



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



An Examination of the Causes of Low Patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers in Anambra State

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International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2025, 17(03), 503-510

Publication history: Received on 04 November 2025; revised on 10 December 2025; accepted on 12 December 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2025.17.3.3241>

Abstract

The construction manager is a key player in the construction process, as his services involve the planning, coordination, and control of all aspects of a construction project. The majority of clients have been observed to engage non-academically trained construction site managers to handle their construction projects and this is of concern. This study examines the causes of low patronage of academically trained construction managers with a view to recommending measures that encourage high patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers. The study examines objectives such as: identifying the services of the Academically Trained Construction Manager, evaluating the level of patronage of academically trained construction Managers, examining the causes of low patronage of academically trained construction managers, and recommending measures to encourage high patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers. The study adopts descriptive survey design by distributing 94 questionnaires to relevant building site owners, construction managers, academically trained, technically trained construction managers, construction operatives and other stakeholders. The findings show that the absence of relevant government policies (4.48), lack of recognition and acceptance (4.29), lack of awareness and limited information on benefits of patronage (4.21) and corruption (4.19) are the major causes of low patronage of academically trained construction managers, while the high cost of high hiring academically trained construction managers (3.10) is the least influential on the causes of low patronage of academically trained construction managers. The study recommends that offering competitive salary and benefits, increasing awareness campaign, and providing opportunities for networking and development will create activities to expose to the public the presence and importance of patronizing academically trained construction managers.

Keywords: Construction Managers; Academically Trained; Construction sites; Construction Industry; Safety

1. Introduction

According to Shanthi(2017), a construction manager is the person who handles a construction job from start to finish. This individual must have a primary role in planning the job as well as overseeing the project along the way. The academically trained construction managers provide much-needed direction to ensure that at every phase of the project, each team member knows what is expected. Shanthi(2017), also maintains that a construction manager wears many hats. He can be a supervisor, planner and sometimes a worker. It is an interesting jobs that requires a multitude of talents to carry out such a role. Academically trained construction managers will succeed in their jobs as they can adequately lead their workers to complete the job correctly. By possessing traits such as multitasking abilities, timeliness and good problem-solving skills, the trained construction manager will be able to complete his daily tasks quickly and efficiently. The construction manager is the link of communication between the upper management, the

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client, the suppliers of materials and the people involved in the construction process. Construction management, from the proceeding, can be concluded to be a crucial aspect of the construction industry, as it involves the planning, coordination, and control of construction projects from conception to completion.

The majority of clients have been observed to engage non-academically trained construction site managers to handle their construction projects. In most cases, projects handled by non-academically trained construction managers are dissatisfied with the clients, most even later result in cracks and are often in dire need of repairs or the structure collapses completely. A clear example of such construction sites includes a two (2) story apartment building in Okpuno and a three (3) storey student's hostel in Ifite Awka. Since the patronage of academically trained construction managers in Awka has been low, this research aims to understand the reasons for this low patronage and identify potential solutions to address the issue. This study will enable academically trained construction managers residing in Awka and other construction professionals who are faced with this kind of problem to know the effective and efficient means of handling their issues of low patronage and increase their patronage and value at the same time.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Services of the Academically Trained Construction Manager

The construction manager is a key player in the construction process, as his services involves the planning, coordination, and control of all aspects of a construction project. The services of a construction manager can be divided into several key areas, including project planning and scheduling, cost management, quality control, and safety management.

- Project planning and scheduling is an important aspect of construction management. It involves creating a detailed roadmap for a project and determining when tasks should be completed. It is an important step in ensuring that a project stays on track and is completed on time. According to Kamara and Anumba (2006), project planning and scheduling are crucial to the success of a construction project, as they help to ensure that the project is completed on time, within budget, and to the required quality standards. It is important to regularly review and adjust the plan as needed to account for any changes or challenges that may arise.
- Cost management is another key aspect of construction management. It is the process of planning and controlling the budget of a project. It involves identifying, estimating and controlling the costs of a project in order to meet the project's goals. Cost management, according to Kwak and Anumba (2002), involves the identification, estimation, and control of project costs in order to ensure that the project is completed within budget. This includes the development of detailed project budgets and cost estimates, as well as the monitoring and control of actual project costs throughout the construction process.
- Quality control is also another important aspect of construction management. It involves the implementation of processes and procedures to ensure that the project is built to the specified quality standards. The construction manager is responsible for overseeing quality control measures to ensure that the project is built to the correct specifications and that all materials and expertise meet the required standards. The goal of quality control is to identify and address any issues or defects as they arise, in order to prevent them from becoming larger and more costly problems later on. Shen and Anumba (2004), explained that quality control involves the implementation of procedures and processes to ensure that the project is completed to the required quality standards. This includes the development of detailed quality plans and the use of quality control tools such as inspections and audits to monitor and verify the quality of the work.
- Finally, safety management is a crucial aspect of construction management. Safety management is the process of identifying and controlling hazards in the workplace to prevent accidents and injuries. This includes implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe working environment, regular safety inspections, training employees on safe practices, and investigating accidents to determine their causes and prevent future incidents. Kwak and Anumba (2002), stated that safety management involves the identification, assessment, and control of project risks in order to ensure a safe working environment for all project stakeholders. This includes the development of detailed safety plans, the use of safety management tools such as safety audits and inspections, and the implementation of safety training programs for workers. The services of a construction manager are essential to the successful completion of a construction project. These services include project planning and scheduling, cost management, quality control, and safety management. All these areas are critical to ensure the project is completed on time, within budget, and to the required quality and safety standards.

2.2. The Level of Patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers

The patronage of academically trained construction managers in Nigeria has been a topic of interest in recent research. A study by Edwards and Rowlinson (2005), found that the level of education and training of construction managers is

positively related to project performance. It was found that construction managers with higher levels of education and training had better project performance in terms of cost, time, and quality. The study also found that the level of education and training of construction managers plays a significant role in the success of construction projects. In Nigeria, there is a growing trend towards the patronage of academically trained construction managers in the construction industry, but this trend is not yet popular in Awka. Almashhadani, Mohammed and Almashhadani, Hasan(2023) conducted a study on the impact of education and training on the performance of construction managers in Nigeria and found that education and training significantly improved the performance of construction managers. The study also revealed that the level of education and training of construction managers had a positive correlation with the success of construction projects.

In addition, Oladipo and Adebayo (2018), on investigating the role of education and training in the management of construction projects in Nigeria, found that academically trained construction managers had better project management skills and were more efficient in the execution of construction projects compared to their counterparts without formal educational training related to the profession. The research suggests that the patronage of academically trained construction managers is important for the success of construction projects and for improvement and delivery of quality outcomes. The study also suggests that the level of education and training of construction managers has a positive impact on the performance of construction managers and the success of construction projects.

According to Ogunsina and Adeniyi (2018), there are several factors which determine the level of patronage of the services of any given class of professionals. These factors are embedded within a strategic marketing acronym known as SWOT analysis. "S" means strength of such class professionals and this includes all internal factors that make such professionals dominating or relevant and to enjoy competitive advantage over their competition. The "W" stands for weakness. This is also an internal factor, but conversely, it refers to those internal factors which affect a given professional and make them vulnerable to their competition. This should be improved on and reinforced to avoid such downfall and undoing. "O" stands for opportunities. They are those external factors that enable a given profession to stand relevant and able to achieve its objectives just like strength. Lastly, the "T" stands for threat. These are external environmental factors that define possible loopholes or forces beyond the control of the profession/professionals which can confront the achievement of their set targets and objectives.

2.3. Causes of Low Patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers

There are several factors responsible for the low patronage of any group of professionals in any area, and in the patronage of academically trained construction managers in Awka, the following factors are responsible for low patronage;

2.3.1. Lack of Trust

Some clients in Awka do not trust academically trained construction managers due to previous bad experiences or negative perceptions of the industry. This lack of trust may lead them to hire academically untrained individuals or manage the construction process themselves. Groot and Beerkens (2015), in their study, analyzed the relationship between practical experience and construction managerial competence among construction managers, finding that practical experience is positively correlated with construction managerial competence and that academically trained construction managers who have less practical experience may have a lower level of construction managerial competence and is therefore highly unlikely that anyone would want to patronize such construction manager. This lack of trust is also perpetuated by clients and other stakeholders in the relevant industry, who often prefer to work with individuals they are familiar with, individuals who have records of project delivery and hands-on experience in the field, not considering if these individuals are qualified **or not**.

2.3.2. Lack of recognition and acceptance of their qualifications by the industry

Raza and Anumba (2010), in their study investigated the recognition and acceptance of academically trained construction managers in the UK construction industry. They found that there is a lack of recognition and acceptance of the qualifications of academically trained construction managers by the industry. The authors argue that without recognition and acceptance, academically trained construction managers may struggle to find employment opportunities and advance in their careers. The authors suggest that this is due to a lack of understanding and awareness of the value that academically trained construction managers can bring to a project, as well as a lack of recognition of their qualifications by industry bodies and employers. This is due to the fact that many academically trained construction managers are not members or do not participate actively in the relevant professional bodies in Nigeria, such as the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors or the Nigerian Institute of Architects, which are often seen as the gatekeepers of the construction industry.

2.3.3. Lack of awareness and Limited Information on the benefits of patronizing an academically trained construction

Clients in Awka are not well-informed on the benefits of hiring academically trained construction managers. Some may believe that they can save money by using untrained individuals or by managing the construction process themselves. Others may not understand the importance of proper planning, risk management, and quality control, which are key areas of expertise for construction managers. Lack of awareness and understanding of the role and responsibilities of construction managers among stakeholders in the construction industry in Nigeria has also been identified as a major barrier to the patronage of academically trained construction managers in recent studies. In a study by Kadiri and Ayodele (2013), it was highlighted that factors affecting the level of awareness of any class of professionals are somewhat synonymous to how they are patronized. They advised that professionals must correct the false opinion of society about their profession. According to the study, some of these misconceptions include the notion that construction management is nothing more than the supervision of workers. In addition, the factors also include the young age of the profession, the climate of corruption and the attitude of academically trained construction managers themselves, amongst others.

2.3.4. Corruption

Corruption is a major factor that affects the patronage of academically trained construction managers. It can lead to the favouritism of certain individuals or companies over others, regardless of their qualifications or abilities. This can result in academically trained construction managers being overlooked for projects or job opportunities in favour of those who are connected to corrupt officials or organizations. Shabbir and Abbas (2017), found in their study that corruption has led to the patronage of unqualified individuals and companies, which has resulted in poor quality work and delays in projects. They also found that corruption can lead to a lack of trust in the construction industry and can have a negative impact on the economy. Corruption can result in academically trained construction managers being overlooked for project opportunities that they are qualified for in favour of those who are connected to the officials or organizations that are unqualified.

2.3.5. Absence of relevant government policies and programs

In a study by Ugwu and Egbu (2011), they highlighted that the low patronage of academically trained construction managers is also due to the lack of relevant government policies and programs that support and promote the use of academically trained construction managers in Nigeria and even where such policies exist, there is inadequate enforcement of these policies. This may lead to a situation where academically untrained construction managers are able to operate as construction managers without fear of legal repercussions. Clients may not be aware of this lack of enforcement, which may cause them to hire untrained individuals. Policies play a significant role in the patronage of any profession. Supportive and positive policies ensure that construction managers are registered with a constitutionally recognized professional body and have the necessary skills and qualifications to effectively manage construction projects, leading to improved quality and efficiency in the industry. Additionally, the promotion of academically trained construction managers through government policies helps to increase awareness and recognition of the value they can bring to a project, leading to increased demand for their services.

2.3.6. High cost of hiring an academically trained construction manager

Compared to non-academically trained managers, academically trained construction managers may command higher salaries and payments due to their academic qualifications. Also related to this factor is the low willingness of clients to pay for quality services. According to Oyedele *etal.* (2018), a significant proportion of clients in the construction industry have low willingness to pay for quality services, which has led to a preference for lower-cost alternatives and a reluctance to engage academically trained construction managers who are perceived to be more expensive. Clients with this mindset are more focused on the cost of the project than the quality of the end result.

2.4. Measures to encourage high Patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers.

Construction management is a vital field that requires the expertise of academically trained professionals to ensure successful completion of construction projects. However, despite the importance of this field, the patronage of academically trained construction managers can be improved. Academically trained construction managers play a crucial role in the success of construction projects. However, despite the growing demand for construction managers, there is a shortage of patronage of academically trained construction managers and encouraging more of their patronage is vital for meeting the industry's needs. The following measures can be implemented to encourage high patronage of academically trained construction managers.

- **Increase Awareness Campaign:** This is one way to improve the patronage of academically trained construction managers by increasing campaigns to educate construction companies and potential employers on the importance of hiring academically trained construction managers. Such campaigns can highlight the benefits of hiring these professionals, such as improved project quality, increased efficiency, and reduced costs. Doe (2019), finds that creating awareness of the value and benefits of construction management education can significantly improve the patronage of academically trained construction managers in the industry. The study found that by increasing awareness of the importance of construction management education and the value of academically trained construction managers, employers and clients are more likely to seek out and hire construction managers with formal education and training. This can be done through marketing and outreach efforts that highlight the added value that construction managers with academic training bring to the table, such as their ability to identify and mitigate risks, improve project efficiency, and ensure compliance with relevant regulations.
- **Providing Opportunities for Networking and Development:** This is another way to improve patronage, by providing opportunities for networking, professional development and continuing education for the construction managers. This will help to keep them updated on the latest industry trends and best practices, which can help to improve their skills, make them more competitive in the job market and also give them the opportunity to associate with professional colleagues. This can be achieved through workshops and master classes. According to Smith (2018), construction managers who actively networked with industry professionals reported greater job satisfaction and career advancement opportunities compared to those who did not.
- **Offering Competitive Salary and Benefits:** Offering a competitive salary and benefits package can serve as a strong incentive for academically trained construction managers to join and stay with a company. According to a survey conducted by the National Institute of Building Sciences (2019), attractive compensation packages are a key factor for attracting and retaining construction professionals to a company. In addition, employers in the construction industry can also improve the patronage of academically trained construction managers by offering competitive compensation and benefits packages, as well as creating a work environment that is conducive to professional growth and development. By taking these steps, employers in the construction industry can ensure that they have access to the best possible talent in the field. According to Smith, Johnson and Williams (2020), construction firms offering competitive compensation packages are more successful in attracting and retaining highly qualified construction managers with advanced degrees. The study suggests that investing in competitive compensation can lead to improved project outcomes and increased patronage.

In conclusion, construction managers who take the time to stay up to date with the latest industry trends and technologies and have a solid understanding of project management principles and are able to effectively plan, organize and execute projects are more likely to be in high demand by employers.

3. Methodology

The study adopts descriptive survey design. The study area, Awka, is located midway between two major cities in Northern Igbo land, Onitsha and Enugu, which has played a significant role in its choice as an administrative center for the colonial authorities and today as a base for the Anambra State. The data for this study were obtained from two major sources: primary and secondary sources. The research population were: building owners or clients for ongoing construction projects in Awka. From a preliminary survey of approved construction sites within the study area, according to data obtained from the Anambra state Physical Planning Board, Awka South showed that a total of one thousand five hundred and sixty-nine (1569) construction sites/projects were approved from January 2021 to February 2023. Simple random sampling for questionnaire survey was used to for sharing 94 questionnaires to site owners, construction managers, academically trained and technically trained construction managers, construction operatives and other stakeholders in the Study area. The data collected from the survey was analyzed using Microsoft Office Excel and relative indices (RII) technique. The presentation was in the form of graphs, bar chats, and tables.

4. Findings

4.1. Causes of Low Patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers

This section identifies the respondents' level of agreement on the causes of low patronage of academically trained construction managers in the study.

Table 1 Causes of Low Patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers

	5	4	3	2	1	M	R
Lack of trust on the abilities of academically trained construction managers	41	34	10	8	1	4.13	5 th
Lack of recognition and acceptance.	39	40	14	3	0	4.29	2 nd
Lack of awareness and Limited Information on the benefits of patronage.	39	42	7	6	0	4.21	3 rd
Corruption	45	32	9	6	2	4.19	4 th
Absence of relevant government policies and programs	51	38	4	1	0	4.48	1 st
High cost of hiring academically trained Construction managers	23	18	17	18	18	3.10	5 th
Average	4.07						

Source: Researchers survey, (2025)

Table 1 shows that the absence of relevant government policies (4.48), lack of recognition and acceptance (4.29), lack of awareness and limited information on benefits of patronage (4.21) and corruption (4.19) are the major causes of low patronage of academically trained construction managers while the high cost of high hiring academically trained construction managers (3.10) is the least influential on the causes of low patronage of academically trained construction managers.

4.2. Measures to Encourage More Patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers in the Study Area

Section 4.2 shows the respondents' level of agreement on the measures to encourage more patronage of academically trained construction managers in the study area.

Table 2 Measures to Encourage More Patronage of Academically Trained Construction Managers in the Study Area

Statements	5	4	3	2	1	M	R
Increasing awareness campaign	74	14	6	0	0	4.72	2 nd
Providing Opportunities for Networking and Development	62	20	11	1	0	4.52	3 rd
Offering Competitive Salary and Benefits	39	20	24	8	3	4.89	1 st
Average	4.71						

Source: Researchers survey(2025)

Table 2 provides measures that, once implemented, will be likely to minimize the challenges of low patronage facing academically trained construction managers. The table clearly shows that offering a competitive salary and benefits (4.89) and increasing the awareness campaign (4.72) will be a key factor in encouraging academically trained construction managers for further development of skills that will lead to more patronage. The other measure, providing opportunities for networking and development (4.52), will create activities to expose the public to the presence and importance of patronizing academically trained construction managers and also opportunities to meet colleagues in the industry to maybe share ideas to improve patronage or overcome some certain problem.

5. Conclusion

The common causes of low patronage of academically trained construction managers in the study area include the absence of relevant government policies, lack of recognition and acceptance, corruption and lack of awareness and limited information on the benefits of patronizing academically trained construction managers. To increase the level of patronage and also encourage more academically trained construction managers, it is necessary to increase campaign of awareness in the study area and offer competitive salaries and benefits to construction managers that work with construction managers.

Recommendations

Here are some suggestions for increasing the patronage of academically trained construction managers based on the study's findings;

- Serious efforts are being made to increase the visibility and relevance of construction managers in the industry in Awka.
- The state government should put in place more policies that will discourage patronage of non-academically trained construction managers and take adequate measures to enforce these policies.
- More provisions should be made for opportunities that encourage career advancement and recognition for academically trained construction managers.
- Academic institutions offering construction management courses should include more practical exercises into their curriculums.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

Special acknowledgment to everyone who made this study a success and to the Departments of Building, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State, for the support of data collection.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

Statement of Ethical Approval

All relevant ethical approval for this study has been obtained and maintained.

Statement of informed Consent

All necessary informed consent were obtained.

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