

Trend in the Nigerian Quantity Surveying Consulting Practices

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines trends in the Nigerian Quantity Surveying Consulting Practices (NQSCP). The survey elicits the view of top management staff in Quantity Surveying Consulting Firms (QSCFs) on traditional and non-traditional building services, non-building services and software application. The intent of the survey was to ascertain the frequency of involvement of (QSCFs) in traditional and non-traditional building services, non-building services and to determine level of software usage in rendering consultancy services. The paper investigates the organizational set-up of (NQSCP) in terms of categories of professional membership and number of year in the industry. Relevant data were obtained through questionnaire. Only 45 out of 60 administered questionnaires were filled and returned. Analysis of the responses from these firms indicates that; 42% of the Consulting firms have been practicing for an average of 18years. The survey further discloses that, 93% of these firms have at most 5 employees as Members of Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors. Among the 45 firms, only 20(44%) registered with (QSRBN). Among the employee Qs, 106 out of 148 in the firms are members of Nigeria Institute of Quantity Surveyors (MNIQS). This implies that, most of the Qs in the consulting firms considered are in this category. Most of these firms engage in traditional building services compared to non-traditional and non-building building services. The rate of use of computer aided software among these firms is still low. All the firms alluded to the use of email and spread sheets but master bill maker, workmate 5.0 bill maker and Qs Cad ranked low. The study concluded that Qs Consulting firms need to develop in the area of non-building services delivery and improve on the use computer aided software applications in order to improve in their service delivery by turning to indigenous computer engineers **keywords:** Trends, Quantity Surveying Profession, Consulting Practice, Software, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Quantity surveyors are key professionals in the construction industry. According to Lenard (2000), most operate through organized consultancy firms,

are involve in cost planning, cost management, project procurement, contract administration, feasibility studies and asset financial management and that the wide array of quantity surveyors' responsibilities means that they have to be educated, trained, and highly skilled in diverse subjects. Changing nature of the construction and development industry such as the adoption of innovative technological processes and development, the emergence of highly focused professionals and the full range of advanced technologies necessitates a much stronger emphasis on job competencies than ever before (Lenard, 2000; Smith, 2003). This research aim at assessing the practicing pattern of Quantity Surveying firms in Nigerian in an attempt to ascertain the predominant aspect of practice and offers suggestion on how to enhance other areas of potential service delivery. In other to achieve the aim of this work, the following objectives were formulated which are:

- i. To evaluate the organizational set up Quantity Surveying practicing firms in Nigeria and
- ii. To identify and assess services render by Quantity Surveying practicing firms in Nigeria.

QUANTITY SURVEYING SERVICES

The role of Quantity Surveyors (Qs) has evolved significantly with clients demanding more comprehensive service than ever (Patrick, 2012). Patrick (2012) further asserts that the most successful professional services firms focus on "reference ability" because they are keener about clients' retainability other than just making money. Quantity Surveying Firms (QSFs) should use enterprise service applications to drive critical business processes. With knowledge as their core product, top QSFs focus on best practices for building a "learning organization". Knowledge management gives the Quantity Surveying (QSy) profession the ability to respond to internal and external competition. QSFs need to enhance professionalism to remain competitive. This can be achievable through qualitative service delivery.

QSy services can be categorized as traditional and non-traditional building services and non-building services. Traditional building services include the preparation of Bills of Quantities, Builders' Quantities, Cost Planning/Budgeting, Estimating and Contract Administration. Non-traditional building services such includes; Feasibility Studies, Life Cost Analyses, Programming, Taxation Advice, Arbitration/Mediation, Expert

Witness/Appraisal, Insurance Valuations, Risk Management, Quality Management, Value Management, Project/Construction Management and Facility Management were identified. Non-building services are identified as; Research and Publishing, Civil Works, Infrastructural Works, Marine Works, Mining, Manufacturing and Petrochemical (Smith, 2003; Akintoye, 2001; and Odusami, 1999).

Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS) (2017) classified QSy services into stages of construction which are; budgetary planning, cost planning, contract documentation, tender reporting, cost check and control, cost/value and control, final cost from finalized account.

SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS TO QUANTITY SURVEYING SERVICE DELIVERY

Most researchers before year 2000 emphasized that most professionals in the western world whose economy had advanced have shown readiness and commitment to the adoption of computers in their operations than those in the developing economies like Nigeria. During post 2000 era, researchers and practitioners in Nigeria began to draw attention of the industry to the advantages of the use of computers in the construction industry. According to Oyediran and Odusami (2004), the level of adoption of software in QSy Practices has been found to be low. In their further submission (Oyediran and Odusami, 2004) pinpoint that the use of IT and the integration of computer application within the QSy services can help to increase the level of productivity in the construction industry and expands the range of information availability and the services provided in addition to speeding up construction and reducing costs considerably. The conservativeness of the QS has been cited as one of the reasons for their rate of IT adoption and diffusion (Cartlidge, 2002).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research targeted the top management staff in QSFs with the intent of obtaining more reliable information for analysis and be able draw a trustworthy conclusion. Since not all the practicing firms registered with the QSRBN, it was extremely difficult to obtain the accurate figure of practicing firms in Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique method was adopted for data collection. Since not all supposedly practicing QSFs in Nigeria engage staff (stand-alone) and a corporate office, such category of consultants were not

considered hence the need to be selective. Out of the 60 questionnaire administered, only 45 were properly filled and returned which formed bases for analysis. The questionnaire was sectioned into Two (2) Sections: Section (A) covered Respondent profile, Location of business, number of employees (Qs), company number of years in the industry, registration status with QSRBN and categories of Qs working in these firms. Section (B) comprises of traditional, non-traditional building services and non-building services as well as software usage in Qs firms. The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency at which these services are carried out by their firms. The rating was based on four-point adopted from Likert's scale. These scales are: Always (4), Often (3), Seldom (2) and Never (1). The data obtained were analyzed using Relative Frequency Index (RFI). The four-point Likert Scale was transformed to Relative Frequency Index for each determinant using numerical score. These were then ranked based on the calculated Relative Frequency Indices. The Relative Frequency Indices were calculated using the mathematical expression below

$$\text{Relative Frequency Index (RFI)} = \frac{4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1}{N}$$

Where n_4 is frequency of always, n_3 is frequency of often, n_2 is frequency of seldom and n_1 is frequency of never and N is total frequency.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

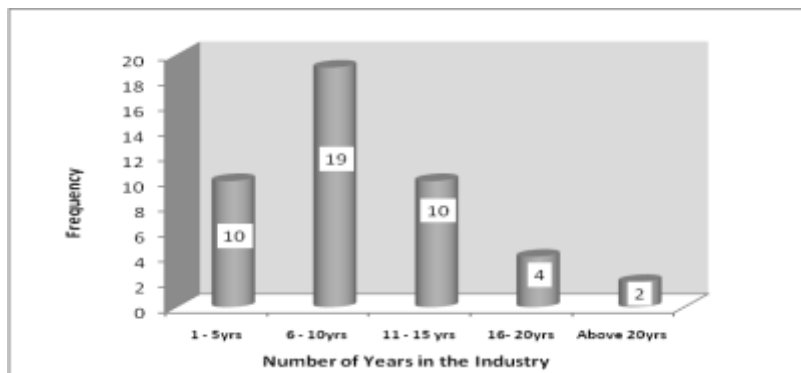


Fig. 1: Number of years of Qs Firms in the industry

Those firms having 1-5 years working experiences amounted to 22%. Same goes to firms having working experience between 11-15years. Most of the firms have being practicing between 16-20 yrs (42%). whereas for those above 20

years of experience amount to 4%. The varieties in working experience of the firms provide a wider coverage of the practicing pattern in terms of staff engagement and the type of services often engaged in. The fact is that firms whose practice is more than 20 years eventually wind-up due to lack of continuity. Chances are that those in this category 20 years and above are being managed by a principal and when the sole owner becomes incapacitated the connections for getting jobs ends and sometimes when death comes calling the business meets a Waterloo. It is pertinent to note that most of the firms in the category of 16-20 years of working experience will soon graduate to the category of 20 years and above which calls for more consultancy firms to be established to care for the needs of clients that are ever changing as submitted by Smith (2003).



Fig. 2: Number of employees in Qs firms

The survey analysis indicates that 93% of the Qs firms have between 1-5 staff. This ranked the highest percentage of all. This denotes that, most of the firms have at most 5 employees. Whereas, those having between 6 – 10 employee are just 4%. Those having between 11 and 15 employees are just 2%. The result of the finding above indicates that the firms having more 6-10 employees and 11-15 employees have more than one practicing offices of practice. The addresses of such branches were obtained and were not visited to avoid duplication of data. Among the firms having 1-5 staff are those with 20 years and above indicating that most of the “aging” firms managed by a sole principal do not have more than just 2 (two) staff on the average. This staff are

the principal and another staff who in most cases are only working to earn salary and not interested in remaining with such firm for a long period of time.

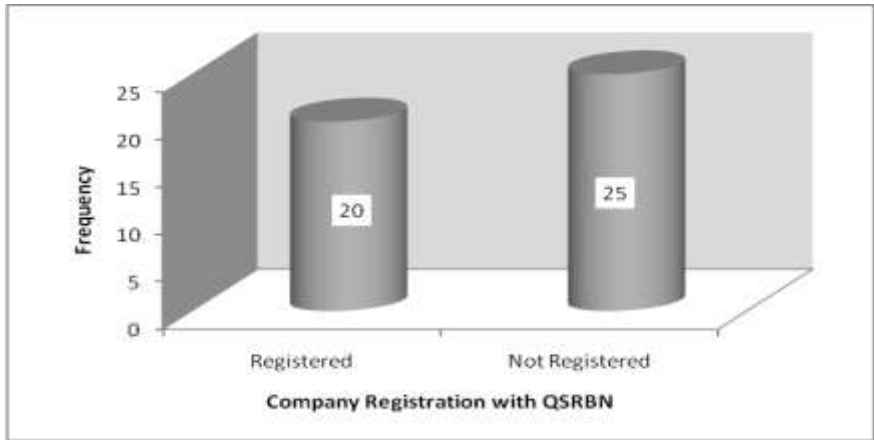


Fig. 3: Company Registration with QSRBN

As indicated in fig 3, 44% of the firms registered with QSRBN. 56% did not register. The board however reiterates periodically that it is a compulsory requirement for practicing firms to register and renew their practicing licences yearly. 95% of decline the idea of registering with corporate affair commission and thereafter with QSRBN but do so to get commissioned especially by government establishment since the board had mandated them to require certificate of registration with QSRBN from Qs firms. To this end, it is time for the board to review its stand on the matter of company registration since it is not a welcome idea by most Nigerian Quantity Surveying firms.

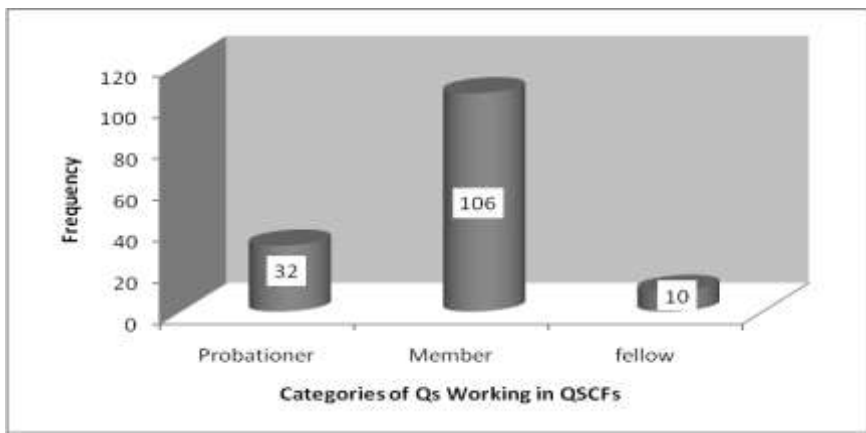


Fig. 4: Categories of Qs working in Consulting Firms

Fig. 4 shows that a total of 148 employees works in the 45 Qs firms surveyed. Collectively, there were 32 (22%) probationers, 106 (72%) members and 10 (7%) fellows. This indicates that there were more associate members in each company compared to probationers and fellows. While it is easier to become a probationer member of the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors, the requirements for becoming a member and thereafter a fellow is enormous and time taking. NIQS (2017) requires that for a prospective probationer, he/she must have the following requirements: B.Sc., B/Tech /HND Quantity Surveying, NYSC Discharged certificate or Exemption Certificate, 5 O'Level Credits in English Language, Mathematics, Physics (mandatory) and other 2 from (Chemistry, Further Mathematics, Economics, Commerce, Geography, Technical Drawing, Biology), all credentials enclosed must be endorsed by the referees who should be financially-up-to-date with the Institute and with a payment of N10,000 only for obtaining form. Probationer/Technician who have passed Professional Competence Interview and logbook assessment.60 Continuous Professional Development (CPD Units), Five (5) O'Level Credits in English Language, Mathematics, Physics (mandatory) and other 2 from (Chemistry, Further Mathematics, Economics, Commerce, Geography, Technical Drawing, Biology), all credentials enclosed must be endorsed by the referees who should be financially up-to-date with the Institute. With Member's upgrade application form fee of N 25,000.

A prospective Fellow shall be a financial Member of the Institute who has fulfilled the following condition (i), (ii) and a minimum score of eighty percent (80%) from the other criteria, namely: He/She shall have been elected by the Institute as a full member for at least ten (10) years, shall have held a responsible position for not less than ten (10) years and has attained the age of 45 years, shall have participated actively in the affairs of the Institute at the National and State Chapter levels, shall have presented at least three (3) papers at seminars, workshops, or conferences organized by the National executive Council and Chapters, or written five (5) articles on matters involving the construction Industry in the Institutes Journal, National or Local Newspapers, shall have been benevolent to the Institute by financial support or other philanthropic gestures or services on a continuous basis, must not have been adjudged guilty or bankrupt by any court of law or previously suspended or expelled for misconduct by the Institute, must show evidence that his membership of the Quantity Surveyors Registration Board of Nigeria is current

and up to date financially, He must have accumulated a minimum of 300 CPD points after election as Member, must have show evidence of active professional practice in the industry, all applications shortlisted for upgrading shall be forwarded to the forum of Fellows by the NEC for screening in accordance with the provisions detailed in this and other sections of the constitution. A minimum of eleven (11) fellows of the Forum, with a minimum of seven (7) years standing nominated by the NEC, including the Chairman, shall screen all the applications and forward its recommendations to the NEC with payment of application form costs N100, 000 only. Strategically, age limitation of 45years and financial implication of accumulating 300 CPD scare many who are overdue for such position.

Qs Traditional Building Services

Table 1. Tradional Building Services rendered by Qs Firms

Qs Traditional Building Services	Mean	Ranking
Preparation of Bill of Quantities	4.00	1 st
Preparation of Interim Valuation	4.00	1 st
Cost control	4.00	1 st
Tendering and Contractual arrangement	3.99	4 th
Advice on cost limits and budgets	3.98	5 th
Estimating	3.88	6 th
Assessment of fluctuations	3.88	6 th
Assessment of variations	3.60	8 th
Cost planning	3.50	9 th
Preparation of Payment Invoice and certification	3.12	10 th
Preliminary cost advice	3.10	11 th
Preparation of final account	3.10	11 th
Procurement advice	3.00	13 th
Monitoring Budget	2.98	14 th
Procurement Management	2.90	15 th
Preparing feasibility studies	2.88	16 th
Settlement of Claims	2.88	16 th
Dispute resolution	2.80	18 th
Advice on contractual disputes	2.78	19 th
Value engineering	1.80	20 th
Whole life cycle costing	1.00	21 st

Preparation of Bills of Quantities, Preparation of Interim Valuation and Cost control are the most predominant aspect of Qs services undertaken by all the firms. They all ranked (1st position). The information gathered also discloses

that all the firms considered have not carried out Whole life cycle costing. This is not surprising because whole life cycle comes with its uniqueness and the types of clients in Nigeria do not venture into that, hence no reason to engage professional Qs to render such service. Most clients are interested in estimated cost of their proposed projects and after collecting the bills of quantities (BOQ) for such project will not look back. It could be that some are using the priced BOQ to obtain loan from bank or at best use to moderate whomever they engaged to execute their project.

Table 2: Mean and Ranking of Non-Traditional Building Services rendered by Qs firms

Qs Non-Traditional Building Services	Mean	Ranking
Project Management	3.10	1 st
Facility management	2.80	2 nd
Property Development	2.50	3 rd
Cost Benefit Analysis	2.10	4 th
Built/ Asset/ Facility Management	2.10	4 th
Risk Analysis	1.20	6 th
Insurance Valuation	1.20	6 th
Due Diligent Report	1.00	7 th
Taxation advice	1.00	8 th
Insolvency advice	1.00	8 th
Expert Witness	1.00	8 th
Arbitration/Mediation	1.00	8 th
Life Cycle Costing	1.00	8 th

Project management, facility management and property development ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. All the firms submitted that they have not engaged in Due Diligent Report, Taxation Advice, Insolvency Advice, Expert Witnesses, Insurance Valuation, Arbitration/Mediation, Life Cycle Costing and Value Management. Ojo (2017) observed that most firms in the industry for many years have not been involved in expert witness or arbitration.

Table 3: Mean and Ranking of Non- Building Services rendered by Qs Firms

Non- Building Services	Mean	Rank
Civil Works	2.90	1 st
Research and Publishing	2.55	2 nd
Infrastructural Works	2.45	3 rd
Marine works	2.25	4 th
Manufacturing	1.55	5 th
Petrochemical	1.10	6 th

Table 3 shows that Civil Works takes precedent above all other non-building services taking the 1st position. While Petrochemical ranked 6th indicating that only very few of the firms had rendered services relating to this aspect. Recently, the NIQS at the national level has seen the need to train members in procurement of infrastructural facilities and, oil and gas. Aside from organizing workshops and seminars at the National level, the national executive council deemed it fit to sensitize other state chapters on the need to hone members skills in procurement of civil and petrochemical projects. To meet this needs, other state chapters are now holding workshops with their team geared towards the procurement of infrastructural amenities.

Table 4: Mean and Ranking of Software Usage in Qs Firms

SOFTWARE	Mean	Rank
Email	4.00	1 st
Microsoft Excel	3.90	2 nd
Microsoft Word Processor	3.85	3 rd
Microsoft Office Project	3.29	4 th
Microsoft Office Access	3.10	5 th
Master bill maker	3.00	6 th
Workmate 5.0 bill maker	2.90	7 th
Qs Cad	2.85	8 th

Table 4 shows that email usage ranked highest among the software that consultants use in carrying out their consultancy services. The result further indicates that, all the firms have email addresses. Followed is Microsoft Word Processor, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Office Project, Microsoft Office Access, Master Bill Maker, Workmate 5.0 Bill Maker and Qs Cad. The usage of Qs Cad ranked 8th position indicates that just very few of these firms make use of the software. The cost of procuring this software and subsequent upgrading make it difficult to obtain. Another factor is the challenge of interoperability of the software with other office gadgets. Most of the software producers are outside Nigeria and may not readily provide after purchase services.

Table 5: Comparison of Traditional, Non-Traditional Building and Non-Building Services

SERVICES	Mean	Ranking
Traditional Building	3.30	1 st
Non-Building	1.97	2 nd
Non-Traditional Building	1.57	3 rd

According to table 5, Traditional Building Services is the foremost of the categories of services rendered by Qs firms. Followed by Non-Building Services and ranked last is Non-Traditional Building Services. This is so perhaps because of the demand of clients in the industry.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the foregoing, the study concludes that most of the CQFs engage in traditional building services more than non-traditional building and non-building services. The use of computer aided software is still low among the firms considered. There is urgent need to step up the usage of computer aided software among the Nigerian Quantity Surveying Firms. This is achievable by exploring local content. Computer engineers can be consulted and briefed to provide softwares capable of doing most of the work the QS consultancy firms engage in. There is also need to acquire more skills to assist them have more impact in term procurement of civil and petrochemical projects.

The study recommends that, more research work are needed in establishing trend in the Nigerian Quantity Surveying firms spanning atleast 10 years. To improve in the use of software by Qs firms, collaboration with Nigerian computer engineers is more than ever needed. This will cut down the cost of software development and the ease of upgrading. In terms of involvement of Qs firms in procurement of infrastructural facility and, oil and gas projects, more still need to be done in terms of training. Quantity surveying curriculum need to be re-evaluated and see how much of training is provided in preparation of bid documents for civil works and, oil and gas project. The formation of Qs academy is a laudable effort. The academy should endeavour to bridge the gap between the theoretical background and ensuring that Qs undergoing training visit oil and gas, and civil works construction sites. Building projects are common around us but construction of refinery is a one-off project, hence the need to visit such location for training and briefing.

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