

**A STUDY INTO THE LEVEL OF APPLICATION OF MARKETING
RESEARCH STRATEGIES IN QUANTITY SURVEYING PRACTICE**

**BY
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B03/0319/04**

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**A FINAL YEAR RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN BUILDING ECONOMICS IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF REAL ESTATE AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT,
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

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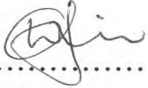
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JULY 2008

Declaration

Researcher's declaration

I, Wilson Chege Muthoni, hereby declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.



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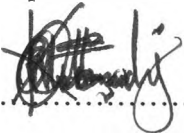
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Supervisor's declaration

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.



21st July, 2008

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Finally, I give glory to God for being my ever-present help in times of need. In Him I live, in him I move and in Him I have my being.

Dedications

It is with great pleasure that I dedicate this paper to my Mum, Miss Chege, for instilling in me the values and virtues that guide my life and for sacrificing considerably to ensure that I got all I needed during my entire tenure at the university.

To my brother Albert and my sister Jacqueline. I shall always treasure all of you for your support, love and prayers. You are special to me. May the Almighty reward you with his great riches.

Working definitions

Quantity surveying practice

This is a professional service practice undertaken by qualified and skilled professionals called Quantity Surveyors. The attributes of this practice are; work of an advisory nature, existence of a private practice, a tradition of service, a suitable code of conduct, existence of an intellectual body of knowledge and a governing professional institution i.e. Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors (B.O.R.A.Q.S.).

Marketing research

Marketing research is the function that links the organization with its market environment. It involves the specification, gathering, analyzing and the interpretation of information to help the management understand the environment, identify problems and opportunities, and develop and evaluate courses of marketing actions.

Abstract

The quantity surveying profession has historically regarded research as an arcane and largely irrelevant indulgence pursued by the field of academia. Only rarely is research overtly commercially focused, and virtually never developed as a function of the Quantity Surveying profession's commercial effort. The study sought to assess the level of application of marketing research in Quantity Surveying practice as well as bring to light the benefits that would ensue from its application.

The research project has been written in five chapters. The first chapter contains a general introduction of the subject of marketing research as well as the problem statement, the research objectives, the hypothesis, the scope, the significance and the organisation of the study.

In chapter two the main ideas in the theoretical framework upon which the study is based unfolds in the review of general theory in the various aspects of marketing research in general. The study then narrows down to marketing research by quantity surveyors. This theoretical framework formed the basis for field survey.

Chapter three covers the research methodology. Information was obtained from quantity surveyors practicing in private consultancy firms. This data was collected from a total of 37 quantity surveying firms using questionnaires.

Chapter four covers the analysis and interpretation of the actual data from the *survey*. This data was analysed using descriptive statistics to ease the interpretation and to quicken the completion of the research. It was largely described and presented in form of tables and percentages as appropriate.

Chapter five contains the conclusions and recommendations. Based on the findings of the research it was apparent that most practicing quantity surveyors do not carry out formal marketing research and as a result various recommendations have been given.

Table of Contents

Title.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Working definitions.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Table of contents.....	vii
List of tables.....	x
List of figures.....	xi

Chapter One *Introduction*

1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Problem Statement.....	3
1.2 Objectives of the Study.....	7
1.3 Study Hypothesis.....	7
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	8
1.6 Organisation of the Study.....	8

Chapter Two *Literature Review*

2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 Marketing Research Generally.....	10
2.2.1 Marketing research vs. market research.....	10
2.2.2. Definitions of marketing research.....	11
2.2.3. Benefits of marketing research.....	12
2.2.4. The marketing research process.....	13
2.3 Uniqueness of marketing research of professional services as compared to that of goods.....	16
2.3.1 Research objectives for services as compared to those for goods.....	17
2.4 The Quantity surveying services.....	18
2.4.1 The services offered by quantity surveyors.....	18
2.4.2 Changing nature of the QS profession.....	19

2.4.3 The market for quantity surveying services	22
2.5 Marketing research by Quantity Surveyors – the key to improving decision making.....	23
Chapter Three <i>Research Methodology</i>	
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Research design.....	30
3.3 Population and sample	30
3.4 Data collection.....	32
3.5 Responsiveness of the respondents	33
3.6 Problems encountered during data collection	33
Chapter Four <i>Data Presentation and Analysis</i>	
4.1 Introduction	35
4.2 Findings.....	35
4.2.1 Year of establishment of the firm	35
4.2.2 Form of business.....	35
4.2.3 Main line of work	36
4.2.4 Clients for the quantity surveyors.....	37
4.2.5 Knowledge of marketing research	37
4.2.6 Marketing research department	38
4.2.7 Identifying the particular strengths, weaknesses and the major opportunities firms face in the market?.....	40
4.2.8 Client satisfaction	40
4.2.9 Tracking and document service performance over time	41
4.2.10 The methods used by quantity surveyors to gather information about their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment.....	41
4.2.11 The challenges facing quantity surveying firms while carrying out marketing research.....	43
Chapter Five <i>Conclusions and Recommendations</i>	
5.1 Introduction	46
5.2 Conclusions	46
5.2.1 Level and extent of application of marketing research in quantity surveying practice	46
5.2.2 The perceptions of the quantity surveyors on the market-based research.	47

5.2.3 The methods used by quantity surveyors to gather information about their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment.....	48
5.2.4 The challenges facing quantity surveying firms while carrying out marketing research.	49
5.3 Recommendations	50
5.4 Suggested areas for further study	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY / REFERENCES	53
APPENDICES	56
Questionnaire Administered To Quantity Surveying Firms.....	56

List of tables

Table 2.1: Service characteristics	16-17
Table 4.3.1: Firms' form of business.....	36
Table 4.3.2: Client type for quantity surveying services.....	37
Table 4.3.3: Importance of marketing research/ perception to the quantity surveyors.....	38
Table 4.3.4: Existence of a formal marketing research department.....	38
Table 4.3.5: Factors affecting existence of a marketing research department in firms.....	38
Table 4.3.6: The extent to which firms carry out the following types of marketing research.....	39
Table 4.3.7: SWOT Analysis by the firms in their markets.....	40
Table 4.3.8: Assessment of client satisfaction.....	40
Table 4.3.9: Performance evaluation for services.....	41
Table 4.3.10: Marketing research strategy.....	42
Table 4.3.11: Strategy approaches.....	42

List of figures

Figure 2.1: The marketing research process.....	14
Figure 2.2: Marketing research process.....	14
Figure 2.3: Marketing planning – the ten step approach.....	25

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

William and Futrell (1987) define a market as people/organisations with wants(needs) to satisfy, money to spend, and willingness to spend it. Thus in the market demand for any given product or service, there are three factors to consider;- people/organisations with wants(needs); their purchasing power and their buying behaviours.

Marketing research is defined as the systematic design, collection, analysis, and reporting of data and findings relevant to a specific marketing situation facing a firm or a company (Kotler, 2006, 102). It is concerned with getting market information to be used for market planning (Muchungu P. 1997; 37). It's usually used in creation of a business plan, launch of a new product or service, fine tuning existing products and services, and expansion into new markets. Marketing research can be used to determine which portion of the population will purchase the product/service, based on variables like age, gender, location and income level. Through marketing research, the market characteristics a target market has can be identified. Companies can also learn more about the current and potential customers (Wikipedia, 2007). Marketing research also assists firms in coming up with a marketing strategy which allows an organization in concentrating its limited resources on the greatest opportunities to increase sales and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

Given the above background, no players in an advanced market should ignore the power of marketing research in the improvement of their products and services. Hence, the quantity surveying profession is expected to move with the changing global trends since they now practice in this advanced market.

The services offered by quantity surveyors are broadly concerned with ensuring that the resources of the construction industry are utilised to the best advantage by providing financial management and consultancy services to the client during the construction process. The quantity surveyor is a specialist whose training and experience are directed towards the planning and control of expenditure on construction of all kinds. In Kenya the professionals involved have a common identity and are regulated by statutes and codes of ethics (The Quantity Surveyor Journal, June-Aug, 2007, 22).

The majority of registered quantity surveyors are employed either in professional practices or within construction companies although a small minority do find employment in property development companies, firms of project managers and financial institutions. Registration as a quantity surveyor refers to registration with the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors (BORAQS) in terms of the Architects and Quantity Surveyors Act (CAP 525). This is the Act that regulates the practicing quantity surveyors.

The Quantity surveying profession in Kenya has undergone tremendous growth since it was introduced locally from the United Kingdom. This growth is as a result of advancement in the market environment and technology. Presently there is a large number of locally trained quantity surveyors as compared to a handful in the 1970s. The number of firms offering these services has also seen unprecedented growth; with over a hundred registered local firms in operation today, (The Construction Review, May 2006).

Due to the nature of the profession, quantity surveying practice can be considered to lie within the professional services sphere, in that the service is offered by qualified and skilled professionals and usually takes the form of an advisory nature. This conforms to Bennion's (1969) comprehensive definition of professional status. Bennion (1969) proposed that, in order to qualify for professional status, six basic attributes had to be satisfied, namely: the requirement of an intellectual body of knowledge; work of an advisory nature; the existence of a private practice; a tradition of service; a suitable code of conduct; and a governing professional institution(s). These elements collectively form the basis of the quantity surveying profession in Kenya and in most of the English Commonwealth.

The market for services offered by quantity surveyors is usually unique compared to that of goods because of the following characteristics of the services:

- Intangibility: the service cannot be touched or viewed, so it is difficult for clients to tell in advance what they will be getting;
- Inseparability of production and consumption: the service is being produced at the same time that the client is receiving it (e.g. during a legal consultation);

- Perishability: unused capacity cannot be stored for future use. For example, query-free times at the reference desk cannot be saved up until there is a busy period.
- Heterogeneity (or variability): services involve people, and people are all different. There is a strong possibility that the same enquiry would be answered slightly differently by different people (or even by the same person at different times). However, it is important to minimise the differences in performance (through training, standard-setting and quality assurance). (The Quantity Surveyor Journal, June-Aug, 2007, 22).

In quantity surveying practice, there are factors that the quantity surveyors interact with in the practice and these factors influence his conduct and the performance of the firm in the market. These factors are referred to as the market environment (Mwangi, 2003, 13).

The market environment can broadly be divided into two categories; the micro-environment and the macro-environment. The micro-environment comprises all the factors that the firm regularly interfaces with in the conduct of its business. This environment is usually industry specific in nature and therefore directly impacts the performance of a given firm (Porter, 1980; Bartol and Kathryn, 1998). For example, the number of quantity surveying firms in the market will influence the supply of quantity surveying services in the market. This also influences the amount of work that each firm gets because of the effect of competition. The macro-environment on the other hand comprises all the factors of general nature to the firm which though affecting the firms performance, it has very little or no control at all over them. For example, the performance of the country's economy (Porter, 1980).

1.1 Problem Statement

The quantity surveying profession has historically regarded research as an arcane and largely irrelevant indulgence pursued by the field of academia (McNamara, 1999). Customarily, research has been perceived as a rather narrow activity undertaken by members of the academic community for presentation to- and intellectual evaluation by- other members of the academic community (McNamara, 1999). Only rarely is research overtly commercially focused (Bennett, 1983), and

virtually never developed as a function of the Quantity Surveying profession's commercial effort.

The breadth and the scope of services that quantity surveyors are involved in is gradually increasing. In addition to building costs and procurement services, which are the core of the practice, services such as taxation advice, cost-in-use and development appraisal, measurement for services and civil engineering works, valuation for insurance, legal advice and dispute resolution are now commonly available from many quantity surveyors (Ogutu, 1997, 32). Whereas many of them proclaim expertise in all these areas, they tend to portray themselves as generalists instead of specialists (Muchungu, 2006).

There is now an increasing recognition that research has an important role to perform in the enhancement of the performance of the profession.

Male S. and Stock R (1993) advocates for firms to carry out marketing research amongst the many services they can engage in and find out which areas they can do better than others. Once they find out, they should go ahead and concentrate their resources in this area in order to establish a competitive edge over their competitors.

This kind of recognition seems to be lacking in quantity surveying firms in Kenya. *"Many quantity surveyors seem to react in response to, instead of acting in anticipation of, the ongoing market situation. A casual observation seems to indicate that quantity surveying firms do not carry out marketing research. This is indicated by the way professionals seem to carry out their work without segmenting certain sectors in terms of their profitability, the effect of economic performance of the construction industry and the lack of post evaluation to try and understand the clients' perception of a successful undertaking. There seems to be very little follow-up after final account and payments are settled in most projects."* (Muchungu, 2006)

The Agenda for Change (Lay, 1998) imposes the need upon the membership of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors that *"We must accept the need for research, the need to have basic business understanding; the need to understand the context in which our clients make decisions; the need to understand the financial markets of which property forms only a part; the need to recognize that we now work in an international marketplace"*. However this kind of recognition of the effect of globalization seems to be lacking in the Kenya's context.

It is argued that, in order to survive and succeed by developing sustainable competitive advantage, a firm must demonstrate to clients the capacity to contribute a high order of added value to the clients' development cycle. An added value in this context is defined as the product of innovative research, consultancy skills and operational effectiveness, all focused upon a relevant product portfolio (McNamara, 1999). Achieving these targets will involve the adoption of flexible, innovative and proactive management strategies such as marketing research.

The Economic Surveys from the Central Bureau of Statistics for various years have shown that the Kenyan economy went through various phases from the year 1995-2000: boom, depression, recovery and recession/ deflation. During this period Choka (2001) pointed out that the professional firms faced unprecedented challenges owing to the poor economic performance coupled with other environmental changes.

However, over the recent years the Kenyan economy has been reinventing itself. From virtual stagnancy in 2001, the economy has expanded steadily to register a remarkable growth of more than 6% in 2006. One obvious beneficiary of this economic renaissance is the construction industry. In the last four years, the industry has grown by leaps and bounds with the boom manifesting itself in increased demand for cement, other building materials and generally the services that quantity surveyors provide (The Economic Survey, 2006).

As a result of the changing economic trends and changing environment in this era of a liberalised economy, as a quantity surveyor, it's crucial to understand your clients and trends in your market. This can only be achieved through collection of information and data gathering from the market.

The Quantity Surveyors, due to lack of adequate market information, have hectic recruitment in their firms when new jobs have come up and quick lay-offs when jobs are completed. Marketing research can help to plan manpower resource, for example when to hire new staff, how many and when to send people on leave and take holidays for partners, which equipments to buy depending on how long they will be required and comparing this with the alternative of hiring (Muchungu, 2006). By proper analysis of the market factors affecting one's market, it's possible to tell short-term as well as long-term market demands.

The profession of quantity surveying is under considerable threat from the architects, this is particularly because the architect can integrate quantity surveying services in his firm – especially by hiring his own quantity surveyors or taking up advantage of emerging technologies intended to automate measurement and quantification service which is the leading service in terms of profitability for majority of the quantity surveying firms in Kenya (Mwangi, 2003; 139). This threat calls for the quantity surveyors to engage in marketing research in order to evaluate the impact and identify proper measures of improvement.

There has been the entry of “non-construction” professions such as accountants and solicitors who are competing for some jobs with quantity surveyors (Davis; 1990, 37). Ogotu (1997) cites examples of procurement advice, legal advice, contract administration and building law consultancy as some of the services that are being taken away. In addition, there has been increased blurring of the boundaries between allied areas of professional activity. This is more apparent in conflict areas with architects, engineers, valuers, and project managers where sometimes services overlap (The Quantity Surveyor Journal, Oct-Dec1999, 23). Marketing research will help monitor these competitors

In a study on how the quantity surveying firms build up their current market share, Mwangi (2003) found that the firms were not following a disciplined and systematic strategy to build up their share but were relying on opportunistic strategies, i.e. taking up opportunities whenever they present themselves (Mwangi, 2003, 113). This therefore implies that there is a major gap in the profession on the use of marketing research as a tool for gathering information and hence assist in making informed decisions.

The profession has of late been evolving worldwide; gradually breaking away from its traditional confines of the commonwealth heritage, embracing technological changes, and having to fulfil stringent client requirements (The Quantity Surveyor Journal, Jan-March 2005, 11). In order to produce superior value and satisfaction for customers/clients, firms need information at almost every turn. Good products, services and marketing programs begin with a thorough understanding of consumer needs and wants. Firms also require abundance of information on competitors, resellers and other actors and forces in their market. Therefore marketing research is

inevitable in any business. However, this is a highly neglected area by the construction industry professionals (Smyth, 2000).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the level of application of marketing research strategies in quantity surveying practice. The specific objectives included:

- To investigate the extent to which Quantity Surveying firms carry out marketing research and their perceptions of the market-based research.
- To identify the challenges facing quantity surveying firms while carrying out marketing research.
- To find out what methods are used by quantity surveyors to gather information about their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment.

1.3 Study Hypothesis

It was the perception of this study that marketing research by quantity surveyors has been inadequate in their practice. This state has been caused by the management policies governing operations of quantity surveying firms, lack of appropriate marketing research knowledge, or lack of appreciation of the role of market surveys by the firms.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The researcher sought to bring to light the importance of marketing research in the professional practice. The study would be an opportunity to inform and educate the professionals and the society, particularly the quantity surveyors about the benefits of employing marketing research. Through this research the challenges faced by firms in their marketing research were identified and proper measures of improvement recommended.

The research also intended to spark development of creative, innovative and enterprising business opportunities for professional Quantity Surveyors through marketing research.

The research also intended to show that marketing research would assist in suggesting changes in existing services and identify potential demands for new services from the quantity surveyors. In so doing it would help to point out where the greatest profit can be obtained both in the short and long term (Bagozzi, 1975) as

well as create a competitive edge. This would be of great significance to the professional firms.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study mainly focused on quantity surveying profession only. Examination of other building professionals would require a different study altogether. Limitations of time and resources prevented the carrying out of such an extensive study.

The study also focused on quantity surveyors operating in practicing professional firms and not in institutions such as the government (Ministry of Roads and Public Works), National Housing Corporation, etc because these are not business oriented and thus marketing research would not be of much relevance to them.

Due to constraints of time and funds to cover travelling expense, this study restricted itself to Nairobi-based quantity surveyors; however this did not invalidate the study as most of the quantity surveying firms are located in Nairobi as evidenced by the addresses of firms obtained from a list of registered firms by the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors (B.O.R.A.Q.S). Out of 124 firms in the list, only three were not located in Nairobi.

1.6 Organisation of the Study

This study has five chapters;

Chapter one gives a general introduction, including the problem statement, objectives of the study, research hypothesis, significance of the study, scope and organization of the study.

Chapter two covers literature related to marketing research, strategies and application in quantity surveying practice. This forms the theoretical basis of the study and the basis for evaluation of primary data to draw research conclusions.

Chapter three covers the research methodology. This includes the research design, population and sample, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, responsiveness and the limitations of the study.

Chapter four covers the analysis and interpretation of the actual data from the survey. It gives findings and analysis related to the problem studied.

Chapter five contains the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some basic concepts in the area of marketing research. It presents various concepts of marketing research as used in the broad sense of business management and then exemplifies the same with a critical look at marketing research management by quantity surveyors.

The body of literature on the marketing research by professional quantity surveyors is scant, with few empirical studies having only been undertaken in general marketing. The available published literature comments on the quantity surveying profession in a changing environment, discussing new roles and responsibilities rather than on marketing development *per se* (Davis, 1992). However, a more generic outlook on marketing research in the professional services sector is available (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003), paying attention to services in general.

2.2 Marketing Research Generally

2.2.1 Marketing research vs. market research

The term marketing research replaced the traditional term market research. The real difference between the two terms is in fact more than a semantic one. First, they differ in the scope of study. Market research is researching about the current and potential customers: who they are; why they buy the product or service; from where and when they buy it; what they buy and how they bought. Marketing research, in addition, deals with information relative to marketing components namely; product, price, promotion and channel of distribution (Wong, 1999). The term “marketing research” is therefore conceptually broader in scope and is more preferably used in modern marketing.

Secondly, market research emphasizes measurements, focusing largely on quantitative dimensions. Marketing research, on the other hand, emphasizes creativity; it focuses on qualitative aspects as well. It also seeks to discover unsatisfied customer needs and wants; it tries to ferret out unsolved problems in the market place; and more significantly, it focuses on what could be rather than what is (Wong, 1999).

2.2.2. Definitions of marketing research

Marketing research has been the subject of a variety of definitions. For example, the American Marketing Association defines marketing research as ‘the systematic gathering, recording and analyzing of all data about problems relating to the marketing of goods and services’. Kotler (2006) defines marketing research as ‘the systematic design, collection, analysis, and reporting of data and findings relevant to a specific marketing situation facing a firm or a company’. Simply put, George Kress defines its two major functions as to provide information for decision making and to develop new knowledge.

The researcher adopted the definition by Kinnear and Taylor (1987) for the purpose of the study. The authors define Marketing research as the function that links the organization with its market environment. It involves the specification, gathering, analyzing and the interpretation of information to help the management understand the environment, identify problems and opportunities, and develop and evaluate courses of marketing actions (Kinnear and Taylor, 1987).

These definitions depict the widespread usage of marketing research and offer a clearer understanding of marketing research as a subject of study.

Consequently, four words – *systematic*, *objective*, *information* and *decision-making* – appear frequently in defining marketing research. Each word bears certain significance in respect of the nature and scope of marketing research and hence deserves further elaboration.

A *systematic*, well-organized approach is mandatory in undertaking a marketing research study. The word suggests that:

- The research should be carefully planned and executed;
- The research purpose should be clearly and concisely described;
- The research design should be developed well ahead;
- The data requirements should be clearly specified and;
- The mode of data analysis should be anticipated well in advance (Wong T. Q., 1999).

Objectivity requires an approach that is independent of the personal views of the researcher. The word *objective* implies that:

- The research should be carried out scientifically;

- The research should be carried out in an unbiased manner;
- The execution of the research should not be affected by emotions (Wong T. Q., 1999).

Information brings about better knowledge and wisdom. The word information requires that the research information should:

- Help raise the level of understanding of the marketplace and the consumers;
- Be pertinent to planning and control purposes;
- Help in the optimal allocation of marketing resources (Wong T. Q., 1999).

Finally, the word *decision-making* specifies that the research should:

- Help lower the level of risk in a decision situation;
- Help broaden the information base for decision-making;
- Aid in the process of deciding on a course of action, after careful consideration of other known alternatives (Wong T. Q., 1999).

2.2.3. Benefits of marketing research

Marketing research involves reviewing the marketing environment, that is, the *markets, customers, competitors* and the *macro-environment*.

- By reviewing the market, the research involves identifying who the major markets and segments of the market as well as the present and expected future size and characteristics of each market and market segment.
- By reviewing the customers, the research seeks to find out how customers and the public feel towards the business organization, the present and expected future state of customer needs and expectations as well as factors that influence the customers purchase decisions.
- The competitors' view of the research involves finding out the organizations major competitors and future trends.
- The macro-environment view is a look at the relevant development to demography, economy, technology, government and culture that will affect the business organizations situation (Kotler P., 1975, 46).

Marketing research carried out by a business organization provides better market information early enough on which service to base wise decisions. Business trends are revealed and customer trends, values and behaviours analysed (Bagozzi, 1975,

30). While the principle benefit of marketing research is to reduce uncertainty or errors in decision making, Wong 1999, pinpoints the more specific benefits of marketing research as to include:

- Helping to present a more accurate problem definition;
- Offering a more reliable prediction;
- Providing a competitive edge;
- Yielding a more efficient expenditure of funds;
- Leading to the discovery of new business opportunities;
- Reducing business risks and uncertainties;
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the marketing plan and strategies implemented.

2.2.4. The marketing research process

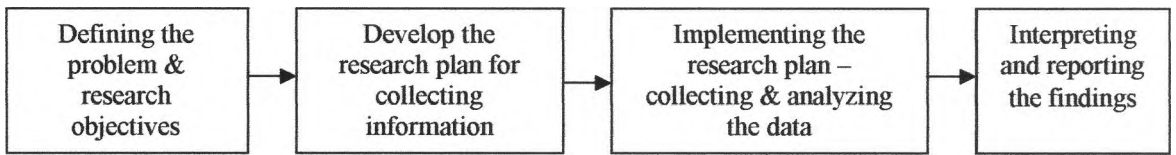
This is the sequence of inter-related steps involved in the systematic collection and analysis of marketing data. This process provides a description of how a marketing investigation is designed and implemented and thus helping to guide the execution of a research study from its inception through to the final analysis and reporting of data.

In specific terms, the benefits of observing the marketing research process are:

- It depicts the structure on which marketing research study can be based,
- It provides a useful basis for understanding and evaluating research proposals and reports;
- It helps the marketing manager to judge the extent of confidence which he can place in the research findings.

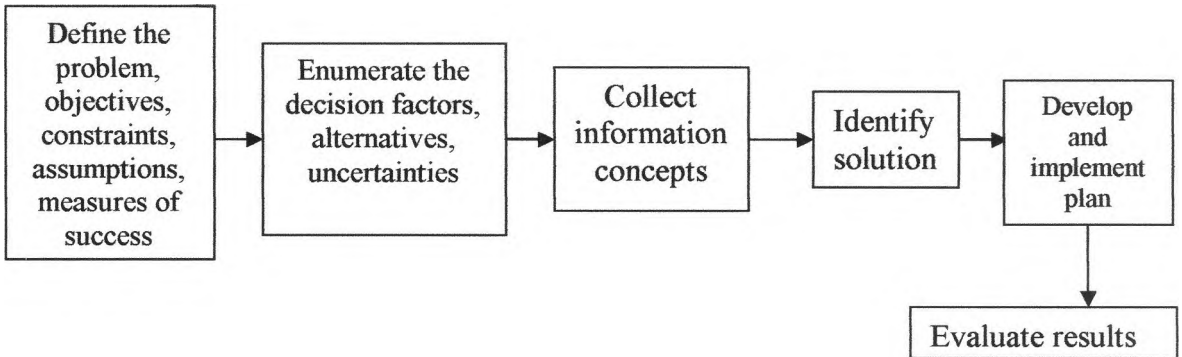
Various institutions, organizations and individuals have delineated marketing research process in somewhat different ways. However, the process is similar only that the steps are integrated differently by the various institutions, organizations and individuals. Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 presents the different marketing research processes as conceptualised by different authors.

Figure 2.1: The marketing research process



*Source: Kotler and Armstrong, 2001

Fig. 2.2 Marketing research process



*Source: Berkowitz et al, 145, 1989.

a) Defining the problem, objectives, constraints, assumptions, measures of success

The foremost step in the marketing research process is to define the marketing problem at hand. Some examples of problems would be how to increase revenues and profits, discovering what customers are aware of and their wants and finding out why a service is not selling well. In a situation where the research problem lacks clear definition, the task of designing a good research programme will become difficult. The prerequisite of defining the problem at hand is to identify and diagnose the problem, a process known as *situation analysis* (Wong, 1999). This phase provides the key impetus in motivation and simulation for further research.

Marketing problems exist aplenty in the marketplace and may be classified into two broad categories: difficulty-related problems and opportunity-related problems. The former concerns development surrounding the market place which bears negative or counter-productive consequences to the company (E.g. sales reduction). The latter category, on the contrary, originates from situations that invite benefits.

In the initial stage, a problem may only be recognized in a very general form and hence restrict the research programme from being comprehensively designed. Both

the researcher and the research client (generally the marketing manager) will jointly formulate the problem into a precise and definite statement (Wong, 1999).

The constraints in defining a problem are restrictions placed on potential solution by nature and importance of the problem. Constraints often require a person to make assumptions or conjunctures about factors or situations that simplify the problem enough to allow it to be solved within these criteria or evaluating proposed solutions to the problems measure of success.

b) Enumerating decision factors

Alternatives and uncertainties combine to give the outcome of a decision. Alternatives are the number of solutions available to solve the marketing problems. Uncertainties are the uncontrollable factors that the decision-maker can't make, for example, it's difficult to know even after asking consumers whether they can buy something that they never thought of before.

c) Collecting data

Collecting enough relevant information to make a rational informed decision sometimes simply means using ones knowledge immediately (Berkowitz et al, 1989, 151). At other times it entails collecting an enormous amount of information at great expense. The data collected are facts and figures pertinent to the problem and this could either be primary or secondary. Primary data are those facts and figures which are newly and directly collected from the field while secondary data are those which have already been recorded.

The three common survey techniques used in marketing research are mail surveys, interviews, telephones and observations (Fisher, 1986, 119).

d) Identifying solution

The solution to the marketing problem in research is the best alternative that has been identified from the facts and figures got. The data got is analyzed to get the alternatives that best meet the measure of success.

e) Develop and implement plan

After a solution has been found, then it is developed and implemented. The goal is to use both effective planning and execution to achieve a successful marketing programme (Berkowitz et al, 1989).

f) Evaluating the results

The evaluation stage of marketing research involves evaluating the decision itself. That is, comparing the actual results with plans and making corrective actions if necessary. The evaluation process involves evaluating the decision process used. This involves changing the activities in one or more steps used in reaching a decision, such as altering the methods used to define the problem, collect data or implement the plan.

2.3 Uniqueness of marketing research of professional services as compared to that of goods

The table below summarises characteristics of services that make their marketing research unique as compared to that of goods.

Table 2.1 Service characteristics

GOODS	SERVICES	RESULTING IMPLICATIONS
Tangible	Intangible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services cannot be inventoried• Services cannot be patented• Services cannot be readily displayed or communicated• Pricing is difficult
Standardised	Heterogeneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services delivery and customer satisfaction depend on employee action• Service quality depends on many uncontrollable factors• There is no sure knowledge that the service delivered matches what was planned and promoted
Production separate from consumption	Simultaneous production and consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer participate in and affect the transaction• Customers affect each other(influence)• Employees affect service outcome• Decentralisation may be essential• Mass production is difficult

GOODS	SERVICES	RESULTING IMPLICATIONS
Non-perishable	Perishable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's difficult to synchronise supply and demand with services • Services cannot be returned or resold

*Source: Zeithaml V. A. and Bitner M. J., *Services Marketing: integrating customer focus across the firm*, 2003.

Other than the unique characteristics of services given in table 2.1, there are other characteristics such as the *need to be perceived as having experience*. Buyers of professional services are often uncertain about the criteria to use in selecting a professional; they usually focus on one question: have you done it before? (Bloom, 1984, pp104). The sellers of these services unlike goods therefore need to be perceived as having experience. Employing an experienced professional makes a risky purchase seem less risky.

Marketing research can assist a practice discover new business opportunities in its market. The requirement for experience creates problems for professional organisations. "Newness" in professions is not nearly as favourable as might be for a good.

2.3.1 Research objectives for services as compared to those for goods

The first step in designing services marketing research is without doubt the most critical: defining the problem and research objectives. It's always essential to devote time and resources to define the problem thoroughly and accurately. Research objectives translate into action questions (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003, pp125). The following are some typical research objectives in services;

- To identify dissatisfied customers;
- To discover customer requirements or expectations for service;
- To monitor and track service performance;
- To assess overall company performance compared with that of competitors;
- To assess gaps between customer expectations and perceptions;
- To gauge effectiveness of changes in service delivery;
- To appraise the service performance of individuals and teams for evaluation, recognitions and rewards;

- To determine customer expectations for new service;
- To monitor changing customer expectations in an industry;
- To forecast future expectations of customers.

Unlike research conducted for physical products, services research incorporates additional elements that require attention.

First, services research must continually monitor and track service performance because performance is subject to human variability and heterogeneity. Conducting performance research at a single point in time, as might be done for a physical product would be insufficient in services. A major focus of services research involves capturing human performance at the level of; the individual employee, the team, the branch, the organisation as a whole, and the competition (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003, pp125). Another focus of services research is documenting the process by which the service is performed. Even when service employees are performing well, a service provider must continue to track performance because the potential for variation in service delivery is always present.

A second distinction in services research is the need to consider and monitor the gap between expectations and perceptions. This is because the gap is usually dynamic because of fluctuations in both perceptions and expectations over time (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003, pp125).

2.4 The Quantity surveying services

2.4.1 The services offered by quantity surveyors

A quantity surveyor is a professional who attempts to ensure the resources of the construction industry are utilized to the best advantage by providing the financial management and consultancy service to the client during the construction process (RICS, 1991). Generally the skills of a quantity surveyor emanate from four fields, namely; *law, management, construction technology* and *economics* (Willis, 1978).

Seeley (1997) pinpoints the services provided by the quantity surveyors as:

- Preliminary cost advice;
- Cost planning and cost checking;
- Advice on contracting methods;
- Construction procurement systems;

- Valuation of construction work;
- Preparing tender documents and negotiating contract prices;
- Preparing contract documents and participating in contract administration;
- Value management;
- Interim valuations and payments;
- Financial statements;
- Variations, final account preparation and agreement;
- Project management;
- Settlement of contractual claims and;
- Giving expert evidence in arbitrations and disputes.

The profession is similar in the commonwealth heritage of which Kenya is part of. Therefore the quantity surveyor practicing in Kenya provides the services as earlier mentioned by Seeley (1997).

Due to economic environmental changes, the role of quantity surveyors is not as simple as earlier mentioned because of the following challenges,

- Competition from other professionals;
- Impact of computerization and;
- Higher clients' requirements through increasing complexity of modern construction projects.

In the face of these, forward-thinking policies will have to be adopted in order to maintain their competitive advantages and to survive and create a new scenario in future decades (Cartlidge, 2000). Thus the Kenyan Quantity Surveyor will have to keep in touch closely with the business environment (locally and internationally due to the effect of globalization). The training and knowledge of the quantity surveyor has enabled the above roles to evolve over time into new areas, and the services provided by the modern quantity surveyor now cover all aspects of project cost management and procurement (Willis and Trench, 1998).

2.4.2 Changing nature of the QS profession

The profession has of late been evolving worldwide; gradually breaking away from its traditional confines of the commonwealth heritage, embracing technological changes, and having to fulfil stringent client requirements (The Quantity Surveyor

Journal, Jan-March 2005, 11). These changes have also occurred in Kenya and have led to the widening of the markets and diversification of activities in the quantity surveying practice. Based on research for the Building report QS Strategies 1999, Westcott (2003) summarized the key changes as being:

- blurring of traditional separation between consultancy and contracting services, due to increasing use of design and build contracts, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Public Private Partnerships (PPP);
- move away from services based on production of bills of quantities to cost planning and cost management;
- IT and computer-aided design have provided opportunities for improving the added-value of Quantity Surveying services rather than computer-aided measurement making Quantity Surveyors redundant;
- increasing appointment of Quantity Surveyors as lead consultants by those clients who are primarily driven by strict time and cost-constraints and who have become frustrated by the architect's inability to appreciate and manage these;
- computerisation, and particularly the adoption of management information systems, has simplified and accelerated the collection and processing of data, allowing the contractor's Quantity Surveyor to take a more effective role in commercial management by undertaking more frequent and informative cost-value reconciliation, rather than historic reporting;
- increasing provision of pro-active budget-setting services, including life-cycle costing and capital allowances consultancy, rather than reactive pricing of architects' drawings;
- changing focus from claims management to conflict avoidance through partnering, value and risk management and;
- increasing awareness of health and safety matters and sustainable construction issues.

Though this is a summary of the changes in the UK's profession, they as well apply in the Kenyan context.

In addition there's increased blurring of the boundaries between allied areas of professional activity. This is more apparent in conflict areas with Architects,

Engineers, Valuers and project managers where some services overlap. There is also a continuing trend towards fragmentation of the profession and growth of new disciplines such as project management, value management, arbitration, facilities management, etc (The Quantity Surveyor Journal, Oct-Dec 1999, 23).

There have been changes in legislation that affect the quantity surveyors practice as well. The example below is a recent change in legislation that has had a considerable impact on the practice.

The Government of Kenya enacted the Public Procurement and Disposal Act (2005) for the purpose of establishing procedures to govern procurement and disposal of goods, works and services. This act established the Public Procurement Oversight Authority, (PPOA) with a general mandate to oversee the public procurement process in Kenya. Section 28 of the aforesaid Act requires that the procurement agents be first registered by the PPOA before they can subsequently be engaged by the Public Procuring Entities (PPEs). Quantity surveying firms fall under the category of procuring agents for consultancy services. They are as such required by the PPOA to prove professional qualifications in procurement, membership of the Kenya Institute of Supplies Management for the key personnel to be involved in provision of these public services amongst many other qualifications.

Another challenge that is being faced today is that of remaining relevant in the current popular trend of Design-and-Build or Turnkey projects whereby the traditional method of procuring a building by engaging professionals is being overridden by the Developer going straight to the Contractor who then drives the process using his own in-house professionals (The Construction Review, February 2007).

If the quantity surveyors in Kenya are to keep their place in the pecking order of the industry, they must respond quickly and creatively to these trends caused by the accelerating social, economic, legal and technological environment. These trends are detrimental to the long-term interests of the profession. There is now a requirement for the quantity surveying practice to be flexible and be able to accommodate the changes in their market environments. This will enable them to produce superior value and satisfaction for customers/clients.

This flexibility can be obtained by applying innovative and proactive management and business strategies which are highly responsive to such changes and trends. Marketing research is part and parcel of the overall business strategy which would help the firm gather current information about the market so as to make informed decisions. If an organization wants to be close to the market it needs to fully understand it, including the roles that the competitors and customers play there.

2.4.3 The market for quantity surveying services

2.4.3.1 Client demand

The clients of the quantity surveyor have varying needs. In some cases they will be unaware of the services provided while on other occasions they may require advice of a rather specialized nature. They do, however, require complete and comprehensive advice on which they can rely. Their concern is not so much with the techniques that the surveyor may use as the value of the benefits that can be provided. They may require the surveyor to evaluate the possible options that are available. They will certainly require a recommendation of the best course of action from their own viewpoint. It is vitally important therefore that the quantity surveyor fully understands the needs and aspirations of the client at a very early stage in the construction process.

The quantity surveyors' proven expertise is primarily on construction costs. More clients are also now concerned with the implications of matters of time, and the interaction of time and cost. The surveyor is also required to bear in mind the final value of the project in addition to the prediction and accounting of its costs. Clients also require regular contact with the quantity surveyor and advise on all issues of importance to them. This advice, to be of any use, must be accurate at all stages and both impartial and independent in character.

Clients are sometimes dissatisfied with the services provided by the quantity surveyor. Some of this dissatisfaction arises from discontent with the construction industry and its processes in general. Some would argue that the industry is archaic in its attitudes, and in need of fundamental changes. Quantity surveyors sometimes fail to appreciate and identify with the clients' objectives and constraints. The services provided often take too long to perform, and are untimely and inappropriate

to the client's needs. Some clients feel that the quantity surveyors are not sufficiently commercially minded. The surveyors may believe that this requirement can at times be in conflict with their professional status.

Criticism has also been expressed of the quantity surveyor's primary role concerning building costs. The quality of the advice and cost control was sometimes inaccurate and inconsistent, and cost forecasting was not good. This criticism may have arisen because the quantity surveyor failed to appreciate the client's needs, or may be due to the surveyor's specific inexperience. It may also in part relate to a lack of authority or control on the part of the surveyor. In other circumstances, clients may unreasonably expect a level of forecasting that is impossible to achieve in practice. The profession must, however, be continually striving to improve in this matter through research and development (Willis, 1994).

Quantity surveyors must on the other hand be able to understand each client's perception of an undertaking so as to deliver satisfaction to each.

2.5 Marketing research by Quantity Surveyors – the key to improving decision making

Quantity surveyors frequently face challenges in their markets such as strict ethical and legal constraints; buyer uncertainty; need to be perceived as having experience; limited differentiability between firms; and limited capacity to conduct off-work activities such as marketing research. The nature of the construction industry in Kenya is also a challenge in that, several building consultancy services have to be combined with construction management services from the contractor in order to yield the client tangible gains.

Every day, firm managers are called upon to make decisions, sometimes minor, sometimes far-reaching, each of which will be better-informed and likely to produce better results with intelligent use of marketing research. Effective decision making depends on quality input, and marketing research plays an essential role in translating data into useful information.

Any business seeking an edge in attracting and retaining customers in competitive market environments turns to marketing. In turn, marketing can create strategies to work towards these goals of attraction and retention, if the business understands its

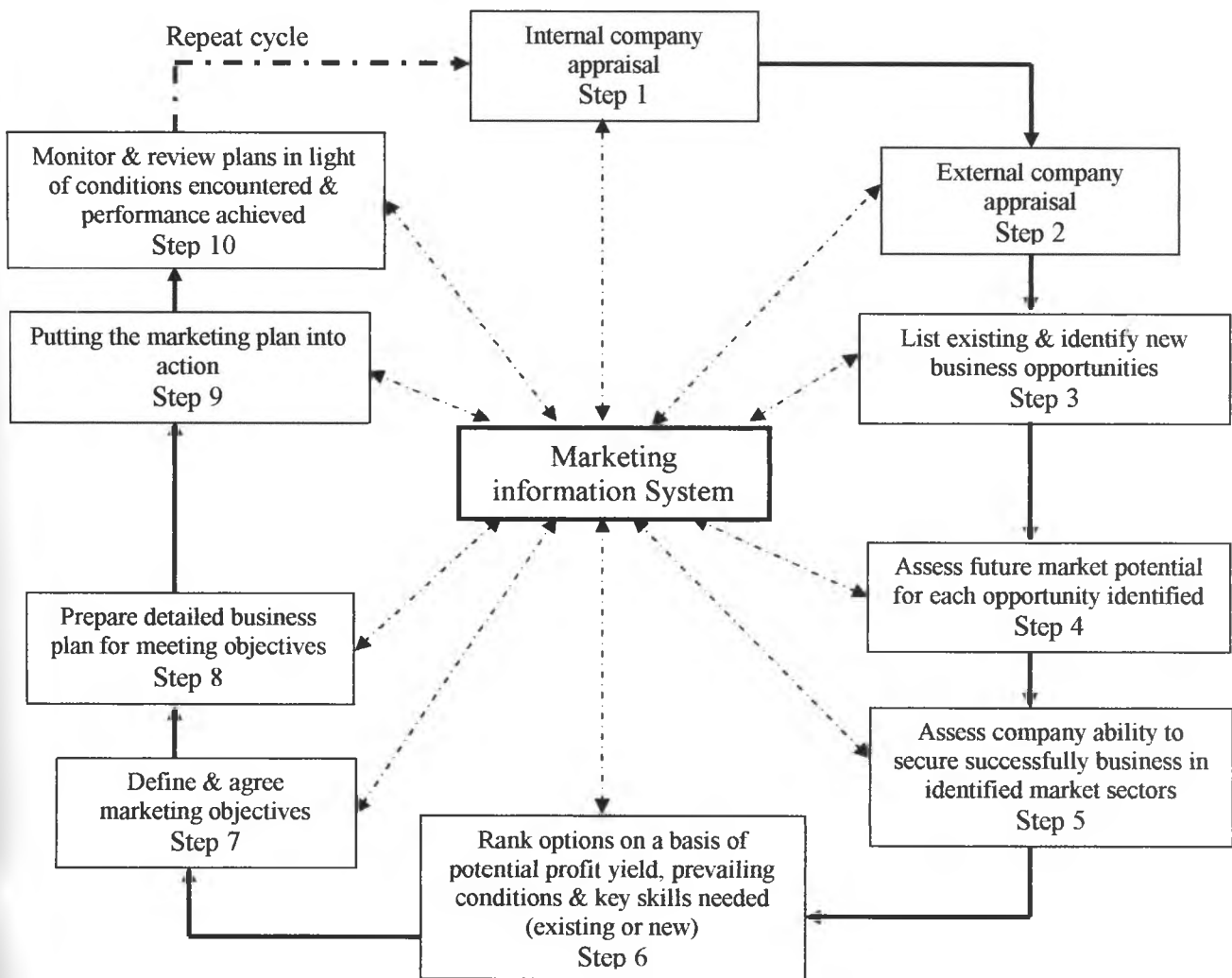
customers. This understanding comes through marketing research, using both periodic projects directed towards specific problems at hand, and continuing, ongoing measurement of the market place (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005).

The principal task of marketing is to create value for customers, where customer value is the comparison between customer perceptions of benefits they receive from purchasing and using products and services, and their perceptions of the costs they incur in exchange for them (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005).

These customers are usually the major focus for every firm's activities. If you ask any experienced quantity surveyor what the secret of their success is and they are likely to reply, "Providing a high quality service to my clients." Basically, any profession which relies principally upon the recommendation or referral of satisfied clients for its new clients must provide a high quality service (Hoxley, 1995).

To ensure the customers satisfaction, the firm managers continuously need information – and marketing research is the firm's formal communication link with the customer and the environment. It's the means by which firms generate, transmit, and interpret information from customers and environment about / relating to the success of the firms marketing plans (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005).

Fig. 2.3 Marketing planning – the ten step approach



*Source: Fisher N, (1989), Marketing in the Construction Industry. Longman, London, p133.

The marketing plans of a firm help in identifying its own, and the competitors' strengths and weaknesses, the clients that it serves by type, the current market conditions and any likely changes in the market place that it need to examine further (Fisher, 1991, pp84).

Already, considerable business success has resulted for those who have had the foresight to grasp the true nature and full benefits of marketing research, and then use it to give them access to, and form long-term professional relationships and multi-project links with, the right clients, (Fisher, 1991). These innovative practices in business terms have grasped that marketing research is a business philosophy, and not just a tool or technique for marketing.

There are a number of highly beneficial areas in which marketing research activities can be conducted. For example:

- a) The economic scenario – a careful analysis of the economic activities and how present and future governmental economic and fiscal policy might affect the market sectors that a quantity surveying practice works in or intends to work in. For example, it's useful to consider carefully anticipated changes in workloads 6 months, 12 months, and 36 months and by work type from a particular date. For example during the period 2008/2009, the overall volume of the corporate client works market may be expected to decline by about 25%. However, "Practice X" may through the benefits of conducting marketing research be able to actually increase its volume of business, and as a result its market share, at the expense of its competitors;
- b) The clients that a practice works for or would like to work for – the service that the client requires and believes that he is currently receiving or not receiving. The aim of this type of research would be to identify a client's "buying mechanism" when selecting a consultant;
- c) Market reputation – how a practice is regarded in the market place, by a representative sample of clients, employers, opinion formers, and competitors. The identification, measurement and assessment of the implications for current and future trading, of any strengths and weaknesses;
- d) Standing of a practice against its principle competitors – the identification in each market sector that a firm operates in, it's strength and weaknesses, and how important client groups perceive that company and rate it against its main rivals, (Fisher, 1991).

According to Fisher (1991), the practices will prosper in their market environments are likely to be those that will:

- a) Successfully adopt a wide 'market oriented' culture;
- b) Acquire practical market knowledge and understanding based on carefully commissioned research and analysis;
- c) Engage in business and marketing planning and as a result identify their own and their competitor's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – by market sector;

- d) Successfully identify appropriate 'niche' markets, and on identification are willing if necessary to discriminate against traditional low margin low risk work, in favour of newer, more risky, higher margin growth sectors;
- e) Identify 'target client groups' and become familiar with the culture, value systems and needs of them;
- f) Understand the 'buying mechanism' of the target client groups with whom they wish to do business;
- g) Have developed a strong clear appropriate practice 'brand', and have successfully promoted it to identified target client groups.

The Kenyan firms need to adopt these strategies as well. This will involve the adoption of flexible, innovative and proactive management strategies so as to reduce uncertainty in business undertaking. Adoption of a strategy such as marketing research by these firms can be useful in identifying:

- The business opportunities in terms of existing new market sectors and areas of profitable business growth;
- Potential clients by market sectors;
- An organizations own strength and weaknesses;
- Competitors, who they are, their tactics, strengths and weaknesses;
- Clients' unique needs and requirements;
- The business environment in which the business organization operates;
- Coming up with a marketing strategy which allows the firm to concentrate its limited resources on the greatest opportunities, to increase sales and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage;
- The effectiveness of marketing tools and techniques that are used.

In today's dynamic and highly competitive global business environment, the quantity surveying firms need to adopt a successful and sustainable professional practice that will meet and exceed client expectations through delivering best value, and complying with professional codes of conduct and statutory regulations. Consequently, in order to sustain a competitive advantage and prosper in any market environment it is necessary for a firm to pursue a management strategy which is responsive to commercial environmental opportunities, and ipso facto, one that neutralises commercial environment threats; ameliorates internal weaknesses and

mobilises internal strengths (Barney, 1991). Marketing research forms part and parcel of such a strategy.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the procedures that have been followed in conducting the study. The techniques that were used to obtain data are explained. The study area has been discussed in detail, as well as the population and how the researcher arrived at the sample, the sampling procedure, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis methods and type of variables used.

This study began with the review of the related literature in the subject. This helped in articulating the concept of marketing research in the area of business management. The literature reviewed was from published textbooks, magazines, journals published by various professional bodies, papers presented in seminars to practicing Quantity Surveyors as well as scholarly work.

The information was collected from quantity surveying firms on the extent of application of marketing research strategies in their practices, their perceptions of the market-based research, identification of the challenges facing quantity surveying firms while carrying out marketing research and finding out the methods they use to gather information about their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment.

3.2 Research design

The study was a survey that attempted to collect data from members of the quantity surveying profession in order to determine the current levels of information with respect to marketing research. The elements of the study were selected based on their direct involvement in quantity surveying practice. The quantity surveying firms formed the elements to be studied.

3.3 Population and sample

The population for this study consisted quantity surveying firms located in Nairobi only. This was due to constraints of time and funds to cover the travelling expense. A list of registered firms was obtained from the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors. This list contained 124 firms. However, the addresses for these firms depicted that three of the firms were not located in Nairobi. Therefore these firms were isolated from the population.

Although the list mentioned here is taken to be comprised of nearly all the registered quantity surveying firms, there is a possibility that there are a number of registered firms which were not listed and therefore not included in the study.

The target population therefore consisted of 121 registered firms as earlier stated. Due to time and resource constraints, the target sample of the quantity surveying firms to be studied is represented by an accessible population derived from the following formulae (Chava F., Nachmiaas D.; 1996).

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pqN}{e^2 (N - 1) + Z^2 pq}$$

Where,

N – Size of the population

n – Sample size

p – Sample proportion estimated to have characteristics being measured.
Assume a 95% confidence level of the target population.

q – 1- p

e – Acceptance error, e = 0.05, since the estimate should be 5% of the true value

Z – The standard normal deviate at the required confidence level i.e. 1.96

The number therefore is;

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.95 \times (1 - 0.95) \times 121}{0.05^2 \times (121-1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.95 \times (1-0.95)}$$

$$n = \frac{22.08}{0.3 + 0.18}$$

$$n = 45$$

A total of 45 firms were studied, this was 37% of the population. To allow for *generalization of the findings and to minimize the margin of error, simple random sampling* was used to select the particular firms to study from all the registered firms, listed and numbered in the B.O.R.A.Q.S. list of firms.

Random sampling was done by writing the number representing each firm on a paper. The papers were folded to conceal the numbers and placed in a container and then picked at random one at a time. Each time before a paper was picked; the papers were well mixed in the container to minimize error. The firms corresponding to the numbers on the papers picked were included in the study sample.

3.4 Data collection

This research sought to obtain data from quantity surveyors about marketing research activities of the respective firms in which they practiced. The data gathered was mainly of qualitative nature.

The research methodology for this study comprised primary data. The instrument used to collect this data was mainly the questionnaires which were administered directly to the quantity surveying firms. Therein, each question was formulated to address a specific objective or the hypotheses of the study. Structured questions were mainly used for ease of administration and analysis.

The questionnaires were administered using two distinct methods. These methods were arrived at upon the individual respondent's choice between on-the-spot interrogation and giving responses at a future date. The two methods comprised of;

i) Self administered approach

In this approach, the respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires by themselves. In this case, the questionnaires were hand delivered to the respondents' premises and were collected after some specified time.

ii) Researcher administered approach

Through this method, the researcher used the questionnaire to interview the respondents. This method offered the researcher the opportunity to assist respondents in case of any difficulties in interpreting the questions.

The choice between these two data collection procedures was dependent on the respondents' availability and the time of the questionnaire delivery.

The questionnaire administered to the quantity surveyors was structured to have two parts; the preliminary and the main questions.

- **Preliminary questions:** There were four basic questions under this section which sought to obtain general information about the firms. Enquiries were

made about the age, the form of the business, the size of the human workforce and the main areas of work.

- **Main questions:** This section formed the crux of the information gathering process. Tables were used to condense the research findings where possible while averages and percentages were used to show the relationship of attributes in terms of proportion, in various aspects.

3.5 Responsiveness of the respondents

A total of 45 questionnaires were administered to the population. Out of these, 3 were returned unfilled and 6 were not returned. This gave a response rate of 80%, that is, 36 questionnaires were returned completed as required. It is from these questionnaires that the data was analysed and conclusions drawn about the whole population from the findings.

3.6 Problems encountered during data collection

The problems encountered while conducting the research did not seriously inhibit the realisation of the objectives of the study. At worst, these limitations only slowed down the progress of the field study. These limitations included;

- Some professionals were uncooperative in filling the questionnaires, even after producing the introductory letter from the Department of Real Estate and Construction Management. They claimed they were busy, and hence were treated as unresponsive.
- Others agreed to fill the questionnaires but never got round to doing so despite the frequent reminders by the researcher. Other respondents lost the questionnaires, and thus were omitted from the analysis.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Presentation

4.1 Introduction

The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics. It was largely described and presented in form of tables, charts and percentages as appropriate.

In an endeavour to analyse the primary data, the scores were summarised, organised and presented in form of charts, percentages, frequency tables, averages and graphs depending on the suitability of the tool.

Upon the determination of the appropriate method and entering data in the respective tool, the researcher embarked on analysing the data by meaningfully describing and interpreting it.

4.2 Findings

The following analysis is derived from data obtained from field work pertaining to the researcher's area of study.

4.2.1 Year of establishment of the firm

The above question sought to establish the time period for which the firms had been operating. The essence was to determine whether the sample selected consisted of practising firms with varying degrees of experience. This had a bearing on the ability of the firm to conduct Marketing research.

The research inferred from the questionnaire that the ages of the firms studied consisted of both recently established firms and those which have been in practice for some considerable time, ranging from 4 years to 22years. This reflected a fairly representative sample in terms of working experience.

4.2.2 Form of business

This question sought to establish the form of businesses that the quantity surveyors operate in the market. The kind of business organisation is a key determinant on the marketing activities of the firm.

The responses were as follows:

Table 4.3.1 Firms' form of business

Response	No. Of firms	Percentage
Sole proprietorship	17	47%
Partnership	14	39%
Private company	3	8%
Limited company	2	6%
Total	36	100

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

47% of the respondents stated that they were operating as sole proprietors (firm with one director) while 39% were partnerships. There only a few respondents who had their firms operating as private or limited companies, i.e. 8% and 6% respectively.

The researcher concluded that majority of the firms practicing quantity surveying in Kenya were sole proprietors and partnerships. This fact may affect carrying out of activities such as marketing research as the decision is based on an individual or individuals who may not regard it as of importance. This is because these directors are the ones who make management policies for the firms.

4.2.3 Main line of work

The question sought to establish the kind of services offered by quantity surveyors in their practices. Quantity surveying services are the most competitive services in the market with 94% of the respondents indicating that they offered these services. 43% of the respondents also indicated that they provided services in contract administration. 31.6% of the respondents indicated that they offered project management services, 21% of the respondents claimed that they do preparation of claims for contractors while 18% of them offered arbitration services.

It can then be deduced that quantity surveying services are the lead sellers for the profession and therefore most marketing research is conducted in this line of work.

4.2.4 Clients for the quantity surveyors

This question sought to establish the major clients that each firm had. This helped to determine whether there was any dependency between the type of marketing research carried out by the firms and the type of client they served mostly.

The question required the respondents to rank their clients in order of priority amongst the choices provided. From the feedback, the following was obtained;

Table 4.3.2 Client type for quantity surveying services:

CLIENT TYPE	SCORES					Total scores;	Percentage score
	5	4	3	2	1		
State Agencies	8	6	12	9	1	119	22%
Corporate clients	9	13	9	5	-	134	25%
International clients	-	3	6	6	21	63	11%
Private clients	16	11	5	3	2	147	27%
Community clients	3	3	4	13	3	68	13%
Others	-	-	-	1	9	11	2%
Totals						542	100

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

The following is the order of importance of the clients for quantity surveying services starting from the most important; private clients 27%, corporate clients 25%, state agencies 22%, Community clients 13%, International clients 11%, and 2% for others. It can be seen that most firms regard their frequent clients to be from the private sector, followed by the corporate sector and closely followed by the state agencies. This implies that most of the firms conducted marketing research which targeted clients from these three sectors.

4.2.5 Knowledge of marketing research

The researcher set out to establish whether the Quantity surveyors are aware of what marketing research meant 80.5% of the quantity surveyors who corresponded had knowledge of what was entailed in marketing research. 19.5% of the correspondents did not know what market research involved. The table below shows the importance of marketing research to the quantity surveyors.

Table 4.3.3. Importance of marketing research/ perception to the quantity surveyors

Importance	No. of firms	Percentage
Extremely important	9	31%
Very important	15	52%
Moderately important	4	14%
Not important	1	3%
Total	29	100%

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

From table 4.3.3 above, it can be deduced that 83% of the respondents regarded marketing research to be of great importance.

4.2.6 Marketing research department

This section of the paper examines the information processing elements of marketing information considered important in professional service firms. In response to whether there exists a unit responsible for marketing research in each consulting quantity surveying firm, Table 4.3.5 indicates a considerable number of firms (99%) with little or no formal marketing research units.

Table 4.3.4: Existence of a formal marketing research department

Response	YES (%)	NO (%)
Existence of a marketing research	1	99

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

The respondents attributed the non-existence of these departments in their firms to a number of reasons as shown in table 4.3.6 below.

Table 4.3.5: Factors affecting existence of a marketing research department in firms

Inhibiting Factor	No. Of firms	Percentage (%)
Inadequate funds to finance such a department	11	31
Small size of the firm in terms of workload it can handle	13	36
Management policy	5	14
It's unnecessary	7	19
TOTALS	36	100

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

Small size of the firm in terms of the workload it could handle was the major reason why most firms did not have a marketing research department. 36% of the respondents were of this view. A majority of the respondents (31%) also attributed the non-existence of such a department to inadequacy of funds to finance it. 19% of the respondents regarded such a unit as unnecessary while 14% attributed its non-existence to management policies of the firms.

Given that the existence of such departments is not necessarily a requirement for effective marketing research and information processing, the extent of use of certain types of marketing research was measured (see Table 4.3.6). These results derive from those respondents both with and without marketing research departments in their firms.

Table 4.3.6: The extent to which firms carry out the following types of marketing research;

TYPE OF MARKETING RESEARCH	Scores				Total score	Percentage
	4	3	2	1		
Identify dissatisfied customers?	17	11	6	2	115	16
Identify Business trends?	9	15	9	3	102	14
Assess the overall firm performance to that of competitors and market share analysis?	13	11	8	4	105	14
Assess effectiveness of marketing undertaken?	19	12	3	3	121	17
Appraise the service performance of individuals and teams for evaluation, recognition and rewards?	10	9	7	10	91	12
Monitor changing client expectations in the industry over time?	14	8	9	5	103	14
Analysis of the market to tell short-term and long-term demands?	7	15	11	2	97	13
Totals					734	100

[Large – 4, fair – 3, small – 2, Not at all – 1]

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

According to these findings, much attention is given to assessing the effectiveness of marketing undertaken and identifying dissatisfied customers. These types of marketing research are carried out to a larger extent than the rest as in table 4.3.6. However, the other types of marketing research in the table seem to be conducted at similar extents. Appraising the service performance of individuals and teams for

evaluation, recognition and rewards and analysis of the market to tell short-term and long-term demands seem not to receive much attention.

4.2.7 Identifying the particular strengths, weaknesses and the major opportunities firms face in the market

This question sought to establish whether the quantity surveying firms' management did some analysis of their market environment to identify their strengths, weaknesses and the opportunities they faced.

Table 4.3.7: SWOT Analysis by the firms in their markets

Response	No of firms	Percentage%
Yes	14	39
No	22	61
Total	36	100

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

61% of the respondents said that they did not carry out SWOT Analysis in their markets whereas 31% did.

4.2.8 Client satisfaction

This question sought to establish whether the quantity surveying firms did enquiry before and after each undertaking to evaluate the clients' expectations and satisfaction

Table 4.3.8: Assessment of client satisfaction

Response	Yes (%)	No (%)
Getting client's expectations before each undertaking	72	28
Following up after final accounts and payment settling	34	66
Keeping clients informed on what the firm is doing	69	31

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

From the field study it can be observed that whereas a majority (72%) of the respondents endeavour to find out the clients expectations and perceptions before each undertaking, there seems to be a very little follow-up after final accounts and payment settling. This is indicated by the large percentage (66%) of the respondents which doesn't follow-up after final accounts. However, many quantity surveyors (69%) put effort in keeping clients informed in what their firms are doing.

This indicates that the quantity surveyors are operating client-oriented businesses. However, more effort should be put in trying to establish whether the clients were satisfied as well as their suggestions on the services they received.

4.2.9 Tracking and document service performance over time

This question sought to find out whether the quantity surveying firms did tracking and documentation of service performance so as to ensure proper service delivery and client satisfaction. This is because service performance is subject to human variability and heterogeneity. A major focus of services research involves capturing human performance

92% of the respondents did not track and document service performance of the individuals working in the respective firms. Only 8% of the respondents indicated that they tracked and documented service performance over time. Of this 8%, 100% of them monitored service performance at the individual level. The following table shows the level at which the firms captured the service performance.

Table 4.3.9: Performance evaluation for services

RESPONSE	No of firms	Percentage%
Individual employee level	3	100
Team level	-	-
Organisation as a whole	-	-
Competition level	-	-
Total	3	100

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

4.2.10 The methods used by quantity surveyors to gather information about their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment

A number of questions were devoted to establishing the methods used by firms to gather market information. Firstly, respondents were asked to comment on whether the marketing research they carry out as in table 4.3.6 is usually carried out scientifically (planned and executed in advance) or randomly when opportunities arise.

The table below shows the responses.

Table 4.3.10: Marketing research strategy

Response	Yes (%)	No (%)
Carefully planned and executed research (scientific)	19	81
Randomly when opportunities arise	78	22

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

There was an open-ended question seeking to find out the specific methods used by the quantity surveyors to gather information about their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment. The most frequent responses were through professional seminars, professional journals, continuous professional development forums, press and media i.e. newspapers, radio and television. There was also wide reference to the internet, personal discussions with the clients and professional bodies i.e. IQSK and AAK. No single respondent gave formal marketing research as a method of gathering this information.

a) Strategy for firms

This sought to establish the strategy approach for the various quantity surveying firms, i.e. how they build up their current market share. The responses were as in table 4.3.11 below

Table 4.3.11; Strategy approaches

Response	No of firms	Percentage%
By following a systematic strategy of growth	8	22
By taking up opportunities whenever they presented themselves	28	78
Total	36	100

*source: Own Field Survey 2008

78% of the respondents stated that they had built their current market share by taking up opportunities whenever the opportunities came up. 22% of the firms were following a systematic strategy of growth.

This shows that quantity surveying firms were not following a systematic strategy but were relying on opportunistic strategies to build their market shares.

4.2.11 The challenges facing quantity surveying firms while carrying out marketing research.

A number of questions were devoted to establishing the challenges faced by quantity surveyors while carrying out market research. Firstly the respondents were asked to give the number of employees in their firms and their respective positions. The findings showed that the firms' human workforce was ranging from five to ten persons. This number included the support staff i.e. secretaries, messengers and drivers. The rest were professionals both registered and unregistered.

From this, the researcher concluded that most quantity surveying firms are small businesses with a small workforce to handle other peripheral activities such as marketing research especially at times when the industry is doing well and there is much work to be done.

From the field study (Table 4.3.4); the researcher established that almost all the firms did not have departments to deal specifically with assessment of the market information. 36% of the respondents gave the small size of the firms in terms of the workload they can handle as the major reason as to why such a department doesn't exist in these firms. 31% of the respondents attributed this to inadequate funds to finance such a department. 14% attributed this to the management policies of their respective firms while 19% saw such a department as unnecessary.

From the study, most of the firms did carry out marketing research although in an informal way i.e. not scientifically. This can be seen in table 4.3.10 and table 4.3.11.

Below are the benefits of carrying out the various types of marketing research in table 4.3.6 as depicted by various respondents;

- i) It helps raise the level of understanding of the market place;
- ii) It assists the firm in optimal allocation of marketing resources;
- iii) It helps in raising the level of understanding of the clients by the quantity surveyors;
- iv) It also assists in gauging the firms' performances to those of their competitors as well as gaining information on how to acquire competitive advantages over their rivals;
- v) It assists in ensuring client satisfaction by establishing a feedback system for the clients;

- vi) It helps in broadening the information base for decision making;
- vii) It aids in decision making after careful consideration of other known alternatives;
- viii) It helps in monitoring service performance by the employees so as to ensure client satisfaction.

The respondents were also asked to give their biggest obstacle in gathering information about their market, customers/clients, competitors and the macro-environment. 52% of the respondents gave small size of the firm in terms of the workload it can handle as the major obstacle, while 33% gave inadequate funds for financing such an activity as their major inhibiting factor. 8% Of the respondents attributed the management policy of their firms as their major obstacles. In fact some quantity surveyors commented that these firms were run by some partners who did not see the need of carrying out such an activity since it was unnecessary. This represented 7% of the respondents.

Majority of the respondents also commented that a major obstacle was the unavailability of prompt, relevant and precise information during their research.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to find out the extent of application of marketing research by quantity surveyors in their practice.

It was hypothesised that the inadequacy in carrying out marketing research was caused by management policies governing operations of quantity surveying firms, lack of appropriate market research knowledge, or lack of appreciation of the necessity of carrying out market surveys by the firms. Objectives were also set out at the beginning along with which the research was to be carried out. The related literature was reviewed and data collected from the field analysed.

This chapter therefore outlines the researcher's conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this study.

However, it's worth to note that the research had some limitations as outlined in chapter one under the scope of the study and chapter three under problems encountered during data collection. The conclusions and recommendations should therefore be looked at in respect to these limitations.

5.2 Conclusions

This study had three specific objectives as postulated earlier. Questions based on these objectives were asked during the fieldwork. On account of the findings obtained from analysis of data collected, the following conclusions are deduced regarding marketing research by quantity surveyors.

5.2.1 Level and extent of application of marketing research in quantity surveying practice

Regarding the level of application of marketing research by quantity surveyors in their practice, the following observations were made.

Majority of the respondents claimed knowledge of marketing research. However, almost all of the firms did not have a marketing research department or a unit that deal formally with such an activity. Given that the existence of such departments is not necessarily a requirement for effective marketing research and information processing, it was observed that the quantity surveyors do carry out various types of marketing research. Given the existence of the wide distribution of application of

different types of marketing research as depicted in Table 4.3.6, attention should be focused on the data relating to the non-use of the various types of marketing research. Appraising the service performance of individuals and teams for evaluation, recognition and rewards and analysis of the market to tell short-term and long-term demands seem not to receive much attention.

Some interesting results have been revealed by this study. The finding that 99% of the respondents possess neither a department nor a designated individual with responsibility for marketing reinforces the view that some consulting firms still struggle to understand and implement effective marketing programmes. There is a strong indication to suggest that these quantity surveying firms are still clinging to an outdated, bull-market philosophy: *'As long as we do good work we will always have plenty of work'*. The fact that a majority of quantity surveying firms do not carry out SWOT analysis as indicated by the results in table 4.3.7 elevates this opinion.

The vast majority of firms report a distinctly client-orientated approach to business which is close to the current thinking in satisfying clients' requirements. It is, however, difficult to understand the relative lack of importance attached to follow-up after final accounts and payment.

There is a major gap in the profession on the use of marketing research as a tool for gathering information. This was also observed by Mwangi (2003). This study also conforms to the findings of Muchungu (1997) that many quantity surveyors seem to be reacting in response to instead of in anticipation of the ongoing market situation. However, this should not be the case. The quantity surveyors should appreciate the benefits of marketing research in order to produce superior value and satisfaction for their clientele. To achieve this they need a thorough understanding of their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment. Therefore the level of application of the marketing research should be elevated in their practice.

5.2.2 The perceptions of the quantity surveyors on the market-based research.

Majority of the quantity surveyors claimed knowledge of marketing research and regarded it be a very important activity. They also attributed the market-based research as to have some benefits such as;

- i) It helps raise the level of understanding of the market place
- ii) It assists the firm in optimal allocation of marketing resources
- iii) It aids in decision making after careful consideration of other known alternatives
- iv) It helps in raising the level of understanding of the clients by the quantity surveyors.
- v) It also assists in gauging the firms' performances to those of their competitors as well as gaining information on how to acquire competitive advantages over their rivals.
- vi) It assists in ensuring client satisfaction by establishing a feedback system for the clients.
- vii) It helps in broadening the information base for decision making
- viii) It helps in monitoring service performance by the employees so as to ensure client satisfaction.

5.2.3 The methods used by quantity surveyors to gather information about their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment

With regard to the methods used by quantity surveyors to gather information about their market, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment, it was observed that most of the firms only carried out marketing research randomly when opportunities arise rather than one that is carefully planned in advance and executed scientifically.

With regard to the sources of information for the above information, no single respondent gave formal marketing research as a source. The most frequent responses got were from secondary sources such as through professional seminars, professional journals and magazines, continuous professional development forums, press and media, internet, personal discussions with clients and other professionals.

It was also observed that the quantity surveying firms were not following a systematic strategy to build their market share but were relying on opportunistic strategies.

The method to be used for gathering marketing data should involve a process which starts by defining the problem at hand clearly all the way up to identifying the best

solution to the problem amongst many alternatives. After a solution has been found, its then developed and implemented. Evaluation of the results of such an implementation then follows. Such an activity would provide better and timely market information on which to base wise decisions. However, it can be concluded that this is not the case with the Kenyan quantity surveyors.

5.2.4 The challenges facing quantity surveying firms while carrying out marketing research.

With regard to the challenges facing quantity surveying firms while carrying out marketing research the researcher concluded that most quantity surveying firms are small businesses with a small workforce usually less than ten people. This makes it difficult to handle other peripheral activities such as marketing research especially at times when the industry is doing well and there is much work to be done.

The respondents attributed their biggest obstacle in gathering information about their market, customers/clients, competitors and the macro-environment to small size of the firm in terms of the workload it can and inadequate funds for financing such an activity. A few attributed the management policy of their firms as their major obstacles.

The study showed that the quantity surveying firms were either partnerships or sole proprietorships. This had a bearing on the marketing research activities in some of the firms. Some respondents commented that some of the seniors in their firms considered such an activity since as unnecessary. Therefore the management of these firms is a major hindrance with regard to the application of marketing research in their practices. Another major obstacle identified was the unavailability of prompt, relevant and precise information during their research.

5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations of this study are as follows;

In a complex and dynamic industry environment the role played by the various professions is likely to fluctuate and change. New technologies may make some traditional roles obsolete and others may be greatly altered in scope and responsibilities. Computer programs which aim to deliver automatic quantities and pricing from 3D computer drawings are in the process of development in several places. While the application problems are by no means small, it is possible that in future programs will be available that will take over the quantity surveying work which is the domain of the practice as deduced from the study. The profession will need to concentrate on their value-adding and organisational skills if it is to continue to prosper. Due and proper recognition of the role of marketing research in professional development is needed if the benefits of their expertise are not to be lost.

Quantity surveyors expertise is in measurement yet they largely avoid measuring their own performance levels. Even when service employees are performing well, a service provider must continue to track performance because the potential for variation in service delivery is always present. There's a requirement to fulfil stringent requirements, produce superior value and satisfaction for customers/clients. Therefore the quantity surveyors should ensure that they document and track service performance over time so as to maintain high standards of service delivery.

The quantity surveyors should also establish a customer/client feedback system for example; use of suggestion boxes. This would help in obtaining additional comments, questions, and requests from clients. Such feedback system should also be introduced internally, within an organization, so as to garner the employees' input. Variations for this method include paper feedback forms such as the "We value your input" or "How was the service today?" cards found in some restaurants; solicitations to provide comments over the telephone or a voluntary survey at the end of a transaction whereby the client is asked to complete a customer satisfaction survey form. Such a system would provide a greater opportunity for obtaining accurate marketing research data and help in improving customer relations.

Recording received suggestions in a robust database can help track any trends in the market as well.

The quantity surveyors should capture, monitor and prioritize the customer feedbacks to ensure client satisfaction. Client satisfaction is a measure of how services provided by a firm meet or surpass customer expectation. In a competitive marketplace where businesses compete for customers, customer satisfaction is seen as a key differentiator and increasingly has become a key element of business strategy (Wikipedia 2008). The quantity surveying firms in Kenya should endeavour to meet the ten 'Quality Values' which influence satisfaction behaviour. These are referred to as the *ten domains of satisfaction* by Berry (2002) and include: Quality, Value, Timeliness, Efficiency, Ease of Access, Environment, Inter-departmental Teamwork, Front line Service behaviours, Commitment to the Customer and Innovation. These 'Quality Values' should be emphasized for continuous improvement of the services provided so as to ensure satisfaction of the clients.

The quantity surveyors should come together and form a unified strategy of promoting quantity surveying as a unique skill possessed by the professional members in order to protect it from encroachers who are competing for jobs with them. They should also lobby for creation of awareness of the profession to the common Kenyan citizen.

Most quantity surveying firms are small businesses. The Survey indicates that the small size of the firms in terms of workload they can handle is a major obstacle in carrying out marketing research. In this case they can engage services of external marketing research consultants to undertake such work.

Inadequate finances/funds is also a main inhibitor of marketing research activities by quantity surveyors. The professional body should establish a research department with an endeavour to cope with such a challenge. Such a department would also cope with the impediments largely created by the changes and trends in the market environment that are impinging on the profession. Such a department would attribute to creation of opportunities to be exploited by the members (e.g. technology). A database can be created in such a department, through sustained research, from which the quantity surveyors can derive data to suit their requirements.

The research department in the professional body should also stimulate and facilitate research by using strategies such as;

- Proactively seeking to initiate and support research in areas typified by major structural changes such as the impact of information technology, management of increasing systematic client relations (e.g. quality management, facilities management, green issues etc), and implications of changes in market structures and processes
- Being receptive and supportive towards research proposals in specific areas of particular potential.
- Supporting a balanced portfolio of research and development within identified priority areas
- Developing a strong research community in quantity surveying and promoting strong links between practitioners and researchers.
- Communicating research material to the membership since research is only effective if its findings are adequately disseminated.

5.4 Suggested areas for further study

- This study constrained itself to the level of application of marketing research strategies within the quantity surveying profession. Further investigations should be carried out on the same for other professions within the construction industry (architects, project managers, engineers, etc.)
- A further research should also be carried out on the role of professional bodies i.e. the Institute of Quantity Surveyors of Kenya and AAK to ensure the profession's development through research into the challenges facing the profession.
- It's also suggested that a study be carried out on the way forward for quantity surveyors with respect to the changing trends in the construction industry due to economic liberalisation, technological developments, client requirements, encroachment by other professions, fragmentation of the profession and growth of new disciplines such as project management, value management, arbitration, facilities management, etc

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire Administered To Quantity Surveying Firms

Dear Sir/Madam

I am an undergraduate student in the department of Real Estate and Construction Management at the University of Nairobi conducting a research entitled “A study into the level of application of marketing research strategies in quantity surveying practice.”

This is for the purpose of part fulfilment of the requirements of a Bachelors degree in Building economics.

Your firm has been identified for the purposes of this research. I kindly request you to assist me by completing the attached questionnaire to help facilitate this research. Your assistance in timely and honestly answering this questionnaire will be highly appreciated.

The information so given will be used for academic purposes only and thus will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours faithfully,

Signed _____

Muthoni W. C. (Student)

Questionnaire

Preliminary Questions:

- 1) When was your firm established
- 2) What is the form of your business? (Tick where appropriate)
- i) Sole proprietorship []
 - ii) Partnership []
 - iii) A private company []
 - iv) A limited company []
- 3) What is the number of employees in your firm in terms of;

Number

Directors.....

Partners.....

Associates.....

Registered professionals.....

Unregistered professionals.....

Non-permanent professionals.....

Support staff - Secretaries.....

Messengers.....

Drivers.....

Others (Specify)

- 4) What is your firm's main line of work?

Quantity surveying []

Claims for contractors []

Arbitration []

Project Management []

Contract administration []

Other (Specify)

.....

Main questions

1) Major clients for your firm?

(Rank them in order of importance, i.e. [5] – most important,,[0] – least important)

- State agencies
- Corporate clients
- International clients
- private clients
- Community clients
- Others (specify)

2) i) Do you know what market research is? Yes / No

ii) If yes, how important do you regard marketing research to be? (Tick where appropriate)

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Not important

3) i) Does your firm have a marketing research department? Yes / No

ii) If no, what are the reasons? (Tick where appropriate)

- Inadequate funds to finance such an activity
- Small size of the firm in terms of the workload it can handle
- management policy
- It's unnecessary

4) What methods do you use for gathering market information i.e. about the market, customers, competitors and the macro-environment?

.....

.....

.....

5) What has been your firm's biggest obstacle in gathering information about the market, customers, competitors and the macro-environment?

(Tick where appropriate)

- Inadequate funds to finance such an activity
- Small size of the firm in terms of the workload it can handle
- management policy

[] It's unnecessary

Other reasons

- 6) Has the firm explicitly sought to identify its particular strengths and weaknesses and the major opportunities it faces in the market? Yes [] or No []
- 7) To what extent Does your firm gather information from its market environment about the following [Large – 4, fair – 3, small – 2, Not at all – 1]
- i) Identify dissatisfied customers? []
 - ii) Identify business trends []
 - iii) Assess the overall firm performance to that of competitors and market share analysis. []
 - iv) Assess the effectiveness of marketing undertaken. []
 - v) Appraise the service performance of individuals and teams for evaluation, recognition and rewards? []
 - vi) Monitor changing client expectations in the industry over time? []
 - vii) Analysis of the market to tell short-term and long-term demand. []
- 8) Is the gathering of the information in (7) above usually; (Tick where appropriate)
- i) carefully planned and executed (scientifically) Yes / No
 - ii) carried out randomly when an opportunity arises Yes / No
- 9) What are the benefits that the firm gets from engaging the research in (7) above?.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
- 10) i) Do you continually track and document service performance over time? Yes / No
- ii) If yes in 11(i), at which level do you capture the performance? (Tick where appropriate)
- Individual employee level []
 - Team level []
 - Organisation as a whole []
 - Competition level []

- 11) i) Does the firm actively try to get the client's expectations before each undertaking? Yes/No
- ii) If yes, how?
-
-
-
- 12) i) Does your firm carry out post evaluation to understand the client's perception of a successful undertaking, i.e. do you follow up after final accounts and payment settling? Yes / No
- ii) If yes in 13(i) above, how, and if not why?
-
-
-
- 14) Does your firm make efforts to keep clients informed of what it is doing?
- Yes/No
- 15) i) Does the firm endeavour to find out why and how new clients approached it?
- Yes / No
- ii) If Yes in 15(i), how do you do it?
-
-
-
- 16) i) Does your firm do some evaluation / analysis of the market to tell long-term and short-term demands? Yes / No
- ii) If yes, to what extent? (Tick where appropriate)
- Extremely Moderately Minimally
- 17) How does your firm build up its current market share?
- By following a systematic strategy of growth
- By taking up opportunities whenever they present themselves