

The Effects of an Inadequate Data Bank System on Real Estate Agency Practice in Lagos Mainland, Nigeria

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Abstract

Property data is an essential component and an integral part of decision-making accountability, so making bad decisions is inevitable in its absence. Therefore, the lack of crucial data is a major factor impacting real estate agency firms and forms the crux of this study. This study examines the impact of a deficient data bank system's impact on licensed estate agents' practice. The study was conducted using questionnaires administered to Estate Surveyors and Valuers within Lagos Mainland. A sample size of 192 respondents was selected from the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers' Directory, which was used for the analysis. The study revealed that the unavailability of a central property data system impairs, to a great extent, the practice of real estate agents. The study further revealed that there is a need for members of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers to collaborate and create a robust databank comparable to that of the Investment Property Databank (IPD). It was then suggested that measures be put in place to develop and facilitate the running of a databank. This would then be made available and accessible to Estate Surveyors who require such information.

Keywords: Property, bank system, real estate, data, estate surveyor and valuer

Background to the Study

The practice of real estate is a growing contributor to the country's national economy. Internally, it is subdivided into various sectors through which a network is created to produce maximal results. None of these industries can function without the availability of processed data, as information is the foundation of every real estate transaction. Indeed, it can be inferred that information is the currency of trade in the real estate market. Therefore, the availability and accessibility to accurate, reliable and timely data is germane to the operation of the property market.

In the words of Ogunyemi (2011), the importance of the availability of data or information in effective decision-making in real estate transactions cannot be over-emphasised. According to him, in real estate, decision-making relates to issues such as the sale, purchase and letting of properties, real estate investment and management, compulsory acquisition

of land and properties, real estate taxation and insurance, real estate inheritance and settlement, asset sharing, allocation and re-allocation and government divestiture and privatisation programs. Thus, its role as an essential component and an integral part of accountability for decisions taken is second to none, and so in its absence, making bad choices is inevitable. Agreeing with this, Adedamola (2011) stated that the lack of or inadequate reliable data would result in an inappropriate or even no decision. He added that transactions (sales, letting and valuation) in relation to property investment require the availability of up-to-date data and the lack of data would significantly impair the performance of surveyors in turning out reports that could stand the test of time.

In addition, Oyedele (2017) discovered that in real estate, many deals rely on data analysis as it makes for faster, more accurate appraisals, sophisticated forecasts and smarter decisions about property

investments. Similarly, deciding whether to invest and what type of investment is available in real estate investment depends on a guide from the data analysed. According to him, predictive analysis of data that involves the use of large sets of historical data to predict future events, give an estimated future value regarding the profitability of a real estate investment and/or an overall market forecast shows the importance of data in making sound decisions and mitigating real estate risk in the future. He concluded that real estate investment could be one of the best and easiest products available if there is adequate data for investment analysis. Then it means that the importance of reliable data for decision-making purposes in real estate should not be undermined. Furthermore, it will be impossible to compare the various decisions available and if the ones made were the best ones that could have been made.

The Nigerian property market lacks data on which to base investment decisions compared to alternative investment markets (Ogunyemi, 2011). He added that it is not impossible to see evidence of inadequate data provision within the property market coupled with the reluctance to release transaction evidence by valuers. Most transactions are carried out secretly, which hinders accessibility to reliable data. There is no doubt that property data sources are perceived to be fragmented and incomplete, sometimes the byproduct of administrative processes and assembled with minimal cooperation from the originators of the data. Commenting on this, Feenan and Dixon (1992) stated: "The ability to collect and compile data to analyse is sadly lacking partly due to secrecy problems and confidentiality and lack of motivation". Moreover, confidentiality clauses and the inaccessibility of government records represent barriers to data exchange within the property market, which is already naturally complex and diverse (Wyatt, 1995).

Car (2006) suggested that a combination of sources should be used in order to collect reliable data. Lizieri and Venmore-Rowland (1991) agree that valuers should seek to widen the information used to arrive at an appraisal and reduce their reliance and dependence on inadequate and often inconsistent property market data. McNamara (1994), pursuing the same theme, argues that much of the forecasting work done in the UK is data-constrained and utilises less-than-adequate

information. Furthermore, the Mallinson Report (RICS, 1994) considers that although the property profession has a history of protecting information in the interest of competition, much could be done to improve data availability without violating confidentiality. Other researchers suggest the cross-fertilisation of ideas in relation to the happenings within the profession and allied professions (in the built environment). This implies, therefore, that in data acquisition for real estate purposes, the Estate Surveyor and Valuer (ESV) cannot operate in isolation from other colleagues in the field. Traditionally, data on property transactions are made available through a network of professional contacts in a process known as the "Jungle Telegraph".

At present, there is minimal data centrally available about the real estate market. This often leads to valuation results of significant variance, inefficiencies in the property market and instability of the profession as a whole. Therefore, the absence of essential data being a major factor impacting real estate agency firms forms the crux of this study.

Literature Review

According to RICS (2009), data can be in the form of facts or statistics. Statistics here constitute numerical information from a collection, organisation, analysis, and interpretation process. Good quality data should have the features of validity and reliability. According to Burns (2000), the latter calls for dependability, stability, consistency, predictability and accuracy. Validity's existence depends on the accuracy of the information the data provides.

Data is essential for firms and businesses because it is the basis of analysis. Data is used for benchmarking, business planning, decision-making, and internal and external reporting (RICS, 2019: 51). As a business tool, data is robust and can create value (Onwuanyi, 2020). At the level of economic management, data constitute the input used to measure economic development (Ge & Harfield, 2006). Data is essential for governments and institutions to plan accurately, fund and evaluate their activities, and monitor progress towards improving socio-economic conditions (Beguy, 2016).

A scientific database is a computerised, organised collection of related data which can be accessed for scientific inquiry and long-term stewardship. Scientific databases allow the integration of different data sets and allow data to be analysed in new ways, often across disciplines, making new types of scientific inquiry possible (Brunt, 2000).

Onwuanyi, 2020 defines property data as data which is gathered or produced from landed property. It originates from the landed property as it passes, at different times, through the processes of being initially delineated, bought and owned, leased out and sold off. These processes involve administration which deals with rights, tenure, registration and transactions – monitoring (Wallace, 2009): and management, development and disposal (by sale or letting), which are value-adding, market and profit-oriented (Darlow, 1984; Fraser, 1984; Savills, 2020).

The RICS (2009) definition of property data defines it as consisting of facts and statistics. Therefore, while some statistical information will emanate from within the property, other factual information regarding the property will originate from outside it.

The Practice of Agency

Different accounts have been provided as being the origin of the development of real estate agencies across the world. Ash (1958) explained that estate agency grew from old auctioneers who were chattel men (but surely also agricultural auctioneers) who turned eagerly to the exciting prospect of selling big landed estates and that the expression "estate agent" was coined to describe the practitioner who did more of selling and buying than auctioneering. The author suggested that real estate activities originated and developed with Christopher Cook of the great piazza in Convent Garden, whose first sale announcement was entirely devoted to land. In the account of Stephen (1981), the employment by great land owners of persons to oversee their holdings, deal with tenure, rentals and many other matters on behalf of their lords goes far back to the Norman Conquest. It could be argued that the stewards were amongst the progenitor of today's "general practitioners" and, as most of today's practising estate agents can be described as, one of the origins from which they sprang. Real estate

practice grew out of England's industrial development, and it is the upheaval of the nineteenth century with its redistribution of ownership and its multiplication of problems affecting the property that can be traced to the vocation of auctioneers and estate agents (Stephens, 1981). In Nigeria, real estate agency is an aspect, and an area of core competence of the professionals trained in the Act trained to deal in property transactions. The organised body recognised for the regulation of the practice of estate agency and property business generally is the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV). The practitioners are referred to as Estate Surveyors and Valuers. However, and rather unfortunately, the Corporate Affairs Commission regards estate agencies as a business concern and classifies it under general business practice.

For Bello & Olajide (2003), the origin of Estate Management dates back to the beginning of time when God at creation established the Garden of Eden and put Adam and Eve in charge of it, thus, making them the first Estate Managers known to man. They argue that the profession of estate surveying and valuation followed in the wake of colonialism in Nigeria, with F.G Gleave, an expatriate, being the first known chartered surveyor to set up a general practice or estate surveying and valuation firm in the country about 1955. Hitherto, there were few chartered surveyors in private and public employment in Nigeria.

Ubonsi (2007), however, disagrees with this sentiment. He explained the background of the practice in Nigeria to have originated in 1968/1969 when Estate Surveyors and Valuers from the United Kingdom who had not only studied but practised for a few years came to Nigeria. He said that while some gained employment in public and private institutions, others set up their private practice. A few years later, in 1975, the government enacted Decree No. 24 of 1975, thus recognising the profession.

Real Estate Agency in Nigeria has largely been regarded as a finger-snap money-making domain for every Dick and Harry. The practice until recently remained very loose, largely unregulated and without serious professional qualification or expertise to get involved (Olayinka, 2017). Estate agency in the conventional form is not only practised by those

trained in property business but also welcomes interest from other backgrounds, including those with little or no formal training (Caleb, 2017). The agency, therefore, is the relationship between a principal and an agent accorded the authorisation to act on behalf of the principal to oversee matters concerning the subject property. Also referred to as a brokerage service, an agency, according to Frew (1986), is considered successful when it impacts selling price and market duration. Generally, the agency is the contract which creates a relationship between the principal and the agent (Mehul, 201).

Commercial activities have increased in Nigeria in the past few years. This is also reflected in the fact that there has been an increase in real Estate activities. The real estate agency practice has, therefore, in recent times become a business for all comers: mechanics, marketmen, lawyers and taxi drivers, among other quacks. The practice of real estate agencies in Nigeria at present remains largely unorganised, unregulated and unprofessional. Apart from the Nigeria Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers, which has set standards for its practice by its members, the majority of those who practice estate agency do so without the basic training in that field, without any certification or qualification, without any regulation and mainly in an unprofessional manner (Gambo& Ashen, 2012). The practice is also endemic in a brazen display of issues on ethics and misconduct among qualified and "unqualified" practitioners.

Some examples of unethical behaviour and practices identified by Oni (2009), Eleh and Ihua-Maduenvi (2015), and in the Code of Professional Conduct for Estate Surveyors and Valuers (1975) include prejudice, a lack of proper accountability for clients' money, a lack of integrity, bribery, and the collection of professional fees from both parties and even third parties. Others include placing two or more boards of estate firms on a property, misleading the client with a description of the property, a conflict of interest, incompetent representation, mishandling of the client's money, a fee-splitting arrangement, the disclosure of confidential information, improper solicitation and advertising, and improper solicitation and advertising.

Although in Nigeria, Section 25&26 of Decree 24 of 1975 empowers the Estate Surveyor and Valuer in

carrying out operations as an estate agent, the organised body recognised for the regulation of practice is the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON). However, the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), a body statutorily empowered to register every business outfit in the country, regards estate agencies as a business concern and classifies it under general business practice (Akomoledede, 2006: Oni, 2009). This has partly accounted for why non-professionals engage in estate agency. The agency practice is regarded as all-comers' affairs as lawyers, engineers, accountants and even laymen learned in numeric details carry out this operation. An expression has become synonymous with the estate surveying profession calling every other profession dabbling into agency as quacks. However, no clear cut-out edicts grant the estate surveyor and valuer the exclusive preservation of operation even when a series of protests have been made to that effect (Iroham, 2011).

The best agitations brought about in Lagos State alone is the recent harmonisation of real estate agency practice under the auspices of the Association of Estate Agents of Nigeria (AEAN). Knowing full well that real estate agency practice is an all-comer affair as colloquially described in Nigeria, the need for training and re-training of Estate Surveyors and valuers to fully take charge of this area of practice cannot be overemphasised. Although a multiplicity of local estate agents' associations exists, these are essentially local bodies without the proper structure, leadership, or plan to advance the practice of real estate agencies beyond the parochial interest of the founders (Hemuka, 2002). However, research on estate agencies and agency education in Nigeria is scarce. Most of such research has been done in the UK, the US and Asia. The performance of an estate agency is undoubtedly a function of factors such as technology development, availability of market data and market environment volatility factors such as housing market liquidity and house price changes and not necessarily factors such as firm size and the level of agency fee (Ke et al., 2008). The foregoing begins to agitate the minds of the researchers as regards the efficiency of real estate agency practice in Nigeria.

The Estate Agent

Estate and agent are two different words coined together to represent a descriptive appellation for the person or business entity carrying out estate agency activities. The estate is a large piece of land owned by an individual or group of persons. It is also described as a piece or large piece of land with different types of buildings/structures being developed.

The legal meaning of estate is the amount, degree or nature of a person's interest in land or other property.

An Agent is referred to as the person or business entity authorised and/or instructed to act on behalf of another person – client – in a business transaction with third parties based on an agency relationship they have created.

Estate Agent, on the other hand, is regarded to mean the person who carries out business activities in estate agency practice and whose duty is to sell, acquire, lease and manage various classes of land and landed properties on behalf of the client in consideration for monetary compensation usually referred to as a commission.

Estate agents, according to Oxford Dictionary Companion to Law, are described as "persons who act as agents for selling or letting of land and houses, aided by advertisement and other means to find a corporate body, or someone who is willing to buy or rent parcels of land or houses". Akomolede (2006) described an estate agent as one appointed or instructed by another person (client) to buy, sell or lease a real estate property to a third party for a fee or commission. Generally, a real estate agent is a person who possesses the authority to act on behalf of another person to establish a contractual relationship between his principal and a third party. The person, who employs the agent, is usually called the principal (Olatunji, 2008).

Research Methodology

This study used the cross-sectional survey approach, which adopts both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study area is restricted to estate firms in the Yaba, Ojota and Ikeja areas of Lagos Mainland. The choice of these areas within the Lagos Mainland as against others is due to the large number of agency

activities that take place there. This may be attributed to the categories of residential and commercial properties in the area or the appealing characteristics of these areas. The target population is licensed real estate brokers in registered firms within the study area.

The Directory of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV, 2009) reveals that more than 50% of real estate firms in Lagos are located on the mainland. However, the exact figures of registered firms cannot be determined. This is because new firms are being established regularly, and not all of them are registered. Thus, figures provided from various sources do not correlate. The Directory of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers in 2015 has shown the number of registered firms in Lagos Mainland to be more than 250. For this study, the population is estimated at approximately 300 (allowing for an increase over the past six years). However, not all firms would be expected to retain the same address, and most firms in the directory have folded up. Therefore, given these possibilities, a sampling frame of 287 firms has been adopted.

In this study, an attempt has been made to adopt a sample size which, on the one hand, is large enough to be representative and, on the other hand, small enough to permit in-depth handling and analysis as appropriate. Therefore, adopting the Kothari Formula (2009), using a sampling frame of 287 firms, a sample proportion of 0.5, a confidence level of 1.96, and a margin of acceptable error of 0.08 resulted in a total of 197 estate firms representing about 51% of the sample frame was calculated as an appropriate sampling size for this study. This represented the total number of questionnaires issued to the respondents.

The Kothari Formula is given as,

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

Where n= Sample size

z = value of standard variant at a given confidence level (1.96)

p = Sample Proportion (0.5)

q = 1-p that is 1- 0.5= 0.5

e = precision rate or acceptable error (0.08)

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{1.962 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 \times 287}{0.08^2(287-1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5} = \frac{281.26}{.42}$$

$$n = 197$$

Therefore, the sample size will be 197 registered estate firms.

The data-gathering procedure was accomplished by administering the questionnaires to the respondents who are registered estate surveyors and valuers in firms in Lagos Mainland, Lagos.

This study adopted a survey questionnaire to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. The questionnaire ensured uniformity and permitted the comparison of results. The collated data obtained from the survey were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

In this study, tools such as frequency distribution tables, mean ranking, bar charts and pie charts were adopted to present the characteristics of the respondents and show the distribution of their responses. In addition, tools such as central tendency, measures of dispersion, and Relative Impact (or Importance) Index (RII) were used to analyse the data. One hundred and ninety-seven (197) questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the study area, and one hundred and Ninety-Two 192 questionnaires were successfully retrieved. At the same time, three (3) were void, and one hundred and Ninety-Two (192) were found usable. This presented an effective 97.46% response rate in total; the discarded responses were from respondents who failed to meet the required quality and consistency checks used in the screening processes.

Analysis of Socioeconomics Profile of Respondents

Primary data gathered through a questionnaire survey, which sought the response of Estate Surveyors and valuers on matters germane to the focus of this study, are presented in this section.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents' Profile

Response	Frequency	Per cent
Location of Firm		
Ojota	48	25.0
Yaba	50	26.0
Ikeja	94	49.0
Total	192	100.0
Age Bracket		
25 - 34 years	66	34.4
35 - 44 years	64	33.3
45 -54 years	40	20.8
55 - 64years	22	11.5
Total	192	100.0
Respondent Years in practice		
1 - 5	84	43.8
6 - 10	80	41.7
Above 10	28	14.6
Total	192	100.0
Area of Specialisation		
Letting	35	18.2
Marketing	86	44.8
Sales	22	11.5
Management	32	16.7
Purchases	17	8.9
Total	192	100.0
Gender		
Male	122	63.5
Female	70	36.5
Total	192	100.0
Academic Qualification		
OND/NCE	37	19.3
HND/BSc	103	53.6
MSc	37	19.3
PhD	13	6.8
Other	2	1.0
Total	192	100.0
Professional Qualification		
Probationer	34	17.7
Associate below 10 years	93	48.4
Associate above 10 years	35	18.2
Fellow	30	15.6
Total	192	100.0

(Source: Field Survey by Author, 2021)

The respondent locations indicate that 25% are in Ojota, 26% are in Yaba, and 49% are in Ikeja. This implies that most of the respondents are located in Ikeja.

The age distribution of the respondents reveals that the highest number of respondents belong to the 25 - 34 age group (34.4%). Others belong to the 35 - 44 age group (33.3%), 45 -54 (20.8%), and 55 - 64 (11.5%). This

show that most of the respondent (64.6%) are within the age group of 35 years and above.

Respondents with Average Years of Experience indicate that 43.8% are within 1–5 years of experience, 41.7% are within 6–10 years of experience, and 14.6% are over 10 years of experience. This implies that most of the respondent has the experience and can deliver justice to all part of the real estate practice.

The data on the area of specialisation, as shown in Table 1, indicates that 18.2% of the respondents specialised in letting, 44.8% were in marketing, 11.5% were in sales, 16.7% were in management, and 8.9% were in purchasing. This implies that most respondents (44.8%) specialised in marketing. The analysis of gender reveals the gender distribution of the respondents, where 63.5% are male and 36.5% are female. The analysis on the level of education attained by the respondents indicates that 53.6% are HND/BSc holders, 19.3% have MSc degrees, 6.8% of them have PhD while 1% have another degree such as certification; most of the respondents have HND/BSc degree and above.

The professional qualification attained above indicates that 23.97% are Fellows, 52.89% are Associates, and 17.36% are Graduates, while 5.79% belong to another category, such as probationer.

Table 2: Sources of Data Available for Respondents' Use

Data Source	FU	OU	OC	SU	NU	Mean	Rank
Market Reports	2.4	1.46	0.38	0.01	0.03	4.27	1st
In-House Data	1.95	1.65	0.53	0.02	0.01	4.16	2nd
Informal Estate Agent	2.06	1.23	0.45	0.13	0.07	3.93	3rd
Professional Colleagues	1.61	1.23	0.75	0.11	0.06	3.77	4th
Public Institutions	1.41	0.94	0.92	0.14	0.11	3.51	5th
Property Owners	1.28	1.06	0.67	0.24	0.14	3.39	6th
Online Sources	1.09	0.94	0.44	0.33	0.23	3.07	7th
Estate Developers	0.83	1	0.61	0.29	0.23	2.97	8th
The Media	0.39	0.5	1.14	0.44	0.2	2.67	9th

(Source: Field survey, 2021)

Note: Frequently Used = FU Occasionally used = OU
Seldom used = SU Never used = NU

Table 2 shows that Market Reports is ranked 1st while In-House Data, Informal Estate Agent, Professional

Colleagues, Public Institutions, and Property Owners are ranked 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th, respectively and Online Sources, Estate Developers. The Media ranked 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, respectively, under the often source range as stated by the respondents as the sources of data available for use in their organisations.

Table 3: Criteria That Inform Respondents' Choice of a Data Source

Criteria	HR	R	U	I	HI	Means	Rank
Accuracy	2.53	1.85	0.06	0.01	0.01	4.46	1st
Dependability	1.95	1.85	0.23	0.11	0.01	4.17	2nd
Consistency	1.93	1.08	0.64	0.15	0.06	3.85	3rd
Comprehensiveness	2.19	0.25	1.14	0.13	0.06	3.76	4th
Stability	1.17	1.4	0.84	0.11	0.08	3.60	5th
Historical validity	1.72	0.75	0.84	0.13	0.13	3.56	6th
Simplicity	1.93	0.6	0.55	0.34	0.11	3.53	7th
Predictability	1.28	1.06	0.52	0.27	0.17	3.30	8th

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

Note: Highly relevant = HR; Relevant = R; Irrelevant = I; Highly irrelevant = HI

Table 3 shows that Accuracy is ranked 1st with 4.46, and Dependability, Consistency, Comprehensiveness, Stability, Historical validity, and Simplicity ranked 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, respectively. In contrast, Predictability is ranked 8th under the relevant range with a mean value of 3.30, as stated by the respondent as the criteria considered in their informed choice of a data source.

Table 4: Information Seldom Found in Data Gathering

Item	FA	A	U	UA	FU	Means	Rank
Property type & size	2.58	1.63	0.2	0.02	0	4.43	1st
Location of the subject property	2.81	1.29	0.17	0.07	0.02	4.37	2nd
History of transaction	2.06	1.13	0.61	0.11	0.05	3.95	3rd
Source of data	1.95	0.98	0.88	0.11	0.02	3.94	4th
Interest in property	1.95	0.98	0.61	0.31	0.01	3.86	5th
Agreed consideration	1.88	1.15	0.53	0.28	0.02	3.85	6th
Date of transaction	1.69	0.81	0.73	0.13	0.15	3.52	7th

(Source: Field Survey by Author, 2021)

Note: Frequently Available = FA; Available = A; Undecided = U; Unavailable = UA; Frequently Unavailable = FU

Table 4 indicates that property type and size are ranked first. Location of the subject property, history of the transaction, source of data, interest in property, agreed-on consideration, and Date of the transaction are ranked 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, respectively, under the always available range as the respondent stated. Based on the respondent's opinions, it shows that all the items above are always available in the data gathering.

Table 5: Factors Contributing to the Challenges of the Evolution of a Data Bank System

Challenges	SA	A	N	D	SD	Means	Rank
Lack of proper documentation	1.53	1.12	0.59	0.2	0.12	3.56	1st
Conservative Attitudes of Surveyors	1.44	1.23	0.49	0.27	0.11	3.53	2nd
Lack of trust among professionals	1.35	1.12	0.59	0.22	0.14	3.42	3rd
Confidentiality constraints	1.58	0.86	0.46	0.29	0.17	3.36	4th
Absence of formal marketplaces	1.53	0.83	0.41	0.32	0.19	3.28	5th
colleagues	0.86	1.26	0.68	0.38	0.1	3.27	6th
The quest to evade taxes	0.68	1.08	0.84	0.31	0.16	3.06	7th
Administrative lapses	0.54	0.68	0.92	0.5	0.16	2.81	8th
Legislative restrictions	0.5	0.94	0.32	0.61	0.25	2.62	9th

Source: Field Survey by Author, 2021

Note: Strongly Agree= SA; Agree= A; Neutral= N; Disagree= D; Strongly Disagree= SD

Table 5 shows that the Lack of proper documentation and conservative attitudes of surveyors are ranked 1st and 2nd respectively under the very satisfactory category, while Lack of trust among professionals, Confidentiality constraints, Absence of formal marketplaces, Colleagues, Quest to evade taxes, Administrative lapses, and Legislative restrictions are ranked from 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th respectively under the satisfactory category as the factors that have contributed to the challenges of the

evolution of a data bank system among the respondents.

Table 6: Factors Constituting Major Challenges to Agency Practice

Factors	SA	A	N	D	SD	Means	Rank
Lack of / Poor Documentation of Real Estate Data	2.11	0.31	0.64	0.24	0.16	3.47	1st
The large presence of Poor Professionals	1.54	0.74	0.62	0.19	0.21	3.29	2nd
Fax Information Flow	1.25	0.8	0.69	0.34	0.15	3.23	3rd
Technology	0.75	0.89	0.73	0.49	0.14	2.99	4th
Poor Marketing	0.68	0.94	0.75	0.36	0.2	2.93	5th
Lack of Trust among Professionals	1.29	0.66	0.36	0.23	0.34	2.88	6th

Source: Field Survey by Author, 2021

Note: Strongly Agree= SA; Agree= A; Neutral= N; Disagree= D; Strongly Disagree= SD

Table 6, Poor, Documentation of Real Estate data and the Large Presence of Poor Professionals are agreed to rank 1st and 2nd as the factors contributing significant challenges to agency practice in the area. Marketing and Lack of Trust among Professionals are ranked from 3rd to 10th, respectively, under the satisfactory category as the factors that are agreed to constitute the major challenges to the practice Agency in the study area.

Table 7: Areas of Agency Practice Affected by the Lack of a Data Bank System

Area of specialisation	SA	A	U	UA	HU	Means	Ranks
Purchase	1.53	1.12	0.59	0.2	0.12	3.56	1st
Letting	1.44	1.23	0.49	0.27	0.11	3.53	2nd
Property management	1.49	0.94	0.65	0.23	0.14	3.44	3rd
Accounting	1.35	1.12	0.59	0.22	0.14	3.42	4th
Investment	1.40	0.90	0.59	0.34	0.13	3.36	5th
Marketing	1.76	0.40	0.57	0.31	0.21	3.23	6th
Sales and acquisition	0.68	1.08	0.84	0.31	0.16	3.06	8th
Lease advisory	1.17	0.83	0.49	0.29	0.25	3.03	9th
Property consultancy	0.54	0.65	0.92	0.50	0.17	2.78	10th

(Source: Field Survey by Author, 2021)

Note: Strongly Affected = SA; Affected = A; Undecided = U; Unaffected = UA; Highly unaffected= HU

Table 7 shows that most respondents specialised in purchases and letting, ranked 1st and 2nd, respectively, under the very effective range. In contrast, Property management, Accounting, Investment, Marketing, Sales and acquisition, Lease advisory, and Property consultancy are ranked from 3rd to 10th, respectively, under the effective range as stated by the respondent as the areas of agency practice affected by the lack of a data bank system in the study area.

Table 8: Perceived Benefits of an Efficient Data Bank System to Agent Practice

Benefits	SA	A	N	D	SD	Means	Ranks
Improved image of the profession	1.53	1.12	0.59	0.20	0.12	3.56	1st
Improved decision making	1.40	1.05	0.84	0.2	0.08	3.56	2nd
Improved efficiency of agents	1.53	1.08	0.32	0.43	0.1	3.47	3rd
Availability of Alternatives	1.35	1.12	0.59	0.22	0.14	3.42	4th
Enhanced quality of service	1.58	0.86	0.46	0.29	0.17	3.36	5th
Ease of access to data	0.86	1.26	0.68	0.38	0.10	3.27	6th
Enhancement of transparency	0.54	0.68	0.92	0.5	0.16	2.81	7th

Source: Field Survey by Author, 2021

Note: Strongly Agree= SA; Agree= A; Neutral= N; Disagree= D; Strongly Disagree= SD

Table 8 shows that an improved image of the profession and Improved decision-making are ranked 1st and 2nd, respectively, under the very satisfactory category. In contrast, Improved efficiency of agents, Availability of comparable, Enhanced quality of service, Ease of access to data, and Promote transparency are ranked from 3rd to 7th, respectively, under the satisfactory category as the benefits of an efficient data bank system to agents in the study area as stated by the respondent.

Recommendations by Professionals

The unavailability of a data bank system is a challenge to the practice of real estate agencies; the primary suggestion by the respondents is a collaboration with other professionals in the field of environmental science to develop a property data bank. Also suggested was the availability of this to estate

surveyors and valuers at a token for the update and maintenance of the data bank.

Discussion of Findings

Dealings in the real estate market, in whatever form, depend on the availability and accessibility of adequate, reliable and current (timely) information to aid the decision-making process. Clients (either individuals or corporate organisations) rely much on the advice of Estate Surveyors and Valuers to enable them to take various decisions with respect to real estate. The advice the Estate Surveyor and Valuer gave is as good as the source(s) of data used in coming up with his opinion of value.

It is evident from the above analysis that, at present, market reports constitute one of the primary sources of data utilised by estate agents, and this decision is informed by the quest to obtain accurate information. Apart from the secrecy surrounding the generation of such data, reliability is in question since they are not subjected to tested treatments. In addition, Lack of proper documentation, Lack of trust among professionals and Confidentiality constraints take the cake in the challenges to the evolution of a centralised data system. The former (lack of/ poor documentation of real estate information) and the large presence of poor professionals significantly impact the practice of estate agents, particularly in the purchases and letting of real estate.

Respondents are, therefore, unanimous in their decision that there is no free access to sufficient market evidence. They are ready to support and contribute to the National Property Databank, which they agree has immense benefits. Their opinions are contained in the challenges above. Responsible information sharing enhances productivity and generates significant benefits such as: enabling decision-makers to be informed rapidly and at low cost, affording access to a wide range of data and improving efficiency and significantly reducing the cost of many products and services.

Conclusion

The lack of reliable databanks contributes a great deal to inaccurate professional advice. The presence of a databank similar to the Investment Property Databank

(IPD) of the UK provides property indices for performance measurement and accuracy tests. The lack of a databank constitutes a significant drawback to the desired result from an Estate Surveyor and Valuer. A substantial part of the problem associated with professional inefficiency will be solved with an adequate national property databank. Taking a cue from RICS (UK), NIESV and ESVARBON should establish a regularly updated property databank to which valuers can have unhindered access even at a token. Most respondents indicated their preparedness to subscribe to National Property Databank – data on concluded transactions.

Reliable property market information is critical to producing professional and ethical valuations. However, access to such information for valuation practice in Lagos is always a challenge. This may require a shift in the current practices of how market information is collected, managed, provided and accessed. This suggests a need to examine the existing property market data sources for valuation practice and the reliability of the data they produce to provide input into any initiative to redress the market data challenges faced by valuers in the country.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and their implications, it is recommended that A property market databank should be created in Nigeria. This, with the support of its members, should, as a matter of urgency, facilitate the creation of this data bank in collaboration with other professionals from various fields within environmental science, the private sector and other stakeholders in the property market data industry, such as valuation practitioners, public institutions, financial institutions, estate developers, estate agents and property owners. Estate Agents should undergo regular, relevant training to develop and enhance their knowledge, skills and capabilities to collect good quality property market data and produce high-standard valuations. The Association of Real Estate, as part of its goal, should organise such education and training programs for practitioners. Also, such training programs should be extended to local estate agents and other property market data collection and management institutions in the country. Last but not least, further research into funding for the

cost of property market data collection in Nigeria should be undertaken.

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