

## Marketing Quantity Surveying Profession in South-Eastern Nigeria.

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**Abstract:** The quantity surveyors are referred to as the construction cost consultants, construction economists or cost engineers. These are the professional experts in construction cost management. The construction activities being managed ranges from building; civil, industrial and other heavy engineering works. Meanwhile, no matter how vital a profession is to the economic development of the nation; if such profession is not well marketed, it would not achieved her desired goal. Marketing is the act of promoting one's image or integrating to the system. The objective of this research is to evaluate marketing practice of quantity surveying in Nigeria and also to identify and analyze the factors militating against its success and proffering solution. Investigation was carried out using field survey method. The survey adopted interviews, observations and closed form structured questionnaires which were distributed to educated observers and students and young school leavers. 82% of the questionnaires returned from field were analyzed and tested using non-parametric statistics method of frequency, percentage and ranking. The study found that the profession is not well known to the students, the young school leavers and even the educated observers in the region. There is conflict in the stated functions of the profession. Factors such as poor publicity; unknown duties of the profession; lack of ascribed title like other profession; lack of bill board to locate the business firms of the professionals, invisibilities of quantity surveyors in many projects and poor payments of the young quantity surveyors are among the hindrance to the awareness of the profession. The level of awareness of quantity surveying in south-east; Nigeria is very poor; mainly among the students. Most of the young contacts are not interested in studying the course because of the aforementioned factors or reasons.

**Keywords:** construction industry, marketing, project costs, quantity surveying.

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### I. Introduction

The construction sector is an essential part of any economy because of its size and the potential role it can play in the development efforts of the economy (Nisaet *al.*, 2006). Construction is often used as an indicator of socio-economic development of a nation and, therefore, it is apparently that construction cannot be elicited in the process of socio-economic development. Its contribution to the national economy is well represented through the construction value addition, investment, employment, trade balance and sectorial linkages. Thus, quantity surveying was succinctly defined by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) as the profession concerned with ensuring that the resources of the construction industry are utilized to the best advantage of the society by providing, amongst others; the financial management for projects and a cost consultancy service to both clients and contractors during the whole construction process. Willis and Ashworth (2006) asserts that the Quantity Surveyor (QS) is the one who "ensures that the resources of the construction industry are utilized to the best advantages of society by providing the financial management for projects and cost consultancy services to the client and designer during the whole construction process. As emphasized, being one of the key professional experts in the construction sector, quantity surveyors have the utmost responsibility to address the key cost, financial and contractual issues of the construction process, which is always highly influenced by the environmental parameters, which are very sensitive to changes and are unique for every project.

Marketing is practiced all over the world and it is referred to as the activity of getting company to sell what the customer "wants" (goods or services). Its importance for the survival of companies cannot be overlooked (Waugh, 2004; Arslan *et al.*, 2009). Polat and Donmez (2010) established that effective marketing plays an important role in the overall success of companies and it is critical for any business to grow in the competitive environment. The central objective of marketing quantity surveying profession according to Usman (2001) is to create a positioning strategy within the total market. There are many studies on the concepts of marketing in the construction industry. However, many studies show that construction firms are slow in adapting marketing principles and marketing is not integrated into the structure of the firms (Ene, 1995; Winter & Peerce, 2000; Bennett, 2005; Adegbile, 2008). Ganah, Pye and Walker (2008) investigated marketing strategies in the construction industry and the challenges facing small and medium enterprises in the development of these strategies. They found that there is a lack of understanding of construction marketing and strategies within small and medium enterprises in the construction industry. They also found that the strategy for marketing is non-existence in most instances (Ashworth & Hogg, 2007). The profession of Quantity Surveying could be said to be

as old as human existence and civilization because according to Moneke (2001), no wise person has ever embarked on a construction project without first guess estimating the financial implications.

Low (1991) has observed that marketing has attracted only little attention among construction contractors and professionals alike. Nevertheless, more recently commentary has tended toward recognition that marketing has made a significant contribution to this industry, and it has received more attention in the construction field (Moore 1984; Winter & Preece, 2001). However, a number of professional marketing practitioners point out that many properties and construction firms still pay lip-service to marketing, and fail to address their substantive marketing management capabilities (Humber, 1989). Nevertheless, the role of the Quantity Surveyor within the Nigeria construction environment is of great importance and is over emphasis to both clients and other industry professionals. Being in charge of financial matters carries with it a great responsibility and the Quantity Surveyor has the expertise to provide independent advice on these matters. Unfortunately, due to a lack of understanding by other industry professionals, the Quantity Surveyor, who is expected to fulfill the role of cost controller, is left simply playing the role of cost monitor. The client employs the Quantity Surveyor to assist in maintaining a budget surplus while the other consultants act without regard for the budget and without the Quantity Surveyor's input, leading to a budget deficit which the Quantity Surveyor must take responsibility for.

Ojo (2011) examined the existing marketing strategies with the aim of determining their level of usage and the effectiveness of marketing among Nigerian Construction Professionals. She concluded that the level of awareness of marketing strategy is low among the construction professionals. Usman, 2001; and Olaniyi, Sanni & Garba (2011) investigated the marketing tools for creating awareness and found that press, radio, TV, personal contact, brochures, presentation, client entertainment, advertising, seminars, newsletters, sponsorship, authorship and exhibition are tools for creating awareness and spreading the Quantity Surveying services. Despite the fact that many research works on marketing abound, none has been recorded as a standard strategy used for positioning professional services in the overall national economy. Therefore, this study shows the collections of existing marketing strategies recommended by marketing professionals for the advancement of Quantity Surveying services within the construction industry and the overall economy and try to add more recommendations to the profession services in order to overcome the neglect.

## **II. Review Of Literature**

### **Understanding quantity surveying profession**

The origins of quantity surveyors can be traced back to the ancient Egyptian civilization that used dedicated personnel to carry out estimates and costing for their magnificent structures and buildings. It developed into an occupation during the 17th century restoration of London after the Great Fire. In 1836 the profession entered its new age when the new Houses of Parliament of Great Britain, designed by Sir Charles Barry, became the first major public contract to be fully measured and tendered using detailed bills of quantities for financial accountability (RICS 2005). This led to the formation of the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS) in 1969. The profession remained somewhat in the doldrums in Nigeria until December 1986 when it was recognized by the then Federal military government of Nigeria through Decree No. 31. The Decree was subsequently replaced with an Act of Parliament (CAP 383 LFN) when Nigeria attained democratic rule.

Quantity surveying profession is faced with great challenges to its recognition and survival in Nigeria (Oyegoke, 2006; Olaniyi, Sanni and Garba, 2011). Ojo (2011) observed that many construction professionals face difficulties in selling their services due to failure to embrace marketing concept. Improved quantity surveying services through marketing can lead to an enhanced economy (Mogbo, 2001). However there is no specific guideline that directs the manners with which Quantity surveyors are supposed to market the services of the profession within acceptable policy of the profession. This would have being an opportunity to quantity surveyor to deem fit while marketing their services of the profession.

The code of professional ethic developed by Nigeria institute of quantity surveyors guiding the operation of quantity surveying profession in Nigeria (section 1: rule 2.) explains only the precautions and restrictions in the implementation of few aspect of element of marketing but does not provide a guide on how to use same for the marketing of Quantity surveying services to clients.

### **QS Key roles and responsibilities**

A QS is a professional in the construction industry who has the ability to analyze both cost components and practical physical construction works of a project in a successful way so as to be able to apply the results of his analysis in solving problems peculiar to each project (Badu and Amoah, 2004). Traditionally, Qs are expected to conduct initial cost planning and quantify all elements of a project, control costs throughout construction, give procurement advice and prepare financial documents accounts and valuations (Ashworth, 2010). This is further explained by Fanous (2012) that its function is known as a simple measure and value system and still remains the main, if not the only purpose of modern quantity surveyor's working on smaller

projects. The majority of the functions traditionally carried out by Fanous (2012) are: Providing Approximate Cost Estimates, Advice on Procurement, Cost quantity surveyors is based upon the measuring and pricing of construction works (Olatunji, Sherard & Gu, 2009).

Nine most important traditional roles and responsibilities of QS as identified planning measuring items on site, preparing bills of quantities, preparing schedules of works, and controlling costs throughout the project, assessing and negotiating tenders. According to Ibrahim (2011) the top three competencies that the Nigerian Quantity Surveying professionals requires to meet the requirements of the professional's current clients and to take advantage of future areas of opportunities are: Quantification and costing of building construction works, project financial control and reporting, project evaluation. The quantity surveying profession has been able to evolve and diversify into new areas of practicing, providing a wider range of services, with the modern quantity surveyor covering all aspects of project cost management, procurement and contract management (Lee, Tranch and Willis, 2011). This has occurred in all sectors of Quantity Surveying including consultants, main contractors and sub-contractors.

The evolved roles and responsibilities of a QS as summarized by Fanous (2012) are: Investment appraisal, analysis of financial risks, project planning, contractual dispute resolution, facilities management, project management, insurance valuates, providing insolvency services, measuring environmental impact and costs, managing maintenance programs, cash flow accounting forecasts, and value management.

### **Quality of services and packaging of the profession**

One major issue that needs to be considered is the fees that QSs are able to charge for their services. As the cost of goods and services continues to rise there has been a mentality in all industries that it is more important to offer a service to the consumer at a cheaper price regardless of the effect on quality. Businesses in some industries have continued to be profitable using this approach. However, this is not appropriate for consultants within the construction industry where high quality service is vital and required by the client to enhance successful delivery of a project.

The recent rises in the cost of construction, due to increased material costs and labor shortages, have put significant financial pressures on developers, who are now trying to find ways of reducing their expenditure. Naturally this tends to encourage developers to search for the lowest possible price for all services, not just the construction itself. It is important that the NIQS monitor the fees being charged by Quantity Surveyors against the recommended fee scales that they issue and take a hard line with those that are involved in cost cutting practices to prevent undercutting of fees to win work and subsequently offering a lesser service. If the fee scales are controlled in this way, the profession can be appropriately compensated for its services and therefore maintain its profitability. This may also have the effect of providing Quantity Surveying firms with the capacity to pay its employees better salaries, thus further encouraging young generation into the profession.

It is also worth noting that many traditional Quantity Surveying firms have now branched into other fields, law, project management, construction management, risk management, civil engineering and the likes, which enables them to offer both services within the one office. This can be quite beneficial as its additional services provision; also increase the range of jobs that the Quantity surveying firms can employ people to fill. This is particularly useful for graduate recruitment where the firms could have a rotation policy to provide future professionals with some exposure to Quantity Surveying, where they previously may not have considered this option.

### **Increasing Quantity Surveying Services through marketing strategies**

Ene (1995) and Adegbile (2008) assessed marketing practices among Nigerian construction firms and concluded that there was little or no use of marketing in the Nigerian construction industry. They, therefore, suggested the need for awareness on the importance of marketing as a tool to withstand the stiff competition in the Nigerian construction business environment. Despite the fact that many research works on marketing exist, few have been recorded on strategies used by Nigerian construction professionals in marketing their services. Hence, this paper identified marketing strategies used by professionals, modified the use of marketing and make it real.

Marketing strategy can be defined as a managerial process of assessing market opportunities and choosing marketing position that serves the company's aims and objectives. It is the company's response to external environment and consistent set of principles through which company hopes to achieve its long run customer and profit objectives in a competitive environment. Marketing strategies are ways by which professional firms sell their services to their intending clients. They have an essential role in the success of a construction company in this highly competitive industry. Ganahet al., (2008) offered generic strategies to be adopted by any business but this may not always be applicable to the construction industry due to its nature. There are some marketing strategies identifies by different construction firms and researchers such as:

*Location of the firm*

This is of importance to professional service firms. There are areas where services are regularly in demand especially areas of high concentration of construction activities like Enugu, Aba, Owerri and Awka. It will, therefore be of benefit to the firms if located in such places to make effective sales. However, Zeithamlet al., (1995) included the use of multi-site locations to cater for firms which have projects in different locations at the same time. However, there is need for caution in terms of proper monitoring of these locations for well representation of the firms. It is observed that most clients in the rural areas do not seek professional services in their project execution.

### **Professional-client relationship**

Good relationship between the client and the professionals makes a good strategy, as courteous service and reliability of the firm's past performance encourage the clients to come back for further services. Zeithamlet al., (1995) recommended managing consumers (clients) as one of the strategies to solve the problem of inseparability in construction services. Winter and Preece (2000) stressed the need for relationship marketing as a strategy for improved performance in construction industry. Jafaaret al., (2008) identified client relations/contact as the most important category of marketing strategies because professional services usually involved a high degree of interaction with the client. Polat and Donmez (2010) recognized the importance of building strong relationship with customers and marketing partners to achieve the desired objectives

### **Business promotion**

This is a method of securing understanding between the client and the professionals for the purpose of bringing about a favorable buying action and at the long run, a lasting confidence in the firm. Zeithamlet al., (1995) described this as part of specific effort to encourage customers to tell others about their services. It is worth noting that promotional techniques adopted in other sectors may not be applicable in the construction industry due to the uniqueness of this sector. Polat and Donmez (2010) listed various promotion parameters that can be used in the construction industry

### **Professional contract**

This strategy may involve members of other related professions to form a link with prospective client who needs their services. Ganahet al., (2008) referred to this as partnering. Construction Industry Institute (CII, 1991) highlighted the expected benefits of partnering to include improved efficiency, cost-effectiveness, increased opportunity for innovation, and the continuous improvement of quality products and services. Ganahet al., (2008) established that construction industry is shifting toward partnering which can lead to adding value to the professional organizations. This can also take the form of a professional recommending another professional colleague to a prospective client.

### **Rebranding their roles\public awareness of the profession**

It should however be observed here that several practicing Quantity Surveyors firms in Nigeria have shown remarkable improvement in this area but much could still be done in the area of dedicated websites. Instead of maintaining their conservative posture, Ashworth (1982) advised that QSs must correct the false opinion of society about their profession. According to him, some of these misconceptions include the notion that Quantity Surveying is nothing more than the preparation of bills of quantities and squinting through a tripod telescope. Both Onyeri(1989) and Ashworth (1982) maintained that the profession must be promoted and marketed through advertising to dispel society's misconception about it. In the long-run, the inability of QSs to let people know what Quantity Surveying is all about, the range of professional skills and services they can offer and possibly where to find them stands as the greatest handicap to public awareness of the profession.

### **Catch them young**

It is important for the profession to look inward into the means of capturing the interest of the younger generation into the profession. Most secondary school students and young school leavers don't have the knowledge of the profession. Information gathered and revealed shown that apart from quantity surveying students of private university like Gregory University, Uturu;95% of the remaining quantity surveying students in ESUT, IMT, UNIZIK, IMSU, FUTO, AbiaState Poly, Aba and Fed, Polytechnics at;Oko, Nwana, Nekedehad no knowledge of the course until the schools'forced the admission' on them. This implies that the professional body in the south-eastern Nigeria must rise to the responsibility of making the profession a well-sought for among the young people.

### **Application of 7 Ps of Services Marketing**

The 7 Ps of services marketing is indeed a popular framework used by marketing professionals to design the critical dimensions of the strategic blueprint while marketing a service. The services marketing mix is

dominated by the 7 Ps of marketing namely Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical evidence. However, one needs to be aware of the limitations of this framework while applying it in a business context. One of the major drawbacks of the 7 P frameworks is that it does not address issues related to productivity in terms of both quantity and quality of service delivery. In integral services management, improving productivity during service is a requisite in overall cost management; but quality, as defined by the customer, is essential for a service to differentiate itself from other providers. These two deliverables are essentially opposite to each other in terms of goals. A firm would want to pursue a strategy involving cost minimization but still quality maximization (Owojo, 2014).

### **Challenges facing quantity surveying in south eastern of Nigeria**

**The conservative attitude of QSs:** This has been identified as another major factor hindering the awareness level of Quantity Surveying profession in Nigeria. Various traces of conservatism by QSs have also been identified. These include lack of good marketing strategy, sub-consultant status, ability to embrace change and inability to invest in necessary technology. Writing on the survival strategies for QSs, Onyeri (1989) accused QSs in Nigeria of hiding behind the legal cloak of Decree No. 31 of 1986 and past glories while their services were being eclipsed by the intrusion of allied professionals.

**Government altitude/orientation:** The government of the south-eastern states is not patronizing the profession as they should. This thus affects the impact the profession should have made towards economic turnaround of the region. That is the reason Nnadi and Alintah (2015) affirms that; 'QSs are rarely utilized in the execution of civil and industrial engineering projects in South East Nigeria despite their skills, affordability and availability. Some of the reasons include professional conflict with Engineers; meanwhile, all professionals have different functions. For instance, it is saddened to discover that State governments within the region execute road projects worth billions of Naira without the input of QSs; even the QS at the ministries of works are denied the supervisory role. The QSs in these ministries are limited to supervision and evaluation of building works (Mainly Enugu and Anambra states)'.

**Expanding the future.** The young people of the region (potential candidates) have low awareness of the profession. The offices of the practicing QS are inconspicuous. The signboard size recommended by the regulatory body is too small. There are other stringent rules that affect the maximum performance of members. The profession should promote the study of expanded related courses in post graduate levels like construction management, project management, and construction economics, engineering courses and property development and law, other than quantity surveying. This lack of "marketing" at the secondary and tertiary education stage has meant the new generation of construction industry professionals are not gaining enough exposure to the profession and therefore not pursuing it as a career. In most cases, the final year students of the institutions were not aware of the next step to take after graduation due to inadequate thorough orientation/marketing.

**Insufficient technical know-how:** Asupoto (2008) bemoaned the inability of QSs to invest in necessary technology as one of the conservative practices bedeviling the growth of the profession in Nigeria and by extension precluding it from public recognition. They need to further enhance their skills, and help to develop the technologies and innovations to achieve sustainable buildings. Thus, the drive towards sustainable development offers the opportunity for QSs to go beyond their present focus on cost to provide leadership in the area of overall economic viability of constructed items, which incorporates the issue of sustainability. There are WinQs32, Qs Plus 2001, QsCAD, CATO, and master bill among other (Willis et al., 1994; Adetola 1998; Murrari et al., 2001), which not only speeding but also enhance the accuracy of quantity surveying services from approximate estimating to final account.

**Obsolete curriculum and inadequacy of modern equipment:** Technological advancements in recent times have tremendously impacted the quantity surveying and mapping profession. Yet to fully utilize the numerous benefits offered by modern day quantity surveying. A large number of professionals, lecturers, technologists and technicians in various organizations involved in geospatial information activities were trained in the obsolete methods of production (Kufoniyi et al., 2002). Most of the personnel available for teaching are well grounded in the traditional techniques, but need to be retrained in the new emerging quantity surveying techniques. With rare opportunities to go for pertinent refresher courses, they are unfamiliar with most modern survey techniques and equipment and are unable to teach same to students. They are compelled to rely on existing curricular, which are outdated. Some of these trainers lack knowledge of basic ICT provisions. Consequently, students trained by these personnel are generally proficient in old survey techniques.

**Inadequacy of Funds:** The importance of funds to the rapid development of the profession cannot be over-emphasized. Though Nigeria has a relatively large number of quantity surveying departments when compared with other African countries, it nonetheless suffers a similar fate with them in-terms of inadequate funding. Researchers in the past have highlighted the fact that poor funding of quantity surveying institutions is critically affecting quantity surveying education in Africa. Tertiary institutions are underfunded and little progress can be achieved in the absence of much needed funds. Most institutions offering quantity surveying in south eastern, Nigeria are understaffed, Funds are needed to attract and keep quality researchers/teachers in academia; needed to train and constantly retrain educators in order to properly position them for the challenges of the 21st century. Without funds, not much can be achieved in the quest for a viable and sustainable of quantity surveying industry in Nigeria.

### III. Research Method, Collection And Analysis

The study examines the evaluation of marketing of quantity surveying in south-east Nigeria. The population is restricted on the career seekers (secondary school students); client /developer and ends users in private and public sectors of Nigeria construction industry. The data collection instruments used are questionnaires, interview and group study discussion. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive method. The reliability of the test was verified by three experts.

Tables below shows the data gathered from secondary schools and client/end users to find the level of awareness and the future of the profession in southeast. Data was gathered from various schools in the states of south east (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo).

**Table 1: Showing the awareness of the respondents to quantity surveying profession in the geo-political zone.**

GROUP	RESPONSE			TOTAL
	YES	NO	PARTIALLY	
SECONDARY STUDENTS	11	66	8	85
UNDERGRADUATES	22	31	11	64
EDUCATED OBSERVERS	8	14	9	31
TOTAL	41	111	28	180
PERCENTAGE (%)	23	62	16	

The table reveals that 62% of the respondents were not aware of the profession. While 23% have the knowledge of the profession and 16% of the respondents have partial knowledge of the profession.

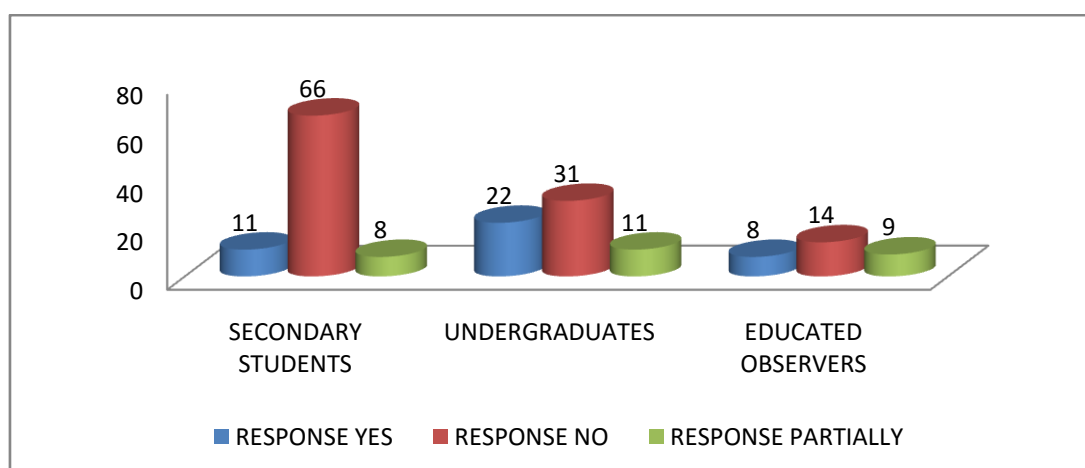
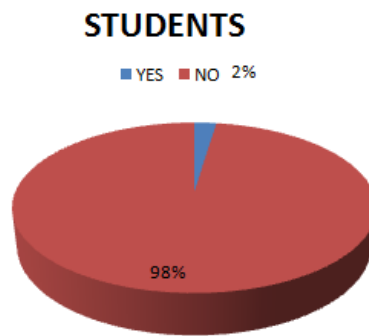


Chart 1: Revealing the awareness level of the profession.

From table 1 and chart 1; it could be deduced that the level of awareness of quantity surveying profession in south east is low. The knowledge deficiency is more among the young people who supposed to have been more informed about the profession considering the expected longevity of the profession and young people's access to media.

**Table 2: Showing the willingness and the interest of the young scholars to study quantity surveying**

GROUP	YES	NO
STUDENTS	2	83
PERCENTAGE (%)	2	98



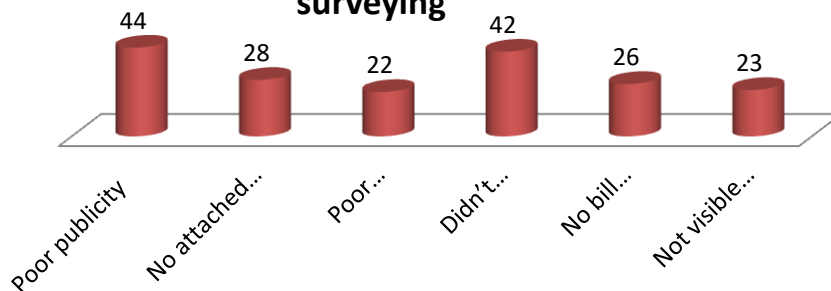
The table 2 and chart 2 above shows the intent of the respondents (secondary school students). Only 2 (2%) of the respondents signify interest in studying quantity surveying. While 83 (98%) of the students are not interested in the profession. Their lack of interest is a threat to the future of the profession.

**Table 3: Showing the factors responsible for the low awareness/interest of the young scholars to study quantity surveying**

FACTORS	FREQUENCY OF OUTCOME	% OF OUTCOME
Poor publicity	44	23.8
No attached title like other professions	28	15.1
Poor enumeration	22	11.9
Didn't understand their function	42	22.7
No bill board to identify offices	26	14.1
Not visible in ongoing projects	23	12.4

The young scholars express lack of poor publicity 44 (23.8%) by QSsin south-eastern Nigeria as the major hindrance to the awareness of the profession. In the same vein 42 (22.7%) of the respondents don't have clearer understanding of the duties or the responsibilities of the profession. It was discovered that most young people want to be identified with the title of their profession like Engr.; Barr. Dr. etc. Other identified factors are lack ofbill board of QSs to locate the business premises;obscurity of QSs in many projects and poor payments of the young quantity surveyors.

**Factors affecting interest/awareness in quantity surveying**



*Chart 3. Showing the factors affecting the awareness and interest of young people in quantity surveying.*

Research revealed further that the numbers of secondary school students who are aware of the profession are very poor. Their different sources of awareness is mostly from media, despite that 11% of the respondents who are aware of the profession do not know the duties of the profession. Apparently same facts were gathered from the clients/end-users, those who are aware of the profession do not know their vital roles. Findings revealed that, majority of the respondents who are aware do not want to study it as their future career because of the identified factors or reasons. Meanwhile, some of these respondents are the younger generation (future generation) that should project the discipline.

**IV. Finding, Conclusion And Recommendation**

QSs are responsible for cost engineering and financial management on construction projects; they are in a strong position to help to establish higher standards of transparency and accountability. They can establish

mechanisms which can ensure greater financial transparency on projects. They can use technology to integrate the cost and other relevant data to institute accountability and responsibility to all stakeholders. These challenges call for transformation in the way QSs' function. QSs should not curtail themselves within the traditional boundaries of cost management. They need to develop new niches, cultivate new knowledge and break into new areas in order to enhance their competitiveness. The educational curriculum should be restructured to accommodate more engineering courses. QSs should play more effective and proactive role across all stages of the project life cycle.

Non marketing and conservation attitudes of QSs are the major factors hindering the awareness of the profession in south east of Nigeria. Upcoming or modern QSs should embrace/ enhance on technologies in terms of adverts, bill board, internet & others which is the most device of conveying information and rebranding QSs' roles. There should be a policy that every government projects should have QSs. There should be integration or name rebranding like cost engineers as used by United States of America. This will help in realigning with Nigeria society of engineers to be more responsive. Furthermore, it will be expedient to include title such as Surv. XYZ, in order to attract the interest of modern young Africans. QSs individually should carry themselves with grace and dignity; as this is a noble profession so that they will be noticed, envied and emulated.

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