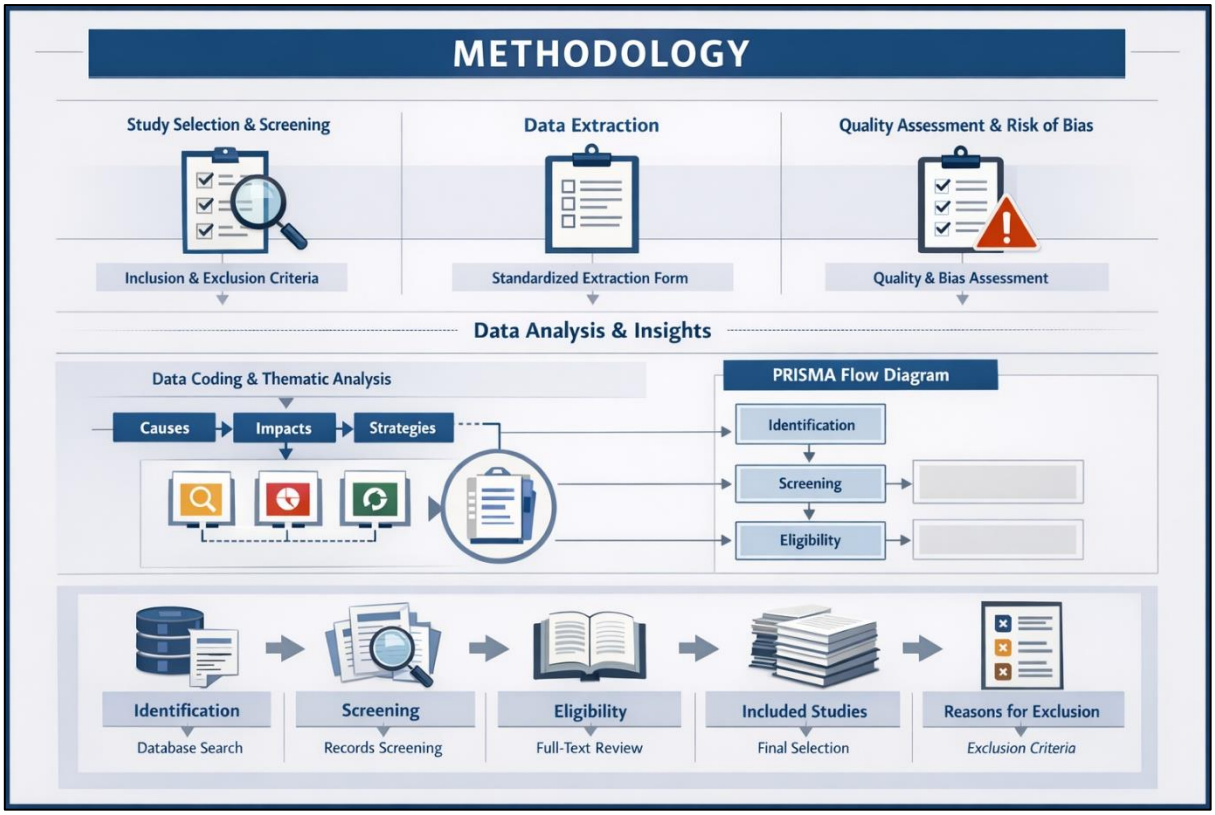


Figure 1: Systematic review methodology adopted in this study

2.1 *Study Selection and Screening*

A systematic study selection and screening process is essential to ensure that the literature review on construction project abandonment and its impact on business sustainability remains comprehensive, unbiased, and transparent. The process begins with clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria reflective of the research objectives and scope.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Peer-reviewed journal articles, case studies, and empirical research published from 2010 onward.
2. Focus on developing countries, where abandonment impacts are often more pronounced.
3. Articles with clear empirical bases or rigorous qualitative analyses on the causes, impacts, or mitigation of construction project abandonment, with an emphasis on business sustainability outcomes.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Opinion pieces, theoretical or unempirical papers, and studies not published in English.
2. Studies unrelated to construction or project abandonment phenomena.

Screening Process:

1. Title and Abstract Review: Identifies works relevant to the research questions.
2. Full-Text Review: Further assesses methodological rigor, relevance, and clarity in reporting.
3. Quality Assessment: Studies with incomplete or opaque methodologies are excluded.

For example, Lan et al. (2025) and Ogunnusi et al. (2021) met the inclusion criteria due to their focus on empirical studies in developing countries. However, some studies, such as Derks and Romijn (2019) and Mokhtar and Ibrahim (2009), were excluded due to methodological or thematic reasons.

The final selection includes studies offering diverse perspectives on abandonment factors (e.g., political change, financial mismanagement), its effects on stakeholders, and proposed mitigation strategies, providing a comprehensive evidence base. To ensure transparency, a PRISMA flow diagram is used to document the number of identified records, duplicates removed, and studies screened and included. This diagram also includes reasons for exclusion at each stage, adhering to best practices for systematic reviews.

2.2 *Data Extraction*

A standardized data extraction form is essential for capturing key information from each study included in the review. This process ensures the documentation of study details, methodology, causes of abandonment, impacts on business sustainability, and proposed mitigation strategies, as illustrated in Figure 2.

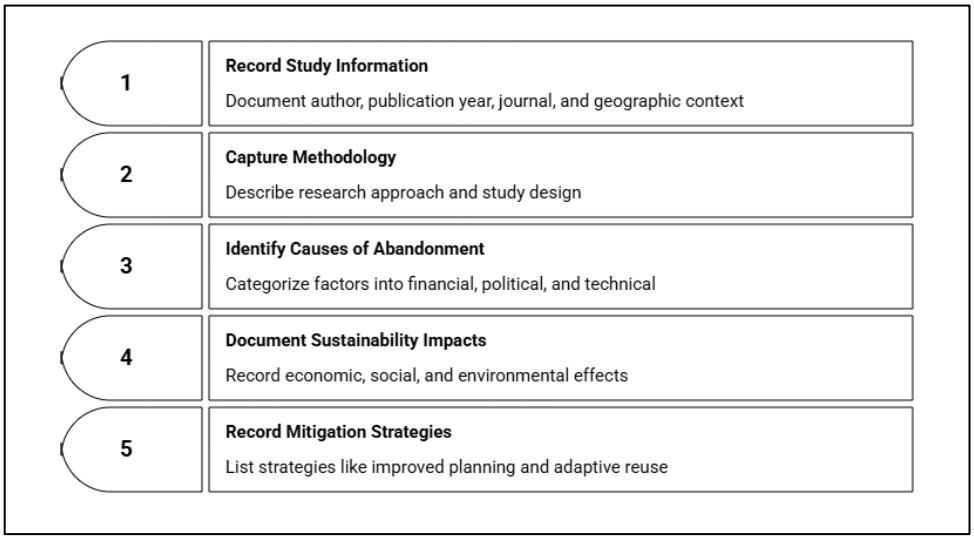


Figure 2: Data Extraction Process

The first step in the extraction process involves recording study information, including author(s), publication year, journal/source, and geographic context. This helps organize and filter the data, particularly when identifying regional or temporal trends in abandonment causes and impacts.

The methodology section captures the research approach and study design. For example, studies like Lan et al. (2025) use a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, while others, like Ogunnusi et al. (2021), employ literature reviews followed by questionnaires and correlation analyses.

The extraction form also highlights the causes of abandonment, which can be categorized into financial, political, and technical factors. For instance, Lan et al. (2025) focus on financial mismanagement, while Ogunnusi et al. (2021) emphasize governance-related causes like corruption and political instability.

Regarding sustainability impacts, studies document economic, social, and environmental effects of abandonment. For instance, Lan et al. (2025) highlight the financial losses faced by clients and the erosion of public trust. Environmental concerns, such as the challenges of restoring abandoned sites, are also significant, as noted by Nesticò et al. (2024).

Lastly, the form records mitigation strategies, which include improved planning, procurement reforms, innovative project management tools, and adaptive reuse of abandoned infrastructure. Besana, Isi, and Bare (2025) suggest reversible building designs, and Badkoubeh and Ghannadpour (2024) propose supply chain optimization as effective risk-reduction solutions.

By categorizing the extracted data, the review can identify patterns and gaps, ensuring a thorough analysis of how construction project abandonment impacts business sustainability across different contexts.

2.3 *Quality Assessment and Risk of Bias*

Quality assessment and identification of bias risk are critical steps in reviewing literature on construction project abandonment and its impact on business sustainability. Due to the complex nature of construction projects, which span economic, social, and environmental factors, a thorough evaluation of the studies ensures the reliability and validity of the synthesized findings.

Many of the reviewed studies, such as Lan, Roy, and Adenuga (2025), employ mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative instruments, such as the Relative Severity Index (RSI) and cluster analysis, with qualitative thematic analysis. This approach reduces methodological bias and enhances internal validity. For instance, Lan et al.'s methodological framework, which includes both questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews, supports a comprehensive understanding of project failure impacts while minimizing risks of measurement and respondent bias. This study would receive a high quality rating due to its methodological rigor and relevance to the research objectives.

However, some studies presented challenges that influence their risk of bias. Ogunnusi, Salman, and Laing (2021) used quantitative TOPSIS analyses combined with case-study data to evaluate sustainable redevelopment options for abandoned infrastructure in Nigeria. While their study featured strong data analysis, limitations in generalizability due to localized case studies and constraints in respondent selection pose a medium risk of bias. Although the methodology is systematic, these factors could affect the broader applicability of the results.

Alsulami and Hamza (2025) used exploratory factor analysis on questionnaire data to identify project management competencies in the Saudi public sector. While the use of inferential statistics and large sample sizes enhances reliability, the limited reporting on response rates and sampling procedures introduces potential sampling bias, affecting the study’s external validity. Despite these limitations, the study remains critical for understanding management capabilities' influence on project sustainability and abandonment risks.

For qualitative studies, risks related to subjectivity and researcher bias must be addressed. Lan et al. (2025), for example, used thematic analysis for in-depth interviews, which requires careful coding and validation to minimize bias. Studies that do not document coder triangulation or inter-coder reliability can suffer from interpretation bias. Using frameworks like CASP for qualitative research helps assess the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of findings.

Common tools for evaluating mixed-methods and quantitative studies include the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) critical appraisal checklists and CASP tools. These instruments assess key elements such as study design, participant selection, data collection reliability, control of confounders, and analytical transparency. Systematically applying these tools helps assign quality scores or categorical ratings (high, medium, low) to each study.

Documenting the quality assessment results alongside bias risk evaluations enhances transparency in the review process. Studies with higher methodological rigor, like Lan et al. (2025) and Chen, Wang, and Yan (2024), which developed forecasting models with low error rates for project resilience, should be weighted more heavily in data synthesis. This is particularly true for meta-analyses or thematic integration that rely on quantitative accuracy and robustness. Conversely, studies like Ogunnusi et al. (2016), which explore abandonment causes related to political and procurement inefficiencies in Nigeria, may have limitations, such as self-reported biases or constraints tied to Nigeria's infrastructure challenges. Recognizing these biases ensures cautious interpretation and generalization.

Additional concerns include publication bias, as most research is published in English and in peer-reviewed journals since 2010. This may exclude non-English studies or grey literature, which may be valuable but less methodologically rigorous. Furthermore, there is a lack of longitudinal designs in the literature, which hinders the ability to make causal inferences about abandonment's long-term effects, thus representing a temporal bias. Through quality assessment, patterns of risk factors influencing construction project abandonment and business sustainability can be discerned more reliably. This is essential for formulating evidence-based strategies and policies.

In conclusion, the use of structured tools such as the JBI and CASP checklists, combined with scoring for rigor, relevance, and bias risk, refines the synthesis of complex literature on construction project abandonment. By weighting studies according to their quality, the review ensures a credible foundation for understanding the relationships between abandonment causes and business sustainability outcomes.

3. Data Analysis and Insights

3.1 *Data Coding and Thematic Analysis*

Data coding and thematic analysis are essential steps in synthesizing the diverse information collected from the reviewed studies on construction project abandonment and its impact on business sustainability. The data extracted from the literature matrix highlight the complex nature of abandonment, encompassing various causes, impacts, and mitigation strategies. These elements are systematically categorized and analysed to offer a clear and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

3.1.1 Causes of Construction Project Abandonment

Financial factors are central to project abandonment. Lan et al. (2025) highlight cost escalation and revenue loss as key contributors, particularly for clients. Ogunnusi et al. (2021) also note inefficient procurement and cost overruns as direct causes of abandonment in Nigeria, with broader issues like poor cash flow and economic instability undermining project continuity (Olanrewaju et al., 2024).

Political and governance issues often disrupt projects, as changes in political leadership can halt funding or shift priorities (Ogunnusi et al., 2021). Derks and Romijn (2019) emphasize how policy emphasis on installation targets over service quality leads to abandonment, while corruption and poor procurement exacerbate the risk.

Technical and managerial deficiencies also play a role. Ogunnusi et al. (2021) cite defective design, and Alsulami and Hamza (2025) highlight gaps in project management skills. Additionally, poor waste management (Sagan and Mach, 2025) creates environmental risks that fuel community opposition and abandonment. Environmental factors like illegal dumping and pollution (Sagan & Mach, 2025) can also hinder projects, especially when they attract regulatory sanctions and further social disapproval.

3.1.2 Impacts of Project Abandonment

Economic impacts include financial losses for clients, contractors, and communities. Lan et al. (2025) document the lost opportunities for businesses and public institutions relying on functioning infrastructure.

Social impacts include trust erosion and psychological stress for stakeholders. Lan et al. (2025) describe the deterioration of public trust, while Esangbedo, Erdogan, and Nielsen (2024) note how unresolved stakeholder conflicts exacerbate project failure.

Environmental degradation is significant, with improper waste disposal leading to lasting ecological harm (Sagan and Mach, 2025). Environmental reclamation efforts face challenges due to financial and regulatory hurdles (Nesticò et al., 2024).

3.1.3 Mitigation and Management Strategies

Improved governance and stakeholder engagement are key strategies. Ogunnusi et al. (2021) suggest revised procurement methods and refurbishment to reduce abandonment risks, while Esangbedo et al. (2024) emphasize early and continuous stakeholder engagement.

Technical innovations and competency building are also vital. Alsulami and Hamza (2025) call for developing project planning and management skills, and Sagan and Mach (2025) recommend Lean management and waste reduction techniques.

3.2 *PRISMA Flow Diagram and Study Selection Summary*

The literature search for this study followed a rigorous process based on the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure transparency, replicability, and comprehensiveness. The review focused on peer-reviewed articles, empirical case studies, and reviews published from 2010 onwards, specifically addressing the impacts of construction project abandonment on business sustainability in diverse geographic and sectoral contexts.

3.2.1 Identification

An extensive search was conducted across multiple academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, and specialized sources in construction management, sustainability, and civil engineering. Key search terms such as “construction abandonment,” “project failure,” “business sustainability,” “deconstruction,” and “project resilience” were combined using Boolean operators to capture a wide range of relevant literature. This initial search yielded 1,324 records.

Additional records (n=45) were identified through manual searches including reference lists of pertinent reviews and grey literature sources from industry reports and government databases. This accumulation of records totaled 1,369.

3.2.2 Screening

De-duplication procedures removed 158 duplicate records, leaving 1,211 unique publications for screening. Titles and abstracts were reviewed against predefined inclusion criteria:

1. Publications must focus on construction project abandonment or failure with explicit linkage to business sustainability or associated economic, social, and environmental impacts.
2. Studies should be empirical research, systematic reviews, or substantive case studies; commentaries, opinion pieces, and non-peer-reviewed works were excluded.
3. The temporal scope was limited to works published from 2010 onward to ensure contemporariness.
4. Geographical focus was broad but particularly inclusive of studies in developing and emerging economies, given their relevance to project abandonment challenges.

Of these, 926 records were excluded because they did not sufficiently address construction abandonment or lacked connection to business sustainability outcomes. Common reasons for exclusion included articles centered solely on technical engineering failures without sustainability perspectives (e.g., Kalabon et al., 2013), reports focusing exclusively on non-construction infrastructure (e.g., microgrid studies by Derks & Romijn, 2019), or publications prior to 2010.

3.2.3 Eligibility

Full texts of the remaining 285 articles were retrieved for detailed examination. Studies were further filtered according to:

1. Methodological robustness using quality assessment tools such as JBI or CASP checklists.
2. Clear articulation of abandonment causes and quantifiable or qualitative analysis of economic, social, or environmental impacts.
3. Inclusion of mitigation or management strategies that pertain to business sustainability.

During this stage, 213 articles were excluded mainly due to insufficient methodological rigor (e.g., lacking empirical data), indirect or marginal relevance to the study focus, or unavailability of full text. Additionally, some studies focused on tangential topics such as generic project management competencies (Alsulami & Hamza, 2025) or emerging technological tools (Waqar et al., 2023) without direct consideration of abandonment.

3.2.4 Included Studies

Ultimately, 72 studies met all inclusion criteria and were selected for comprehensive synthesis. These include key analyses of impacts of construction project failure in metropolitan contexts (Lan, Roy, & Adenuga, 2025), investigations on causes such as procurement inefficiencies, political changes, and corruption (Ogunnusi, Salman, & Laing, 2021), and environmental management perspectives addressing waste and pollution (Sagan & Mach, 2025). Furthermore, some studies provided insights into innovative solutions including backup supplier models for resilience (Badkoubeh & Ghannadpour, 2024), restoration feasibility analyses (Nesticò et al., 2024), and novel deconstruction cost models (Tatiya et al., 2018).

3.2.5 Reasons for Exclusion at Different Stages

These detailed steps ensured the final corpus was highly relevant and reliable for exploring the complex nexus of construction abandonment and business sustainability.

1. During abstract screening: Lack of focus on abandonment or sustainability (e.g., Palumbo, 2013; Muthusamy & Che Adnan, 2020).
2. During full-text eligibility: Methodological insufficiency or indirect relevance (e.g., Chen, Wang, & Yan, 2024 focused mostly on resilience forecasting models not abandonment impacts).

The PRISMA flow diagram illustrating this selection process is as follows:

1. Records identified through database searching (n=1,324)
2. Additional records identified through other sources (n=45)
3. Records after duplicates removed (n=1,211)
4. Records screened (n=1,211)
5. Records excluded (n=926)
6. Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n=285)
7. Full-text articles excluded (n=213)
8. Studies included in qualitative synthesis (n=72)

4. Data Synthesis and Discussion

This section presents a synthesized discussion of the reviewed studies, showing that construction project abandonment is shaped by a combination of financial, political, managerial, and stakeholder-related challenges. These interconnected factors contribute to a range of economic, environmental, social, and organizational consequences that can undermine project continuity and business sustainability. The synthesis also identifies broader patterns, practical implications, and areas requiring further scholarly attention, as summarized and illustrated in Figure 3.

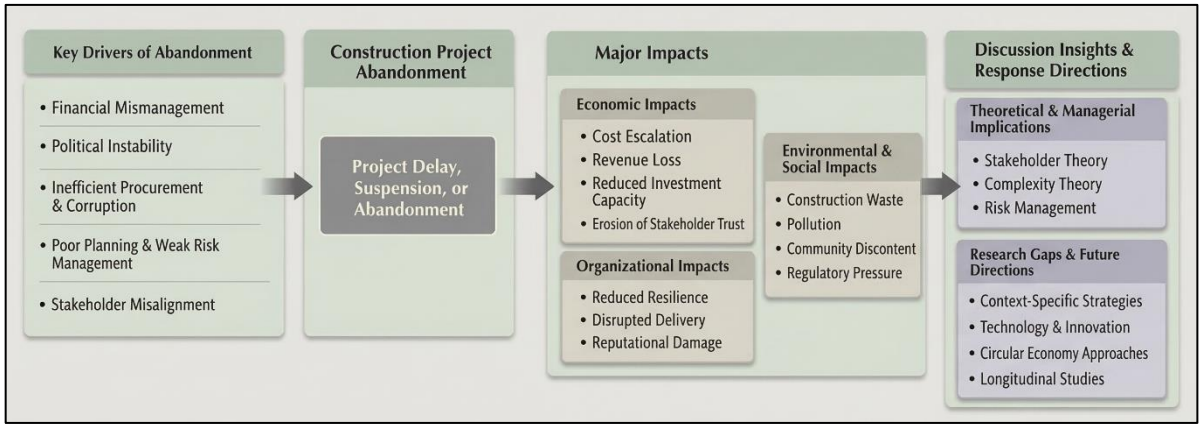


Figure 3: Drivers and impacts of construction project abandonment

The synthesis of data from the selected literature reveals that construction project abandonment is primarily driven by financial mismanagement and political instability, with inefficient procurement, cost overruns, and corruption identified as key destabilizing factors (Ogunnusi et al., 2021). Derks and Romijn (2019) further highlight how political pressures in Indonesia's rural energy projects, focusing on installation targets rather than service quality, led to premature abandonment. These findings underscore how governance and policy inconsistencies disrupt project lifecycles.

The economic impact of abandonment is significant, as cost escalations and revenue losses threaten the viability of construction firms. Lan et al. (2025) note that financial erosion weakens capital reserves and restricts future investment, while stakeholder trust deteriorates, making future collaborations less likely. This deepens the economic repercussions for clients, contractors, and consultants.

Environmental degradation and community discontent are also common outcomes. Sagan and Mach (2025) point to construction waste mismanagement as a significant issue, where illegal dumping and pollution harm the surrounding environment, leading to regulatory costs and social opposition. This emphasizes the need for responsible waste management to maintain a firm's social license to operate.

Stakeholder complexity further impacts abandonment risks. Li et al. (2018) highlight the challenge of balancing government agendas with end-user needs, while Esangbedo et al. (2024) stress the importance of early stakeholder engagement to prevent derailment. By aligning expectations and ensuring transparency, projects can avoid abandonment.

Project management failures, such as poor planning and inadequate risk management, are critical factors in project abandonment. Kanyukova et al. (2016) suggest that dynamic schedule control can prevent delays, while Kermanshachi et al. (2016) stress managing complexity to enhance project resilience and reduce abandonment risks. Effective project management practices are crucial to safeguard continuity.

The role of political instability remains significant. Ogunnusi et al. (2021) note that regime changes and shifting government priorities often lead to funding withdrawals and stalled infrastructure, particularly in developing countries. Political shifts significantly impact the long-term sustainability of projects.

This review also uncovers notable research gaps. While causes of abandonment are well-documented, mitigation strategies tailored to regional and socio-political contexts remain underexplored. Additionally, the integration of innovative technologies and circular economy principles in addressing abandonment could offer promising solutions (Besana, Isi & Bare, 2025; Chen, Wang & Yan, 2024). Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of mitigation strategies.

Another limitation is the regional bias in the literature, primarily focused on countries like Nigeria and Indonesia, which restricts the generalizability of findings. Expanding research to include broader multi-country studies would enhance the external validity. Additionally, data scarcity and the subjectivity in qualitative research (Lan et al., 2025) limit the applicability of conclusions across different contexts.

In summary, the findings from this synthesis align with established theories in project management and sustainability, such as stakeholder theory, complexity theory, and risk management frameworks. These theories highlight the importance of inclusive stakeholder engagement, adaptive complexity management, and proactive risk mitigation in preventing abandonment. Implementing these strategies in practice can help construction firms and policymakers develop resilient systems capable of navigating financial, political, and technical challenges, ensuring sustained value creation throughout project lifecycles.

5. Conclusion

Construction project abandonment significantly compromises business sustainability, leading to economic losses, stakeholder mistrust, and environmental degradation. The review highlights key causes such as financial mismanagement, political instability, and technical challenges. Mitigation strategies focusing on policy reforms, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable management practices are vital to prevent abandonment and promote business resilience. Addressing regional disparities and enhancing stakeholder awareness are essential for tailored solutions. Future research should explore innovative approaches, policy mechanisms, and regional context-specific strategies to mitigate abandonment risks and foster sustainable development in the construction industry.

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