

# Appraisal of Awareness Level of Quantity Surveying Profession among Secondary School Students in Benin City, Nigeria

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**Abstract**—Law, architecture, accounting, medicine, civil engineering are among the well-known and prestigious professions among senior secondary school students, parents and guardians. However, quantity surveying profession has being in existence for over four decades in Nigeria but, there is general low awareness level of this noble profession. Quantity surveyor is the financial consultant of the construction industry, whose training and experience qualifies him/her to advise clients on the optimal use of funds, arranges contractual relation between clients and contractors and prepares contract documents on all construction projects. This study aimed at appraising the awareness level of quantity surveying profession senior among secondary school students in Benin City Nigeria. Questionnaire survey was then structured and administered to senior secondary school students of three randomly selected secondary schools in the three local government areas within Benin City. Data were electronically analysed using SPSS. From the analysis, the study revealed that about 66.3% of the respondents have not heard about quantity surveying profession. The study further revealed that 80.7% of the respondents were unaware of the roles or duties of quantity surveyors. The study concludes that the awareness level of quantity surveying profession among senior secondary school students within Benin City is low. The study therefore recommend that both the National Secretariat of Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors and State Chapters should embark on awareness campaign across the country to sensitize senior secondary school students on what quantity surveying profession entails and the job prospects for quantity surveying graduates.

**Keywords**— Awareness, senior secondary, quantity surveying, Nigeria.

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are many careers paths available to secondary school students to choice from when applying for a degree

programme into the university. Regrettably, students choose those professions well-known to them and their parents. The lack of awareness level of other professions among these young boys and girls should be a serious concern to many professionals' bodies in Nigeria. According to Onyeri (1989) that 95% of Nigerians had neither heard about quantity surveying profession nor understood the roles of quantity surveyors in the construction industry. Also, Babalola (2006) stated that majority of Nigerians were yet to benefit from the services rendered by quantity surveyors. Awareness creation of the existence of certain profession like quantity surveying is overdue. Quantity surveying like other professions such as Architecture, Law, Engineering, Accounting, and Medicine have immense prospects for young boys and girls. Though, quantity surveying may be regarded to be relatively new when compared with Law, Architecture, and Medicine in Nigeria, but there is low level of awareness among students and parents (Babalola, 2006). Quantity surveyor is the financial consultant of the construction industry, whose training and experience qualifies him/her to advise clients on the optimal use of funds, arranges contractual relation between clients and contractors and prepares contract documents on all construction projects (Esenwa, 2014).

In contemporary Nigeria, students in obedience to their parents' or guardians' advice go for those well-known and prestigious professions. Interestingly, the choice of a particularly profession are influenced by many factors. Wildman and Torres (2002) stated that family role models and economic stability are factors guiding college students in their career choice. In addition, Beggs, Bantham and Taylor (2008) argue that many students choose their careers/professions based on their academic ability. Research conducted by Wildman and Torres (2002) on career paths for college students concluded that students, parents and guardians tend to choose a particular career because of its name and prestige attached to such profession

in the society. Nonetheless, lack of awareness of certain careers/professions among students and parents are major factors in their career choice.

Studies conducted by Mihyeon (2009) shows that some college students choose a particular profession because of their personality traits. Anecdotal evidence has shown that some students with certain quality have achieved greatly in their chosen careers in spite of their parents' advice to read law or medicine. For instance, the celebrated Afro beat Fela Anikpala Kuti, made unbeatable feat in the field of music against his father's wish to read law. Personality trait should be a major factor in guiding secondary school students in chosen a particular profession.

Research has been conducted in the South-West of Nigeria to determine the awareness level of secondary school students on quantity surveyors' roles in the Nigerian construction industry (Kadiri and Ayodele, 2013), but no research has been conducted in the South-South Geopolitical zone of the country that appraise the awareness level of senior secondary school students on quantity surveying profession. Therefore, this study tend to fill in the gap by appraising the awareness level of senior secondary school students within the South-South Geopolitical zone in order to increase students' intake into quantity surveying programme at both the universities and polytechnics in Nigeria.

#### **Aim and objectives of the study**

The aim of this study was to appraise the level of awareness of quantity surveying profession among senior secondary school students in the South-South Geopolitical zone of Nigeria and recommend strategies/measures that would help to sensitize senior secondary school students and parents on quantity surveying profession and job opportunities available for them. Thus, the specific objectives of the study include:

- To determine the awareness level of quantity surveying profession among the senior secondary school students in Benin City, Nigeria,
- To create awareness among senior secondary school students about this noble profession 'quantity surveying', and
- To highlight the roles of quantity surveyors in the construction industry

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Historical overview of quantity surveying profession**

Since the ancient days, man faces problems of managing meager/scarce resources to carry out his developmental project. This can be traced back to over 2000 years ago

when Jesus declared in the ancient biblical scriptures; '*For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it? Lest happily, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish it (Luke 14:28-30).*' The above quotation from the Bible epitomizes the birth of quantity surveying profession. In our world of scarcity and numerous competing needs, quantity surveyors are engaged for optimal financial management of construction contracts to ensure that clients obtained value for their money and that the completed projects provide added value to the clients' property asset (Ango, 2014). The need for financial probity and accountability in the areas of developmental projects in the face of scare resources necessitated the emergency of quantity surveying profession as dated back to 1785 in England.

The quantity surveying profession emerged in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, although the firm of Henry Cooper and sons of Reading was established as early as 1785. Prior to the first recorded usage of the term 'Quantity Surveyor' in 1859, the terms 'Measurer', 'Custom Surveyor', or 'Surveyor' were used at various times to describe Quantity Surveyor (Esenwa, 2014). In those early days, the quantity surveyor acted for the Master-Tradesmen, measuring the work after completion and frequently submitting partisan final account to the client. As a direct result of these activities, it increasingly became the practice of clients, who wish to have work executed under contract, to call for tenders before any work was undertaken. A procedure therefore evolved, where client would approach an Architect to design a building. Drawings and specifications were distributed to selected master Builders, who would then submit tenders for the total price rather than a collection of prices from Master Tradesmen. As each Builder had to prepare his bills of quantities for each project, it was realized that it would be more economical for Builders to employ one Surveyor to measure quantities for all of them. They would thus, share the cost of the employed Surveyor, obtain an identical bill of quantities, which ensured that they would all be tendering on the same basis. The client subsequently realized that it would be to his personal advantage to appoint and pay the fees of the quantity surveyor rather than have the Builders do so. Thus the independent professional quantity surveyor gained consultant status as the enlightened society become aware of his functions.

Within the last three centuries, quantity surveying has grown into a robust profession within the British

Commonwealth with its tentacles in America, Africa, Europe, and Middle/Far East. Thus, as cost/financial probity remains a core driver in the matrix of all developmental projects, the role of quantity surveyor become more vital than when it was first mentioned by Jesus Christ in about 2000 years ago. However, in Nigeria, the numbers of students pursuing different level of certification in Quantity surveying is still relative low in comparison to other professions with similar prospect, probably due to low level of awareness of this noble profession in our society.

#### **Quantity surveying and its roles in the construction industry**

Quantity Surveyor is a professional consultant appointed by the client to advise him (client), architect and engineers on all financial and contractual matters arising from the earliest commencement of a construction project right through to the completion of the project (Yakubu, 2013). The Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyor (NIQS) (2015) defines the profession as being responsible for total cost and procurement management, for the achievement of client's objectives in all types of capital projects and developments, from conception to commissioning and maintenance. Jagboro (2016) also defines quantity surveyor as an expert who is concerned with the financial probity in the conceptualization, planning and execution of both new development projects and refurbishment works.

Ashworth and Hogg (2007) described quantity surveying as the profession concerned with the prudent management of resources of the construction industry for the best advantage of the society, by providing, amongst others, the financial management for projects and cost consultancy services to both clients and contractors during the whole construction process. The quantity surveyors' roles for the sustainable national development goals of any nation are highly in demand, particularly in a highly competitive world with spiraling costs of developmental projects. Jagboro (2016) stated that quantity surveyors roles are becoming more vital in all sectors of the economy particularly for the attainment of sustainable national development goals than when it was originally established in England in 1785.

The high demand for infrastructural provisions associated with increase in population and urbanization, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria required effective utilization of scarce resources by costs experts. The quantity surveyors through training and experience fill in this gap. Jagboro (2016) further maintains that quantity surveyors are construction cost experts, planning, controlling, contract managers, and negotiating tendering and budgeting.

Quantity surveyor as a construction costs expert play an enviable role in construction projects all over the World.

The quantity surveying profession in Nigeria was given legal recognition by Decree 31 of 1986 (Act. 31, of 1986). The roles and duties of a Registered Quantity Surveyor as defined by this Act include among others: preliminary cost advice; cost planning, preparation of tender documents, advice on tendering methods and contractual arrangements, negotiations with contractors, valuation of the works in progress and settlement of final accounts, giving expert evidence in arbitration and dispute, feasibility studies, investment appraisals, cost control and post contract management, project management and coordination, value management, risk management, security management, and financial analysis. Undisputedly, quantity surveyors' roles in the construction industry are very vital to the provision and sustainability of any nation's social and economic development.

#### **The need to create awareness of quantity surveying profession among secondary school students**

The high demand for infrastructural provisions associated with increase in population and urbanization, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria required effective utilization of scarce resources by costs experts (Jagboro,2016)). The services of quantity surveyors as experts on cost, planning and financial control, contract administrators, tendering, contracts negotiators and budgeting are on the high demand more than when the profession was originally began in England in 1785. In meeting the high demand of quantity surveyors in a highly pressurized world of spiraling costs and large-scale development, there is an urgent need to embark on awareness campaign to sensitize Nigerian secondary school students on what quantity surveyors are and their roles in the construction industry in this 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

Despite the overwhelming evidence of the vital roles of this noble profession "quantity surveying" play on construction projects, the awareness level of both students and parents are very low. Moneke (2001) stated that the low level of awareness of this noble profession in Nigeria could be linked to high level of corruption, particularly among public officers. Moneke (2001) further maintains that quantity surveyor as an impartial judge stand to ensure financial probity and value for money on development projects. Several reasons have been adduced to low awareness level of quantity surveying profession Nigeria, this includes the relative young age of the profession in Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2014), lack of good marketing strategy, sub-consultant status (Moneke, 2010), inability to embrace change and the

devastating effects of professional rivalry from kindred professions (Kadiri & Ayodele, 2013b) and inability to invest in the necessary technology (Asupoto, 2008) is also factor bedeviling the growth of the profession in Nigeria. Despite all these reasons impacting on the growth of quantity surveying profession in Nigeria, there is a dire need to create awareness among senior secondary school students on the prospects awaiting quantity surveying graduates in the construction industry and other sectors of the economy.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The research used stratified sampling technique to select three secondary schools from the three local government councils within the Benin City. Random sampling technique was used to select 30% of students from the three schools and this constitutes the sample size for this study. Structured questionnaires were administered on the respondents to elicit information in line with the research objectives.

One hundred and ten (110) questionnaires were distributed; eighty- three (83) were completed and returned. The analysis resulted in a response rate of 75%. The response rate achieved in this survey is considered adequate. Sutrisna (2009) and Dainty (2008) maintain that performing a statistical analysis in a survey within the response rate equal to or above the threshold of thirty (30) is acceptable. Thus, 75% response rate achieved in this survey provides reasonable data for analysis. Data obtained from the completed questionnaire survey were subjected to statistical analysis by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and the results were presented below.

### IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

#### Demographical information

Analysis of demographical data of the respondents shows that, 13.3% of the respondents were between the age of 12 and 14 years, 79.5% were between the age of 15 and 17 years and 7.2% were between the age of 18 and 20 years. This shows that majority of the respondent were between the acceptable age for senior secondary school certificate examination. Therefore, it can be concluded that these categories of respondents are matured and their responses are reliable. 95.2% of the respondents' fathers were educated and only 4.8% were not educated while 86.7% of the respondents' mothers were educated and 13.3% were not educated. This showed that the majority of the respondents' parents have requisite education to influence their children on career choice.

The data analysis revealed that the respondents' uncles, aunts or older siblings who studied built environment related courses were 48.2% while those who did not were 51.8%. This showed that the awareness level of quantity surveying profession among the respondents' relation is below average and this could equally influence their level of awareness of quantity surveying profession.

#### Previous knowledge of quantity surveying profession

Table 1 indicates the respondents' perceptions of the "Yes", "No" and "Not sure" question relating to their previous knowledge of quantity profession. The data analysis shows that 33.7% of the respondents were aware or have knowledge of quantity surveying profession, 39.8% have not heard about the profession and while 26.5% were not sure. These research findings corroborated the work of Onyeri (1989) that 95% of Nigerians had neither heard about quantity surveying profession nor understood the roles and duties of quantity surveyors in the construction industry.

*Table.1: Previous knowledge of quantity surveying*

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	33.7
No	33	39.8
Not sure	22	26.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Level of understanding of quantity surveying

Table 2 below shows the respondents' perceptions of their level of understanding of quantity surveying. The data analysis showed that 33.7% had very low understanding, 22.9% have low understanding, 32.5% of the respondents have a moderate understanding of the profession, 8.4% have a high understanding and 2.4 % have a very high understanding of quantity surveying. The above findings supported what Kadiri and Ayodele (2013a) had earlier found that only 8.1% of 430 surveyed young school leavers were aware of quantity surveying as a course of study in the universities.

*Table.2: Level of understanding of quantity surveying*

	Frequency	Percent
Very high	2	2.4
High	7	8.4
Moderate	27	32.5
Low	19	22.9
Very low	28	33.7

	Frequency	Percent
Very high	2	2.4
High	7	8.4
Moderate	27	32.5
Low	19	22.9
Very low	28	33.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Understanding of what quantity surveyors do

Table 3 shows the respondents' understanding of what quantity surveyors do. The analysis revealed that 30.1% understood quantity surveyors to be responsible for land demarcation and topographical detailing, 16.9% understood quantity surveyor to be responsible for structural design and detailing, while 33.7% understood quantity surveyors to be responsible for management of completed construction projects. 19.3% of the respondents understood quantity surveyors to be responsible for cost detailing and analysis, Kadiri and Ayodele (2013a) found that 82.8% of the 430 respondents surveyed in Osun State, Nigeria misunderstood quantity surveyors for either land or estate Surveyors.

Table.3: Understanding of what quantity surveyors do

	Frequency	Percent
Land demarcation and topographical detailing	25	30.1
Cost detailing and analysis	16	19.3
Structural design and detailing	14	16.9
Management of completed construction projects	28	33.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Understanding of subjects' combination to study quantity surveying

Table 4 shows respondents' understanding of subject combination to study quantity surveying at Nigerian tertiary institutions. The analysis revealed that 38.6% of the respondents understood the main subjects combination to pass at credit level in their senior secondary certificate examination (SSCE) to study quantity surveying are English, Mathematics and Economics, 36.1% understood the subjects' combination to be English, Mathematics and physics and 25.3% were not sure of the subjects combination required to study quantity surveying at the Nigerian tertiary institutions. However, 36% of the respondents indicated correct combination required to study quantity surveying in the Nigeria tertiary institutions

Table.4: Understanding of subjects' combination to study quantity surveying

	Frequency	Percent
English, Mathematics and chemistry	7	8.4
English, Mathematics and physics	30	36.1
English, Mathematics and Biology	7	8.4
English, mathematics and Accounting	5	6.0
English ,Mathematics and Government	2	2.4
English ,Mathematics and Economics	32	38.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table.5: Number of respondents agreed to study Quantity surveying

Table 5 indicates number of respondents that agreed to

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	15.7
No	70	84.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0</b>

study quantity surveying as a profession. Analysis of the survey showed 16% of the respondents agreed to study quantity surveying while 84% preferred to study other courses like law, architecture, medicine, and engineering and computer science. These finding supported literature survey. A research conducted by Kadiri and Ayodele (2013a) among school leaver in Osun State found that only 8.1% of 430 were aware of quantity surveying as a course of study in the universities.

#### V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research findings show that only 33.7% of the respondents had a previous knowledge of quantity surveying profession, this figure is considered very low relative to the number of years the profession has being in existence in Nigeria. Literature survey supported the research findings in that Onyeri (1989) found that 95% of Nigerians had neither heard about quantity surveying



profession nor understood the roles and duties of Quantity Surveyors in the Nigerian construction industry. The study also found that 56.6% of the respondents have low understating of what quantity surveying is all about while the remaining 53.4% either have moderate, high and very high understanding of the profession, this could also be consider as improvement over the years compared to 5% found by Onyeri (1989). Furthermore, this study also found that 80.7% of the respondents misunderstood Quantity Surveyors for Land Surveyors, Estate Surveyors or Civil Engineers. This finding is similar to what Kadiri and Ayodele (2013a) found that 82.8% of the 430 respondents surveyed in Osun State, Nigeria misunderstood Quantity Surveyors for Land or Estate Surveyors. The 19.3% of senior secondary school students in Benin City who understood the roles of Quantity Surveyors on construction projects was considered as an improvement to 8.1% of what Kadiri and Ayodele (2013a) found among young school leavers in Osun State in Nigeria. It was also found that 36.1% of respondents understood the subject combination they are required to pass at credit level before they could be admitted to study quantity surveying in the Nigeria universities and polytechnics. Finally, the 15.7% of the respondents who indicated interested in pursuing a further study in quantity surveying in the University and Polytechnic is an encouraging.

## **VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the research finding of this study it could be concluded that the awareness level of quantity surveying profession among senior secondary school students in Benin City is low. The study also revealed that majority of the students within the study area was not aware of what quantity surveying is and some mistook it be land surveyor or estate surveyor. The study found that the percentage of students that understood the subject combination required to pass at a credit level before they could be admitted to study quantity surveying programme into Nigerian tertiary institution is still very low while those that indicated interest in pursuing a career in quantity surveying is encouraging. The study therefore recommends that:

- Schools should organize career talks periodically to enlightening students on different disciplines and professions,
- The Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS) and Quantity Surveyors Registration board of Nigeria (QSRBN) need to be more proactive in enlightening secondary school students about quantity surveying profession especially by the use of State Chapters,

- Government should employ more guidance and educational counselors in secondary schools who will be able to enlighten the students on different disciplines and professions as they prepare to choose their career.

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