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Real Estate Pedagogy- Towards A Globalisation of Institutional Isomorphism of Real Estate Curriculum

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Abstract

The pedagogy adopted in the teaching of real estate dictates the effectiveness of the transmission of knowledge to the students, and the development of their intellectual capacities, without neglecting the fostering of their skills and character traits. There are diverse opinions on what should constitute estate management pedagogy, such that knowledge and skills are adequately imparted to students in this academic discipline, through a robust curriculum, within the context of global institutional isomorphism. Emerging from the reviewed literature, there are inconsistencies in the body of knowledge, in relation to what is germane and pertinent in the structuring of the real estate curriculum. The study is anchored on the theory of institutional isomorphism. Based on integrative-narrative approach, this paper employed a synthesis matrix to review, and synthesise relevant literature on the structure of real estate curriculum. Issues that were raised include the conceptualisation of real estate pedagogy as it relates to institutional isomorphism relative to real estate curricula, and analyses and synthesis of literature. The paper posits that to promote an effective real estate pedagogy, geared towards inculcating employable skills and improving the quality of education of real estate graduates, there must be a balance in the entrenchment of the normative, mimetic, and coercive pressures in curriculum development. Additionally, real estate pedagogy demands a level of mimetic isomorphism of successful institutions, as a prelude of globalisation of the practice.

Keywords: estate management; coercive; mimetic; normative; real estate education

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1. Introduction

Real estate education is pivotal to the impartation of necessary skills and knowledge on graduates, as well as raising their level of competencies in handling societal needs within the property sector (Weinstein & Worzala, 2008). However, there are divergent opinions, globally, on the effectiveness of real estate method of training and practice (Perera et al., 2011; Boyd et al., 2013).

Studies in the past have alluded to the existence of a gap between the theory and practice of real estate (Small & Karantonis, 2001; Miller, 2001; Crews, 2004; Karisiddappa, 2004; Ugwuanyi & Ezema, 2010; Mafe, 2010; Poon et al., 2011; Poon, 2012). Other studies have posited that there is a skill gap (Black et al., 1996; Ghyoot 2000; Uvah, 2004; Ayofe & Ajetola, 2009; Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012). Some researchers have also discussed issues that bedevil the effectiveness of real estate education (Shulte et al., 2005; Oloyede & Adegoke, 2008). Till date, there is yet a growing global concern, among researchers, real estate practitioners, regulatory bodies, industry and other stakeholders about the need to bridge the gap between real estate academic curriculum and industry needs (Weeks & Finch, 2003; Boyd et al., 2013; Poon & Brownlow, 2014; Helyer, 2015; Oladokun & Olaleye, 2017; Amidu et al., 2018).

This culminates into the need to research real estate pedagogy as a strategy for addressing this malaise, particularly in emergent economies, like Nigeria, especially within the framework of globalization of real estate education. While estate management pedagogy have benefited from diverse studies (Black et al., 1996; Hardin, 2000; Souza, 2000; Manning, 2002; Galuppo & Worzala, 2004; Abdulrahman, 2016), no deliberate attempt has been made in the literature to collate and synchronise their findings through an holistic review of existing research in order to identify the salient issues within these pool of research endeavours, thus extending the body of knowledge.

The potential conceptualisation and synthesis of literature and theory on this topical issue is also critical in the logic of scholarship and stands to provide a more holistic and diversified insight into the teaching and learning of real estate. This study aims to collate and undertake a comprehensive review of literature in this field, to elicit information from previous studies on estate management pedagogy and other relevant body of knowledge that underpins it. The study stands to benefit policy makers by identifying existing works on this topical issue, evaluating them, and synthesising their findings, in order to provide evidence about the quality, effectiveness and impact of the teaching. The object of the research is to contribute to existing literature by evaluating previous studies. Additionally, the paper is also significant because it helps to identify fallacies and gaps in research on estate management pedagogy. Further, it will help to draw conclusions that will impact future studies and enhance positioning real estate teaching and learning within a plethora of scholarly pedagogical research endeavours.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The theory of institutional isomorphism provides the theoretical underpinning for this study. It was propounded by Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell in 1983 in their scholarly work entitled, “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). It stemmed from the work of Hawley (1968), who described isomorphism as a compelling process that propels a unit within a population to resemble other units, by adapting to the same conditions that is set therein.

The theory states that to promote similarities and homogeneity in institutions, then paradoxes must increasingly be reduced by rational actors, to foster similarities. In arriving at this outcome, three isomorphic processes were proposed. They are coercive, mimetic, and normative.

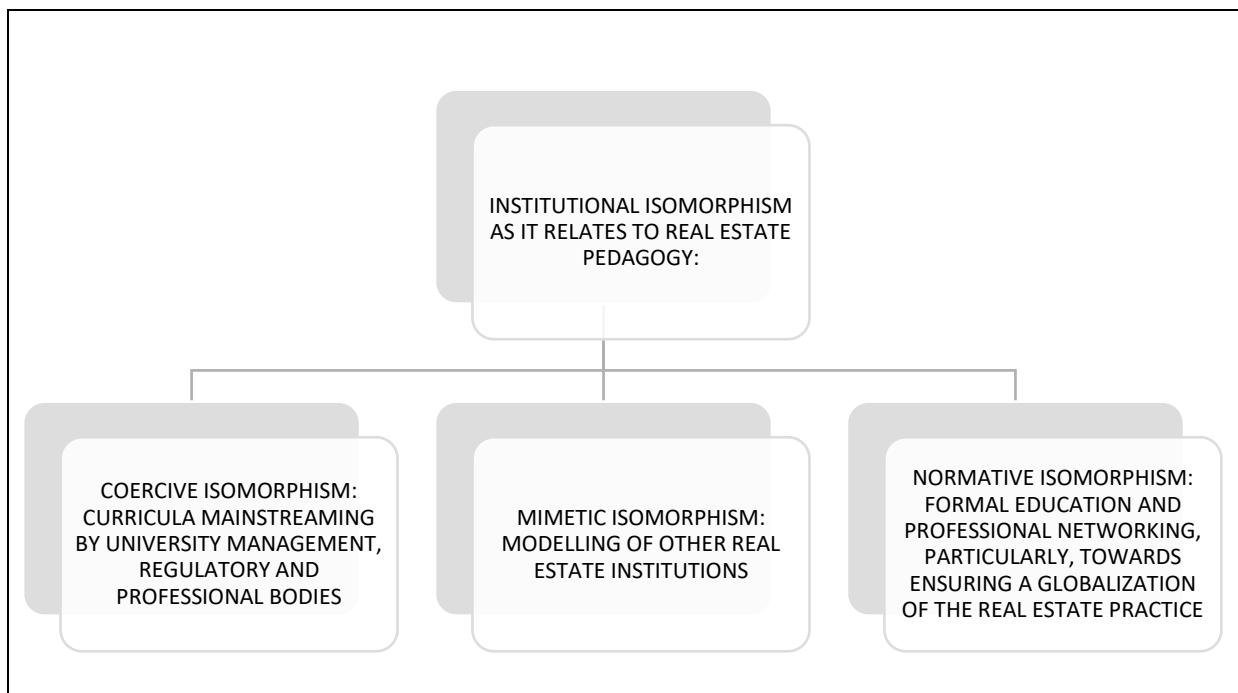


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of institutional isomorphism as it relates to real estate pedagogy.

Source: *Author, 2023*

- i. Coercive isomorphism occurs because of formal and informal pressures, brought about by the influence of one institution upon another, that depends on them. The pressure exerted may be in the form of persuasion, force, or an invitation to be a part of a common purpose. Such may come of curricula mainstreaming, to conform to a particular standard (Meyer et al., 1981), as in the case of real estate pedagogy,

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- whereby the coercive authorities of regulatory and professional bodies dictate the courses being taught in institutions.
- ii. Mimetic isomorphism stems from the force injected by uncertainty upon an institution, causing them to imitate or model other similar institutions in their field that they perceive to be successful and legitimate in their operations (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Olsen, 1976; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), thus enhancing efficiency, with a less expensive and convenient outcome.
 - iii. Normative isomorphism results primarily from professionalization and credited to the collective activity of members of a professional group to define the rules and regulations that governs their practice, alongside the checks and balances put in place to ensure quality control, legalization of professional autonomy and institute a cognitive intellectual base (Larson, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In ensuring this, professionals do not work in isolation, but co-opt non-professional clients, heads of institutions and regulatory bodies. Notwithstanding, there is an entrenchment of the mimetic and coercive pressures in their isomorphism processes. Critical aspects of normative isomorphism include formal education and professional networking, particularly, towards ensuring a globalization of the practice, with a relative homogenous practice. Consequently, institutions of higher learning and professional training bodies are crucial to defining and promoting normative rules and norms, guiding and dictating professional behavior. This suggests that there must be homogeneity in the orientation, and training of professionals, governed and guided through parallel curricula in institutions of higher learning.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) posited that homogeneity must not be determined a priori but must be based on empirical investigations. Further, they described four components of structurization for homogeneity to emerge, to include: an increase interaction among stakeholders; clearly defined institutional structures and patterns; improved information; and mutual awareness of stakeholders, such as researchers and real estate practitioners.

3. Methodology

The teaching and learning of real estate have benefited from diverse studies in the past (Black et al., 1996; Hardin, 2000; Souza, 2000; Manning, 2002; Galuppo & Worzala, 2004; amongst others). However, a database search was conducted to systematically select fourteen (14) more recent extant studies for this research from year 2014 till date using Google Scholar, and Science Direct, amongst others. Based on integrative-narrative approach, a synthesis matrix was subsequently employed to review and synthesise the literature on the structure of real estate pedagogy and curriculum. The use of a synthesis matrix in organising the literature review and integrating them aids in arriving at a unique interpretation of the

contents, thus serving the purpose of contributing to the dialogue, and providing a solid foundation and credibility for the study (Sally, 2013).

4. Findings, Discussions and Implications for Real Estate Pedagogy

In bridging the gap between real estate education and the practice, Black et al. (1996) had submitted that it is necessary for stakeholders to come together to define a robust real estate curriculum that is capable of reflecting the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of the field, as well as address the skills, and knowledge needed in the industry, in conjunction with the legal and ethical aspects of interaction with the physical, social and economic environments. While this appears alluring, it does not appear that the pursuit of a globally acceptable ‘one size fits all’ curriculum is going to be achievable in the short run. However, a step in the right direction in the pursuit would be an exploration of existing curricula, and their effectiveness in serving the purpose of adequacy in grooming graduates for the industry by effectively incorporating knowledge and skills.

The results of content analysis of selected previous studies are presented chronologically in Table 1. Boyd et al. (2014) examined the distinct activities carried out by real estate professionals in an attempt to align real estate education with practice requirements. The study, based on a Delphi survey, compared real estate education in U.K. and U.S. The theme was normative isomorphism as it examined the professional bodies as a major protagonist of the delivery process. Findings reveal the need to use practice-based knowledge for professionals’ development, programme accreditations, and real estate education. The authors opined that real estate academics place higher importance on higher order cognition activities such as offering teaching and advice for students, as well as developing practitioners, with implications for real estate education.

Table 1: Summary of Selected Studies on Real Estate Pedagogy

Author & Date	Research focus	Research method	isomorphism focus	Pedagogic or curriculum highlight of research findings	Limitations to effective pedagogy & (or) solutions
Boyd, Amidu & Smith (2014)	Studied activities of professionals to check link between real estate pedagogy and practice requirements.	Delphi survey	Normative isomorphism	Findings indicated the importance of practice-based knowledge for real estate pedagogy & accreditations, & professionals’ development; excessive attention placed on higher order cognition activities with implications for real estate education.	Divergent opinions on critical areas of focus of real estate pedagogy
Oloyede & Adegoke (2014)	Studied graduates’ quality & shortfalls of current curriculum.	Quantitative approach	Coercive isomorphism	Deficiencies in the quality of graduates in valuation, agency, feasibility, and viability, etc; Advocacy for a review of curriculum every four years to conform with global standards.	Controversies in defining a common body of knowledge for real estate education.

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Poon (2014); Poon & Brownlow (2014)	perceptions of multiple stakeholders on employability skills of real estate graduates	survey	Normative-Coercive isomorphism	top employer-rated; knowledge and skills were present while practical experience was largely missing from courses studied	Excessive focus on research methods; practical experience was lacking in the curricula
Iroham, Oloyede & Ajibola (2015)	effectiveness of adopted curriculum for real estate training for agency practice amongst professionals	Quantitative approach	Coercive-Normative Isomorphism	The curriculum employed did not effectively incorporate topical issues required for agency such as negotiation skills and interpersonal relationships, leading to inefficiencies in the abilities to convince clients and sub-optimal performance of estate surveyors in this aspect	Curriculum overhauling, to accommodate agency skills; Inefficiency ascribed to paucity of research on curriculum revamp in this aspect
Charles (2016)	the potential for using the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Hines Student Competition as a pedagogical tool in teaching real estate		Mimetic isomorphism	competition can be used to address the interrelated issues of market analysis, urban design, and finance; offers benefits of collaborative pedagogical techniques, of team & problem-based learning; fosters multi-disciplinary teamwork and a competitive spirit, inspiring them	Competition is a promising tool for conveying experience-based, tacit knowledge of real estate development within a graduate real estate curriculum.
Oloyede, Iroham, Ajibola & Ayedun (2017)	gaps between the employability skills of young graduates and employers' expectations	Qualitative approach	Coercive-Normative Isomorphism	The success of real estate pedagogy is hinged on the level of acquisition of hard and soft skills by young graduates.	strong curriculum & periodic visitations of accreditation bodies; Lack of consensus on whether to treat real estate pedagogy as an academic discipline or a professional one.
Kampamba, Tembo & Nkwae (2017)	Investigated the relevance of real estate curricula in Botswana	Cross-sectional survey	Coercive-Normative Isomorphism	Programme similar and relevant to industry	Curricula were only studied within the local context
Amidu, Ogbesoye n & Agboola (2018)	degree of alignment of real estate curriculum with the needs of the industry	Qualitative approach	Coercive isomorphism	knowledge from real estate academic curriculum aligns with the industry in six out of nine knowledge base areas, but gaps in three most crucial areas; divergent opinions of stakeholders on bridging identified gaps	academia attach more relevance to modules on knowledge acquisition than key features of industry activities, namely professional practice, etc

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Kim and Pior (2018)	conducted to elicit information about real estate pedagogy curricula, within the context of globalisation.	Qualitative approach	Mimetic - Coercive isomorphism	Real estate education of the UK and the US, have majorly influenced those of other countries; challenges in accurately identifying the characteristics of real estate pedagogy in different countries.	Curricula accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) are among those at the forefront of globalisation of real estate education.
Palm & Pauli (2018)	Aimed at bridging the gap between real estate education and industry requirement.	Bloom's learning stages	Normative isomorphism	Pedagogy approach will dictate outcome. Inclusion of the industry in real estate pedagogy through real world interaction of guest lectures prone tend to positively contribute to training.	Risks of tendencies of practitioners to focus on practicalities more than academic standards.
McGrath, Wang, Jackson, Kämpf-Dern, Malone, Funk and Geurts (2020)	Studied real estate education and its challenges.	compilation of professional opinions and experiences of educators and researchers.	Normative-coercive isomorphism	Identified the need for university education to align with marketplace realities, and the society. Lack of applied learning skills in curriculum; it is difficult to bridge every identified gap.	There is never going to be a "best" model for the future of real estate education.
Saginer, Weinstein & Worzala (2020)	Explored the impact of changes in the real estate pedagogy.	Survey approach	Normative isomorphism	Real estate education is not well adapted to recent changes in the workplace; Lack of sufficient introduction of technological advances, digitization, and automation in curriculum.	Research focus limited to real estate pedagogy in the United States, rather than a global perspective
Hamza & Ogunbajo (2021)	Assessed the improvements and growth in real estate pedagogy in North Central Nigeria	Mixed research method	Mimetic - coercive isomorphism	real estate pedagogy is pivotal to training needed professionals required to meet societal needs of the property sector.	need for outcome-based education.

Source: Authors' Content Analysis, 2023

loyede and Adegoke (2014) investigated complaints of stakeholders over the quality of estate management graduates being released into the property market on a yearly basis, to identify aspects of the current curriculum shortfalls and the effectiveness of the adopted real estate pedagogy. Coercive isomorphism best explains the thematic focus of the study as attention is drawn to the regulatory bodies charged with the review of programme curriculum. The

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research findings indicated that there were deficiencies in the quality of the graduates in the areas of valuation, agency, feasibility and viability appraisal, and property management. Similarly, Poon & Brownlow (2014); Iroham, et al. (2015); Oloyede, et al. (2017); Amidu, et al. (2018) and Saginor et al. (2020) submitted that while top employer-rated knowledge and skills were present in most of the programs studied, practical experience were largely missing and thus advocated for curriculum overhaul to bridge the identified gaps between theory and practice.

In bridging the gap between real estate education and industry requirement, Palm and Pauli (2018) submitted that it might be necessary to include the industry as co-partners in real estate pedagogy through real world interaction of guest lectures. This will positively contribute to real estate pedagogy. Problem envisioned in this regard however is tendencies to focus on practicalities more than academic standards. In his own contribution, Charles (2016) proposed the use of competition as a pedagogical tool to foster multi-disciplinary teamwork and a competitive spirit among students, which may inspire them to do their best work.

In addition, based on the submissions of Boyd et al. (2014) and Oloyede and Adegoke (2014), divergent opinion on crucial areas of expertise of real estate professionals between stakeholders in academics and practitioners on modules to be deployed as core body of knowledge for real estate pedagogy may pose as a limitation to the development of a global curriculum. The authors thus advocated for a periodic review of real estate curriculum at intervals of four years in conformity with global best practices. This will subsequently enhance the facilitation and eventual adoption of a universal real estate curriculum and in defining a common body of knowledge for real estate education.

Notwithstanding, McGrath et al., (2020) has expressed reservations about the possibilities of a global curriculum for real estate programmes. Meanwhile, Kim and Pior (2018) had earlier asserted that real estate education of the UK and the US, have majorly influenced those of other countries but major challenge lies in accurately identifying the characteristics of real estate pedagogy in different countries. Meanwhile, in a local environment context, Kampamba et al., (2017)'s study showed that it is possible for universities to adopt similar curricula for their programmes by mimicking one another. This may suggest the need for a general adoption of mimetic isomorphism, where real estate programmes in different nations model their programmes to conform to global practices, as derived and driven by more advanced economies regulatory institutions like the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

From the foregoing, this paper suggests that to promote and project a globally acceptable real estate pedagogy, theory and employable skills must be richly embedded in the curriculum of institutions that runs the programme. Also, to enhance the quality of real estate education of the graduates, there must be a balance in the entrenchment of the normative, mimetic, and coercive pressures in curriculum development. Additionally, real estate

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pedagogy demands a level of mimetic isomorphism of successful institutions, as a prelude of globalisation of the practice.

5. Conclusion / Recommendations

Real estate pedagogy is an evolving issue in literature. This study is a research attempt at expounding stakeholders' submissions about the contents of real estate curricula and their capacity to facilitate practice-based knowledge within an institutional isomorphism structure. The study undertook a comprehensive review of the literature, to elicit information from previous studies on real estate pedagogy and curricula that underpins the effectiveness of real estate education. The paper is significant because it helps to identify fallacies and gaps in research on the pedagogy of real estate. Further, it helps to draw conclusions that will impact future studies and enhance positioning real estate teaching and learning within a plethora of scholarly pedagogical research endeavours. The conceptualisation and synthesis of literature and theory on this topical issue is critical in the logic of scholarship and stands to provide a more holistic and diversified insight into the teaching and learning of real estate.

The study concludes that for real estate pedagogy to be adjudged effective, it must ensure a balance between theory and practice. In accomplishing this, the study recommends that the curriculum adopted should sufficiently serve the purpose of addressing the skills, and knowledge needed in the industry, for it to be an efficacious tool in training quality graduates. This recommendation is at the heart of gaining stakeholders' confidence, and to sustain the relevance of real estate education. The study stands to benefit policy makers by identifying existing works on real estate pedagogy, evaluating them, and synthesising their findings, to provide evidence about the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and how impactful it has been. It thus contributes to existing literature by embedding this research in them.

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