An Assessment of the Effect of Remuneration on the Construction Performances of the Professionals in the Nigerian Building Industry

By

J.A.B. Awolesi,

Department of Quantity Surveying, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro; Ogun State, Nigeria
Email: awolesibiodun@yahoo.co.uk Tel.: + 234 (0) 8033067045;

And

C.A. Ayedun#,
Department of Estate Management, Covenant University, Ota. Ogun State, Nigeria
Email: caayedun@yahoo.com Tel.: + 234 (0) 8033900681;

Corresponding Author.

An Assessment of the Effect of Remuneration on the Construction Performances of the Professionals in the Nigerian Building Industry

ABSTRACT

Construction professionals are the authors on one hand and co-executors of construction projects on the other, therefore, the quality of the services expected of them in construction project delivery as environmental resource manager is key. This paper investigated whether quality of service of the construction professionals in Nigeria is influenced by the level of professional fees receivable for services rendered hence their resource management role. The determinants of service quality are identified and their means of evaluation examined using the SERVQUAL; instrument used for measurement of the service quality on responses got from a set of questionnaires administered on the construction stakeholders comprising of the construction clients on one hand and the construction professionals on the other hand in Lagos, Nigeria with a view to assessing the perception of the clients regarding the quality of services being received from their construction professionals vis-a-vis clients expectations. The study revealed that there was no significant relationship between the level of fees paid and the quality of service rendered by the construction professionals as the result of the analysis of variance between service quality gap and the various methods of fees paid is not reflected in the service quality of construction professionals.

Keywords: Construction Clients, Construction Professionals, Service Quality, Expectation, Perception, Satisfaction, Methods of fee payment.

1. Introduction

Remuneration received for services rendered by construction professionals worldwide is the professional fees and is normally paid based on the percentage of the total construction cost of

the proposed project. In most countries of the world including Nigeria, professional scale of fees are in use which are often put in place by the governments of different countries to regulate the fees payable to the professionals in the construction industry of such countries concerned.

It is believed that the level of services expected of each of the professionals on a project is represented by the percentage of the total costs assigned as the appropriate fees capable of adequately remunerating the professionals for the services rendered. A subset of this scale of fee is the time charges for additional services to the core service and residency on projects. Negotiated fees is an unwritten document which forms its basis from the mandatory fee scale where some aspect of professionals services are remunerated based on negotiation of fees on mandatory scale regardless of the different professional bodies in the construction industry insistence on non negotiation of professional fees.

To ensure that clients receive best value for their money, Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) was introduced by the UK government (being a major construction client) in 1983 whereby professionals are pre-qualified for commissioning based on their design, cost, time and fee competition.

Higher Education Design Quality forum in their occasional paper No.2 "The issue of Professional fees" April 1998; enquire into the relationship between professional fees and design quality and also outline basic methods of using fees in consultant selection process. The paper points out that achieving a balance between quality and cost has been explored by various bodies and the method with the interest backing is that developed by the construction industry board following Latham Review. This paper also confirmed Hoxley (1988) findings by recommending amongst others that selection on the basis of fee bids alone should be avoided if quality and overall value for money are both required.

American Consulting Engineers Council (ACEC) (2002) noted in a publication titled "Reality of Bidding" that bidding for projects is not the solution to the problem of quality of services by professionals but on qualifications – based selection (QBS) process which allows the owner to choose the service provider determined to be most qualified by objective criteria,

whereas selecting design professionals by low bid takes this process out of the hands of the owner. Qualification Based Selection QBS has the advantages that:

(a) a well qualified firm is selected

(b) a scope of work satisfactory to both parties is negotiated

(c) a mutually agreed-upon price is paid for services (d) a team approach (partnership) between the owner and consultant can be developed so that both parties have an interest in the project success.

It is therefore necessary to look at the mandatory scale of fees method of remunerating professionals in Nigeria plus other methods like Negotiated Fee System or Lump Sum System and amongst other things been able to:

1) Determine empirically whether mandatory fees are strictly followed for services rendered and to highlight the service quality rendered.
2) Determine the rate of responsiveness (if any) of change of mandatory scale (via negotiation or lump sum system) to service quality both from the service providers and the clients perspectives.
3) To determine whether the fees influence service quality at all hence affecting environmental resource management.

Therefore, the need to identify the determinants of service quality and their means of evaluation examined especially as they respond to fees paid becomes a paramount issue under this research. The predominant amount of research on the empirical measurement of service management quality has taken place in non-construction industries like retail stores, financial or investment brokerage services and health care.

Hoxley (1998) conducted research into quality of consultant's services in construction area. This research will also investigate the consultants' service quality of professionals based in Lagos Nigeria, (being the commercial capital of the country where most commissions are made) using the principles developed within the context of construction and other industries by summarizing the nature of service and service quality. Then the concept of service quality and the 'Gap' model developed by Zeithanil et al (1988) will be applied to help the consultants measure their service quality. The relationship of this 'gap' with the level of fees

paid produces the result that the service quality is not influenced by the fees paid. Expected service quality – this is the standard of quality expected by the clients. This is dependent on the knowledge of the client or his organization about the service.

a. Perceived service quality – this is the assessment of the client's or consultants of what a particular service delivered is.

   According to Parasuranman et al (1990) service quality is assessed broadly on five major dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

   (i) Tangibles (ii) Responsiveness (iii) Assurance (iv) Empathy (v) Reliability

1.1 The Nature of Services

Services have been defined as an activity or series of activities of more or less intangible nature that normally but not necessarily take place in interactions between the customer (client) and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and / or systems of the service provider which are provided as solutions to customer problems' (Gronroos, 1984). The Gronroos (1984) also identified the qualities of services, which differentiate it from products. These characteristics of services make it difficult to assess their quality as compared to products.

The four common characteristics are:

i. **Intangibility** – Services are activities or benefits that are essentially intangible, cannot be prefabricated in advance and do not involve ownership or title. (York, 1993). Most services cannot be counted, measured, inventoried, tested and verified in advance of sale to assure quality, because of this intangibility, firms find it hard to understand how customers (clients) perceive their services and evaluate service quality.

ii. **Simultaneous Production and Consumption** – Service is simultaneously produced and consumed while physical goods are first produced, then sold and finally consumed. The inseparability forces the involvement of the customer in the production process. The quality of service delivered depends therefore on the input of the customer (client).

iii. **Perish ability** – this means that service cannot be produced in advance and later made available for sale, they are performances that cannot be stored (Zeithanil, 1988). This feature makes it also difficult to match supply with demand.

iv. **Heterogeneity** – Manufactured goods are subject to strict quality control to ensure that a homogeneous product is provided to customers. Services are obviously people dependent and therefore difficult to standardize. Variations often occur in performance from producer to producer and from customer to customer and from day to day. (Parasuraman et al 1985).

Parasuraman et al (1990), further adds, image, testability, uniqueness and peripheral as other qualities of services.

Professions are occupations which are conducted within a self imposed ethical framework. Wilson, (1984) describes the three stages of professional development as:

(a) Achievement of legal recognition.

(b) Adherence to a self imposed code of ethics.

(c) Recognition by society as a whole.

Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1964) suggested that professions are collections of technical experts with formal association and that the development of all professions can be seen as an inevitable result of a historical process: the meeting of like-minded people in social situations, the discussion of common problems, attempts to resolve the problems ending with the formalization of these attempts and discussions into an organizational framework.

There are however two critical aspects of professionalism – the professional must be able to demonstrate a knowledge and skill in his claimed area of competence and must be able to recognize the limits of his skills and boundaries of his competence.

Root (1997) states two characteristics by which the professions of land, construction and property can be identified as, a prolonged period of training or education to acquire a specific body of knowledge and methodology to apply this knowledge to the ordinary business of life.

Walker (1989) believes that establishment of the construction professions has led to the protection of their professions and created patterns of working that inhabited innovation. He

believes there is evidence that the barriers between the professions are being broken down as they seek to survive in an increasingly complex and competitive society. This situation is replica of what takes place in Nigeria, where interview conducted by researchers have shown that professional cross their defined boundary in other to stay ahead.

The aim of any business organization or occupation is to make profit, but Root (1997) asks if this aim is different for the professionals and especially for the construction professions. He proffers answer by accepting that at the most basic level, the primary purpose of any professional and indeed of any practice is to make money. This reality does not make them different from other occupations.

Coxe (1987) identify a continuum with business-central professional firms at one end and practices centered firms at the other, he further asserts that though every professional design firm combines both aspects of business and practice, what the practice values of these two views dictates its place in the continuum.

However, whichever value professional firm attaches to their ultimate goal, the professional is reminded that his primary responsibility is to perform the service with reasonable skill, care and diligence.

Failure to meet this standard by omission or act is likely to be deemed professional negligence. McClure (2002) reminds professionals that whatever situation he finds himself, integrity and trust should be the watchword.

1.2 The Recognized Professionals Within The Nigerian Construction Industry:

Federal Ministry of Works and Housing (1996) classified and identify the following professionals as those recognized for remuneration in Nigeria.

(a) Architects : Governed by Nigerian Institute of Architects(N.I.A.) and regulated by Architects Regulation Council of Nigeria (ARCON) with over 5000 members

(b) Engineers - (i) Civil Engineers(ii) Structural Engineers
(iii) Mechanical Engineers (iv) Electrical Engineers
(v) Other Engineers like Chemical, Electronic

Governed by Nigerian society of Engineers and regulated by Council for Registration of Engineers in Nigeria (COREN) with over 10,000 members

(c) Quantity Surveyors : Governed by Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS) and regulated by Quantity Surveyors Registration Board of Nigeria (QSRBN) with over 2000 members.

(d) Estate Surveyors and Valuers : Governed by Nigerian Institute of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) regulated by Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVRBN) with about 2000 members

(e) Land Surveyors: Governed by Nigeria institute of Surveyors (NIS) regulated by Surveyors Council of Nigeria (SURCON) with about 2000 members.

(f) Town Planners : Governed by Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) regulated by Town Planners Registration Council (TOPREC) with about 2000 members.

(g) Builders: Governed by Nigeria Institute of Building (NIOB) regulated by Council for registration of Builders in Nigeria (CORBON) with about 2000 members.

Procuring construction professionals are by (i) Direct appointment, traced to Paragraph 22 of Simon Report (1944), where the direct appointment of the architect (who later appoint other professionals) depends on recommendation by previous clients, experience of the clients on past jobs with the clients or via publications brought to the attention of the client.(ii) Competitive Tendering which get the best out of the professionals tendering for a proposed project stating their ability to deliver in terms of technical know-how, manpower and equipments. In countries where the mandatory fee scale is the mode of remuneration, fees will not be a criteria for selection.

1.3 The Role of Clients in the Service Process.

The service delivery stage is of course critical to the successful outcome of a professional service. All professional services involve an element of agreeing in the early stages what is to be provided and how this will be achieved, the briefing process is a way of articulating the requirements of the client with the consultants. According to the RIBA Plan of work (RIBA,

1967), briefing process is carried through the inception to sketch design stages after which the brief is not to be unnecessarily altered. Communication is an important aspect of the initial phase of any project and is crucial both to the clients and consultants, the level of information received from clients depends on the type of clients.

1.4 Dimensions for Assessing Service Quality

Much of the service quality research is based on the five broad dimensions identified by Parasuraman et all (1990) as depicted in Table 1 below which recognizes five broad dimensions of service quality that are germane and applicable to any service organization.

Table 1: Service Quality Dimensions and their Definitions

Dimensions	Definitions
Tangible	Physical facilities, equipment, appearance of personnel, Communication material.
Reliability	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
Responsiveness	The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
Assurance	The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
Empathy	The caring individualized attention provided to customers.

Parasuraman et al 1990, in Siu et al, 2001.

1.5 Service Quality: Input, Process and Outcome

Groonroos's (1984) identifies two aspects of service quality as technical and functional quality. Technical quality which is concerned with what the client receives i.e. the correctness of solutions, drawings, specifications, functional quality involves such things like the accessibility and politeness of staff. Functional quality is concerned with the process of service delivery.

According to Baker and Lamb (1993) in architectural design service quality, functional and process factors were found to be important, while Hoxley (1994) discovered in his research into service quality among building surveyors, that technical factors are considered more important by clients.

1.6 Service Quality Measurement Scale

The scales for measuring customer or client satisfaction has been based on different models. Among them is the disconfirmation model, equity theory, performance or perception models and the cognitive/affection theories. (Sui et all, 2001).

Much research in service quality measurement is based on the disconfirmation model. This model was developed by Parasuraman et all (1985). It was developed and presented as a result of their exploratory qualitative studies. They propose a model in which service quality perceived by customers is a function of different gaps between expectations and performance. Perceived quality is therefore viewed as the degree and direction of discrepancy between customers' or perceptions and expectations' (Parasuramam et al 1990).

With customers' expectations being determined primarily by word-of-mouths communications, the personal needs of the customers, the customers' past experience of service providers and external communications.

They identified ten major determinants of perceived service quality; reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesies, communication, credibility, security, understanding the customer and tangibles. These ten determinants were analyzed using empirical data across a variety of industry settings, these determinants were consolidated into their SERVQUAL instrument.

The SERVQUAL scale is based on the five dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The scale has been used in measuring service quality in several service industries, where it has been modified to suit the particular service setting.

2.0 The Study Area

According to US Census Bureau (2006), Lagos is the economic hub of Nigeria and the largest city in Africa with a population of approximately 11 million (UN, World Bank and US Census Bureau estimates, 1999). It is currently the 7th largest city in the world, and with current annual growth rates of about 6%-8% (i.e. up to 600,000 persons per annum or 1,644

people daily) it is projected to become the 3rd largest city in the world by 2015 (US Census Bureau, 2006). It was the formal capital city of Nigeria before it was replaced by Abuja on 12th December, 1991 but remains as the commercial and industrial nerve center of the country.

Lagos was originally founded as a trading port in 17th century by the Portuguese and became colonial administrative headquarters of the newly formed Nigeria in 1914 and remained as capital even after independence in (1960) and until 1991 when a new federal capital territory was built in Abuja. It is the smallest of the administrative states in the country in terms of land area occupying only 3,577sq km of mostly coastal plains. The state is surrounded by lagoons which make up about 22% of the state's land mass. Metropolitan Lagos itself accounts for only 37% of the states land area, but is occupied by more than 80% of the states population, such that population densities in the state reaches up to 20,000 persons per sq km (Lagos State Government, 2004). Figure 1 is the map of the state showing the component Local Government Areas constituting the state. Lagos State has 16 Local Government Councils as shown in Figure 1 and 57 Local Government Development Areas.

N

Fig 1: Map of Metropolitan Lagos showing the Local Government Areas

Source: Lagos State Ministry of Information

The state has witnessed rapid construction demand for all types of construction de4velopments, especially during the era of economic boom of the late 1970s up to 1980s. Thus the choice of the state as the study area is necessitated by the level of construction works being carry out in the state and the fact that the bulk of building construction professionals are found to congregate in the state. The fact that the construction professionals converge in the state arises from the fact that the clients consisting of public and private are in abundance in the state.

3. Data Collection and Research Methods

Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed among various professionals involved in the building industry (Quantity Surveyors, Electrical Engineers, Town Planners and Architects) on the one hand the clients of these professionals represented by private corporate bodies, government and private individual clients.

The questionnaires administered are in two sets of 50No.each, set (A) aimed at eliciting clients expectations and perceptions set (B) to get the professionals perceptions of clients expectation and perceptions of service quality. The clients and professional surveyed are all based in Lagos southwest Nigeria. The clients groups surveyed are: Government, Private corporate and Private individuals in equal proportion. The assessment covers diverse selection of construction professionals with minimum of five years experience in equal percentage of the total practicing professionals in Nigeria.

For test of validity of the research instrument i.e. The questionnaires, is structured in reference to SERVEQUAL instrument by Parasuraman et al for their service quality research work consisting of five sections: -

Section 1: General information section where personal and organizational data are recorded.

Section 2: Perceptions section, which is aimed at getting the clients perceptions of service quality of the service providers. The section comprised twenty-two statements related to one of the five major dimensions of service quality namely: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. These statements were presented on a Likert rating scale of 1 to 7 with terminal anchors of "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

Section 3: This section is in between perceptions and expectations section to assess the relative importance of the five quality dimensions by weighing each dimension out of a total of 5 points.

Section 4: Expectations section which elicit the clients expectations of the services providers quality of services. It also has twenty-two statements relating to the five major dimensions of service quality as designed under section 2 above.

Section 5: Performance measurement of a specific project, where the degree of commitment of the professionals is assessed in relation to the level of fees received for such projects.

This section is however an addition to the SERVQUAL instrument to achieve the test for the research hypotheses on the side of the service provider on the side of the client the level of satisfaction is an addition.

The perceived service quality (SQ) is computed along the five dimensions by subtracting expectations scores from perceptions scores giving an SQ score for each statements ranging between –6 and +6. Negative SQ score is an indication that the level of the provider's service quality is below customer expectation. While a positive SQ score is an indication that the service provider is exceeding customer's expectations in that particular area.

The service quality gap (denoted as G) is the gap between expectations and perceptions. The measurement of (G) requires a comparison of responses between these two sections of the questionnaires and it is computed along the five dimensions by subtracting the client's expectation score from service providers expectation score.

A negative (G) score indicates underestimated expectation and a positive score indicates overestimated expectation.

Descriptive and non-descriptive statistical tools were used and inferences drawn concerning the significance or otherwise of the relationships between the variables of the study.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

The response rate of 52% and 36% for construction professionals and clients were recorded in the study which are considered satisfactory in view of the of reluctance often exercise by most professionals in the construction industry in the country as well as the clients too. All the recognized construction professionals in the country are duly considered and included in the study with the Quantity Surveyors having 38.46% representation, Electrical Engineer, Town Planner and Architect having 3.85% representation respectively.

The majority of the responses from the clients came from the private corporate bodies (8 firms or 44.44%) which was closely followed by government (33.33%) and private individual clients (22.22%).

The responses to statements for perceptions and expectation sections of the Professionals Questionnaire (Form A) and the clients questionnaire (Form B) were grouped into five dimensions of a SERVQUAL.

The mean of the various scores recorded on the questionnaires are computed by averaging the respondent scores for the five dimensions, these means are those shown in Table 2; Variance and Standard Deviation of the expectation and perceptions for the five dimensions of service quality for both clients and construction professionals. Evaluation of the perceived importance of the determinants of service quality is shown in Table 3 below while the clients places more emphasis on “Responsiveness” or company willingness to help customers and provide prompt service (29%), the construction professional prefers company ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (25%)

The overall weighted SERVQUAL score taking into account the relative importance of the dimensions is detailed in Table 4. This shows the overall expectation scores of the client

group and the construction professionals as 5.48 and 5.90 respectively. The overall perception scores of the client and professionals as 5.90 and 6.30 respectively.

Quality is a comparison between Expectation and performance therefore assessing the quality of service (SQ) using SERVQUAL in computing the differences between the ratings customers assign to the paired expectation/perception statements. Table 4.4 is an analysis of service quality which is calculated by SERVQUAL score = Perception score – Expectation score.

Table 2: **Comparison of clients' expectations and perceptions with service providers' perceptions of those expectations and perceptions.**

	Clients			Construction Professionals		
SERVQUALscore	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation
Expectations						
Tangibles	5.31	1.43	1.20	5.64	1.23	1.11
Reliability	5.31	1.55	1.25	5.75	1.18	1.09
Responsiveness	5.62	0.65	0.81	6.05	1.70	1.08
Assurance	5.61	1.32	1.15	6.15	1.26	1.12
Empathy	5.46	1.77	1.33	6.01	1.03	1.02
Overall	5.46	0.02	0.15	5.92	0.05	0.22
Perceptions						
Tangibles	6.13	0.52	0.72	5.99	0.63	0.79
Reliability	6.44	0.09	0.30	6.29	0.34	0.59
Responsiveness	6.57	0.09	0.31	6.48	0.25	0.50
Assurance	6.49	0.24	0.49	6.43	0.29	0.54
Empathy	6.37	0.56	0.75	6.39	0.31	0.55
Overall	6.40	0.03	0.17	6.32	0.04	0.20

Table 3: Weighted expectation and perception scores for clients and service providers.

SERVQUAL score	Clients	Construction Professionals
Expectations		
Tangibles	0.85	1.18
Reliability	1.06	1.44
Responsiveness	1.63	1.39
Assurance	1.18	1.11
Empathy	0.76	0.78
Overall	5.48	5.90
Perceptions		
Tangibles	0.98	1.26
Reliability	1.29	1.57
Responsiveness	1.38	1.49
Assurance	1.36	1.15
Empathy	0.89	0.83
Overall	5.90	6.30

Table 4: Construction Professionals and Clients Main Considerations

Determinants of service quality	Clients	Professionals
The appearance of the company's physical facilities, equipment and personnel	16%	21%
The company's ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.	20%	25%
The company's willingness to help customers and provide prompt service	29%	23%
The knowledge and courtesy of the company's employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.	21%	18%
The caring, individualized attention the Company provides its clients	14%	13%
	100%	**100%**

Table 5: Analysis of Service Quality

Dimensions	Perception mean	Expectation mean	SERVQUAL
Unweighted			
Tangibles	6.13	5.31	0.82
Reliability	6.44	5.31	1.13
Responsiveness	6.57	5.62	0.95
Assurance	6.49	5.61	0.88
Empathy	6.37	5.46	0.91
Overall	6.40	5.46	0.94
Weighted			
Tangibles	0.98	0.85	0.13
Reliability	1.29	1.06	0.23
Responsiveness	1.38	1.63	-0.25
Assurance	1.36	1.18	0.18
Empathy	0.89	0.76	0.13
Overall	5.90	5.48	0.42

Table 5 shows the weighted and unweighted SERVQUAL score for the group (same could be done for the professionals). The discrepancy 'G' between client's expectations and professional's perceptions of the expectations is calculated as Gap Score = Professionals Perception of clients expectation Score – Clients expectation score

Table 6: Analysis of discrepancy between clients' expectations and service providers' perceptions of clients' expectations (weighted)

Dimensions	Provider expectation mean	Client expectation mean	G
Tangibles	1.18	0.85	0.33
Reliability	1.44	1.06	0.38
Responsiveness	1.39	1.63	-0.24
Assurance	1.11	1.18	-0.07

Empathy	0.78	0.76	0.02
Overall	5.90	5.48	0.42

Table 6 provides the weighted score of service quality gap 'G' which captures the discrepancies between clients and professionals on both expectations along the five dimensions of the relative importance of the dimensions.

Table 7: Service Quality and Fees paid (Professional Perception and Client's Expectation)

	Full Fees	**Neg. Fees**	**% Fees**	**Time Charges**	**Total**
	1	2	3	4	
Professional Perception means (unweighted) 6.32	9	7	10	0	26
Clients Expectation (unweighted) 5.46	5	9	2	2	18

Table 7 shows the matrix of the service quality (unweighted) with the level of fees or type of fees paid by the client. The service quality means used to examine the relationship by analysis of variance (ANOVA) is that of client's expectation and Professional Perception.

5. Interpretation, Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

The results of the survey shows that there are discrepancies in expectations and perceptions between professionals and the clients. Both the client and the professionals have the perceptions of service quality to be higher than expectations. The results also show that the levels of expectation from the professionals is higher than those from the clients and the level of perceptions of the professionals lower than those from the clients.

The client group rated "Responsiveness" as the most significant variable out of the five determinants of the service quality (29%), the professional rated "Reliability" as the most significant (25%). Assurance and Reliability are the next on the list of importance for the clients while Empathy and Tangible are of lesser importance as depicted in Tables 3 and 4.

The professionals rated "Responsiveness" and "Tangibles" next in line of importance while Empathy and Assurance are of lesser importance. It is noted that the professional weighted tangibles and reliability 5% each above the clients group. Generally the result of overall service quality score is consistent with the level of satisfaction. The overall service quality is 0.94 (unweighted) and 0.42 (weighted) which means that the perception of service is higher than the clients expectation. However, all dimensions except reliability are potentially close to client's expectations.

Table 5 reveals that the gap score between dimensions varies from 0.82 (tangibles) to 1.13 (Reliability). The Reliability and Responsiveness recorded greater SQ scores. Reliability is directly affected by the organization's resources base in terms of budgets and systems, while responsiveness is directly affected by commitment and professionalism. However, the weighted scores for reliability and responsiveness are 0.23 and –0.25, therefore responsiveness is the most important dimension that providers should look into and improve in order to meet the clients expectations since clients put substantial weighting on that dimension. The table further shows that expectation for all dimensions and the result of analyses indicated that client's expectations are generally low.

The Gap 'G' is the discrepancy between the professional's perception of expectation, which indicates the level of understanding and knowledge the professionals have about their client's expectation. The overall service quality gap score indicate that the professional over estimate clients expectations. Theoretically, this should result in a higher overall service quality but does not do all the time, as the positive gap score does not imply that the service quality meets client's satisfaction.

Table 6 further shows that "Responsiveness" which is the most important dimension of service quality to the client has a negative gap score of –0.24, this suggesting that the professional do not allocate their resources effectively to meet clients requirements.

In summary, the study vividly revealed the following conclusions which are drawn from the findings and which need to be given serious consideration by the stakeholders in the country's construction industry:

(1) Satisfaction is widely viewed as involving both perceived quality and expectations.

(2) Service quality as viewed by most organization is just a support mechanism rather than a competitive strategy.

(3) Construction professional over-estimate client expectations of quality of service to be provided.

(4) Generally, service performance of construction professionals is below client's expectation.

(5) Responsiveness is considered to be most important variable by the clients while Reliability is favoured by the construction professionals.

(6) Service quality is not influenced by level of fees paid hence their role in environmental resource management.

References

American Consulting Engineers Council (2002) Bidding is not the Solution; Case Studies in Bidding.

Carr –Saunders A.M. and Wilson P.A (1964) The Professions Cass, London.

Coxe .W. (1987): Success Strategies for the Design Professional, McGraw Hill, New York.

Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, Lagos (1996) Federal Republic of Nigeria, Professional Scale of fees for Consultants in the Construction Industry.

Gronroos .C. (1984) Strategic Management and Marketing in the service sector, Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, Helsinki.

Hoxley .M. (1998) Impact of competitive fee tendering on construction professional service quality: Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy, University of Salford, Salford UK.

McClure L.R.(2002) Ethics A way of life, construction control corporation, Columbia, South

Carolina.

Parasuraman .A, Zeithanil V.A, and Perry L.L. (1985) Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research, in Journal of Marketing, Vol. 49, Fall, 41-50.

Parasuraman .A, Zeithanil V.A, and Perry L.L. (1990) Delivering Service Quality, Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations The Free Press, New York.

RIBA (1967) Plan of work, Royal Institution of British Architects, London.

Root .D. (1997) The Core values of construction Professionals in Practice Management for Land Construction Professionals, Greenhalgh .B. (ed), E&FN Spon, London.

Siu .G.W.K, Bridge, A and Skitmore .M. (2001) Assessing the Service Quality of Building Maintenance Providers: Mechanical and engineering services, Construction Economics and Management, 19, 719-726.

Walker .A. (1989) Project Management of Construction BSP Professional Books, Oxford.

Wilson .B. (1984) Systems: Concepts, Methodologies and Applications John Wiley and Sons, Chi Chester.

York R.P. (1993) The Impact of Quality Satisfaction and Value on Service Patronage A comprehensive approach using Structural Equation Modeling UMI Dissertation Services, Mississippi State University M.S.

Zeithanil V.A. (1988) Customer Perceptions of Price, Quality and Value A means-end model and synthesis of evidence Journal of Marketing 52(3) 2-22.