

# Estate Surveying and Valuation: A Profession Endangered by Quackery in Awka, Anambra State

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**Abstract:** *This paper aims to investigate the impact of quackery in Estate Surveying and Valuation practice in Awka, Anambra State. The challenges confronting the Estate Surveying and Valuation profession globally are substantial, and the future of the profession, particularly in Nigeria, is being questioned. Data for this study were gathered using questionnaires distributed to twenty-five (25) registered Estate Surveyors and Valuers in Awka. A total of twenty (20) completed questionnaires were returned and analyzed. The collected data were processed using Descriptive Statistics, including Weighted Mean Scores and Frequency Tables. The study found that the Estate Surveying and Valuation profession has significantly contributed to Nigeria's economic growth. It also highlighted that factors such as the unregulated entry of quacks into the profession and the lack of awareness among clients are contributing to the rise of quackery. The research further showed that quackery undermines the positive role of Estate Surveyors and Valuers in real estate practice, potentially leading to the extinction of their relevance in estate agency and property management if not addressed. The study identified several factors that encourage quackery, including the high earnings from estate agency and property management, client ignorance, the shortage of qualified professionals, and clients' reluctance to incur additional legal fees in litigation. The paper recommends that all real estate stakeholders and the general public be continuously educated through conferences, seminars, and workshops on the practice of Estate Surveying and Valuation and the dangers posed by quackery. The public should also be sensitized to the roles of Estate Surveyors and Valuers in the real estate market. Additionally, ESVARBON must strengthen its resolve to regulate estate agency and property management in Nigeria and advocate for a bill granting exclusive rights to Estate Surveyors and Valuers in these areas, while also pushing for its passage into law. Furthermore, the process for admitting new graduates into the Institution should be simplified to accommodate the increasing demand for qualified professionals.*

**Keywords:** estate surveying, valuation, quackery, Awka, Anambra state

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## INTRODUCTION

Estate Surveying and Valuation profession dates back to the beginning of time. The profession started from the time of creation when God established the Garden of Eden and put Adam and Eve in charge of it (Gen. 2:15). This act of God underlines the importance of the profession to the development and growth of any society. Property Management and Estate agency as aspects of the profession have over the years experienced greater influx of quacks.

Agency refers to the establishment of a contract between a principal and an agent through mutual agreement, where the principal grants the agent the authority to act on their behalf under their direction. This relationship is typically formed when the principal believes that agents, with their experience, training, and expertise, will produce more effective results. Agency is applied across various sectors of life, but in real estate, where market information may be scarce, the role of an estate agent is crucial. Estate agency involves facilitating the transfer of property rights, either through outright sale or the creation of leases or other interests in property (Akomoledé, 2006). Estate agency is a highly profitable part of Estate Surveying and Valuation, providing significant income (Idudu, 2014).

On the other hand, property management involves applying specialized skills to manage investments, often on behalf of individuals, households, or corporate bodies, to ensure maximum return. It includes the planning, control, monitoring, coordination, and supervision of property interests to achieve the owner's objectives. This is a deliberate process of guiding and structuring an investor's land investments into profitable ventures. Estate management covers activities like valuation, sales, purchases, leasing, and ongoing management of property to meet the owner's stated goals. Property investment is often one of the largest financial commitments for households due to the capital involved, and the success of these capital-intensive investments depends on proper management. Effective property management focuses on serving tenants and users, rather than just the physical buildings themselves (Li, 1997). As suggested by Li, this also implies the need for property managers to acquire the necessary training and knowledge to perform their duties effectively.

A property manager needs a deep understanding of land economics, accounting, architecture, construction, and finance. They must be knowledgeable about landlord and tenant laws, have access to competent legal counsel, and possess strong communication, organizational, and delegation skills. Time management and stress-reduction techniques are also essential for efficient property management. Additionally, as Li (1997) indicates, property managers should be sensitive to changes in the economic landscape to make necessary adjustments to cash flow planning. This is often a challenging task in a mature real estate market with well-established regulations and practices.

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According to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Ref No T 069 (2006), commercial property managers must demonstrate three levels of competency: first, a clear understanding of property management and the relationship between owners and tenants; second, the ability to apply property management principles to solve issues affecting both parties; and third, the ability to provide informed advice, including the preparation and presentation of reports on property management.

The formal training required for effective property management is part of the education of an estate surveyor and valuer. This training prepares the professional to understand property owners' needs and desires. Estate surveyors and valuers are experts in property matters and are registered with the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria, the body responsible for regulating estate management practices in Nigeria. Through their formal education, estate surveyors are equipped to manage both property management and estate agency effectively.

Despite the availability of qualified estate professionals, many property owners still hire non-estate surveyors and valuers for managing their properties and facilitating property sales. Over time, there has been an influx of unqualified individuals (quacks) into the estate surveying and valuation profession. Professionals have criticized the involvement of charlatans, particularly in estate agency, highlighting the negative effects of their actions on society, such as arbitrary rent hikes, failure to remit rents to property owners, and excessive charges for tenants (Idudu, 2014). Estate agency, which involves tasks like buying, selling, and letting property, is a highly competitive field, contested by various professionals, including lawyers, doctors, engineers, accountants, teachers, and even the unemployed. Idudu (2014) further notes that, despite clear regulations regarding estate agency practice, estate surveyors and valuers have struggled to exclude unqualified individuals from the profession. Nemieboka (2010) points out the absence of laws banning unqualified agents in Nigeria, stating that anyone can register as a property agent with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Several scholars have predicted that certain professions, including estate management, architecture, and building construction, may lose relevance in the near future. Solanke (2010), in his Mathematical Model for Professional Survival cited by Oni and Adebayo (2012), predicted that, unless current trends change, estate management could become obsolete within the next 21 years. This underscores the pressing need to address the challenges faced by sustainable real estate practices, particularly in estate agency and property management in Nigeria, to prevent the predicted decline in the profession's relevance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Estate agency and property management within the Estate Surveying and Valuation profession have seen a significant influx of quacks. Nemieboka (2010) identified quackery as one of the major challenges facing Estate Surveyors and Valuers. He noted that quacks infiltrate the profession through estate agency, a key aspect where professionals represent either the buyer or seller in legal matters and property valuation, guiding clients on the best ways to navigate the property market. However, estate agency has increasingly become an open field, leading to a surge in quack involvement.

Akomolede (2006) and Oni (2010) highlighted several challenges faced by estate agency and brokerage practices in Nigeria, including lack of partnerships (with practice often being a one-person operation), widespread competition from quacks, and legal issues involving the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Money Laundering Act, Lagos State Land Use Charge Law 2001, and the Lagos State Estate Agency Law 2007. Additional challenges include the digital divide, varying opinions on property values, low staff salaries, lack of training and retraining, and non-implementation of valuation standards. Unethical practices like "topping up" of rent/price, "gazumping," and "gazundering" also complicate the industry. These practices, alongside the mounting of multiple notice boards, collecting double fees, and soliciting for jobs with financial inducements, create significant negative impacts on sustainable real estate practice in the country (Oni, 2009). "Topping up" rent or price involves corrupt practices where agents negotiate an amount with the vendor and then suggest a higher price to the purchaser, pocketing the difference in cash after the deal is closed. This practice is common among non-professionals, although a few professionals may be involved. Efforts by the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) and the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON) have reduced its prevalence (Oni, 2009).

Gazumping and gazundering are actions where the price or rent previously agreed upon is later increased, usually before a contract is finalized. Although these practices are not illegal, they are considered unethical and harm the reputation of those involved (Akomolede, 2006; Oni, 2009). Another unethical practice is the guerilla approach to real estate marketing, where an agent pretends to be a prospective buyer or tenant to secretly negotiate with the property owner, often leading to dishonest transactions (Akomolede, 2006).

In Nigeria, the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) and the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON) are legally recognized as the official bodies for estate agency services. Section 38(f) of the Estate Surveyors and Valuers (Registration, etc.) Act No. 24 of 1975 (now CAP. E13LFN, 2004) defines the profession as involving the selling, buying, or letting of property as an agent. However, the Corporate Affairs

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Commission (CAC), which is responsible for registering businesses, classifies estate agency as a general business activity, allowing non-professionals to practice (Akomoledé, 2006; Oni, 2009). Iroham, Olawumi, Ayedun, and Oloyede (2011) argue that estate agency is viewed as an open field for various professionals—lawyers, engineers, accountants, and even laypeople—resulting in what is commonly referred to as quackery in estate surveying. Despite protests, there are no clear legal boundaries that restrict estate agency to qualified professionals (Iroham, Olawumi, Ayedun, and Oloyede, 2011). Ibiyode (2009) describes an unregistered or untrained individual practicing estate agency as a quack.

The activities of these quacks have posed a significant threat to sustainable real estate practices in Nigeria. Quacks present themselves as professionals without the necessary academic or regulatory qualifications. They are not members of any professional bodies and operate without oversight. The rise in quackery can be attributed to several factors, including the involvement of other professionals like lawyers and architects who, due to their initial contacts with property owners, branch out into estate agency. Additionally, many unskilled individuals have entered the field due to the high unemployment rate in Nigeria (Oni, 2010). There are about 18,000 registered Estate Surveyors and Valuers (ESV) in Nigeria, serving a population of over 200 million people, creating a significant gap that quacks exploit. The lack of a statute to prevent non-professionals from practicing estate agency further exacerbates the issue. Quacks often defraud clients by collecting fees for non-existent properties and disappearing, a practice not typically seen among licensed professionals who are regulated by NIESV and ESVARBON. The licensing system, which holds professionals accountable and occasionally publishes the names of those who engage in misconduct, has helped to clean up the practice, significantly reducing the rate of unethical behavior among registered professionals.

Oni (2010) further explains that the high rate of quackery can be linked to the involvement of professionals like lawyers and architects who have ventured into estate agency due to initial exposure to property owners. Additionally, many non-literate individuals have entered the field due to unemployment. Akomoledé (2006) also notes that the lucrativeness of estate agency, coupled with the lack of will by ESVARBON to regulate the practice, has created a loophole that quacks have taken advantage of. This study emphasizes the urgent need for ESVARBON to develop a stronger commitment to regulating estate agency and property management, advocating for legislation that would grant estate surveyors and valuers an exclusive right to these practices or at least create a framework to legally incorporate and train non-professionals under a unified body for better regulation and oversight.

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The study of factors responsible for the influx of quacks into Estate Surveying and Valuation profession is carried in Awka, Anambra State. Awka is the capital of Anambra State, Nigeria with an estimated population of 301,657 according to 2006 Nigeria census. The focus on Awka is justified because of the affordability of data collection and Estate Firms with requisite experience in Estate Surveying and Valuation profession are located in the Awka which provide sufficient data for this study.

The paper utilized the self-administered questionnaire and interview survey for data collection. This is useful when the respondents could be identified and reached. However, out of the twenty-five (25) Estate Surveyors and Valuers, only twenty responded, this represents 70% of the sample size. Descriptive statistics such as weighted mean score and frequency table were used to identify the factors that contribute to quackery in the practice of Estate Surveying and Valuation profession and consequence of quackery in the profession.

### Data Analysis and Discussion of results

This section of the paper presents analysis of data collected from the study area and the discussion of results. The analysis was structured to examine the factors that contribute to quackery in the profession in Awka, the prevalence of the activities of quacks and consequence of quackery in the profession.

**Table 1: Factors that contribute to quackery in Estate Surveying and Valuation profession in Awka.**

Factors	SA(5)	A(4)	D(3)	SD(2)	U(1)	WMS	Rank
Free entry of quacks in the practice of the profession	55	20	0	0	0	3.75	1
Preying on the ignorance of clients	45	20	2	0	0	3.35	2
Preposterous posing of cost incentive in consulting quacks.	15	25	12	3	0	2.75	3
High mobility of quacks	5	30	10	0	9	2.7	4

**SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2023**

(SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agreed, U = Undecided, D = Disagreed, SD = Strongly Disagreed)



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As indicated in Table 1, all the factors mentioned contribute to quackery. However, free entry of quacks of Estate Agency and property management ranked first with mean score of 3.75. This finding corroborates the finding of Oni and Adebayo (2012) which found out that there is no law regulating the practice of Estate agency and property management in Nigeria, hence it is an all-comer affairs. Furthermore, preying on client's ignorance, preposterous posing of cost incentive in consulting quacks and high mobility of quacks ranked second, third and fourth with mean score of 3.35, 2.75 and 2.7 respectively.

**Table 2: Factors Responsible for Incursion of Quacks into Property Management and Estate Agency Practice.**

Factors	SA(5)	A(4)	D(3)	SD(2)	U(1)	WMS	Rank
High income from property management and agency	70	10	0	0	0	4	1
Lack of legal framework	60	15	0	0	0	3.75	2
Fear of incurring additional legal fee for litigation	60	5	0	0	0	3.25	3
Shortage of qualified personnel	50	10	1	0	0	3.05	4
Ignorance of the clients.	45	7	0	0	0	2.6	5
Lack of confidence by clients on Estate Surveyors to evict erring tenants.	30	5	2	0	3	2	6
Provision of unsatisfactory and less than standard service by Estate Surveyors.	5	5	10	10	0	1.5	7

**SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2023**

(SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agreed, U = Undecided, D = Disagreed, SD = Strongly Disagreed)

Able 2 shows the opinions of respondents on the factors that contribute to the incursion of non-professionals into the practice of property management and estate agency. High income from property management and agency ranked first with mean score of 4. The respondents are of the opinion that what motivate non-professionals into property management and estate agency is high income accruable from the practice. The justification for this act is the high level of unemployment

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and poverty in the country, which also make trained men of allied profession to abandon their calling to practice property management and estate agency. Lack of legal framework that prevents non-professionals from carrying out property management and estate agency ranked 2 with mean score of 3.75. This is in line with the assertion of Idudu (2014) that Estate Surveyors and Valuers have not been able to exclude non-profession from the practice and this is due to the lack of legal backing. Fear of incurring additional legal fee for litigation and ignorance of clients concerning the works of Estate Surveyors and Valuers ranked 3 and 5 with mean scores of 3.25 and 2.6 respectively. The study therefore shows that fear of incurring additional legal fee for litigation is often responsible for reasons while clients patronize nonprofessional coupled with ignorance of the clients on the works and scope of the profession. This is because some clients' patronage of non professionals is an attempt at avoiding attendant legal expenses for evicting erring tenants. Shortage of qualified personnel ranked 4 with mean score of 3.05. This shows that inadequate number of qualified Estate Surveyors and Valuers significantly contribute to the invasion of the profession by non-professionals as the number of qualified and available professionals are inadequate to meet up with the demand of the populace.

However, Lack of confidence by clients on Estate Surveyors to evict erring tenants and Provision of unsatisfactory and less than standard service by Estate Surveyors and Valuers ranked 6 and 7 with mean scores of 2 and 1.5 respectively. This therefore indicates that these factors are not important or major factors responsible for the incursion of non Estate Surveyors into property management and estate agency practice in the study area. The study indicates that the incursion of non estate surveyors into property management and estate agency does not have to do with whether or not the Estate Surveyors are competent as many of the Estate Surveyors in the study area are well trained and grounded in the principles of property management and estate agency.

**Table 3; Respondents' opinion on the prevalence of the activities of quacks.**

Nature of Activity	VO(5)	O(4)	SO(3)	NO(2)	NA(1)	WMS	Rank
Collection of double fee	70	15	0	0	0	4.35	1
Topping up of rent	60	20	2	0	0	4	1
Gazumping	40	25	9	0	0	3.7	3
Partial/non-remittance of rent to the landlord	20	24	20	0	9	3.2	4
Gazundering	3	4	15	17	0	1.95	5

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2023

(VO = Very Often, O = Often, SO = Somewhat Often, NO = Not Often, NA = Not at all)



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Table 3 shows the opinion of respondents on the prevalence of the activities of quacks in real estate market. However, collection of double fees ranked first with a mean score of 4.25 which means that quacks indulge in collecting double fee from their clients unlike Estate Surveyors and Valuers while topping of rent, gazumping, partial/non-remittance of rent to the landlord and gazundering ranked second, third, fourth and fifth with mean score of 4, 3.7, 3.2 and 1.95 respectively.

**Table 4: The consequences of quackery in Estate Surveying and Valuation practice.**

Consequences	SA(5)	A(4)	U(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	WMS	Rank
Undermining of the positive impact of the Estate Surveyors and Valuers in real estate practice	40	15	20	0	0	3.75	1
Extinction of the relevance of the Estate Surveyors and Valuers in real estate agency	20	10	30	5	2	3.35	2
Submission of the Estate professionals to the whims and caprice of the quacks,	5	19	20	2	5	2.55	3

**SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2023**

(SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agreed, U = Undecided, D = Disagreed, SD = Strongly Disagreed)

Table 4 shows that undermining the positive impact of professional Estate Surveyors and Valuers in real estate practice ranked first with mean score of 3.75 while extinction of the relevance of practicing Estate Surveyors and Valuers ranked second with mean score of 3.35 as quite a number of the populace are of the opinion that agents (quacks) are same as Estate Surveyors and Valuers. This makes difficult to separate Estate Surveyors and Valuers from the unprofessional/unethical activities of the quacks which include but not limited to topping up of rent/price, non-remittance of rent to landlords, gazundering and gazumping. This may lead to Estate Surveyors and Valuers losing relevance in the practice of Estate in the nearest future as predicted by Solanke (2010)'s mathematical model for professional survival. Submission of the Estate professionals to the whims and caprice of the quacks ranked third which shows that Estate Surveyors and Valuers sometimes bows to the dubious ways of quacks by acting and operating like them.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the impact of quackery on the Estate Surveying and Valuation profession, particularly within the domain of estate agency and property management in Awka, Anambra State.

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The study found that Estate Surveying and Valuation has significantly contributed to the growth and development of Nigeria's economy. It also identified key factors such as the easy entry of quacks into estate agency and the lack of client awareness as major contributors to the prevalence of quackery in the field. Additionally, the research revealed that quackery has undermined the positive impact of qualified Estate Surveyors and Valuers in real estate practice and threatens the continued relevance of professionals in estate agency. The influx of quacks can be attributed to factors such as the high-income potential from estate agency and management, the absence of a legal framework, client ignorance, a shortage of qualified personnel, and the fear of incurring legal fees in case of litigation.

### Recommendations

In light of the negative effects of quackery on the Estate Surveying and Valuation profession in Awka and the risks it poses to the field, several measures are recommended to help address the problem. The implementation of these measures would significantly reduce or eliminate the influx of quacks into the profession. These recommendations include:

1. **Public Education:** It is crucial to continuously educate the public and all stakeholders in the real estate sector through conferences, seminars, and workshops about the practice of Estate Surveying and Valuation and the dangers that quackery poses to estate agency. The public should be made aware of the roles and significance of Estate Surveyors and Valuers in the real estate market.
2. **Regulation of Estate Agency and Property Management:** Although challenging, ESVARBON must develop a strong commitment to regulating estate agency and property management practices in Nigeria. This can be achieved by advocating for a bill that grants exclusive rights to Estate Surveyors and Valuers to practice estate agency and property management. Such a bill would help regulate the profession and prevent quacks from infiltrating the sector. Alternatively, ESVARBON can explore ways to organize non-professionals under a unified body for better regulation and monitoring.
3. **Incorporation of Non-Professionals:** The Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) and ESVARBON should encourage non-estate management graduates and current "estate agents" who wish to pursue a career in the profession. This would involve establishing a College of Estate Management where certificates or diplomas could be awarded. This initiative should include the creation of membership categories and a pathway to absorb trainees into the professional qualification system.
4. **Adherence to Ethical Standards:** Estate Surveyors and Valuers must adhere strictly to the ethics and guidelines governing the practice of the profession in Nigeria. They should avoid

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engaging in unethical practices that make it difficult for the public to distinguish between qualified professionals and quacks. Estate Surveyors and Valuers should focus on delivering excellent service and prioritizing client satisfaction, which will help push out non-professionals from the field. While there has been a noticeable reduction in professional misconduct among Estate Surveyors and Valuers, NIESV and ESVARBON must continue their efforts to promote high-quality practice and integrity among their members. They should consistently be prepared to publish the names of erring members, revoke licenses, and prosecute individuals for misconduct, as they have done in the past. These actions will help ensure the sustainability of Estate Surveying and Valuation practice in Nigeria.

5. **Simplified Certification Process:** The process and conditions for admitting fresh graduates of Estate Management into the Institution and certifying them through ESVARBON should be streamlined. The associated fees should be reduced to make it more affordable for indigent graduates, while older professionals should be encouraged to mentor these new entrants into the profession.

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