

# QUANTITY SURVEYORS' COMPLIANCE WITH THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

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Knowing that the construction industry has a poor image in most countries from the ethical point of view, this study appraised the practicing quantity surveyors' level of compliance with the ethical standards in Delta State, Nigeria. This is with a view to enhancing adherence of the practitioners to the ethical practices of the quantity surveying profession, thereby increasing client's satisfaction. To achieve the aim, the survey method was employed. Not only were the respondents knowledgeable about the existence of quantity surveying ethical standards but also, they attested that significant numbers of quantity surveyors in the study area were known to comply with the standards. The top three included compliance with the relevant laws and regulations, being honest, and acting with integrity. The least of the ethical standards, being not withholding information, had rating of 3.58 which is well above the 2.5 benchmark of average. Kruskal Wallis test carried out indicated that out of the thirteen ethical standards collated from the literature, there were significant differences in the opinions of the respondents on avoidance of conflict of interest, respecting confidentiality and being objective at all times. It is recommended that quantity surveyors should hold in high esteem the ethical standards stipulated by their regulatory body, the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS), while also developing an ethical compliance culture among quantity surveyors in order to promote integrity and ethical conduct in the construction industry.

Keywords: ethical conduct, ethical standards, ethics, Nigeria, quantity surveyors.

## INTRODUCTION

Not all the literature supports the view that codes of conduct are necessary to improve ethical behaviour within a firm. Valentine and Barnett (2003), based on responses to a questionnaire in the United States of ethical perceptions in firms, reported that there exist no connection between ethical perceptions and the use of written codes. However, Kaptein (2009) stated that the first step for companies in developing their integrity is to introduce a code of conduct. This is a document that articulates company's business values, principles and standards. The ground for maintaining standards of professional conduct is compliance with the particular institution's regulations, bye-laws and codes of conduct. The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Rules of Conduct for Members (2007) (The Rules) centered on "proportionality, accountability, consistency targeting and transparency" in providing better regulation over members professional practice.

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Bamisile (2004) opined that regulations which are supposed to collate all relevant standards for incorporating them in the construction projects, and which constitute the key document for quality management, are frequently absent in Nigeria. The Minister of Works noted that many practitioners find it tough to uphold their professional ethics; this is a development that is impacting negatively on the nation's economy (Valentine and Barnett, 2003). The major dilemma for implementing effective Codes of Ethics remains that no law or Code will be of much value if individual civil servants lack the technical competence to recognize an ethics problem for what it is, or if they do not know what standards their organization expects of them, or (worst of all), if they consider it to be not in their interests, personally or professionally, to take a stand for integrity and against corruption (Transparency International 2001). This study therefore appraises the level of quantity surveyors' compliance with ethical standards in Delta State, Nigeria. This is done in order to develop recommendations to the profession which achieve a move towards the successful compliance with ethical standards among the quantity surveyors.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Nigerian Construction Industry and Ethics**

Aje and Awodele (2006) opined that the image of the construction industry lies on ethical conduct within the industry. Stephens (1994) argued that ethics are not placed over business and that business itself is an ethics, defined by ethics, and made conceivable by ethics. Oyewobi, Ganiyu, Oke, Ola-Awo and Shittu (2011) stated that the Nigerian construction industry is susceptible to ethical erosion due to the heterogeneous nature of the industry, which makes it imperative for construction professionals to exhibit high levels of professional ethics. Ameh and Odisami (2010) noted that professional ethical lapses in Nigeria led to project abandonment, capital flight and huge economic loss in the form of additional costs on a project.

Odugbemi (2008) argues that accountability helps citizens, civil society, and the private sector to scrutinize the actions of public institutions and officials to hold them accountable. The challenge among government officials in Nigeria borders on behavior that is unethical, which is a common occurrence. This manifests in lack of adherence to rules and regulations for the promotion of ethics and efficiency in the public sector (Anyim, Ufodiama, & Olusanya, 2013).

Whereas personal ethics constitute the perception of beliefs, values, personality and background, any tendency of an individual towards ethical conduct is strongly influenced by the value systems reflected by the employing organization (Mason, 2009). The major notable unethical misconduct in the construction industry according to Zarkada-Fraser and Skitmore (2001), Zou (2006) and Nawaz and Ikram (2013), are administrative interference, the illegal award of contracts or subcontracts, the exposure of confidential information to certain tenderers and the extortion of kickbacks by client and government officials.

On the other hand, contractors are found guilty of offering bribes to clients or tender committees in order for them to closeout tenders, collusive tendering and bid rigging, invoice fraud, the use of cheap materials that do not conform with acceptable standards and collusion between contractors and other supervisory authorities. The

European Council defines corruption as requesting, offering, giving or accepting, directly or indirectly, a bribe or any other undue advantage or prospect thereof which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behavior required of the recipient of the bribe (Fewings, 2009). Transparency International (2005) observed that corruption and other unethical practices in procurement especially of construction projects leave many developing countries saddled with substandard infrastructure and excessive debt.

Kenny (2007) noted that the impact of corruption goes beyond bribe payments to poor quality of constructed infrastructure with low economic returns, and low funding for maintenance. Corruption plays a major role in the awarding of contracts in terms of bribery. Oyewobi et al (2011) observed that ethical problems are evident in all the stages of building project from pre-tender stage to completion and a relationship exists between corruption and activities at different stages. It was revealed that project abandonment, delays and cost overrun among other things are the consequences of unethical behavior. Unethical or corrupt practices tend to distort construction process and thereby hamper economic growth. Unethical performance hinders the free play of market forces, discourages economic aid from foreign donors and makes it difficult to attract international investors which shun the corrupt environments to the detriment of the economies and communities of the countries (Kadembo, 2008).

Many features of the construction industry provide opportunities for corruption to flourish. There are few companies with financial capability to implement the construction of building projects where contracts tend to be huge in terms of monetary value (Shakantu, 2006). According to CIOB (2015), corruption and wrongdoing may always exist. By nature, it is very hard to eradicate, but it must be leaned against continuously through developing a strong culture, greater transparency and meaningful, policed discipline and punishment. The effects of unethical practices have a lasting impact detrimental to construction and engineering companies such as wasted tender expenses, tendering uncertainty, increased project costs, economic damage, blackmail, criminal prosecutions, fines, blacklisting and reputational risk.

Ethics is important to the practice of quantity surveying because it enhances the standard of services, reduces infiltration of quacks and also makes the profession command respect from the general public. Inadequate remuneration, the present economic climate and inadequate education and training are seen as the prevalent factors contributing to the decline in ethical standards of the quantity surveying profession in Nigeria (Aje and Awodele, 2006). Good governance can only be judged within a context and this context is influenced by the cultural environment within which either the organisation or its stakeholders operate, or by an externally imposed set of standards, such as might be required by a professional body seeking to use a code of ethics to regulate its membership. Four guiding governance principles have been identified: (Dallas 2004): (1) **Fairness** – the equality of treatment of all financial stakeholders; (2) **Transparency** – Clear and equal access of material company information on a regular basis allowing monitoring of company activities; (3)

**Accountability** – legitimate systems of control; and (4) **Responsibility** – adherence to prevailing laws and management of relationships to promote long term sustainability.

### **ETHICAL PRACTICES OF QUANTITY SURVEYORS**

Ethics is a major challenge to professionalism in Nigeria according to the Minister of Works, Housing, and Power of Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2018). Cunningham (2011) sets out nine core values, or principles, which may guide members in managing difficult situations or where their professionalism may be compromised. Members are expected to know and understand and be committed to these principles in order to maintain the integrity of the profession. Table 1 reveals the nine principles that serve as a guide to the practicing quantity surveyor in upholding ethical values. These principles are also based on a recently issued RICS Guidance Sheet Maintaining Ethical Standards (2010). These three additional principals require members to comply with relevant laws and regulations and avoid any action, illegal or litigious that may bring the profession into disrepute; avoid conflicts of interest and declare any potential conflicts of interest, personal or professional, to all relevant parties; respect confidentiality maintain the confidentiality of your clients' affairs. Never divulge information to others, unless it is necessary (RICS, 2007).

**Table 1:** Principles that serve as guide to Quantity Surveyors

<b>Principles</b>	<b>Description</b>
Act with integrity	Never put your own gain above the welfare of your clients or others to whom you have a professional responsibility. Respect their confidentiality at all times and always considers the wider interests of society in your judgments.
Always be honest	Be trustworthy in all that you do -never deliberately mislead, whether by withholding or distorting information
Be open and transparent in your dealings	Share the full facts with your clients, making things as plain and intelligible as possible
Be accountable for all your actions	Never commit to more than you can deliver, take full responsibility and don't blame others if things go wrong; know and act within your limitations
Act within your limitations	Be aware of the limits of your competence and don't be tempted to work beyond these
Be objective at all times	Give fair neutral advice, and never let your own dealings or interests cloud your judgment; never discriminate; against others
Always treat others with respect	whatever their gender, race, religion or sexual orientation
Set a good example	Remember that both your public and private behavior could affect your own, the Society's and other members' reputation
Have the courage to make a stand	Be prepared to act if you suspect another member of malpractice.

Source: Cunningham (2011)

According to the Code of Professional Conduct Standards for Quantity Surveyors (2008) Quantity Surveyors should recognize and accept that they have a responsibility to the public and should at all times, in the conduct of their professional business, act in a manner which affirms this. They should, in their day to day practices, adhere to an ethical standard of business practice and behave with independence, integrity, and fairness towards the public, their clients and fellow professionals. Quantity Surveyors should, in the conduct of their business, act in a manner consistent with the good reputation of the profession and refrain from any conduct which might discredit it. For the avoidance of doubt, the latter conduct does not include: normal competitive commercial activity, advertising is not prohibited elsewhere in this Code. A Quantity Surveyor shall not take over the work of another quantity surveyor without communicating to that quantity surveyor that they have taken over such work. Where a client transfers from one Quantity Surveyor to another, the second quantity surveyor shall inform the client that he may be liable to fees for both. Quantity surveyors should, at all times, act objectively, with honesty and free of any conflict of interest and not allow their actions or advice to be unduly influenced by others.

The practice of quantity surveying in Nigeria is regulated by Decree No 31 of 1986, which set up the Quantity Surveying Registration Board of Nigeria (QSRBN). The members of the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS) are governed by its constitution, bye laws and the code of professional conduct, in addition to the general laws of Nigeria. One of the fundamental characteristics of a professional body is the adoption and adherence to a code of professional conduct. Thus the sustainability of the standards and public confidence in the profession depend on the establishment of high ethical values based on broad principles and mandatory rules of conduct for service provided (NIQS, 2000), The NIQS code of conduct represents the essential minimum framework within which members provide their services; it reflects the ethics and culture of quantity surveying profession and the spirit of the laws governing the profession, also it identifies the key principles and values that should guide the day to day practice and emphasizes the core values that should be honored. It requires quantity surveyors not only to recognize their responsibility to their client but also their responsibility to the public and fellow professionals.

The NIQS code of professional conduct shall be the reference guide here, as its purpose is to regularize the level of discipline/skill and the behavior of all categories of Quantity Surveyors in the pursuance of the practice of the profession in Nigeria. Practitioners are expected to be conversant with all the provisions and apply the rules in their dealings with fellow professionals and the public in general. Failure to adhere to the general standard of conduct indicated in this code will be adjudged incompatible with the status of a practicing quantity surveyor and shall attract such disciplinary measures of reprimand, suspension or expulsion set out in the current constitution and bye-laws of the NIQS and the provisions of Decree No 31 of 1986 (now known as CAP 383 Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria) setting up the QSRBN.

Principals and partners of practicing firms shall be held responsible jointly and severally for any contraventions of this code committed by any of their member of staff in the performance of their official duties provided always (it is established beyond reasonable doubt) the member staff did not commit tortuous act or misrepresent the good intention of the partnership or acts on his/her own selfish interest. The NIQS has put in place certain guidelines as regards the ethics of members and those who wish to practice quantity surveying in Nigeria. These are presented under the following headings: Professional Obligation, Professional Conducts, Remuneration, Firms/Companies, General Practice Rule, Advertisement and Publicity, and Relationship with other Professional Colleagues.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey method with primary data collected through structured questionnaires that were administered on both the practicing quantity surveyors and other allied professionals in Delta State, Nigeria. Tables were employed for data presentations while analysis of the collected data was carried out using both the descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Percentiles was used in analyzing the general characteristics of the respondents such as years of working experience, academic and professional qualifications, while the mean was not only used in determining the average years of working experience acquired by the respondents but also in ranking of items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Kruskal Wallis test was employed in this research work to determine the existence of significant difference or otherwise in the opinions of the respondents regarding the level of quantity surveyors' compliance with the ethical standards.

### Research Rigour

The consistency degree of the data collected for this study was undertaken via reliability analysis according to Aftab et al. (2010). The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient is a measure of the inner consistency (Kothari, 2009). Reliability is taken to be low when Cronbach  $\alpha$  is less than 0.3 and it cannot be accepted while reliability is in high level when Cronbach  $\alpha$  is greater than 0.7. (Aftab et al., 2010). In furtherance of validating the questionnaire, the test of internal consistency was carried out using Cronbach's alpha. The internal consistency of the measured attributes in this study as perceived among the respondents within the Likert scale (1 to 5) was explained by the reliability coefficient that is based on the average correlation among the attributes and the total number of attributes in the sample. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was computed and presented on Table 2.

**Table 2:** Reliability Analysis of the Construct

Scale of measures	Alpha value $\alpha$	Nr. of items
Level of compliance with ethical standards	0.898	13

Table 1 shows reliability analysis undertaken with the result of Cronbach's Alpha value being 0.898 for the research instrument used in measuring the level of practicing quantity surveyors' compliance with ethical standards. The values are far greater than 0.7 thresholds; therefore, based on Sushil and Verma (2010), the data collected with the instrument is acceptable while the instrument itself is reliable and valid.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Background information of the respondents to the survey

Out of 271 questionnaires that were randomly administered, 152 were retrieved and this represents 56.09% of the total questionnaire administered. This is considered sufficient for the study based on the assertion of Moser and Kalton (1999) that the result of a survey could be considered as biased and of little significance if the return rate was lower than 20-30%.

Table 3, shows the demographics of respondent. 9.9% of the respondents are Quantity Surveyors, 12.5% are Architects. The Builders were 14.4% while Engineers comprising Structural/Civil Engineers, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers are 50% of the total respondents. The remaining 13.2% are other professionals such as Estate Surveyors, Land Surveyors and Town Planners.

Regarding the respondents' years of working experience, it is evident that most of the respondents have 6-10 and 11-15 years of experience being 34.9% and 27.6% respectively of the total respondents. The respondents had an average of 13 years of working experience. Based on the foregoing, the experience and information of this group of professionals are considered adequate and reliable for the analysis.

While 46.7% of the respondents are corporate members of their respective professional bodies, 25.7% are probationer members and 13.1% have fellow membership status. The remaining 14.5% are not affiliated to any of the professional bodies yet they are practicing their respective professions.

**Table 3:** Demographics of the respondents

Category	Classification	Frequency	Percent
<b>Profession Of Respondents</b>	Quantity Surveying	15	9.9
	Architecture	19	12.5
	Building	22	14.4
	Engineering	76	50.0
	Others	20	13.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Year Of Working Experience</b>	1 – 5	14	9.2
	6 – 10	53	34.9
	11 – 15	42	27.6
	16 – 20	28	18.4
	21 – 25	6	3.9
	26 – 30	9	6.0
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>12.54</b>	<b>Total</b>
			<b>100.00</b>

<b>Professional Membership Type/Status</b>			
	Probationer	39	25.7
	Corporate	71	46.7
	Fellow	20	13.1
	Non Member	22	14.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 4:** Respondents knowledge of quantity surveyors ethical standards

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
High	97	63.8
Low	18	11.8
Uncertain	17	11.2
Very High	17	11.2
Very low	3	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4 shows that quite a number of the respondents are knowledgeable about the ethical standards put in place for the quantity surveyors. Taking the level of knowledge into consideration, 63.8% of the total respondents had a high level of knowledge while 11.2% of the respondents had a very high level of knowledge of the quantity surveyors’ ethical standards in the study area. Based on the aforementioned, the total number of the respondents with adequate knowledge of ethical standards guiding the practice of the quantity surveyors outweighed those with little or no knowledge regarding the quantity surveyors ethical standards.

**Table 5:** Quantity Surveyors compliance with the ethical standards

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Average	60	39.5
High	82	53.9
Low	7	4.6
Very High	3	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 shows that the level of quantity surveyors’ compliance with the ethical standards in Delta State is quite encouraging consequent upon the perceptions of the respondents who had previous working relationship with the practicing quantity surveyors. While 53.9% of the total respondents rated compliance level to be high, 39.5% viewed compliance to be at average level and 2% rated level of quantity surveyors’ compliance with ethical standards as being very high. Based on the aforementioned, in Delta State, the level of compliance exhibited by the quantity surveyors towards the ethical standards of practice as stipulated by the NIQS can be said to be 55.9% (53.9% and 2.0%).

**Table 6: Allied professionals view-point regarding quantity surveyors adherence with ethical standards**

Ethical Standards	Architects			Builders			Engineers			Others			Average	
	MIS	STD	Rank	MIS	STD	Rank	MIS	STD	Rank	MIS	STD	Rank	MIS	Rank
Compliance with relevant laws and regulation	4.47	0.772	2	3.95	0.722	3	4.18	0.795	1	4.15	0.988	1	4.19	1
Being honest	4.00	0.667	4	3.50	0.722	10	4.16	0.834	3	3.90	0.968	7	4.04	2
Acting with integrity	3.95	0.715	6	3.73	0.883	5	4.18	0.743	2	4.05	0.945	4	4.02	3
Being objective at all times	4.47	0.841	1	3.45	0.596	12	4.11	0.793	4	4.05	0.826	6	3.98	4
Being accountable for all actions	3.95	0.705	7	4.09	0.610	1	4.00	0.938	8	4.10	0.718	3	3.95	5
Respecting confidentiality	3.42	0.692	12	3.95	0.844	2	4.03	0.923	5	4.15	0.813	2	3.89	6
Being open and transparent	3.89	0.737	8	3.73	0.767	6	4.00	0.993	7	3.90	0.852	8	3.89	7
Do not distort information	4.37	0.831	3	3.45	1.224	11	3.91	0.969	10	4.05	0.887	5	3.88	8
Being aware of the limitation of competence	3.58	0.769	10	3.55	1.262	8	4.01	0.959	6	3.80	0.894	10	3.79	9
Not falsifying material or advertisement	3.84	0.688	9	3.91	0.684	4	3.84	0.834	12	3.55	1.099	12	3.74	10
Avoidance of conflict of interest	4.00	0.577	5	3.23	0.869	13	3.97	1.006	9	3.70	0.923	11	3.73	11
Not taking over other quantity surveyors work without communication (supplanting)	3.42	0.607	13	3.64	0.902	7	3.88	0.879	11	3.85	0.988	9	3.70	12
Not mislead by withholding information	3.47	0.964	11	3.50	1.012	9	3.67	0.999	13	3.50	0.946	13	3.54	13

Having realized that high quantum of the respondents are knowledgeable concerning the compliance of quantity surveyors with ethical standards (Table 4), opinions of the allied professionals were sought on the quantity surveyors' adherence with the ethical standards. Table 6 shows the descending order of mean scores that Architects rated "being objective at all times" and "compliance with relevant laws and regulations" as most significant. This is partly in line with the engineers who believe that "acting with integrity" and "compliance with relevant laws and regulation" is the most significant. The builders were of the opinion that "being accountable for all action and respecting confidentiality" is the most significant. In the view of other professionals, "acting with integrity" and "not distorting information" is seen as being most significant. Taking all the opinions of the respondents into consideration, on the average the top three ethical standards that were perceived to be strongly adhered with among quantity surveyors are compliance with relevant laws and regulations (Mean Score, MS = 4.14), being honest (MS = 4.04) and acting with integrity (MS = 4.02). The least ethical standards adhered with among the quantity surveyors included not mislead by withholding information (MS = 3.70) and not taking over other quantity surveyors' work without communication (supplanting) (MS = 3.54).

**Table 7: Quantity Surveyors (Qs) adherence with ethical standards – Qs viewpoint**

Ethical Standards	Quantity Surveyors		
	Mean	STD	Rank
Compliance with relevance laws and regulation	4.27	0.884	6
Being honest	4.33	0.617	5
Acting with integrity	4.40	0.507	4
Being objective at all times	4.27	0.594	7
Being accountable for all actions	4.33	0.816	3
Respecting confidentiality	4.47	0.516	2
Being open and transparent	4.47	0.640	1
Do not distort information	4.00	1.195	11
Being aware of the limitation of competence	4.13	1.061	9
Not falsifying material or advertisement	4.13	1.187	8
Avoidance of conflict of interest	3.73	1.223	12
Not taking over other quantity surveyors work without communication (supplanting)	4.13	1.060	10
Not mislead by withholding information	3.47	0.915	13

Table 7 shows the viewpoint of practicing quantity surveyors regarding their order of adherence with professional ethical standards guiding quantity surveyors practice. The top three from as reflected in the table are being open and transparent (M.S = 4.47), respecting confidentiality (M.S = 4.47) and being accountable for all actions (M.S = 4.33). None of the variables for measuring the ethical standards is found to be below benchmark/average of 2.50, this therefore further attests to the high importance attached to the standards among the practicing quantity surveyors. The least ethical standard rated is "not mislead by withholding information" as evident in the mean score of 3.47 and avoidance of conflict of interest (M.S = 3.73).

**Table 8:** T-test on the adherence of quantity surveyors to ethical standards

	<i>Allied Professionals</i>	<i>Practicing Quantity Surveyors</i>
Mean	3.8723	4.1638
Variance	0.0295	0.0851
Observations	13	13
Pooled variance	0.0573	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	24	
t Stat	-3.1056	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.0024	
t Critical one-tail	1.7109	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0048	
t Critical two-tail	2.0639	

Table 8 reveals the t-test regarding the order of quantity surveyors adherence with ethical standards with recourse to the respondents.

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** there is no significant difference between the perceptions of allied professionals and quantity surveyors on the level of adherence of practicing quantity surveyors with ethical standards.

**Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** there is a significant difference between the perceptions of allied professionals and quantity surveyors on the level of adherence of practicing quantity surveyors with ethical standards.

**Decision:** Based on the analysis carried out as shown in Table 8, T-critical < t-cal (P-value < 0.05, two-tail), therefore the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is significant difference between the perceptions of allied professionals and quantity surveyors on the level of adherence of practicing quantity surveyors with ethical standards.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study found that other allied professionals are well informed and knowledgeable on the existence of ethical standards for quantity surveyors, this finding is in consonance with Adeyinka et al. (2013) that professionals in the industry know the importance of conformity with ethical standards. Also, that most organizations subscribed to a professional code of ethics while many had an ethical code of conduct in their employing organizations (Vee and Skitmore, 2003). The finding is contrary to Babalola and Anifowose (2015) that the general public is not fully aware and sensitized with the existence of code of conduct. The noticeable difference in the outcome of the studies might be consequent upon the different choice of location where the studies were undertaken. Beside the aforementioned study locational factor, while the general public might not be in the know of the existence of code of conduct, allied professionals might not claim ignorance being a professional and such code of conduct is equally inevitable in such profession as also opined by Adeyinka et al. (2013). The study undertaken according to Babalola and Anifowose (2015) was also based on the perceptions of the general public and not actually the reflections or point of views of the quantity surveyors or other allied professionals as undertaken in this present study.

While other allied professionals regarded compliance with relevant laws and regulations, being honest and acting with integrity as the top three ethical standards

exhibited by the quantity surveyors among others. Quantity surveyors believed that of all the significant ethical standards assessed, being open and transparent, respecting confidentiality and being accountable for all actions topped the list. The diverse opinions are not unexpected between quantity surveyors and other professionals because while the quantity surveyors focus on cost management for construction projects others tilted towards aesthetics, strength and buildability among others. Having realized that both the quantity surveyors and allied professionals are quite knowledgeable about the quantity surveyors' ethical standards and codes of practice, Rooley (2001) noted that the codes cannot change inherent behavior because everyone involved in construction has a personal code of professional behavior.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The respondents are knowledgeable about the ethical standards put in place for the quantity surveyors by the NIQS and the level of compliance/adherence exhibited by the quantity surveyors towards the ethical standards of practice is high.

The top three ethical standards that were strongly adhered to by the quantity surveyors, based on the view point of allied professionals, are compliance with relevant laws and regulations, being honest and acting with integrity while Quantity Surveyors believed the top three ethical standards adhered with are being open and transparent, respecting confidentiality and being accountable for all actions. There is a significant difference between the perceptions of allied professionals and quantity surveyors on the level of adherence of practicing quantity surveyors with ethical standards yet none of the variables for measuring the ethical standards is found to be below benchmark/average of 2.50. This further attests to the high level of importance attached to the standards among the practicing quantity surveyors.

It is recommended that quantity surveyors should hold in high esteem the ethical standards stipulated by their regulatory body, the NIQS, during the discharge of their professional duties. Also the culture of standard ethical compliance should be developed among quantity surveyors in order to promote integrity and ethical conduct in the construction industry knowing that everyone involved in construction has a personal code of professional behavior.

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